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cruise

TRADE NEWS

The Olsen Way

How Fred Olsen's subtle yet effective message
has pushed the brand to new heights



In association with



Fred. Olsen
Cruise Lines

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younger passengers?

INTERVIEW

In conversation with
HAL's Wendy Lahmich

AT A GLANCE

P&O launches its
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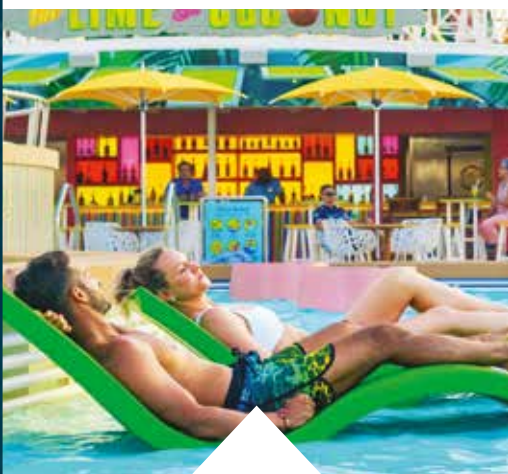
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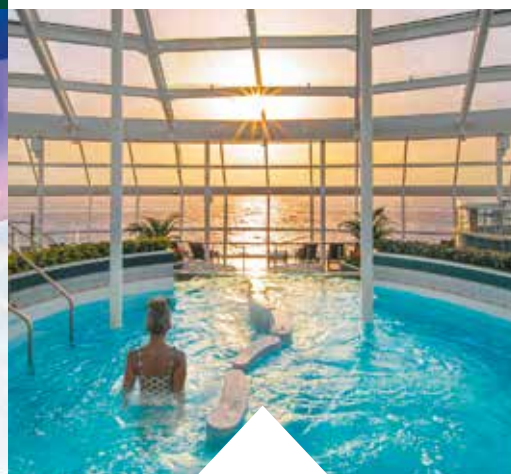
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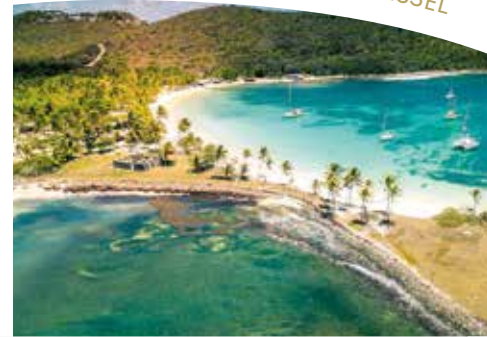


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Festive

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Editor's letter

Welcome to the September/October issue

So, that's summer over. More rain than sun, it's true, but as we approach the autumn months and darker nights, the skies have brightened for the cruise sector.

The return of international cruises is our headline news – it was impossible to ignore the universal feeling of euphoria, or collective sigh of relief, as Bolsover Cruise Club MD Michael Wilson explains in The Briefing. Domestic cruises have also continued to delight many clients, both repeaters and those new to cruise.

The summer months also brought with them another reason to celebrate – the Celebrity Cruises and *Cruise Trade News* prize giveaway.

This joint digital and print campaign was all about rewarding hard work and providing some light relief. It included great prizes, such as Celebrity stationery gift packs, culinary starter packs, and a chance for four people to experience the freshly revolutionised *Celebrity Silhouette*.

As one of the winners, GoCruise & Travel cruise specialist Peter Ruck, explains: "I'm excited about stepping foot on board a Celebrity ship and enjoying the outstanding, luxurious facilities on *Celebrity Silhouette*. After an extremely trying and horrendous 18 months, it will be an incredible pleasure to do something normal in the industry."

Elsewhere in this issue, in the CTN Investigates section, we analyse how the sector can better target younger cruisers and create new, life-long clients, while P&O Cruises' new mega ship *Iona* is the focus of the At a glance feature.



Above:
Celebrity Silhouette
is sailing once more

We also take a closer look at Horizon Cruise Terminal, the new state-of-the-art cruise facility at the Port of Southampton, and step on board *Celebrity Silhouette* for a six-night domestic voyage.

For this month, we also have a luxury supplement, giving you all you need to know about this segment of the cruise sector, including a special interview with Oceania Cruises.

All in all, things are looking up.
Happy reading.

Gary Peters
Editor, Cruise Trade News

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The Briefing

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION FOR CRUISE NEWS

In BRIEF

Domestic cruise demand

● Almost half of holidaymakers who have travelled on UK domestic cruises this year are planning to book another one within the next 12 months, according to a new survey. The research – from Cruise.co.uk – revealed that the on-board service was the highlight for most guests.

Silversea unveils 2023/24 season

● Silversea has opened general sales on more than 280 new voyages for 2023/24, including two new grand voyages to Africa & the Arabian Peninsula and to the Mediterranean. Go to cruisetradenews.com to watch the line's latest trade webinar.

Qatar & CLIA join forces

● Qatar Tourism and CLIA UK & Ireland have announced a partnership that will “enhance Qatar’s brand awareness across the region and with CLIA’s wider community of cruise lines, travel agents and stakeholders”.

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“We’re keen to get agents on board,” says Tui’s Chris Hackney

RIVER

Tui River Cruises: ‘We have big aspirations’

Colette Doyle was on board *Tui Maya* for its inaugural sailing down the Rhine and caught up with Tui cruise MD **Chris Hackney** to hear about his hopes for the travel behemoth’s latest offering

A long time coming.” That’s how Chris Hackney, the managing director of Tui River Cruises, describes the launch of the first of its three ships, *Tui Maya*.

The company’s plans to break into this particular sector of the cruise market were derailed last March by the onset of Covid-19.

The operator hasn’t been idle over the past 18 months however, with Hackney noting that they have used the time “to work with our on-board teams to ensure we have the kind of customer experience in place that we want to offer when the first passengers board”.

A golden opportunity

Tui had previously undertaken research on the river cruise market, and this persuaded the operator that there was indeed a golden opportunity.

“We also saw elements where we could bring something new to the market – and that’s flexibility and choice, something we very much wanted to make part of our

product proposition,” remarks Hackney.

