

Your comprehensive guide to selling cruise holidays

cruisetradenews.com

ISSUE 100 | OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2020 | £5.50

cruise

TRADE NEWS

Building blocks

How Royal Caribbean is looking to the future

CTN HITS
100
Celebrating
a milestone

WIN

A river cruise with
AmaWaterways

PAGE 10

INSIDE: How digital is changing cruise • Sailing the British Isles
How to sell small ships • In conversation with Celestyal Cruises



The magic of the Mediterranean and the beauty of Britain.

Introducing new 2021
Queen Elizabeth itineraries.

On sale now.



Queen Elizabeth will make her return to UK and European waters in March 2021, before returning to Australia in December. This includes the introduction of all new three and four night scenic cruising around the magnificent coasts of the British Isles. She will also – for the first time since 2014 - then embark on a series of seven night fly-cruises in the Mediterranean, departing from Barcelona, before returning to Australia on a Grand Voyage with calls at Singapore and Sri Lanka.

5% Cunard World Club member saving off the Cruise only Cunard Fare,
when booked by 30 November 2020.



The Cunard Upgrade

Your customers can enhance their stay with a complimentary upgrade on their suite or stateroom booking. They can enjoy a Queens Grill suite for the fare of a Princess Grill suite or upgrade to a Balcony when selecting an Inside stateroom*.

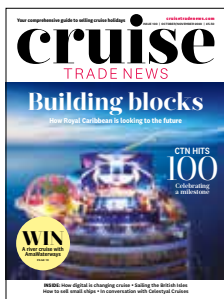


YOUR VOYAGE TO RECOGNITION AND REWARD

Find helpful training guides and further information on our new itineraries at www.shinerewardsclub.com. Remember to enter all of your Cunard Fare bookings to play our online deck game and earn Shine points. How will you spend yours? On the latest technology, jewellery, or perhaps your very own voyage with Cunard.

Shuffle. Score. Shine.

*The Cunard Upgrade offer applies to new Cunard Fare bookings for Queen Elizabeth voyages sailing between 26 March 2021 and 10 November 2021. Book by 10 November 2021. For further terms and conditions, visit www.shinerewardsclub.com



EDITORIAL TEAM

GROUP EDITOR
Colette Doyle
colette.doyle@realresponsemedia.com

EDITOR
Gary Peters
gary.peters@realresponsemedia.com

STAFF WRITER
Isabella Sullivan

ART DIRECTOR
Phil Couzens

SUB EDITOR
Caroline Parish

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Barnaby Moore

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
Rochelle Streater
rochelle.streater@realresponsemedia.com

COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Zarina Kapasi
zarina.kapasi@realresponsemedia.com

MARKETING CONSULTANT
James Gambling
james.gambling@realresponsemedia.com

CEO
Chris Pitchford
chris.pitchford@realresponsemedia.com

For subscriptions & enquiries:
020 8444 2554
info@cruisetradenews.com
All enquiries
+44 (0) 20 8444 2554

Printed in the United Kingdom by Micropress.
Reproduction is not permitted without the
express written consent of the editor.
All efforts are made to ensure that factual
accuracy is correct at time of publication.

cruise
TRADE NEWS

Published by
Real.
RESPONSE MEDIA

Unit 4D, Cally Yard
423-425 Caledonian Road
London, N7 9BG
ISSN 2059-9986



**CONNECT ONLINE WITH
CRUISE TRADE NEWS**

cruisetradenews.com
 @cruisetradenews
 Cruise Trade News

Contents

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2020



6 The Briefing

Our essential round-up of the newest developments in the sector

10 Sales inspiration

All the latest training, incentives and support that cruise lines are offering, plus itineraries and packages clients will want to snap up

12 Making waves

Royal Caribbean's Ben Bouldin discusses plans for trade partnerships and the 2021 itineraries agents should highlight to clients

14 CTN investigates

We look at how digital solutions are changing the customer experience and how cruise lines and travel agencies can adapt to the new normal

18 In conversation with

Celestyal Cruises on upping agent engagement and adding a new ship to the fleet

20 Win at selling

Windstar Cruises BDM Anna Perrott explains how agents can sell small-ship itineraries

21 Spotlight on

How Panache Cruises launched during lockdown

22 At a glance

An in-depth look at Uniworld's all-suite *Mekong Jewel*, built with eco-friendly and sustainable materials for a unique boutique experience

25 Cruise Stars Awards Q&A

One-to-one with an award-winning industry star

26 100 and counting

We ask industry heads for their views on celebrating a landmark issue for CTN

30 Six of the best

Isabella Sullivan rounds up the latest technology that lines are using to eliminate touch points

32 Destination focus

A voyage around the British Isles promises many exceptional experiences – much closer to home

38 Ship review

Inside Silversea's new Galápagos-bound ship, *Silver Origin* – mixing opulence and adventure

42 The last word

Avalon Waterways' Janet Parton on why engaging with clients is crucial, especially now



**Monday
26 April 2021**

8 Northumberland
Avenue, London

WAVE AWARDS 2020



Join us at this spectacular
event, the Oscars of cruising,
for a fun-filled night of food,
drink and entertainment, as we
celebrate the very best of the
UK's cruise industry

Brought to you by
WORLD OF
cruising cruise
TRADE NEWS

**BOOK
YOUR TABLE
NOW**



CELEBRATING THE VERY BEST OF THE UK'S CRUISE INDUSTRY

HEADLINE SPONSOR
SAGA

SPONSORS

ACCORD

in partnership with
AROSA


CRYSTAL




Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

GREECE

**MARELLA
CRUISES**


SEABOURN



 **silvertraveladvisor**
The Voice of Mature Travellers

AFTER PARTY SPONSOR

 **Royal Caribbean**
INTERNATIONAL

PR PARTNER

Rooster.
We are pr.

CONTACT US  Erin.Marshall@realresponsemedia.com  020 8444 2554

thewaveawards.com #WaveAwards2020



EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the October/November issue

This year is progressing with frightening speed. So much has happened that it has been difficult to take a step back, analyse and take stock of the situation. As I'm sure is the case for many of you, I have been up and down when it comes

to my own feelings: positivity comes in flashes, balanced by the realisation of the challenges ahead.

That being said, these challenges need a positive mindset. As Avalon Waterways sales and marketing director Janet Parton explains on page 42, forward thinking and teamwork are two of the keys to unlocking the future.

This mirrors the process in which we have worked to produce this edition of *CTN* and all of our online content over recent months. During the good days it's easy to get caught up in the individual elements of work, but the value of unity is fundamental.

This issue is also rather more special, as it is number 100 for *CTN*. In some ways, celebrating this landmark achievement during current circumstances gives me even more satisfaction and I could not be more proud of the team and everyone who plays their part, day in, day out.

Elsewhere, we take a forensic look at how the use of technology is changing the industry and speak to a range of experts for their thoughts about social media, VR and AR – see page 14 for more. As for our destination focus, Isabella Sullivan examines the



Above: The cruise sector is embracing digital solutions. More on page 14

incredible experiences available on a British Isles cruise (page 32), and Anna Perrott, of Windstar Cruises, shares her top tips for selling small-ship itineraries on page 20.

We also have some exciting news about the return of our much-loved Cruise Challenge events – go to The Briefing section for more information about how you can get involved.

Until next time, folks.

GARY PETERS

Editor, Cruise Trade News

CONNECT ONLINE WITH CRUISE TRADE NEWS

cruisetradenews.com [@cruisetradenews](https://twitter.com/cruisetradenews) [Cruise Trade News](https://facebook.com/cruisetradenews)

In BRIEF

Marella retiring ship

● Marella Cruises has revealed it is retiring *Marella Dream* from its fleet following a decade of service. All sailings on the ship due to take place from 26 October 2021 and beyond have been cancelled and all affected customers are being notified. Those with journeys booked on *Marella Dream* for summer 2021 will have their booking automatically moved to *Marella Discovery*.

Expedition line joins CLIA

● Swan Hellenic has joined CLIA to build its profile and relationships with agents across Europe. The Swan Hellenic brand is relaunching with two new state-of-the-art expedition ships, which are currently under construction in Helsinki. The addition of Swan Hellenic follows the news that Tradewind Voyages and river cruise line Vodohod have also joined CLIA.

3FOR supporting health solution

● Industry sales and marketing support specialist 3FOR has been appointed as the exclusive sales agent for the travel sector for a new range of no-touch hand sanitising systems, called eShield180, which, 3FOR states, are suitable for use in the cruise sector. The device can also be used to provide a temperature check alert and a facial recognition option.

THE NEWS YOU NEED

Subscribe to the *Cruise Trade News* newsletter for all the latest in cruise news, features, destination guides, interviews and more.

Sign up now at
cruisetradenews.com

EVENTS

Cruise Challenge returns

With 2020 having brought the cruise industry to a halt, there is no doubt that agents are more eager than ever to get back to doing what they do best – selling cruise holidays.

With that in mind, the most innovative travel agent event in the industry is back by popular demand, as *Cruise Trade News* unveils a host of new dates and exciting new formats for the Cruise Challenge.

Cruise Challenge events provide a great platform to bring agents and cruise lines together for a fun-filled and educational evening. However, in the light of current circumstances, it has been necessary to adapt and create a virtual edition.

“This is a unique training event in the cruise industry”

All virtual events follow the format of an online quiz, hosted by CTN's quiz master Peter Smith, with travel agents participating individually, rather than in teams. Agents will answer questions based on cruise line presentations, with the opportunity to improve their product knowledge and win a host of wonderful prizes.

For cruise lines it is a fantastic chance to engage with the travel trade and share key information regarding itineraries, special offers, the on-board experience and any forthcoming agent-specific updates.

As an added bonus CTN is organising Q&A sessions with cruise line representatives following the quiz to give travel agents the opportunity to ask any burning questions they may have.

CTN editor Gary Peters said: “We are delighted to announce the return of the Cruise Challenge. This is a unique training event in the industry and we know that agents are determined to stay abreast of all the latest developments and use this knowledge to sell more cruise holidays to their clients. The virtual format is hugely exciting and promises to take the Cruise Challenge to a new level.”

cruise
TRADE NEWS



86%

of agents would like to participate in virtual Cruise Challenge events



30-40

potential number of agent attendees per virtual event



15

MINUTES

dedicated to a Q&A session during every virtual event

For more information please email
erin.marshall@realresponsemedia.com

SUPPORT

Ad bonanza proves big hit

The *World of Cruising* Travel Recovery Grant has provided a “beacon of positivity” during the pandemic, according to the cruise companies benefitting from the scheme.

World of Cruising (WoC), sister magazine to *CTN*, created the project earlier in the summer, distributing £250,000 of free advertising to 50 companies. The grant was open to travel agents, cruise operators and tourist boards.

CroisiEurope stated that the grant has enabled it to create bespoke content, which has “greatly assisted in highlighting our combined efforts in re-establishing river cruises as a safe and enjoyable holiday choice”.

Bolsover Cruise Club added: “Winning the Travel Recovery Grant was a big



**World of Cruising
SUPPORTING THE
CRUISE INDUSTRY**

CTN's sister title is behind the grant

boost at the height of the pandemic, coming at a time when advertising needs were ramping up a little, but budgets weren't.

“The editorial content has given us an opportunity to market outside our own database, something we wouldn't have looked to do at this time without the grant. It's been a beacon of positivity.”

Princess Cruises said of the travel grant: “It shows *WoC's* commitment to the cruise industry.”

PODCASTS

Listen to new podcast series

C*ruise Trade News* has joined forces with The Cruise Strategy Company to share a new podcast series discussing key selling tips for travel agents.

The Cruise Strategy Company, an independent business founded by cruise experts Stuart Perl and Philip Ordever,

has been created to help travel agents sell more cruise.

The company has worked with esteemed travel writers to develop a range of podcasts focusing on different sectors, including river, ocean and expedition cruising.

CTN editor Gary Peters said: “We are delighted to share these podcasts with our readers. They provide valuable advice and support during this difficult period, but also a refreshing dose of optimism for the future.”

“Each episode gets under the skin of a different part of the industry, providing unique insights that agents can use in their day-to-day jobs.”

“Each episode gets under the skin of the industry”

All podcasts can be found on the interviews section on the *CTN* website and at

cruisestrategy.co.uk

APPOINTMENTS



Celestyal Cruises has expanded its UK & Ireland sales team with the appointment of **Emma Paxton** as BDM for Northern England, Scotland and Ireland. Paxton will develop opportunities for new business within existing accounts and new distribution channels.



Windstar Cruises has named **Christopher Prelog** as president. Prelog, who started his cruise career as a waiter, first joined the line four years ago. He will report to Andrew N Todd, CEO of Windstar Cruises and Xanterra Travel Collection.



Crystal Cruises has revealed that **Jack Anderson** will take over as interim president and CEO. Anderson, formerly of Seabourn, Holland America Line and Windstar Cruises, takes over from Tom Wolber, who is stepping down to pursue other interests.



INDUSTRY

Cruise framework



Screening for potential cases is one of the key requirements

The new Covid-19 framework, developed by the UK Chamber of Shipping and CLIA, in collaboration with other agencies, lists a series of recommendations for cruise lines, passengers and seafarers to support the safe resumption of operations. However, what are the key points across embarkation, social distancing and dealing with outbreaks?

Embarkation

The framework suggests that operators may ask passengers to fill in a health declaration questionnaire prior to arriving at a port to embark, the results of which can be used to determine if they can travel or not.

Pre-boarding screening may help identify people with unknown Covid-19 infection. These measures should be organised into two phases – primary and secondary screening.

Primary screening usually includes an initial assessment by non-medical cruise or port staff, as well as a health declaration questionnaire, observing travellers for signs of infection and checking body temperatures. Passengers who have suspected symptoms should

Operators should consider methods needed to maintain physical distance

be referred to secondary screening. This should be conducted by personnel with medical training and may include an interview, medical examination, a second temperature check and potentially a Covid-19 test.

Social distancing & face coverings

The collaborative document states that “operators should consider methods needed to maintain physical distance between individuals, including signage or markings”.

Examples include showing minimum distances people should remain from one another; limiting the number of passengers in certain venues and waiter-only seated service for meals and drinks.

Face coverings should be worn at the terminal and on board when it is not possible to maintain an appropriate social distance, or on “other occasions where deemed appropriate based on completed risk assessments”.



Social distancing is as important on board as it is ashore



Lines need to be able to manage the flow of passengers

Managing an outbreak

Operators must have a written contingency plan in place for the prevention and control of transmission, which should come into effect immediately as soon as one individual shows symptoms.

The symptomatic person and their close contacts should isolate until test results are produced. While

a suspected person is being tested, the guidance says that “retroactive contact tracing” should be started to identify where the suspected person has been in the past two days and to identify any close contacts.

Those with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 should be

able to isolate away from the general population of the ship. Ships should be able to designate an appropriate number of cabins to be used solely for isolation.

The guidance says “operators are responsible for leading in the management and implementation of repatriation of passengers and seafarers”. This involves arranging flights or other transport, potentially for symptomatic passengers, to the UK when required.

VISIT
cruisetradenews.com
for the full list of
recommendations



New date for Wave Awards

Following discussions with partners and the wider cruise community, we have taken the decision to move the date of the next edition of the Wave Awards.

The event will now take place on 26 April 2021, at 8 Northumberland Avenue, London. This decision is not one we have taken lightly but we are following current guidance and feel this is the best course of action at this time.

The glittering ceremony will be complete with a host of awards and fantastic entertainment, and we look forward to celebrating as one industry.



INDUSTRY

Confidence remains high, says Mundy Cruising

Clients are confident about the return of cruise, according to Mundy Cruising MD Edwina Lonsdale.

Speaking to *CTN* as part of the agency's 50th anniversary celebrations, Lonsdale was upbeat about the outlook for 2021 and beyond and praised the

"A ship is just going to be so much safer than a hotel"

work that the industry is doing to provide reassurance to guests.

"We've had a very low level of people saying they will never cruise again," said Lonsdale. "People are really confident they will cruise again, and that cruising is going to be the safest way for them to travel. What we've seen from the industry confirms that."

"With cruise it's always been this battle on the perception of the industry – that perception of an unsafe petri dish. Cruise is always fighting that battle. But a ship is just going to be so much safer than a hotel. I think it'll be a challenge, a PR challenge, but I do think there is an opportunity."

Lonsdale added that the company's experience over the past 50 years had enabled it to navigate the troubles of recent months and moving forward it has created an expert consumer panel to give insight and guidance.



MARKETING GURU

Mark Lewsey of Accord Marketing, looks at the pros and cons of internal teams and external partners

Strategic agility has to be the bedrock a business is built upon. But what about the age-old question of whether to establish an internal team or partner with external suppliers? The following principles may help decide which direction to go in:

Competency – the people and/or skills required to meet the objective
Capacity – the amount of productivity required to meet the objective
Cost – of satisfying the objective and the return on investment

It is important to look at the pros and cons of both approaches. For in-house benefits, for example, staff are fully engrossed in the company culture and there is close alignment to business KPIs, providing a single focus that an agency may not be able to replicate.

However, finding the right person with the right skills isn't always easy, and the focus can stray from strict deliverables. The outsourcing route brings with it more time to focus on the business and manage internal and operational opportunities. Agencies are also paid to perform. Nevertheless, you could be faced with expectations not being met, and some agencies have their employees working on multiple projects.

In the end, the answer depends entirely on your situation and, of course, it's possible to go in both directions. Go to accordmarketing.com for further information and case studies.

Cruise with AmaWaterways

AmaWaterways has launched the latest iteration of its Sell Five, Sail Free booking incentive.

Travel agents who book five new FIT bookings by 31 December 2021 will earn a complimentary seven-night river cruise for themselves and a companion.

As an added bonus, agents who make 10 or more new bookings will have the opportunity to be among the first guests to sail on *AmaDahlia*, which launches on the Nile in September 2021.

Visit the line's travel agent portal at amawaterways.co.uk for more information.

An AmaWaterways river cruise is on the cards for agents who make five bookings

VISIT
cruisetradenews.com
for more on cruise line
restart plans, agent
training, itineraries
and incentives



Queen Elizabeth will be sailing around home shores as well as the Med and beyond

Cunard opts for scenic route

Cunard's new 2021 itineraries on *Queen Elizabeth* – which are now on sale – feature the line's first foray into scenic cruising, with a choice of three and four-night voyages around the British Isles, as well as a return to Mediterranean fly-cruising.

Itineraries will feature a series of overnight port calls to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Rotterdam, Singapore and Auckland, with late evening departures from Amsterdam, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Aqaba, Colombo and Fremantle.

The programme starts in Southampton on 26 March 2021 and ends on 19 December 2021 in Melbourne.

Visit cunard.com for more information regarding itineraries and prices.



Drinks by the pool can be enjoyed on MSC ships now more than ever

MSC Cruises releases 2021 all-inclusive options

MSC Cruises is adding a premium drinks package to more than 1,000 sailings departing from April 2021 to November 2021.

The promotion covers sailings in the Caribbean and the East and West Mediterranean, in addition to ex-UK cruises on board *MSC Magnifica*, which is sailing from Southampton in summer 2021. The promotion applies to all new bookings made until 2 December 2020. **More information can be found at msccruises.co.uk.**

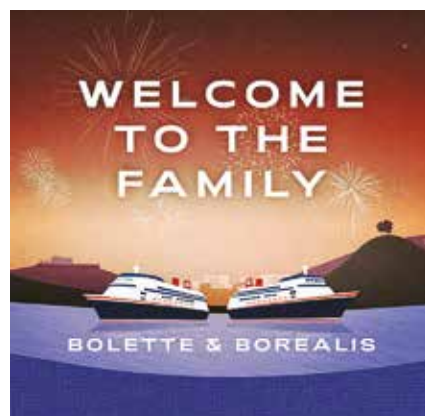
Join Fred Olsen's new ships

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines is offering travel agents the chance to win one of six cruises for two on board the line's new ships, *Bolette* and *Borealis*.

To qualify, agents must register every new booking made on to Fred Olsen's 2021, 2022 or 2023 cruise programmes, on any of the fleet – *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Bolette* or *Borealis* – until 30 November 2020, inclusive.

The winning agents will join either the seven-night cruise aboard *Bolette*, departing from Dover on 17 April 2021, or a five-night cruise on *Borealis*, departing Liverpool on 29 April 2021.

All bookings need to be registered online via Fred Olsen's travel agent hub by 4 December. The winners will be announced on 7 December.



Sky Princess will be sailing around Scandinavia

Princess changes UK & Europe 2021 plans

Princess Cruises has announced that its 2021 programme will now see three Royal-class ships based in Europe, including the newest addition to the line's fleet – *Enchanted Princess*.

The ship – due to join the fleet later this year – will spend May to September sailing round trip from Rome on a series of new seven and 14-night voyages, calling at a variety of destinations in the Mediterranean.