Now that *Tui Maya* has welcomed its first guests, *Skyla* is up next and will be launching at the end of November in time for the Christmas markets tours. The third vessel, *Tui Isla*, will complete the fleet when she sets sail next spring.

Agents will be pleased to hear that Tui is reiterating its commitment to the trade by inviting them to sample the new product for themselves.

“Our third-party agents are really important to us in sharing our message, so we’re keen to get them to come on board,” elaborates Hackney.

The first key point for agents to highlight to prospective clients is the modern, contemporary and stylish design that’s been used for the ships. Then there’s the £120 credit a week that guests can put towards excursions.

Despite the challenges of the past 18 months, Hackney is confident about the future of this new venture: “River cruise fits nicely into our portfolio of products. We have big aspirations.”

INDUSTRY

Bolsover MD: 'A sigh of relief'

Bolsover Cruise Club MD **Michael Wilson** shares his thoughts on the lifting of the ban on international cruising

The return to international cruising prompted a collective sigh of relief from the cruise industry. We've spent more than a year holding our breath, despairing at times as red lists became amber lists and green lists, guidelines were scrapped as quickly as they were introduced, and goalposts moved at such a quick pace that the England team might have had a better chance with those penalties.

When news broke that the government's ban on international cruising had been lifted, it felt as if the clouds had parted.

A summer staycation season has proven that people are desperate to get back to sea. We're longing to leave land behind, leaving the problems of the past 18 months behind with it. Time at sea has always felt like an escape – wifi becomes an option, mobile signal is fleeting, and guests are in a bubble of exploring, eating, and spending time with loved ones.

It's an escape from the norm that has been polarised by the events of the past year or so, and so this news has reaffirmed it as an option in the shorter term, not just for the years ahead. I



"People are desperate to get back to sea," says Bolsover's Michael Wilson

expect we'll see the release of pent-up demand as those who are double-jabbed clamour to get on board.

The desire to see the world has never been so strong. Some cruise lines have already released international itineraries for the end of this year, and I fully expect many others to follow suit.

This was the news we have all been waiting for and the relief is palpable across an industry desperate to get back out there and show people the world.

PRIZES

'So grateful... can't wait to step on board'

Winners in the Celebrity Cruises and CTN summer prize giveaway have spoken of their delight at the prospect of stepping on board *Celebrity Silhouette*.

The competition, which ran in July and August, saw agents given the chance to win a raft of goodies, including free cruises on *Celebrity Silhouette*.

Peter Ruck, luxury travel and cruise specialist, GoCruise & Travel, who scooped one of the cruises, said: "I was absolutely stunned when I discovered that I was the winner of such a prestigious prize.



A Celebrity cruise was one of the big prizes

"I'm excited about stepping foot on board a Celebrity ship and enjoying the outstandingly luxurious facilities."

If Only cruise specialist Lynseyann McLoughlin told CTN that cruising on *Celebrity Silhouette* would be "a great way to end the year, feeling as though normality is returning".

APPOINTMENTS



Regent Seven Seas Cruises has appointed **Andrea DeMarco** as its new chief sales and marketing officer. DeMarco moves from her position at parent company NCL Holdings, where she was senior VP investor relations, corporate communications and ESG.



Travel technology company Traveltek has announced that **Hayley West** is now head of account management, and Tracy Sharp – formerly head of commercial – has been promoted to head of Europe, Middle East & Africa.



Ex-Saga Travel CEO **Robin Shaw** is to assist the Riviera Travel team following the departure of the line's chief commercial officer, Jim Forward, who is leaving to become chief executive of Hoburne Group, a holiday and property development firm.

A royal flush

Royal Caribbean sales director, UK, Ireland and Spain
Stuart Byron examines the success of the line's domestic cruises and looks forward to plans for 2022

What feedback have you had from your UK sailings, and will you run these again in the future?

These have been extremely successful and we've seen peak guest satisfaction scores. We are delighted to have provided so many UK guests with memorable holidays this summer on *Anthem of the Seas*. We have recently announced the extension of our British Isles sailings through to October 2021, given the great response to these sailings from our UK guests and the complexities that we still need to navigate with international cruising. It is not out of the question that we will run these domestic cruises again but we are also eager to operate internationally from the UK when the time is right to do so.

You've been sailing from Cyprus on *Jewel of the Seas* this summer – what was the thinking behind these itineraries?

The Cypriot government has been very open to discussions around restarting cruising and we are grateful for their ongoing support in making cruises from



“People are eager to get back out there and seek out new experiences again”

Limassol possible this summer. Guests can sail on seven-night round-trip itineraries from Cyprus to Greece and the Greek Isles. These cruises offer holidaymakers the chance to learn about the Ancient Greek heritage of destinations such as Limassol and Athens and marvel at the stunning natural beauty of the eastern Mediterranean coastline along the way.

Tell us a bit more about *Harmony of the Seas*' departures from Barcelona

Harmony of the Seas is popular ship and one of the most revolutionary in our fleet, so holidaymakers who choose to sail with us from Barcelona are in for a great summer vacation. From now until October, the innovative ship will whisk guests away to the scenic Palma De Mallorca before sailing to Italy, where they can explore art and culture in Florence, visit world-renowned landmarks in Rome and experience the beauty of Naples with its iconic skyline defined by the towering Mount Vesuvius.

How important is the lifting of the international cruise ban?

The lifting of the ban is a welcome step forward and helps to remove barriers for those of our UK guests who want to sail with us internationally. Alongside CLIA, we continue to work collaboratively across the sector and with government on the next steps for the UK cruise industry. The industry thrives on the fantastic destinations our ships visit, so getting back to cruising internationally is very important.

Have you seen a surge in interest/demand since the lifting of the ban?

Demand for our cruises in the UK and across Europe continues to climb as people are eager to get back out there and seek out new experiences again. Our first sailings have gone really well, with high guest satisfaction scores.

Can you explain more about your plans for 2022?

We are incredibly excited to be launching *Wonder of the Seas* – our fifth ship in the Oasis class. It will be the first of its kind to be designed with eight neighbourhoods, introducing the new Suite Neighbourhood alongside returning favourites Central Park and the open-air AquaTheater, sporting a new look and where jaw-dropping, high-diving acrobatic and aquatic performances take place.

Odyssey of the Seas will be making its return to Rome and set sail on seven and nine-night cruises to the Greek Isles and Turkey, and 12-night Holy Land sailings. Guests will be able to relish sun-soaked destinations like the scenic shores and ancient ruins of Santorini, Mykonos, Athens and Rhodes. These ships, coupled with emerging destinations and continued innovations across the business, will provide guests with an even greater experience. I am confident there will be high demand for cruises in 2022 and beyond. 🌟



New ship *Wonder of the Seas* will cruise in 2022



GOING GLOBAL

In his regular column for CTN, Fred Olsen Cruise Lines head of sales **Geoff Ridgeon** discusses the line's return to international cruising

Late in August, we at Fred Olsen Cruise Lines became the first operator to complete an international sailing from the UK when *Borealis* returned from Iceland. And wow, does it feel good.

There were new challenges to overcome with this sailing, new requirements to meet and a new way of preparing for a cruise. However, what didn't change was that appetite for travel, and the desire from guests to get ashore, explore and learn.

This isn't just a big deal for us as a brand – it is a huge milestone for the cruise industry. It shows that international cruising is possible and puts it very much back on the radar, at the perfect time to capture those autumn and winter sun bookings.

In recent editions of this column, I have used the word 'opportunity' rather frequently, and I hope you can forgive me for using it again here. There is a real opportunity as more and more operators begin to venture outside UK waters over the coming weeks.

While this is great news (both professionally and personally – get me on that beach), we must not throw the baby

“As an industry, we have proved over the past few months just how much we can change”

out with the bathwater and forget all that we have learned over recent months, especially when it comes to flexibility.

As an industry, we have proved just how we can change and, as we begin to dip our toes back into the world of international travel again, we must retain – and even champion – the new-found flexibility that has become second nature.

Traffic lights

Of course, there is still the ever-tangled web that is the government's traffic light system, but now that those who are double jabbed no longer need to quarantine on their return home from an amber-list country, there really is the chance to venture to warmer climates this year.

At Fred Olsen, we promise to sail only to green and amber-list countries, and we will change our itineraries if we need to. With the nature of the cruise sector, if we

can't go somewhere, all is not lost – we can just move the ship.

While we will always try to replace a port day with another port day where we can, there will be times when it's not possible. However, fear not, as we have so much to offer with our ships – and I'm talking right across the industry here – whether customers are after big ships, go karts and water slides to stimulate the children, or, like us, smaller ships with fewer guests.

After what has been a pretty glum summer, it's time to get the sun shining on our industry again. ☀



GEOFF RIDGEON

HEAD OF SALES
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The Cruise Challenge

Live and coming to you soon



The Cruise Challenge is ready to make its eagerly anticipated comeback, with live events taking place through to the end of the year.

This one-of-a-kind roadshow, organised by *Cruise Trade News*, is prepped and ready to put the fun back into events, with its unique combination of education, entertainment and prizes.

This is the place to learn about new ships, innovative itineraries, fresh as well as familiar destinations, and all the latest happenings in the cruise sector.

The Cruise Challenge (hosted by Peter Smith, pictured left – agents will recognise him from previous Challenges) will start in Glasgow this month (September), and then travel across the country through the autumn and winter, visiting cities such as Southampton, Newcastle, Manchester, Cardiff, and others.

Riviera Travel sales development manager Paul Mellon said: “We can’t wait for the return of the Cruise

Challenges, especially as they’ll now be back in person. The evenings are not only educational for the agents who attend but are also great fun.”

Royal Caribbean International UK sales director, UK, Ireland & Spain Stuart Byron said: “The Cruise Challenge is a fun and innovative way to engage with our trade partners and educate them on our product offering in a really enjoyable way.”

This is the place to learn about new ships, itineraries, destinations and all the latest happenings

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines head of sales Geoff Ridgeon added: “These events have always been much anticipated within the industry for the way they bring us all as travel agents and cruise operators together, and that will be even more so after the 18 months we have all had. We have got so much to update agents on and can’t wait to see lots of familiar faces, as well as some new ones, at the events very soon.”

All events will follow the latest government guidance in terms of health and safety.

For more information on event dates and how to get involved, please contact Rachel Lonsdale:

rachel.lonsdale@realresponsedmedia.com



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and incentives



World cruises are in high demand, says Viking

VIKING UNVEILS TWO WORLD VOYAGES

Viking has launched two 138-day World Cruises for 2023-24 due to what it describes as “strong demand”.

The voyages, which will depart three days apart, will sail the same itineraries from Fort Lauderdale.

Guests can choose to sail on *Viking Sky*, which will depart on 20 December 2023, or on *Viking Neptune*, which will depart on 23 December.

The cruise includes overnights in 11 ports, such as Sydney, Haifa, and Istanbul, and double overnights in Auckland, Bali, Ho Chi Minh, Yangon, and Mumbai. Prices start from £39,990pp.

The line will also operate a shorter,

121-day Viking World Journeys itinerary, with guests having the option to embark in Los Angeles.

This cruise will call at destinations in Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand, Asia, and the Middle East, before exploring the Mediterranean and ending in London. Prices start from £36,990pp.

Chairman Torstein Hagen said: “We are delighted to offer explorers once again the opportunity to circumnavigate the world in comfort. Our previous world cruises sold out in a matter of weeks, and we are now seeing more interest in these extended voyages than ever before.”



BOOK & WIN

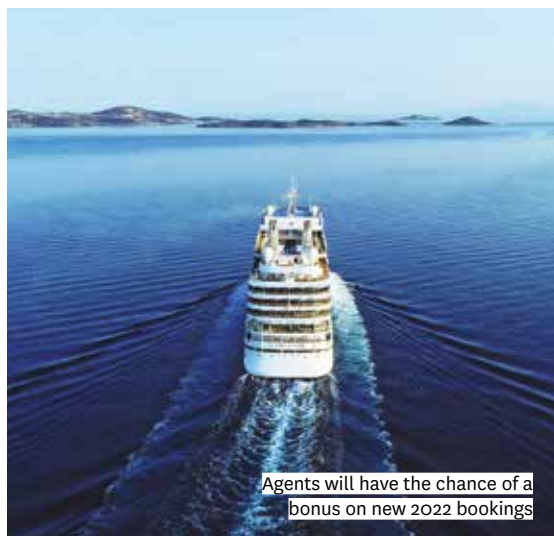
Scenic and Emerald Cruises have relaunched their River Rewards & More travel agent incentive.