Sky Princess will spend its first UK season from April to September sailing round trip from Southampton on eight and 12-night British Isles cruises, as well as a series of 12-night Scandinavia & Russia voyages.

In addition, *Regal Princess* will spend April to October sailing from Southampton to a variety of destinations including Iceland, Norway, the Mediterranean and Canada & New England.



Agents can go online for support from Seabourn for sales of Seabourn Venture

Seabourn launches new trade webinars

Seabourn has announced more support for the trade with a series of webinars running throughout November and December.

The weekly webinars, called Seabourn Mini-Moments, will be hosted by members of the Seabourn business development team. The 15-20-minute events, which will be held every Thursday at 9.30am, have been designed to explain to agents what the line has to offer.

Content will focus on destinations and the line's new expedition vessel, *Seabourn Venture*, which will launch in December 2021, sailing from London.

Agents can contact salessupport@seabourn.co.uk for more information on how to register.

Odyssey of the Seas promises plenty of adrenaline-fuelled activities



Weathering the storm

Ben Bouldin, vice-president EMEA at Royal Caribbean International, explains how the line is determinedly looking to the future, as it plots its return to the seas

How are you supporting the trade at present?

One way is through the launch of RCL Cares, a dedicated content hub created by Royal Caribbean Group to assist thousands of travel professionals dealing with the negative impact of the crisis. RCL Cares offers information ranging from wellbeing support for families to links to UK government and ABTA advice, trade FAQs and contact details for sales support teams. We're also currently launching a series of promotional campaigns, which our trade partners can take full advantage of.

What's the plan for your trade partnerships moving forward?

Our first step is to conduct training for all trade partners, focusing on our new health and safety protocols. What's really

clear is that our trade partners will play a crucial role in our back-to-service plan and we will rely on them to reassure our guests that we continue to offer fantastic holidays. This new training will equip them with all the information they need to articulate our protocols to guests. The landscape of the travel trade has been evolving as we move through the pandemic, but we are committed to adapting so that we have the ability to work closely with our key travel partners up and down the country.

The current goal is for you to restart cruising on 1 December – how feasible is that?

We are really hopeful to bring cruising back in December. Our Healthy Sail Panel has now completed its research and in-depth findings have been submitted to

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for review. We have just gone on sale in Singapore, offering Ocean Getaway sailings onboard *Quantum of the Seas*, starting on 1 December. These sailings are currently just available for Singapore residents and will see new health and safety measures introduced to keep guests and crew safe. These sailings are taking place with the full support of the Singapore government, who were extremely impressed by our protocols.

What's your plan for your new ships?

Odyssey of the Seas will launch in April next year in Rome and I'm hopeful we will have the chance to show her off to the trade ahead of her summer season. Following this, *Wonder of the Seas*, our fifth Oasis-class ship, is scheduled to launch in China in 2022. She will be the



Harmony of the Seas is heading to Europe in 2021



first ship of her class in China and presents an exciting new opportunity. In addition to this we still have the new Icon-class of ships on the horizon, as well as further Oasis ships. We don't have set completion dates for these just yet, but they are still going ahead as planned.

You've built a brand that is famed for its fun and family-friendly activities – how can you continue in this vein when you return?

When we return, we want to be confident that we can offer the same incredible family holiday experience that our guests know and love. While we may introduce measures such as physical distancing and additional sanitisation, our guests will still be able to enjoy all the fun on-board activities. We're actively focused on welcoming families back and our latest promotion, where kids can sail from £99 all year, is just one example of how we are doing this.

How optimistic are you for 2021?

Super optimistic. I know that 2020 has been a tough year for so many and travel has been something that people have particularly missed out on. For this reason, I think there will be huge demand next year. This being said, we are of course currently seeing a rise in cases in much of Europe, so we do need to follow guidelines to keep the rate of infection down and protect summer 2021. If we can do this, I'm confident that we will see a huge spike in demand.

What 2021 itineraries should agents promote to their clients?

I'm excited about our ships in Europe next summer. *Odyssey of the Seas* will feature longer stays in every destination and overnights across some of the Mediterranean's most stunning beach destinations. We'll also have *Anthem of the Seas* sailing from Southampton, offering a variety of itineraries. *Harmony of the Seas* will be in Europe for the first time since her inaugural season in 2016, with seven-night sailings from Barcelona, while *Adventure of the Seas* will also sail from Barcelona on four and five-night Med voyages.

You have a certain influence among the general public – how can you use this to help challenge the common myths around the cruise industry?

The reality is that the pandemic is pushing us – as it is many different industries across the globe – to better ourselves and protect our guests and crew in this new environment. We have been consistent in our approach that we will not return to the water until it is safe to do so. We will be reliant on our loyal guests sharing their experience and letting others know how safe cruising is. We have every confidence that when we resume cruising, the quality of our product will shine through and we will soon be targeting the new-to-cruise audience once again. 📌

The Ultimate Abyss ride takes guests to the edge





CTN investigates

TRAVEL 2.0

As the pandemic has shown, technology is crucial for communication and adapting to consumer demands. But how will digital solutions change the cruise business, marketing and the customer experience? **Gary Peters** investigates



Illustrations **Phil Couzens**

When lockdown hit and cruise lines announced sailing suspensions, a whole industry ground to a halt. The unthinkable had happened and ships appeared anchored off coasts and in ports, a very visual expression of just how wide reaching and devastating this pandemic has been.

But then something happened – instead of sitting still and stagnating, lines and travel agencies upped their digital game, providing virtual experiences and tours of ships for guests and injecting positivity into the lives of many.

Virtual travels

The Crystal@Home concept, for example, has featured a weekly series of live streaming events, including conversations on Crystal Cruises' social media channels, blog posts and podcast guest lectures. There has been a Sunday cooking series with chef Jon Ashton via Facebook Live; Wellness Wednesday, including fitness, wellbeing tips and home workouts; and Sail Away Saturday, using the hashtag #CrystalFamily to keep the conversation flowing.

Likewise with Holland America Line, which has used its HAL@Home series to showcase live cooking demonstrations, performances by musicians from its Lincoln Centre Stage on-board live music experience, and special videos about wildlife from the EXC Talks programme. The likes of Royal Caribbean, Silversea and Lindblad Expeditions have also produced video content to promote their holiday experiences. In addition, Viking TV has proved to be a huge hit – featuring

lectures, destination insight, cultural expertise, messages from chairman Torstein Hagen and crew members, deep dives into river and ocean cruising, and much more.

A new relationship

For travel agents, relationships with clients have been transformed. As businesses across the country shut their doors, the decades-old system of people walking into their local travel agent branch stopped and digital communication suddenly became essential as consumers were forced to use online alternatives.

Many agencies have supported their clients with regular emails, social media posts, communication via apps, and video calls, providing their expert knowledge in this most testing of circumstances.

That such support has come at a time when many agencies have furloughed staff and are subsequently working with a skeleton team is yet another demonstration that agencies really do value their relationships with clients.

At the time of writing, businesses are opening their doors, often with reduced

staff, new health and safety measures in place and appointment-only meetings, but there are still many that are using the power of video conferencing tools to discuss holiday plans with clients. It is unlikely that this way of working will change any time soon.

Social skills

But what other technology considerations are at play? Social media has often been touted as an ideal way to sell destinations, and there's no doubt that many travel brands use platforms such as Instagram to reach clients. A potential new player on the block is TikTok, the video-sharing service, which has garnered much press attention of late, albeit not all of it positive.

Travel creators Michelle Gonzalez and Carmen Sognonvi have created a white paper, *TikTok For Travel Brands*, to demonstrate how the platform can help travel companies connect with travellers. They argue that TikTok has evolved into a "dynamic ecosystem where you can find content on just about any topic imaginable".

"TikTok as a platform is very much emphasising informational content, which makes it the perfect place for travel agents



“Instead of sitting still and stagnating, lines and travel agencies have upped their digital game”



to showcase their in-depth knowledge about ships, routes, excursions and ports,” Sognonvi tells *CTN*.

“Creating a series of videos on a specific topic is another great strategy on TikTok, as it gets people to click on your account and follow for more, for example, cruise packing tips or perhaps the most luxurious cabins.”

Gonzalez adds: “Static imagery can only do so much, and in a digital world travellers are demanding more engaging virtual representations of what to expect when planning future travel. Social and video solutions [can help] draw in potential customers and emotionally invest them in what is on offer [from a travel brand].”

However, during a time when resources are stretched and cruise lines have suspended sailings, how easy is it for a company to dedicate the time needed to produce engaging digital content? Gonzalez and Sognonvi advocate repurposing existing, evergreen content from past projects, potentially in “Q&As or top five lists that make it easy to incorporate existing footage”.

“Travellers are demanding more engaging representations of what to expect when planning future travel”

How easy a transition this is, though, is debatable, particularly when travel brands may decide to focus on existing social channels to boost their digital output rather than take the risk – and attempt the learning curve needed – on a new platform. Food for thought.

Don’t forget the human touch

The future customer experience incorporates far more than just social media, however, and it is in other areas that the most dramatic transformation will take place.

Sitel Group, a customer experience management company, stated in its latest white paper – *Covid-19: The CX Impact* – that when consumers were asked what technology travel and hospitality firms could implement to improve customer experiences, chatbots, voice automation

and virtual reality (VR) took the top three spots.

The report continued: “It is easy to imagine how immersive experiences could be built, enabling customers to ‘try before they buy’. Consumers also saw the opportunity for the travel and hospitality industry to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to deliver personalised recommendations.”

It’s important to add, however, that the report also explicitly says that the human touch will remain a valued part of any customer experience – partly for emotional intelligence and empathy reasons. Note the following from the white paper: “87 per cent of consumers still feel connecting with a live customer representative is the best way of resolving a critical issue”. This highlights how face-to-face or video conferencing

conversations will continue to be hugely important. Augmented reality (AR) – interactive experiences of a real-world environment – as well as VR and AI, meanwhile, are best used to showcase holiday experiences and tailor ideas to individual needs.

Immersion sells

David Ripert is the CEO & co-founder of Poplar, a platform that helps clients build AR experiences. He believes that AR “holds the perfect solution” while travellers remain cautious of travelling or are prevented from doing so by government restrictions – “whether it’s by transporting consumers to a virtual beach or providing different and unique ‘on-board’ experiences”, he tells *CTN*. “Royal Caribbean International, for example, has recently introduced an on-board AR adventure experience allowing guests to play four immersive games,” he says. “Guests are tasked to locate artefacts, build temples and destroy ruins on their quest to discover ancient masks.”

The line has also used the technology as a selling tool by offering a virtual walking tour of cruise destinations.