Agents can win luxury gifts for every Scenic and Emerald Cruises booking made. The more river cruises, escorted tours or ocean cruises they book, the higher the rewards.

There is also the chance to earn bonus points for “going above and beyond”, the brands said. The breakdown is as follows:

- 100 points for every Scenic or Emerald Cruises river cruise booking
- 150 points for every escorted touring booking
- 200 points for all ocean cruise bookings on *Scenic Eclipse* or *Emerald Azzurra*

Visit riverrewards.cruises for more information.



Agents will have the chance of a bonus on new 2022 bookings

BONUS COMMISSION FROM SILVERSEA

Luxury line SilverSea has extended its bonus commission incentive for travel agents.

Agents can now earn £150 bonus commission, automatically added, for new bookings on 2022 voyages sailing between 1 April and 31 December 2022. Bookings must be confirmed by 30 September 2021.

The line recently christened its latest ship, *Silver Moon*. A sister to *Silver Muse*, the ship features reimagined public spaces, butler service in all suite categories and a

crew-to-guest ratio that is near enough 1:1.

The 596-guest *Silver Moon*, which embarked on its inaugural season from Athens on 18 June, also marks the debut of the line’s new culinary programme, Sea and Land Taste, which focuses on regionally inspired dishes, drinks and demonstrations, as well as excursions that are designed to enable guests to experience the food and drink cultures of destinations they visit.

The OLSEN Way

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines sales manager for specialist sales **Carla Ball** explains how the line's unique selling points set it apart in a rapidly evolving market



New ship *Bolette* looks right at home in Dover

In late August, you were the first line to complete an international cruise from the UK since the initial shutdown – how much of an achievement is this?

This was such a huge achievement for us, both as a brand and as an industry. It was something we had been working towards for a long time, even before we knew for certain when we would be able to sail further afield again. To see all our plans become a reality was so rewarding.

We have loved sailing the British Isles over the summer and it has been fantastic to celebrate some of the incredible destinations and spectacular scenery we have right on our doorstep. However, as an industry we rely on being able to venture further afield in the cooler winter months, which is why this first international sailing was so important.



What requirements had to be met to make this happen?

We have a team of journey planners here who have been in regular contact with the destinations. This Iceland sailing was a cruise we had already released in *Borealis*' original cruise programme.

The team kept a close eye on the local situation there, and the longer it remained on the green list the more hopeful we felt about being able to operate the cruise. All guests had to be double jabbed and were required to submit paperwork before arrival into Iceland, as well as testing and completing the passenger locator form prior to returning to the UK.

Your new flagship, *Bolette*, has also now set sail. Tell us more about it.

We could not be prouder of our new flagship. I had the chance to visit her myself just before she set sail on her maiden voyage and she is so beautiful. When stepping aboard it instantly feels like a Fred Olsen ship. The attention to detail is such a trademark for us and our crew have worked so hard to add our own touches to both *Bolette* and *Borealis*.

What elevates the ships above others in the small-ship cruising market?

While physically *Bolette* and *Borealis* are a little larger than the rest of the fleet, they carry around the same number of guests



**CARLA
BALL**
SALES MANAGER
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The on-board Atrium is a feast for the eyes

“We are not reinventing the wheel; we are a traditional line with a fleet of smaller ships”

as *Balmoral*. Guests on board the new ships can feel confident that they will still receive the same personal service and attention to detail they love us for, while being able to take advantage of some fantastic new facilities.

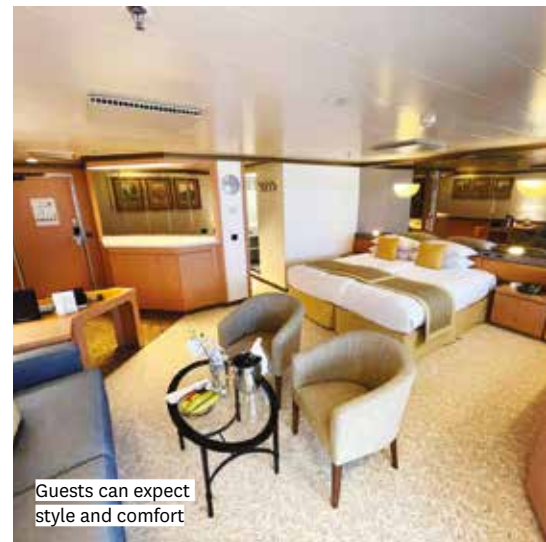
What key selling points should agents focus on for the new ships?

They have brought a host of new facilities to the fleet. Both have grand, two-tiered theatres and main dining rooms, and larger spas. One venue I am particularly excited about is The Auditorium, where we can hold culinary demonstrations with our chefs and galley team.

We also have new speciality dining venues. There's Vasco, which focuses on the culinary traditions of Goa, all cooked fresh and to authentic recipes by our Goan chefs. Then we have Colours & Tastes, which offers modern Asian fusion dishes incorporating seafood, gyoza and sushi as well as classic Chinese and Thai favourites. The key thing for us is that they will still offer the same Fred Olsen, small-ship experience.

What is The Olsen Way?

What is key for our company about The Olsen Way is that it is not a big marketing campaign. Rather, it is a way to encompass who we are as a brand and to



Guests can expect style and comfort

celebrate that. We are not reinventing the wheel; it is a reminder of who we are, what we stand for and what sets us apart from the competition.

What does this mean for travel agents?

Agents will be able to use The Olsen Way to remind their potential clients of the key parts of our brand, so that when they are recommending Fred Olsen to their customers, they can do so in the knowledge that we are the best match for that guest.

There is so much noise in the market about being bigger, brighter, bolder – and there is a place for that – but that isn't us, nor who we want to be. We are an elegant, traditional line with a fleet of smaller ships that believes the joy of the journey is just as important as the destinations we visit. The Olsen Way is a powerful tool for agents. 📌



The ships feature The Auditorium space for culinary demonstrations



Bolette

WELCOME BOLETTE

Bolette set sail on her Maiden Voyage on the 16th August and proudly bears the name of Fred. Olsen Jnr's great-great-grandmother.

With just 690 cabins, she fits perfectly with our smaller ships. She can travel at high speeds, enabling us to reach destinations more quickly, meaning our journey planners can craft itineraries that include more ports of call on shorter cruises, and more time sailing the most scenic routes.

Bolette provides guests with plenty of space to relax. Her Crow's Nest is where they can enjoy scenic cruising through large panoramic windows. The new Auditorium will host cooking demonstrations as well as specialist talks and evening cinema nights. Up on deck eight, guests will find our Lido Bar and swimming pool. The retractable roof means they can enjoy a swim year-round, wherever they are cruising.



Scan this QR code with the camera on your device for a tour of our new ships.



The Bookmark Café



Premier Suite



Colours & Tastes Restaurant

For more information, please visit our Travel Agent Centre at www.fredolsencruises.com/agent



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

WINTER SUN, THE OLSEN WAY

New lower fares just added, from only £599pp



Guests can join us aboard our smaller ships this autumn and winter. Never sailing with more than 900 guests, they will have plenty of space to relax and enjoy the views as we journey to sunnier climes like the Mediterranean and Canary Islands. And, with our new lower fares from only £599 it might be just the excuse needed to get away this year.

DEPARTURE	ITINERARY	SAILING FROM	NTS	SHIP	CRUISE ID	PRICES FROM PER PERSON
21st Sep 2021	Spain's Undiscovered Gems Cádiz • Mahon (Menorca) • Castellon de la Plana • Cartagena • Motril • Vilagarcia de Arousa: Spain	Dover	14	Bolette	T2123	£699
26th Sep 2021	French Cities & Spain La Pallice (for La Rochelle) • Cruising Gironde & Garonne Rivers • Bassens (for Bordeaux): France • Getxo (for Bilbao) Gijon: Spain • St. Malo • Honfleur: France	Liverpool	11	Borealis	S2122	£599
5th Oct 2021	Discovering Spain with Mallorca La Coruña • Cádiz • Málaga • Barcelona • Palma (Mallorca) • Cartagena: Spain	Dover	13	Bolette	T2124	£649
7th Oct 2021	Andalusia, Portugal & the Algarve Belfast: Northern Ireland • Gibraltar • Cádiz: Spain • Portimão • Lisbon • Leixões (for Oporto): Portugal	Liverpool	11	Borealis	S2123	£649
18th Oct 2021	Escape to the Canaries La Coruña: Spain • Lisbon: Portugal • Lanzarote • Gran Canaria • Tenerife • San Sebastian • La Palma: Spain Funchal: Madeira	Dover	15	Bolette	T2125	£899
18th Oct 2021	Exploring Azores & Portugal Belfast: Northern Ireland • Vigo: Spain • Lisbon: Portugal • Praia da Vitoria • Horta • Ponta Delgada: Azores La Coruña: Spain	Liverpool	15	Borealis	S2124	£899
2nd Nov 2021	Authentic Culture of Morocco Belfast: Northern Ireland • Cádiz: Spain • Tangier • Agadir • Casablanca (overnight): Morocco • Lisbon: Portugal	Liverpool	14	Borealis	S2125	£899
20th Nov 2021	Discovering the Canary Islands Lanzarote • Gran Canaria • San Sebastian • La Palma • Tenerife: Spain	Southampton	12	Bolette	T2128	£799

To book, call 0800 0355 052 | www.fredolsencruises.com/agent

Terms and conditions apply. All prices are subject to promotional availability and may be withdrawn at any time. All prices shown are on Saver Fares. For full terms and conditions, visit fredolsencruises.com/offer-terms



THE GENERATION GAME

The cruise industry has long sought to attract younger people, but as the sector emerges from the immediate difficulties caused by the pandemic, what needs to be done to change opinions and create new life-long cruisers? **Gary Peters** investigates



Let's be honest, it's not uncommon to hear those dreaded words: 'cruise is for old people'. Whether it's from colleagues, family members, friends, or potential clients, it's a belief that has long dogged industry executives and agents trying to widen their customer base.

That's not to say, however, that cruise is shying away from such opinions. In fact, what industry leaders are trying to get across is that cruise can be everything to anyone, regardless of age, demographic, interests and any other parameter that defines people. It's a mission rooted in one key reason: get a younger person hooked on cruise now, and, in all likelihood, they will come back again and again.

This undertaking is also probably one that will never truly end. New generations will emerge, and new strategies will be needed to entice them to jump on a ship. However, looking at the here and now, what is the way forward?

Opportunities for growth

Data from a CLIA survey in May this year paint a quite promising picture when it comes to Gen X and millennials. For past cruisers, the survey shows that enthusiasm for cruising is high, with 82 per cent of Gen X respondents and 85 per cent of millennials likely to cruise again in the next few years. For those who have



Social media is all powerful when it comes to targeting anyone under 50

never cruised, 62 per cent of Gen X and 71 per cent of millennials are likely to cruise in the next few years.

Responses were gathered from eight countries – the UK, US, Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, France and Spain – with 4,000 respondents, all international holidaymakers over 18 years old.

This builds on findings from CLIA's 2020 *State of the Industry* report, which reported that more than 66 per cent of Gen X and 71 per cent of millennials have a more positive attitude about cruising than in 2018.

One reason for the uptick could be the innovation that has swept across the sector in recent years, whether it be new on-board technologies to streamline and personalise the cruise experience – such as Princess Cruises' OceanMedallion – exciting service developments like the humanoid robotic bartender on *MSC*

Virtuosa; on-board activities from rollercoasters to virtual reality gaming; deeper dives into local cultures; authentic, destination-inspired cuisine, or anything else.