“AR has the potential to revolutionise all aspects of travelling,” Ripert adds. “For example, it has been used by companies for their advertising, social

“Swathes of customers who weren’t always digital have adopted new methods of communication”

media and printed brochures to engage consumers in their story through ‘world effects’ and lenses, mini-games, portals and face filters.

“This type of experience can provide additional information about a brand’s services and direct links to its website, so consumers can immediately book the holidays shown.”

Ripert believes that the interactivity of such methods will help boost sales in the coming months, adding: “Being able to interact with holiday destinations, rather than just imagine them, is the next best thing for those looking to plan their next adventure and will certainly encourage bookings and sales in the difficult months ahead.”

A similar argument can be applied to VR experiences, the difference being of course that VR is complete immersion and the removal of surroundings, often through headsets, and so is more suited to use on ships or in-store at a travel agency branch.

To the future

When it comes to biometrics and AI, much evidence points to these being used for personalised and touchless travel.

AI is best placed to simplify customer recommendations based on their needs rather than using an outdated catch-all methodology, while biometrics are the next stage in touchless travel – considered to be even more important in an age of social distancing.

Travel technology company Amadeus has undertaken much research analysing trends that will shape the future of travel as part of its *From Human Touch to Human Tech* series. One key finding is that many travel agencies view AI as a core part of their future strategy – and no, this is not about super-intelligent robots, but more about using machine

learning to provide personalised content to travellers and the most recent information available.

Customers also expect a certain level of digital solutions to form part of their experience. Apadmi, a mobile-first digital agency, has worked with clients across multiple sectors, including travel when creating an app for Travel Counsellors. The company’s chief strategy officer, Marcus Hadfield, explains to *CTN* that “the pandemic has driven shifts in behaviour that won’t be reversed”.

“Swathes of customers who weren’t always digital have adopted new methods of communication and learnt to trust digital solutions,” he says. “At the same time, uncertainty has ruled – last-minute changes, quarantines, cancellations – all these things mean that travellers are looking for fast information and as much control as they can get, when they need it.”

How the customer experience will change is the “golden question”, adds Hadfield. “It’s impossible to predict the next 12 months.” What will remain true, though, is that “[travellers] really are mobile”, he says.

“They take mobile devices with them across the world and rely on them for information about their trip. The phones are also their diary, their guidebook, their navigator, their camera, currency converter and boarding pass.”

He adds: “There is a huge opportunity for travel brands to be so much more than booking partners – they have the potential to make trips even better for their customers. If the travel brands don’t do it, then customers will find that information elsewhere.”

Success will come, however, from a combination of human interaction and technology – customers want and expect both. The evolution continues. ❶



”
In conversation with...

Celestyal Cruises

Gary Peters speaks to **Leslie Peden**, chief commercial officer at Celestyal Cruises, as the line prepares to welcome a new ship to the fleet

So much for the brilliance of technology. Five minutes into a phone call from the UK to Greece and the wifi drops and there's nothing but silence on the line. The dreaded feeling of hopelessness arrives.

It's proof that nothing will ever truly replace the cast-iron guarantee of a face-to-face interview – the nuances, the changes in expression depending on the question, the spontaneous off-the-record moments. It's a vital component of all journalism, but perseverance with other methods is now more important than ever.

And suddenly, just like that, systems reboot, connections restored, and all is not lost. “The whole phone system and wifi went down in the office for some reason... this brave new world of technology,” says Leslie Peden.

Supporting UK agents

The chief commercial officer for Celestyal Cruises – the foremost line serving the Greek Islands and East Mediterranean – is on the line to explain how it has tackled the pandemic and the big plans it has for the future – just one element is a new ship, but more on that later.



“We kept the entire business running and office staff in place [during lockdown]; we didn't furlough staff,” he says. “We've used this time to tackle a number of projects, such as a new website, built from scratch, and, of course, our new ship.”

It has also been the smaller innovations, though, that have had a measurable impact on how Celestyal positions itself in the market and the travel agent community.

Peden explains: “We've run a series of virtual webinars and our partners have definitely enjoyed that level of engagement.

“We have increased our level of contact with trade partners and that's created quite a significant level of awareness during a time when we might not have had that level of attention. We've really tried to capitalise on that in order to put us in a strong position when the markets come back, so we get out of the gates quickly.” This support is more than words,

however, as demonstrated in October, when Celestyal Cruises welcomed a new business development manager, Emma Paxton, covering northern England, Scotland and Ireland. Peden confirms, too, that BDMs are also back out on the road meeting agents in Covid-secure environments and with all health protocols in place.

“We're seeing resilience in the UK market,” he says. “There's a strong future to be had and we want to continue to support and grow the business for our partners in the region.

“This pause has actually allowed some partners to evaluate the opportunity with new suppliers like ourselves and really get to understand Celestyal Cruises. We've also launched Facebook groups dedicated to each region – Celestyal Cruises Agent Talk UK & Ireland – and the level of engagement has been phenomenal.”



Wellness will be at the forefront of the offering

Celestyal Experience has been refurbished in recent years

“Initially, the wellness concept will launch on *Experience* but we’ll see how the market responds”

LESLIE PEDEN

New ship, new experience

The headline news from Celestyal is undoubtedly the purchase of a new ship. *Celestyal Experience* (formerly the *Costa neoRomantica*) continues the line’s focus on the small-to-medium ship market and increases the fleet to three, alongside *Celestyal Olympia* and *Celestyal Crystal*.

The 1,800-guest *Celestyal Experience* will debut on 6 March 2021 (the month when the line intends to resume sailings) on the seven-night Three Continents itinerary, calling at Athens, Rhodes, Kusadasi, Ashdod, Port Said and Limassol. From 3 April 2021 it will sail a seven-night Idyllic Aegean itinerary, followed by Eclectic Aegean trips later in the season.

Labelled a “game changer”, the ship underwent a €90m refurbishment recently and is primed to elevate all aspects of Celestyal’s on-board

experience, not least through the addition of new suites and a wellness concept – a first for the line – featuring staterooms that are wellness orientated, and exclusive, complimentary access to a spa area.

The aft of the ship will also include a new adults-only area, The Beach Club, which again will be provided free of charge to those in both the select suite and wellness stateroom categories.

“Initially, the wellness concept will launch on *Celestyal Experience*, because it’s a key feature of this vessel, but we’re going to use this as the launch platform to introduce it and see how the market responds.”

Another initiative is the Whole New Experience campaign, which launched in October, to help re-energise the market.

“This includes some quite significant savings,” says Peden. “We will be

leading in on the *Celestyal Experience* with a fare of £519pp for an inside stateroom. The new wellness junior suite category will start at £1,379pp – they are all-inclusive prices.”

Just as important is the news that this campaign will include free Covid travel and medical insurance, automatically included in the price, for departures in Q1 and Q2 next year. At the time of writing, this applies to new bookings made up until the end of October this year.

Bringing people together

Such a move may help entice new-to-cruise guests. In recent months many column inches have been used to discuss the difficulties the industry might have in tempting first-time cruisers, but Peden is optimistic that it remains a viable avenue for agents to explore.

“We’re bringing a lot of new-to-cruise into the market, particularly with our three and four-night itineraries – a great city break opportunity,” he says.

As a whole, Celestyal is posting positive sales figures, as Peden explains: “Looking at the sales numbers [as of the end of September] we are 17 per cent up year on year. It shows there is positive intent.”

In addition, he says: “We’ve noticed a trend towards multi-generational travel, with people putting greater value on time together and reconnecting with family.”

Overcoming hurdles has become an everyday chore in recent months, but as Peden explains, opportunity is knocking.

Technology is a wonderful thing when it works, and clearly, the system is working for Celestyal. 📍

Win at selling

Small ships

There has never been a better time to promote the benefits of sailing on smaller vessels, as Windstar Cruises BDM Anna Perrott explains

When it comes to selling what can be defined as a small-ship cruise, there are three key areas to focus on: service, destination and experience.

Yes, these can be found with any large cruise ship provider, but smaller operators, such as Windstar, go the extra mile to turn a holiday into something special and unique.

What client doesn't love it when they go to a bar and the bartender knows exactly which drink they want to order? Or when they are greeted by a crew member who remembers their name from check-in, or when the cabin steward knows exactly which fruit they like to eat and replenishes it daily? This is everyday life on a small ship.

With fewer people on board, it's easier to get to know the crew and other travellers. It's not uncommon to hear about guests who meet on a trip, become good friends, and then travel together for years. When cruising on a small ship, too, it's little touches that



“Our guests often say they feel as if they’re on a friend’s private yacht”

make a holiday special. Windstar guests often say they feel as if they are cruising on a friend's private yacht, with the attention to detail and personalised service.

Windstar also has an open bridge policy so guests can visit while the ship is underway. Here they can relax, enjoy the view and get to know the captain and officers. Connections between people are a key part of a memorable vacation experience and these connections with the crew help to drive repeat bookings.

Explore more

Also, tiny ports and harbours are accessible, meaning guests can enjoy the quieter, scenic places without crowds and mass souvenir sellers.

To put it simply, there are more places in the world open to smaller ships. Their itineraries can be very appealing to travellers interested in exploring beyond a country's most popular towns and cities, and the

freedom that guests have to work to their own timeline is a big benefit. Guests are also closer to the sights and sounds of the ocean, providing a better view of any marine life nearby.

As we know, it's better at the moment to be away from crowds, and small-ship cruising has many benefits when it comes to social distancing. There is ample space on board all our ships, as well as flexible dining times and multiple dining venues – including complimentary speciality restaurants. Guests can choose to dine when they want, with who they want.

Once clients have cruised on a small ship or yacht, they often seek out similar experiences in the future. This is great news for travel agents, because guests will come back wanting more. 📌

Selling TIPS

In an age of social distancing, highlight operators that pride themselves on having plenty of on-board space. It's never crowded on a small ship

• Service is rapidly becoming a personalised experience and cruise lines are at the forefront of this evolution. Fewer guests will mean more attentive crew and a personal touch

• Sell the fact that new ports of call and excursions are available with smaller operators – what is lost in on-board entertainment is more than eclipsed by the unique voyages on offer



Guests have plenty of space on board

Spotlight *On...*

Panache Cruises

A new business and a global pandemic – not a perfect match. However, for **James Cole**, lockdown proved to be the ideal setting to refine and launch his latest venture

Most people would be daunted by the thought of launching something new in the height of the biggest pandemic the world has recently experienced, and especially a cruise endeavour, but not James Cole, who back in July unveiled Panache Cruises, a new cruise retailing business that he hopes will become the largest distributor of luxury cruises in the UK by 2025.

Cole, a well-known figure in the industry, used the recent lockdown period to develop his plans and recruit a team of experts. What's more, the Cole household welcomed a new addition late last year, with the arrival of baby Lilli, now nine months old. Busy times, indeed.

"During lockdown I followed a strict regime," Cole explains. "I would get up at 5am and work on the business plan and during the afternoon I would spend time with Lilli, my other half, Heather, and my two older children."

In 2018 James sold his previous cruise business, WTH UK, owners of Cruise118,



"We felt that the right thing to do was to seize the moment and crack on"

Six Star Cruises and River Voyages, took some time out and then started a property business, which, he says modestly, has done quite well. However, his passion for cruise was always there, lurking in the background, and when the pandemic hit, he felt a call to return to the sector.

"The magnetic pull of the industry started to work its magic on me. While initially I had no intention of returning, over time I began to get a cruising itch. Not only did we go on three cruises during my down time, I also started to think about what the future of cruising might look like.

"Our plan was to launch much later in 2020 but as it became clear that good, experienced people in the industry were being made redundant, we felt that the right thing to do was to seize the moment, start immediately, recruit a team and crack on."

High hopes

Cole's aim is to turn Panache Cruises into a leading distributor of luxury cruises and the company will focus on the elite

ocean, river, expeditions and yacht-style sectors. He says: "Our main USP will be what a number of people refer to as good old-fashioned customer service, which we believe is sadly lacking in today's world."

He is keen to point out that Panache Cruises is most definitely a long-term venture and will be around for many years to come. "As an entrepreneur I am very optimistic that we can grow sales reasonably quickly, even if it takes a little time for cruising to return back to pre-pandemic levels.

"We have sound financial backing and will take the rest of 2020 and early 2021 to establish the infrastructure of the business, develop a robust database and create strong and lasting relationships with lines and other suppliers."

But what has been the response to date? Cole states that trading has gone well, despite all that the industry has had to deal with, as "customers are keen to get back on the water and as soon as the Foreign Office ban was lifted on river cruising we definitely saw an increase in sales".

He says: "Customers are definitely being more thorough, doing more research, wanting to understand the detail, and spending more time discussing their specific requirements to ensure they are getting the most out of their future cruise holiday."

He continues: "Many people feel that they have missed out this year, so they are going to ensure they make up for it in 2021. I have every confidence that when this period is behind us, the experience on the water will be as good as it's ever been – if not better." 📌

Clients are doing their research much more thoroughly than before



Fast Facts

Uniworld's all-suite *Mekong Jewel*, which sails the mystical Mekong past villages, gold-dipped temples and vibrant cities, has been constructed with eco-friendly and sustainable materials and features a swimming pool, spa with sauna and steam room, beauty salon and two delicious dining venues. Guests can also relax in wood-paneled lounges, looking out upon the stunning landscape from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap.

.....

68

PASSENGERS

51

CREW

4

DECKS

34

CABINS

2

RESTAURANTS

1

POOL

MEKONG JEWEL



1



Restaurants

Mekong Jewel finds space for two restaurants, both offering regionally inspired dishes alongside the usual classics. For lavish sit-down dinners there's the main dining room on the Lotus Deck, and for more casual affairs there's an al fresco eaterie on the Orchid Deck.

2



Bars

With warm steamy evenings spent on board, it's only right the ship's focal bar be positioned out on deck. Surrounded by greenery and seated on plush red bar stools or ornate cream sofas, guests can sip classic cocktails and refreshing spirits (all included in the price).



3



Spa/gym

Making sure all her guests are relaxed and preened to perfection, *Mekong Jewel* has not only a spacious spa, sauna, steam room and gym, but also a hair salon and nail bar, ensuring that it more than matches many of the modern ocean ships for luxury amenities and on-board wellness.

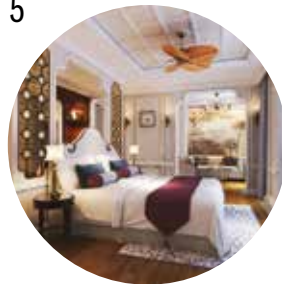
4



Entertainment

Itineraries on *Mekong Jewel* are port intensive, with time spent on board relaxing and socialising. Guests can spend their time in the ship's ornate library, which features an array of fascinating titles, and indulge in magical on-board performances presented by local entertainers.

5



Cabins

All cabins are suites, divided into three grades – Suites, Grand Suites and Royal Suites. Ranging from 39 square feet to 924 square feet, accommodation is reminiscent of a French Colonial palace, with decorative headboards and elegant furnishings, and ceilings adorned with wooden fans.

6



Pool

Lined by bright-coloured sunbeds and the welcome shade of parasols, surrounded by green palms and decorated with ornate blue tiles, *Mekong Jewel's* glittering swimming pool takes centre stage on the sun deck, providing a focal point on the ship that attracts guests of all ages.



COMING TO YOU IN 2021

Look out for more details

Celebrating cruising's
rising talent

#CruiseStars

 Erin.Marshall@realresponsemedia.com  020 8444 2554



Winning streak

In this regular series of articles, we profile the winners of the latest Cruise Stars Awards



Ellis Barker

PR Executive
FRED OLSEN CRUISE LINES

How did you feel about winning the Cruise Line Rising Star award?

I felt so overwhelmed and really proud. I love my job and I have always taken pride in the fact that I work hard and always strive to achieve. But to have that recognised from people in the wider industry felt amazing.

What do you think were the main factors that contributed to your win?

I think it's the way I incorporate things into the role that really broaden what PR can achieve and also things that don't just bring PR benefits but also help make a difference. I am very passionate about our green initiatives, so it was great to be able to support the company with the removal of single-use plastics across our fleet, for example.

What tips can you pass on to others in your position to help them be successful in their cruise careers?

Think outside the box and don't limit yourself to what your role is on paper. Broaden your horizons. If you have a good idea about something that could bring benefit to your company, then talk to your network about how it can be achieved.

If I can convince my directors that buying a giant patchwork Elmer the Elephant sculpture and putting it on

"Don't limit yourself to what your role is on paper"

board our ships is a good idea, anything is possible. We raised more than £15,000 for St Elizabeth Hospice with that elephant, while also helping to promote the fantastic work of the charity.

What has been your best experience in the industry so far?

I had the honour of being involved in our sailing with the Royal British Legion last year to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. I was on board *Boudicca* with more than 250 D-Day veterans, helping them to tell their stories. It was a real privilege to be there and something I will never forget.

What innovations would you like to see being introduced in the industry?

I think we will see a lot of change within the industry as we return to the water. There will certainly be a shift in making as many interactions and transactions contactless where possible, but without compromising on the guest experience.

What is your dream destination for a cruise?

I have been fortunate enough to travel to some fantastic destinations in my career, including Iceland, which was just incredible. However, I am definitely a warm-weather girl. I have always wanted to visit Australia.

What on-board amenity do you enjoy the most?

I am a massive foodie, so anything that includes food. On every cruise our chefs will include dishes local to the destinations you are visiting, which I love. Our two new ships have cookery theatres and wine tasting venues, which I am especially excited about.

How do you see your career progressing?

I'd love to have those extra parts of my job – the green initiatives and our corporate social responsibility – officially incorporated into my role, and to really help lead the way on those. Writing is my real passion, so any new chapters will always have to include lots of opportunities for that. I am very ambitious, but also very open minded, so who knows what the future holds. Whatever it is, I will give it my all. 📌



Iceland is just one of the places Ellis feels lucky to have seen in her career

CRUISING TO 100

This issue is extra special for *Cruise Trade News*, as we celebrate publishing issue number 100. Much has changed since the first, but our mission remains the same: to educate, support and inspire

many of the agents we work closely with find it extremely useful. The destination features also provide us with some much-needed inspiration for our own travels, which is arguably more important now than ever."

Dave Monk Cruise expert

"Facts without flannel – that's what I enjoy about *CTN*. Brief, to-the-point news snippets, enlightening interviews and informative features. I always learn something. It all comes in a well-designed format that draws you in – and I particularly savour the fast facts spread about featured ships. I love the innovative ideas like the advent calendar cover, too. I'm looking forward to the next edition already."

Jeannine Williamson Cruise expert

"From small ships to tall ships and river barges to the biggest ocean liners, I've written countless articles for *CTN* on all types of vessels,

mouthpiece for everyone, from our travel partners and sales teams to our crew. Beyond that, the magazine also acts as a real celebration of our industry – the wonderful people, the places our ships sail to and the unique experiences we all provide for our guests. Long may it continue."

Geoff Ridgeon Head of sales Fred Olsen Cruise Lines

"It is always a pleasure working with the team behind the scenes and we have worked closely together on a number of projects, most recently as the main sponsor of the *CTN* Christmas advent calendar in 2019.

"The magazine is an incredibly useful resource in allowing us to share our news and key information on our campaigns, and I know that so

intention of stopping. To help us celebrate this fact, we asked a selection of industry figures to give us their take on *CTN* and the role it plays in the industry. Thank you for supporting us along the way and here's to another 100 issues.

Gary Peters, editor

Lynn Narraway UK & Ireland MD Seabourn

"*Cruise Trade News* has always been such a champion for the industry and that has become even more apparent in recent months. The *CTN* team is always a delight to deal with and it really does provide a vital news source and

What a peculiar time to mark this very important milestone in the *CTN* story. It's fair to say that this is not how we envisaged celebrating when we first put our plans in place. Nevertheless, even with the well-documented difficulties that we are all facing, we are still here, still fighting, still printing, and we have no

from our wonderful industry. I love reading about the new ship launches, new initiatives happening in our industry and all the new appointments – who's moving and where are they going.

"I also find it really useful and interesting to hear from my colleagues and peers across the industry about current situations and challenges. It's a great one-stop shop for cruising and it really is the best it's ever been. Here's to the next 100 issues and beyond."

Andy Harmer
UK & Ireland director
CLIA

"It has been great to see the huge changes that have taken place at the magazine since it was founded, and at this time more than ever, it is important for the travel agent community to be able to access a range of information and support.

"We are very thankful for the support the team has given the cruise industry and CLIA over the years and we would like to offer our huge congratulations to the team on their 100th issue." 🎉

reading each issue and – now more than ever – it is invaluable in keeping us up to date and fully informed."