Indeed, new lines have also launched. Virgin Voyages has been open since its inception to attracting a new type of cruiser. A spokesperson tells *CTN*: "While our cheeky demeanour and on-board happenings certainly lend themselves to a millennial audience, our voyages were truly designed for the young at heart. We've gone the extra mile to create an inclusive environment that speaks to avid cruisers and newbies alike."

The importance of the selfie

Nevertheless, "millennials are under-targeted in cruising and yet represent such an opportunity for growth", says University of Suffolk tourism and cruise researcher Jennifer Holland. "They want such different experiences and won't be content with the usual Caribbean beach cruise image. They are also more willing to travel again after Covid, so they represent a great opportunity for the cruise industry to restart operations in the regions where there is hesitancy."

One reason for the uptick is the innovation that has swept across the cruise sector in recent years



Younger generations “are more likely to be influenced by high-profile bloggers, influencers and Instagrammers”

These audiences need to be “treated as first timers with a difference”, says Accord Marketing strategy director Jasman Ahmad. “In recent years, growth in the number of ocean cruise passengers from the UK and Ireland has come mainly from older travellers. As a result, the average age of the ocean cruise passenger is now around 57, which has led to younger generations feeling more and more disconnected.”

One such different marketing strategy – and a way to establish a connection – is social media. The industry should “recognise the importance of the selfie”, says Holland, and “use iconic, Instagram-worthy images in marketing to show how unique and amazing cruise destinations and the ships can be”.

Truc Le, associate lecturer in the Department of Tourism, Sport & Hotel

Management at Griffith University in Australia, agrees, believing that younger generations are “more likely to be influenced by high-profile bloggers, influencers, and Instagrammers”, adding: “[Social media] should be one of the top priorities for cruise marketers when attracting younger generations.”

Many lines have recognised this, investing in more active social content and utilising the power of video to expand their reach. Take Carnival Cruise Line, for example. The line’s senior director of brand and advertising, Jayne Andrews, tells CTN that the line continues to “hone our marketing efforts to reach younger cruisers who tend to utilise social media to a greater degree for travel research and promotion”, adding: “We promote the Carnival vacation experience heavily in social media. We currently have more

than 750,000 Instagram followers and we have greatly expanded our presence on TikTok.”

The key is in providing information of substance. Expedia president of cruise Matthew Eichhorst explains that “the three most important aspects our younger customers value are cleanliness, contactlessness and eco-friendliness”.

The results, taken from Expedia’s *Traveller Value Index* report, demonstrate that younger cruisers determine their booking preferences on cleanliness above all else, “suggesting that cruise companies need to continue providing detailed information on all elements of Covid-19 safety measures to travellers in order to rebuild their confidence and harness young demand”, Eichhorst adds.

What about the experience of younger cruisers themselves? Matthew Gilbert, who runs the Cruising with Matthew YouTube channel, took his first cruise at the age of 6. Now 24, he’s travelled far and wide on ships. “I’ve taken several of my friends and they have all been blown away by the facilities on board and the experience as a whole,” he says.

“Jumping ship (pun intended) to cruising is quite intimidating to a new cruiser. The huge range of information lines have on offer can be quite overwhelming, so streamlining this advice would be hugely helpful.



“Simplified explanations of each line (and their ships) are critical because, if they don’t match people’s holiday expectations, then this may put them off the concept of cruising. Advertising may need reconsidering, as a good number of images and videos from cruise lines show couples or younger families, and mostly skip people aged 20–30 years old. Therefore, this may perpetuate the idea that ‘I’m not the right person to cruise.’”

The price factor

Reaching younger audiences is one thing, but what about the element of cold, hard cash? Finances for many are tighter than ever due to the economic disruption caused by Covid-19, and while there is evidence to support the theory that holidaymakers are keen to splash out on a much-needed break, the reality of cost should not be overlooked.

Mintel associate director of travel research Marloes de Vries explains: “All-inclusive deals would encourage the majority of Gen Z and millennial travellers to pick one cruise holiday over another. However, younger people expect far fewer products/services to be included in the price of a cruise holiday. This presents an opportunity to offer younger people more flexible price tiers so they can select and deselect services of their choice when making the booking. As cruise ships are mostly associated with being luxurious and expensive, lower budget options are also necessary to attract younger travellers.”

Le says: “Price has been and always will be the biggest barrier preventing more millennials and Gen Z from getting on board. Prices of cruise packages tend to be too high and not very affordable for the young generations.”

Gilbert counters this, highlighting the level of inclusions on many ships and itineraries. “When it’s broken down, so



Video is one way of getting in touch with younger cruisers

“Price will always be the biggest barrier preventing more millennials and Gen Z from getting on board”

much is included within a cruise fare. The range of inclusive dining options is incredible, as well as the entertainment on board. I’ve enjoyed bands, West-End style shows and amazing aerial shows – all in one evening. Ships are so vast that people can be as budget conscious or as extravagant as they like.”

Expedia’s Eichhorst highlights another point, not relating purely to price but rather to the booking experience as a whole. Shifts caused by the pandemic have shown the importance of “digitalisation across booking platforms... customers expect a personalised experience that serves their travel goals through a contactless experience and premium benefits”, he says. “Younger demographics are less focused on monetary incentives and instead prioritise a seamless experience between the platform and the cruise line, often via agents but also directly online, too.”

While the challenge to attract new cruisers is considerable, it can be overcome, and the ‘cruise is for old people’ stigma need not be everlasting, “but [the industry] needs to listen to younger people’s needs”, says Accord’s Ahmad. “Think of what neobanks (100 per cent digital, app and online-based banking services) have done to the traditional banking industry,” he continues. “They’ve understood consumers’ pain points and addressed them head on.”

He adds: “Some of the ships we see are making great efforts and the interest from younger travellers is high – but they still do not convert into bookings. Companies need to ask themselves what are the consumers’ pain points in the booking journey between interest and booking? It’s one thing having a good idea, it’s another thing selling it.”

”
In conversation with...

Wendy Lahmich

Holland America Line UK & Ireland director of sales Wendy Lahmich is celebrating 25 years with the brand. She speaks to **Gary Peters** about her most memorable moments in cruise and explains how colleagues have become her extended family

One memory that sticks in the mind is when we launched *Eurodam* back in 2008. We'd never done a launch on that scale, and we had to use the “banana” terminal at Southampton; we basically had to clear it of bananas and literally

make it into a cruise terminal for the ship.