Jamie Loizou
UK managing director
AmaWaterways

"Cruise Trade News provides engaging, compelling and interesting content about our dynamic and fast-moving industry. As our industry starts to rebuild, CTN has a vital role to play in educating agents and ensuring they are best placed to sell our wonderful product, thus facilitating the strong return of our sector. Thank you for sharing our enthusiasm and passion for river cruising and good luck for the next 100 issues."

Elaine Gillard
Marketing director
The Cruise Portfolio
"Cruise Trade News is my go-to read for all the latest news

"At this time more than ever it is important for the travel agent community to be able to access a range of information and support"

offering a huge range of products. Its usefulness is three-fold. It's a really informative look at industry developments, but it's also an opportunity for sales teams to stay abreast of things they need to know, something that very usefully supplements the constant training we do in-house.

"The focus on destinations is especially helpful, for example, as it goes beyond the ship-focused training that tends to take priority quite often. It's also excellent to have an outlet to share opinions and to read those of others in the industry."

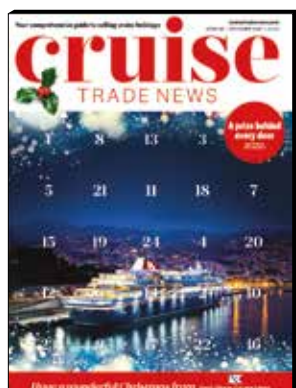
Sue Alexander
Managing director
Eagle Travel

"From the beginning, CTN has been our 'go to' magazine for everything cruise related. It is full of useful and interesting content about ports of call, destinations, new ship launches and travel agent features. I've always enjoyed

itineraries, ports of call and different aspects of the cruise industry. I've been delighted to be involved with the publication since the very early days and have seen it evolve into the leading title that it is today.

"It provides a real insight into every aspect of cruising. It is a one-stop-shop to enable travel agents to sell cruises with complete confidence, match clients to ships and destinations, identify future trends and generally keep their finger on the pulse of the industry."

Michael Wilson
Managing director
Bolsover Cruise Club
"We really value the ability of Cruise Trade News to bring together an industry bursting at the seams with operators





Limited Time Only

GO ALL INCLUSIVE!

ANTHEM OF THE **SEAS**

..... 2021 SAILINGS

OFFER ENDS 2ND NOVEMBER 2020

DELUXE DRINKS PACKAGE OFFERINGS

Vodka	Absolut • Belvedere • Grey Goose • Stol • Tito's Handmade Vodka
Rum	Bacardi • Bacardi 8 • Captain Morgan Spiced Rum • Malibu • Miami Club
Gin	Aviation • Beefeater • Bombay Sapphire • New Amsterdam • The Botanist
Tequila / Mezcal	1800 • Avion Silver • Camarena Gold • Patron Silver Del Maguey Vida Blanco Mezcal
Scotch	Chivas Regal 12 Year Old • Dewar's 12 Year • Glenfiddich Johnnie Walker Black • The Glenlivet
Whiskey Bourbon / Rye	Buffalo Trace • Canadian Club • Crown Royal • Jack Daniel's Jameson • Maker's Mark • Whistle Pig Rye
Cognac	Hennessy VS • Remy Martin VSOP
Beers	Domestic, imported and craft beer brands
Wine By The Glass	Iconic varietals from California to New Zealand
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	Can and fountain soda • Fresh and bottled juices Premium coffee and teas • Bottled and sparkling water



.....

DELUXE DRINKS PACKAGE

£35^{PP} PER DAY*

.....

How to Book!

Whether your customers have cruised with us before or this is their first time, one of the main things we recommend they do before they board is to book their drinks packages. With our current offer, it has never been a better time to upgrade to our Deluxe Drinks Package.



STEP 1

.....

Go to Pre Cruise Planner.
royalcaribbean.com/gbr/en/booked



STEP 2

.....

Enter their details along with
their reservation number



STEP 3

.....

Start planning the
perfect holiday and book
drinks packages



PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

*Applicable to new eligible bookings confirmed between 22/09/20 and 02/11/20 for selected sailings. Terms & conditions apply.
Package excludes all beverages served inside licensed Starbucks® stores/cafes.



1

Augmented reality

Celebrity Cruises has developed the *Celebrity Edge Access Tour* app, allowing passengers to dive deeper into the ship using binaural audio, soundscaping and 3D AR technology. Guests are given a full tour and the app is free to download and can be used from anywhere in the world, not just aboard the ship. However, for those who wish to enjoy it while sailing, they can do just that on the line's 11-night Italy, Turkey and Greek Islands cruise, departing 16 August 2021. Prices start from £1,730pp.

Ports step up

Of course, the industry is about far more than just what happens on board ships. A crucial element of all cruise operations is the health of passengers before they board, and this has only been amplified by Covid-19. One example is at Portsmouth Port, which installed a thermal temperature scanner in May to support its infection control measures. The scanner is available to all cruise operators using the port. A high temperature scan raises an alarm, after which a medical team makes a decision on whether the passenger is fit to travel.

6

OF THE BEST

Cruise tech

Technology has never been more important, especially in the light of the pandemic. As such, the cruise industry is working hard to eliminate touch points and streamline the guest experience, as

Isabella Sullivan discovers

3 Voyage well

Virgin Voyages says that its first ship, *Scarlet Lady* – and all ships in its fleet that follow – will be among the first in the world to feature a 100 per cent fresh air, bow to stern air purification system, which disinfects air on board and has been shown to kill 99.9 per cent of viruses, claims the line. In addition, thermal camera technology will be used to monitor the temperature of crew and passengers. Prices for the Mayan Sol itinerary, sailing on *Scarlet Lady*, start from approximately £555pp, departing 18 July 2021.



4

Muster 2.0

Royal Caribbean Group has introduced a new type of muster drill, which the line is calling Muster 2.0. This new method means that passengers no longer have to congregate in groups for the safety presentation, and can instead follow the tutorial in their cabins or via a mobile app. They can also view all the safety information before they embark or at any time during the voyage. A seven-night Scandinavia and Russia itinerary, on *Jewel of the Seas*, departs 23 May 2021. Prices start from £613pp.

5 Intelligent wristbands

Passengers travelling on six of MSC Cruises' newest megaships can experience the line's smart wristband, MSC for Me. Operating through an app that's available before and during the cruise, the wristband connects passengers with crew and the ship, offering an impressive array of services like MSC for Me Chat – where guests can message each other directly through the app without the need for wifi. A seven-night Mediterranean itinerary, sailing on *MSC Seaview*, departs 1 July 2021. Prices start from £819pp.

3

5



6 Ocean Medallion

Princess Cruises shook the cruise world when it released a little gadget, known as the Ocean Medallion. This isn't just a wearable device but an app and service providing faster internet connection. Passengers can place orders remotely, locate friends and family on the ship using GPS, book excursions and dining and even watch the cabin's entertainment system from the app. Prices for a six-day Spain and France cruise start from £599pp, departing 29 May 2021 on *Regal Princess*.

6





Closer to **H O M E**

There's no doubt about it, Great Britain is great – just think of how we're getting through this year together. With 20,000 miles of coastline, it's also the perfect destination for a cruise, with its share of archipelagos and exciting ports. **Isabella Sullivan** reports



Liverpool welcomes visitors, as well as those in search of music



Coastal paths put Jersey on the map for adventurous types

Islands galore

The British Isles is made up of hundreds of islands and some of the most beautiful spots can be found in these areas, particularly the Channel Islands. Closer to France than mainland Britain, the Channel Islands have their own unique heritage and feel, and Guernsey's St Peter Port and Jersey's St Helier are both popular cruise destinations.

At just nine miles by five miles, Jersey is easy to explore in a day, with ships docking at its buzzing capital of St Helier, home to a Michelin-starred restaurant, a quaint harbour and a world-class zoo. Outside the city, cruisers will find sun-drenched sandy beaches and historic castles gracing the shoreline.

Guernsey, the second largest Channel Island, is also home to incredible beaches and a rugged coastline, famous for its cream teas (try the Guernsey cream) and northern coast. These islands were the only part of Britain occupied by the Nazis during World War Two and are home to fascinating ruined fortresses and underground German bunkers, with poignant museums available to explore.

Mainland marvels

While its islands often get the most attention from holidaymakers, Britain's

Cruising closer to home is now more appealing than ever before, allowing cruise lovers the chance to enjoy their favourite holiday without the risk of travel advice changing abruptly while they're travelling abroad.

"When the time is right and Brits can once again take to the seas, we're likely to see some cruise lines offering more itineraries 'close to home' during the initial restart phase," says CLIA UK & Ireland director Andy Harmer.

"Rich in history, a British Isles cruise could make a fantastic holiday option, especially for those who are keen to get back on board and explore some of the hidden gems that a UK sailing offers, all while being able to start their holiday from a UK port."

Destination special: British Isles

ITINERARIES

Fred Olsen

● Prices for a 13-night Scenic Islands of the British Isles cruise start from £2,199pp, featuring stops at Guernsey's St Peter Port and St Mary's on the Isles of Scilly. Departing 11 July 2021.

🔗 fredolsencruises.com

Princess Cruises

● The British Islands Cruise stops at St Peter Port and also the Isle of Portland – just four miles long. Prices for the 12-day cruise, departing 14 May 2021, start from £999pp.

🔗 princess.com

Azamara

● A 12-night voyage with a round on seven famous golf courses. Sailing from Leith to Southampton, passengers will dock in Dundee (for St Andrews), and play on the fabled Old Course. Prices start from £4,089pp, departing 16 July 2021.

🔗 azamara.com

Hebridean Island Cruises

● Seven-night Highland and Island Explorer itinerary on *Hebridean Princess*, round trip from Oban, departing 27 September 2022. Prices start from £4,880pp.

🔗 hebridean.co.uk

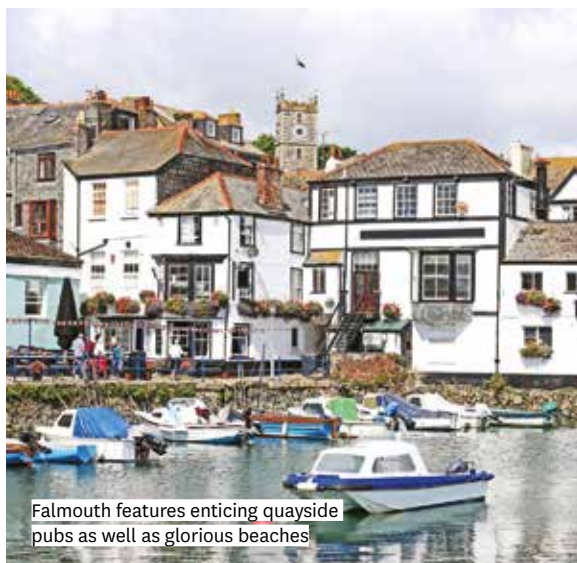
Majestic Line

● Three-night Taste of the Hebrides voyage, focusing on exploration of coves and inlets. Departing 13 July 2021 on the *Glen Tarsan*. Prices start from £1,185pp.

🔗 themajesticline.co.uk



The Giant's Causeway is a marvellous sight



Falmouth features enticing quayside pubs as well as glorious beaches

The warmer south coast is particularly exquisite, and feels worlds away from other British regions

mainland is filled with tiny vertiginous ports, sandy beaches, buzzing historic cities and miles of luscious green rolling scenery.

The warmer south coast is exquisite. Here guests will find Devon and Cornwall and popular cruise ports like Plymouth and Falmouth. Visiting these ports feels worlds away from other British regions, particularly Falmouth, which offers a laid-back holiday town vibe with tiny tea rooms and local shops, along with four great beaches (pebble and sandy) and the chance

to hike and take on any water sports – its coast is famed for surfing. Plymouth, with its trendy waterfront, also acts as a gateway to the Devon countryside.

Just off the mainland lies another beachy paradise, the Isles of Scilly. Thanks to their warm climate, abundance of wildlife and powdery beaches reminiscent of those found in the Med, these small islands are perfect for people who love the beach and the outdoor life.

Further north, the bustling port cities of Liverpool, Edinburgh and Dundee are home to castles, thriving streets packed with pubs and shops, and famous

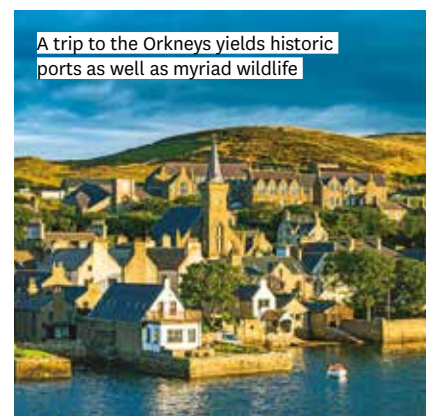
landmarks such as Edinburgh Castle and the Royal Albert Dock.

For golf lovers there is also the hallowed ground of St Andrews. Special events for clients to look out for, and plan around, include the Edinburgh Military Tattoo or Edinburgh Fringe Festival, which ordinarily both take place in August.

Exploring the Highlands

The Scottish Highlands are remote regions dotted with friendly villages and centuries-old whisky distilleries. They're rolling, rugged landscapes outlined by icy waters dotted with fishing boats and lighthouses. The region is also a perfect cruise destination, particularly the Shetlands, Orkneys and Hebrides.

For whisky lovers, a pilgrimage to the Isles of Islay – home to world-famous



A trip to the Orkneys yields historic ports as well as myriad wildlife

Selling TIPS

A big selling point is being closer to home. This eliminates any worry of repatriation, health care or plane travel

•

It's the British Isles, so passengers don't have to worry about culture shock, currency or day-to-day activities like using their phones. They may be far from home, or even, technically, in another country, but they can still use the familiar pound and their usual mobile network

•

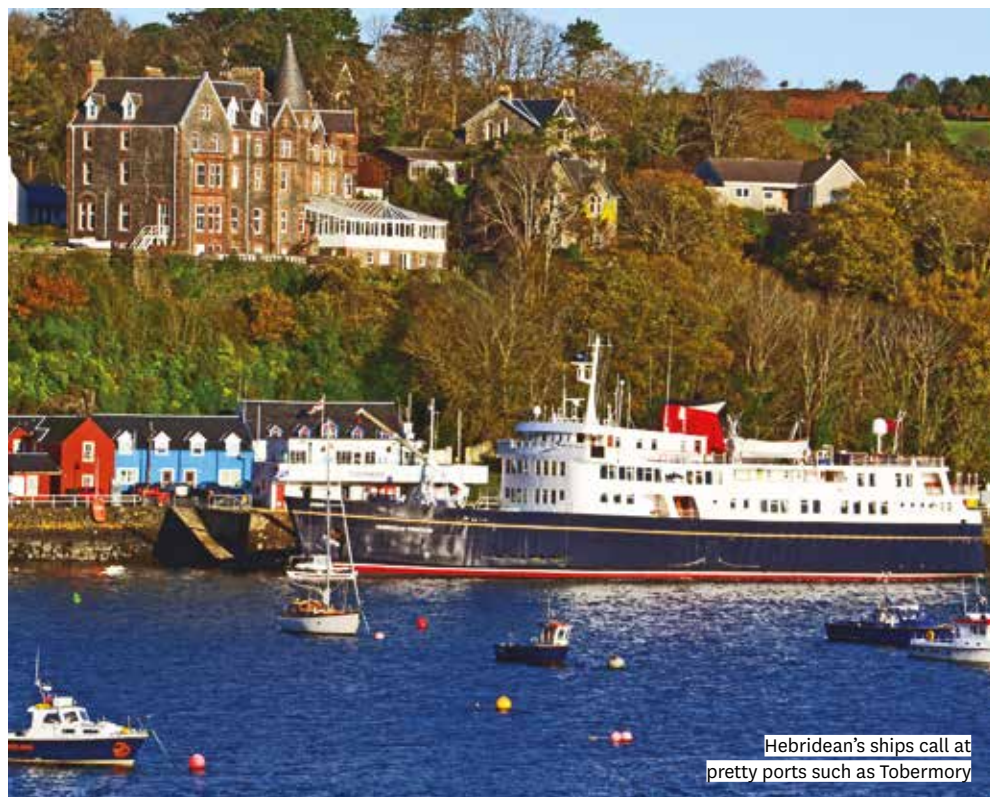
The British Isles are some of the most diverse and varied landscapes in the world and even on short cruises passengers can see sandy white beaches, craggy coastlines, traditional villages and buzzing cities

•

Excursions are also a real highlight on British Isles itineraries, from visiting a whisky distillery in the Highlands to exploring World War Two bunkers in Guernsey

•

There's something for everyone. Lovers of bigger cruise ships can travel on board Princess Cruises, Fred Olsen and Royal Caribbean ships, while those in search of a small-ship boutique experience can sail with Hebridean Island Cruises or The Majestic Line, for example



Hebridean's ships call at pretty ports such as Tobermory



The course at St Andrews in Scotland is a must-visit for golf fans

house with roaring fireplaces, tartan furnishings and touches like bagpipes on embarkation.

The Majestic Line operates four tiny ships around the west coast and the Hebrides. On both Hebridean and Majestic guests can fish directly off the ship and have their catch served up by the chefs on board.

Celtic coasts

Lesser-trodden British Isles itineraries include the Isle of Man – a bubble of beautiful scenery and friendly ports in the middle of the Irish Sea – and the rugged and spectacular Causeway Coast of Northern Ireland.

Holding semi-autonomous status, the Isle of Man was designated a biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 2016. The capital, Douglas, is perfect for families, and kids will love spotting genuine Viking gold at the Manx Museum and riding in a horse-drawn tram along the promenade. Douglas also has three city beaches, Groudle, Port Jack and Douglas Central Beach – the latter perfect for kids, with its long, sandy shore.

Northern Ireland's most famous natural sight, the Giant's Causeway, is a mysterious rock formation of 40,000 interlocking basalt columns. Also on the Causeway Coast, overlooking the chilly waters of the Irish Sea, is the eye-watering National Trust Carrick-A-Rede

peated whisky – or Skye, where Talisker makes its famous single malts, is a cruise must. For foodies, it's a visit to Mull and Iona for their famed fresh ice cream and just-caught fish with, naturally, chips.

For lovers of nature and wildlife, there's nothing like Orkney and the Outer Hebrides. Here, the waters are filled with dolphins, basking sharks and minke whales, and the skyline is dotted with seabirds, peregrine falcons and, of course, the characterful puffin.

A handful of tiny, luxury boutique cruise ships sail these waters, like those run by Hebridean Island Cruises (even chartered by the Queen) and The Majestic Line (holding just 12 passengers). Travellers seeking something really special should look out for the six-star *Hebridean Princess*, a floating country

bridge – a must-visit on any adventurous itinerary. Ruined castles, remote sandy beaches and clifftop paths are also highlights of this stunning coastline, steeped in Celtic folklore.

"The British Isles have so many intriguing natural phenomena," says Fred Olsen Cruise Lines director of product and customer service Clare Ward. "We offer a number of British Isles cruises, which are always popular with our guests. We are very lucky – Britain has a vast and fascinating history, remote islands, quaint towns and villages, and vibrant cities." 🍷



Brought to you by

cruise
TRADE NEWS

The Cruise Challenge

Learn, play, win.

REGISTER ONLINE
thecruisechallenge.com



 [@cruisetradenews](https://twitter.com/cruisetradenews)  [#CruiseChallenge](https://www.facebook.com/CruiseChallenge)



SPONSORS



Join us for an evening to...

Learn from the leading cruise brands

Play, laugh, dance & take home a wealth of knowledge

Win a host of fantastic prizes

FREE TO ATTEND

2020 virtual dates

- Thursday 22 October
- Thursday 5 November
- Tuesday 10 November
- Wednesday 11 November
- Wednesday 18 November
- Tuesday 24 November
- Thursday 26 November
- Tuesday 1 December



Boost your cruise knowledge & win a host of fantastic prizes.

A new ORIGIN

Isabella Sullivan looks at what guests can expect to find when they set sail on Silversea's new Galápagos-bound ship

Not even a global health crisis has stopped luxury line Silversea launching its highly anticipated purpose-built expedition ship, *Silver Origin*.

The ship, undoubtedly one of the most elegant expedition cruise ships ever built, is designed to sail the sapphire waters of the Galápagos Islands, accommodating just 100 guests.

To sail on *Silver Origin*, certainly, is to dive into a world of opulence and extravagance, but it is also one of education and adventure. Guests luxuriating in butler-serviced suites can look out on to sea lion-packed waters as

The ship appeals to those guests who are not willing to compromise on luxury

they sip prestige cuvée champagne, or hop on board a kayak for an afternoon trip.

During the day, hiking, snorkelling, learning and exploring are all on the agenda, while the evening offers pampering spa treatments, lavish dinners and live pianists. Appealing to those who aren't willing to compromise on luxury to get intrepid, the ship will sail week-long itineraries between Baltra and San Cristobal.

Flawless from top to bottom

If there was ever a ship to combine purpose and substance with elegance and luxury, it is this one. *Silver Origin's* motto is 'designed for the Galápagos, built around you', and after stepping on board, this couldn't be truer.