“We also had a Smart car, which was HAL branded, and our president at the time decided, on the spur of the moment, that he wanted it airlifted on to the ship. So, then we had to arrange for that to be done.”

Wendy Lahmich is speaking exclusively to *CTN* about her time in the cruise sector, as this year marks a quarter of a century for her with Holland America Line – “I can’t believe I’m saying a quarter of a century: some of the people reading this won’t even be that old, including my own team.”

The *Eurodam* anecdote is perhaps not the most memorable, however. Alaska holds a very special place in HAL’s story, and the same can be said for Wendy.



Celebrating 25 years: sales
supremo Wendy Lahmich



Wendy counts her HAL
colleagues as family

“Alaska is just my absolute favourite,” she says. “Those who know me well, and know my son, will know that he was essentially made in Alaska... is that too much information?”

“We had a few ideas on his name – Juneau, Ketchikan... he’ll probably kill me for saying this. We were going to go back to Alaska to celebrate his 18th birthday this year, which obviously was not possible. But on a serious note, I just feel so lucky to be here. I’m so grateful to this industry, not just my own brand, but to everyone involved.”

Treasured friendships

Family plays a key role in Wendy’s ongoing drive to push cruise forward. During her time at HAL, colleagues have

become friends, trusted confidants who will always hold a special place in her heart. The same can be said for the travel agent partners who have worked with Wendy and the wider HAL team to make cruise more accessible and appealing for millions of passengers.

“It is [one big family],” she insists. “Someone said to me recently, ‘oh, you come across as a real motherly figure’. I thought, ‘goodness me, am I now seen as a mother in cruise?’ But I can see who the future leaders in the sector will be. I hope that I have had – and can continue to have – some kind of influence.”

So, is there anything agents may not know? “I think I’ve shared this before, but I was a disco dancing champion in 1983. So when anybody sees me at any of the



Eurodam's smooth launch took a lot of effort behind the scenes



Travel agents have played a pivotal role in Wendy's career

events, shooting some moves, they now know that it's genuine.

"I've also signed up to the Open University for a creative writing course. I've got a few ideas; quite a lot has happened in my life and around me in the industry. I just think there's a story there dying to get out."

An award winner

Tales of this ilk are a common theme during the interview – Wendy has packed plenty into her career to date, and the humour with which she describes them

“What I’m most proud of is the people I’ve worked with in cruise”

masks a steely determination and work ethic that have seen her thrive.

Indeed, evidence of this success was shown when Wendy's work was highlighted by CLIA with an outstanding contribution award – “very proud of that” she says – and a similar award from HAL. However, again, it's the work relationships and personal friendships that are the pinnacle. “I think, if I'm honest, what I'm most proud of is the people I've worked with, who have worked for me and who I've worked for,” she says with a beaming smile.

“Everybody knows that I've stayed with Lynn Narraway (HAL MD) for all this time – she is a huge, huge part of why I'm still here, and the same goes for everyone else I've worked with.

“All of that has been wrapped up into

one lovely parcel – that's why I'm still here.”

As for what the future holds, there's no doubting Wendy's continued commitment to the cause. “Going forward, what we've all done and all the

investments we've made, and the way that the cruise lines have handled themselves and the industry has handled itself [during the pandemic], and the way that we've come together, has been phenomenal.

“I'd love to see cruise get to three, four, five million UK passengers a year, because I think all of us in this industry believe even that's still not enough. I think agent partners have become creative, and consumers of course are now desperate to travel again.

“I could shed a tear right now, although I'm not going to, because that's how strongly I feel. I think we've all learned a lot of lessons.

“Cruising has a really bright future. As an industry, we're closer than ever before and I'm so proud to be part of it.” 📌

Ladies FIRST

Virgin Voyages is officially sailing. The line has battled through the pandemic and is now set for a bright future, with travel agents key to its plans

Few lines have created the buzz surrounding Virgin Voyages since it signalled its intention to revolutionise the market with a new style of cruising. And despite a delayed introduction caused by the global suspension in operations, the anticipation never faded.

Now, with *Scarlet Lady* cruising, the line is looking forward confidently and with renewed vigour, promising guests that its cruise experience will challenge the “status quo in every way”, according to Virgin Voyages president and CEO Tom McAlpin.

“Not only are we committed to helping our Sailors [as they call guests] create the most memorable vacation, we also want to provide the safest travel experience possible without compromising on the fun we all deserve,” McAlpin added.

Virgin's Seacademy

Virgin Voyages' commitment to transform the experience for its guests is equalled by its determination to work with the trade. At the forefront of this is its Seacademy programme. Available to First Mates (agent partners), this is a one-stop-shop and resource tool, designed to help agents learn about the finer details of the brand.

This innovative concept is broken down into four levels, ranging from Violet to Gold, and is designed to build agents' confidence in different areas of the brand, ranging from destinations and shore excursions to on-board areas and venues. Each level comes with its own unique reward to encourage agents to complete each tier at their own pace.



Adults-only cruising takes Virgin to another level

The Gold tier gives agents on-board credit, priority access to events and first dibs on future fam trips

For tier one, Violet, after completing five Seacademy lessons, agents will receive a downloadable certificate stamp to add to their email signatures, as well as valuable knowledge, while for completing tier two, Scarlet, agents can earn an updated certificate and email signature stamp, plus a £75 bonus commission voucher.

The Silver level brings with it access to agent-exclusive rates, again with updated certificates, while after 20 Seacademy lessons, it's the Gold tier, complete with three perks – on-board credit, priority

access to events, and first dibs on future fam trips.

“Seacademy is packed full of bitesize modules and inside scoops,” says associate vice-president international sales Shane Riley.

“Our modules have been rated 4.88/5.00 by our First Mates – testament to the quality of the content. During the past 12 months... [we have] also seen 5,000 Seacademy courses completed, and 1,400 UK First Mates will be enjoying a free Seacademy voyage in the months ahead.”