To start, she's the most environmentally friendly ship Silversea has ever built. In fact, she's one of just two ships to feature dynamic positioning, meaning no anchor damage at all. Unlike many other smaller ships, *Silver Origin* has plenty of deck space and viewing areas, such as a panoramic Observation Lounge – perfect for gazing across the archipelago and its waters. Inside, in the public areas, sleek, tasteful themes

prevail, and gone are patterned carpets and deep-coloured furnishings typical of older Silversea ships. Instead, the line has gone for a clean, modern and bright feeling, with white walls, cream furnishings, softly coloured panelling and tasteful artwork, highlighting the colourful landscapes of the Galápagos.

For such a small size, *Silver Origin* manages to pack in some incredible facilities – and passengers sailing on her will never feel as if they've had to relinquish anything. The ship is unique in the fact that it combines all the luxurious facilities typical of a Silversea ship, with the education and technical facilities of an expedition vessel.

For starters, three of the public spaces are dedicated to adventure and exploration, with the ship housing a high-tech Basecamp, cosy Explorer Lounge and dedicated photo editing area. Basecamp serves as the spot for launching zodiacs, and is designed to prepare guests for their on-land (or at-sea) excursion. It doubles as an information HQ, with an interactive wall and information on the flora and fauna of the Galápagos.

Following excursions, the adventure can continue on board in the elegant Explorer Lounge with its expansive library and briefings from the expedition team. A photo-editing area allows guests to download and edit what are sure to be amazing photographs captured on the islands. However, what puts *Silver Origin* in a class of its own is that while she is a



The blue-footed booby is one of the area's famed species

Ship review: Silver Origin



Clockwise from top left: there are eight classes of stateroom on board; the red-throated frigatebird is one of the reasons for visiting the archipelago; for learning and relaxing, the Explorer Lounge is the place to be; Silversea has even made space on board for a gym; every aspect of the design is elegant; wildlife to see include the prehistoric-looking marine iguana





Silver Origin is sleek as well as technically dynamic

Selling TIPS

Silver Origin complements its surroundings like no other ship. Every element has been designed to enhance the Galápagos experience. Guests with a hankering for nature and exploration will appreciate such detail

As with other Silversea ships, the service on board is definitely high end. Guests can experience once-in-a-lifetime adventures without comprising on the finer things

For guests with environmental concerns, agents should highlight the use of the dynamic positioning system, which helps protect against damage to the ocean



Sophisticated neutrals characterise the public areas, such as the Observation Lounge

purpose-built expedition ship, she also has the facilities of a six-star luxury vessel.

Guests can visit the ship's beauty salon for hair and makeup, its fitness centre for personal training, or beauty spa for a host of pampering treatments. There's also an Expedition Boutique, selling chic expedition gear and anything guests may have forgotten to pack.

In a final expedition ship rarity, *Silver Origin* has free unlimited wifi, so guests can access social media and FaceTime their amazing experiences.

Spacious living

Nowhere shows off Silversea's incredible blend of expedition and luxury like *Silver Origin's* accommodation. Every cabin on the ship is a spacious suite, with a total of eight suite categories. These range from a Classic Veranda Suite all

the way up to a palatial Owner's Suite.

Echoing the ship's muted and soft public interiors, cabins are decked out with plush carpets, cream furnishings, king-size beds, works of art and state-of-the-art features like walk-in wardrobes, ocean-view walk-in showers and cosy sitting areas.

The ship was built to provide passengers with as many wildlife viewing opportunities as possible, and cabins have floor-to-ceiling windows and private viewing terraces. All cabins come with private verandas and butler service, so guests can live like royalty, and the most expensive suites (Owner's, Grand, Royal and Silver) come with whirlpool baths.

In certain suites guests can even take a bath next to whales and sea lions in ocean-view bathtubs or get closer to



nature in showers accessed from the balcony. *Silver Origin* also debuts Silversea's latest technology, the Horizon Balcony – where the touch of a button transforms the balcony into an inside seating area.

As for the cuisine, *Silver Origin* again looks to the Galápagos for inspiration. The restaurants serve the most delicious Ecuadorian and South American cuisine, along with international favourites. In addition, Silversea has turned traditional expedition dining on its head, getting rid of the one-restaurant approach and instead offering passengers two restaurants.

The ship's main dining space is The Restaurant, where breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in an informal setting. Along with The Restaurant, passengers can also choose to eat at The Grill, home

of Silversea's Hot Rocks concept. With some al fresco and some partially enclosed seating, guests can enjoy lazy lunches and spend their evenings sizzling fresh seafood and juicy meats.

For a purpose-built expedition cruise ship such as *Silver Origin*, nothing is more important than nailing the excursions offering. Luckily, Silversea has done just that.

All excursions are included in the cruise fare, a rarity for an expedition ship – even for Silversea itself. A team of dedicated on-board guides is on hand to guide guests around the superlative archipelago, and excursions include zodiac trips and kayaking to explore waters teeming with sea lions, reef sharks, eagle rays, sea lions, marine iguanas and Sally Lightfoot crabs.

Other excursions include visiting local

conservational breeding centres, hiking through verdant and volcanic national parks, and coming face-to-face with beloved Galápagos creatures like giant tortoises, flamingos, blue-footed boobies and penguins. What's more, all guides on board are certified by the National Park of the Galápagos.

Silver Origin truly is the ideal home for guests who have a desire to explore and learn in ultimate luxury. 📍

Details

● **Seven-day** Baltra to San Cristobal itinerary, departing 2 October 2021. Prices start from £8,460pp.

The last **word**

Janet Parton, sales and marketing director at Avalon Waterways, outlines why her confidence in the future remains strong, and what clients want to know from their travel agent



“Unsurprisingly, for clients the top consideration when booking a cruise is health and safety”

There is no escaping the challenges that the global pandemic has brought upon the travel industry, and is of course still imposing. I'm sure that we are all looking ahead to the future of the industry and it's vital that we continue to adapt, plan and be reactive, as guidelines continue to change. Together we need to instil confidence and provide reassurance to consumers that cruising hasn't stopped being a fantastic way to see the world.

At Avalon Waterways we have undertaken a consumer survey of 1,000 guests. From this, two key areas were apparent in the results.

Currently (and unsurprisingly), the top consideration when booking a cruise is health and safety. As cruise line operators, these are hygiene factors for us; they are not USPs. They are an enhancement on the already very stringent protocols and procedures that would have been in place before the pandemic, but it's important that they are highlighted to provide reassurance.

Agents need to be aware of what lines are doing to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone on board, but must also understand the practical elements of what happens before, and during, a cruise to help alleviate any customer concerns. To this end, CLIA is working on systems and information to share with agents to support these conversations and provide practical tools.

Developing the message

So, what else are customers telling us? They want to hear from their travel agents and holiday providers. They want deals, offers and, as ever, to hear about the must-see destinations and sights.

Since the beginning of July, at Avalon we have been evolving our messaging from “dreaming” to “doing” and increasing sales messages to consumers – this is what they



Whatever the method, it's essential to stay in touch with customers

want. As such we are seeing forward bookings for 2021 and beyond.

Agents may find that marketing funds are tight (I don't know of a travel company that hasn't had to cut its spending this year), so it's important to look at free/less expensive methods to engage with consumers.

We are seeing success in social media and simply engaging with the database of clients. In fact, it can be as simple as sending a letter, perhaps advising that the business is open and highlighting offers for future travel, all underpinned by stringent health and safety measures. Whatever the method, it's important to engage, to be proactive and to approach them.

If there is one thing that the past few months have shown me, it's the industry's resilience. Times are challenging but we need to be forward thinking and work together as travel agents and cruise lines to inspire trust and rebuild. We can do this. 📞

Travel media unites to support #OneTravelIndustry



ABTA
magazine

CRUISE
ADVISER

cruise
TRADE NEWS

NO TRAVEL
news

selling
TRAVEL

travelbulletin

travelmole
Unearthing travel news since 1999

ttg MEDIA

Share your positive stories and include both the hashtags
#OneTravelIndustry **#OneTravelMedia**

The Saga Difference

There are so many reasons they'll love a Saga Cruise

With so much included in the price, there are so many reasons your customers will love a Saga cruise. Plus, our best savings of up to 35% off the full fares are still available throughout our 2021 season!



Cruise Price Promise

If we lower the price of their cruise, customers get the value of the difference back.



No-fly cruises

All our cruises depart from the UK ports of Dover or Southampton, with no flying required.



Peace of mind

All of our holidays are ABTA or ATOL protected.



Early bookers save up to 35%

When our cruises first go on sale, we offer early bookers the highest discounts of up to 35% off the full fares on selected cruises and cabin grades.



Always all inclusive

Every cruise is all inclusive, with included drinks and speciality dining in every bar and restaurant on board.



Included excursions

All cruises from April 2021 also include sightseeing excursions at selected ports.



All prices in £s sterling

There is no need to worry about currency or exchange rates on board.



Coronavirus cancellation cover included

We now include coronavirus cancellation cover, as well as travel insurance with up to £5m coronavirus emergency medical and repatriation cover, or a price reduction[§].



Door-to-door chauffeur

We'll pick guests up from home and drive them to the port, included up to 250 miles each way[^].



Small-ship luxury

Our boutique sister ships are the newest on the ocean, and carry no more than 999 guests.



Your very own balcony

All cabins have a balcony as standard on both Spirit of Adventure and Spirit of Discovery.



Little extras

From free Wi-Fi to included portage, 24-hour room service to afternoon tea, we include a lot of little extras too!



Proud of our heritage

Founded almost 70 years ago, we use our experience to always go the extra mile.



0800 074 8021
www.sagaagents.co.uk

boutique cruising

SAGA



W8164 / W8179

All-inclusive includes a choice of wines with lunch and dinner, house-branded spirits and cocktails, draught beer and lager, plus all mixers and soft drinks. Pre-departure cancellation cover is provided by Saga, and only available when taking the included optional travel insurance. [§]Travel insurance is underwritten by Great Lakes Insurance SE, UK Branch and includes up to £5m coronavirus emergency medical cover. A price reduction is available if choosing not to take the included insurance and additional cancellation cover. Cover is subject to medical screening. Further terms and conditions apply. [^]Private chauffeur service to the port up to 75 miles each way or shared chauffeur service from 76-250 miles. Visit saga.co.uk/loveit for details. Some highlights may only be seen on optional excursions or by exploring independently. Saga's holidays and cruises are exclusively for the over 50s, but a travel companion can be 40+. NTA-SC4753