Valiant Lady will be on her way next year



Virgin is proud to be entering the cruise market

By digging deeper and completing the learning modules, agents will also see that Virgin is not simply a ‘party’ cruise line. It is multi-layered, with many areas agents can focus on to help clinch a sale.

“We’ve purposely created a differentiated experience, and setting sail the Virgin way means Sailors can enjoy a premium experience free from the stuffy formalities often associated with cruise,” Riley explains.

“Our voyages offer a festival of choice, with more included. It’s important to focus on the on-board value – with more than 20 eateries, wifi, fitness classes, soft

drinks and much more included. And fair bar pricing means Sailors won’t feel ‘nickel and dimed’, either.”

Future ladies

Scarlet Lady is due to be joined by its sister ships, *Valiant Lady* and *Resilient Lady* – expected to sail next year – and an as-yet-unnamed fourth ship.

Valiant Lady’s inaugural, pre-summer voyages for 2022 are now on sale. The ship will hit the water in the spring, sailing from the UK to the most gorgeous islands and cities in Europe, including late-night and overnight stays in Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, the Canary Islands, and Lisbon.

“With *Valiant Lady* coming to the UK, agents can be sure that we’ll have big plans for our First Mates, so watch this space,” says Riley. “*Resilient Lady* will be sailing from Athens, and we plan to bring First Mates to experience these epic itineraries – overnight in Mykonos, anyone?”

“We absolutely love working with agents. Over the past 18 months we’ve laughed together and cried together but



Glam rock is the key aboard *Scarlet Lady*

more importantly, we’ve stuck together. First Mates are recommending us to other First Mates, which is so amazing. The trade is performing exceptionally well for us. We’ll also be hitting the road later this year to meet even more agents to educate them on what it means to set sail the Virgin way.”

It all adds up to a hugely exciting time, not just for the line but for travel agents themselves, too. 🎸

Spotlight On

Horizon Cruise Terminal

Associated British Ports head of cruise **Rebekah Keeler** explains the thinking behind the Port of Southampton's next-generation terminal

They say timing is everything. Building a new cruise terminal during a global pandemic seems unconventional to say the least, but that is exactly what we announced in November 2020.

We are now just a few weeks away from the naming ceremony for Horizon Cruise Terminal, which has been welcoming passengers since 3 July. The name was chosen from a public competition attracting more than 4,000 entries.

Of her winning entry in the competition, Hampshire resident Anna Chojnacka Liberska said: "I thought about the future and the past of the city. The future is something you can't predict."

The past 18 months are certainly testament to that, yet at the same time our approach to this project was about future-proofing as much as we could, including asserting a long-term commitment to sustainability.

Despite the global pause, cruise is on the rise. As Europe's leading cruise turnaround port, we typically welcome around two million cruise passengers per year to Southampton, and that number is expected to grow to four million per year over the next 30 years.

We wanted to make sure that we had the capacity to handle this growth and the next generation of ships. With incredible energy and commitment from our partners, we set about creating our £55m next-generation open access terminal.

Green energy

Horizon Cruise Terminal was always an opportunity to support the industry's sustainability credentials. The terminal is fitted with shore power, to be commissioned later this year, enabling ships with the right connectivity to 'plug in' to a green energy source. It also has more



"With more than 2,000 solar panels, on a typical day it will generate more energy than it uses"

than 2,000 roof-mounted solar panels, which means that on a typical day it will generate more energy than it uses. With responsibly sourced wooden beams forming its curved roof, Horizon Cruise Terminal makes a statement while also treading gently.

These initiatives are part of a larger programme we have carried out across the Port of Southampton in recent years, including the 2019 refurbishment of the Ocean Cruise Terminal to support P&O Cruises' *Iona's* home-porting, and bunkering of liquefied natural gas in Southampton.

At Horizon and Ocean, the message is the same: we will do all we can with our infrastructure to make it as convenient as possible for our partners to innovate on this journey with us.

We can't talk about the relevance of Horizon Cruise Terminal to the UK cruise industry without mentioning the customer, the global supply chain and our local stakeholders. For many passengers taking those tentative steps forward, the opportunity to sail from Southampton counts for something.

We are so thankful to everyone who has worked on this project with us and for those who supported us throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so. Cruise is back. Here's to the future. 🍀



REBEKAH KEELER
ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS
HEAD OF CRUISE

Win at **Selling**

Cruise & tour

Titan Travel senior product manager **Rob Stapley** explains why cruise and tour holidays are incredible experiences that are well worth promoting to clients

While it was never going to be smooth sailing in 2021, the news that international cruises can now resume is welcome. Back in 2019, the industry was on target to hit dizzying heights when 30 million passengers travelled on cruise ships around the world, but subsequently, with ships grounded and only a handful sailing, there was much to be concerned about.

However, despite such challenging times, what is clear is the appetite for cruising hasn't diminished. CLIA stats show a staggering 74 per cent of cruisers are planning on cruising in 2022/23 – and that 58 per cent of first-timers would like to try a cruise in the next few years.

Selling **TIPS**

Explain the benefits of exploring without being rushed. Escorted touring really gets to the heart of a destination, with more hours in port

- Cruise and tour holidays are priced at the higher end of the scale, but that said, they are superb value. Make sure clients understand the included benefits in any package.

- All the details have been taken care of, so they can enjoy stress-free holidays

- Now more than ever, travellers want to feel safe when travelling. Outline all the safety protocols that are on board cruise ships, on coaches and at hotels, and what procedures clients can expect at airports, embarkation and disembarkation



Destinations such as Porto are a classic combination for mixing cruise and tour

“Clients can combine adventure and luxury all in one, often at superb value”

At Titan Travel, I am involved in curating and planning holiday itineraries and while Titan, like all other travel companies, has faced unprecedented times, we stood firm and launched our new Cruise & Tour holidays for 2022 and 2023, offering the best of both worlds, with a blend of escorted touring and ocean cruising.

With options such as Rio de Janeiro to Antarctica, and Norway by rail and sea, there are many inspirational itineraries out there that appeal to a wider demographic. This includes seasoned cruisers who love sailing but are looking for a more immersive experience on the ground, or clients who love escorted touring but have never cruised before.

The ultimate holiday experience

So, why is cruise and tour the ultimate holiday experience? First, there's the opportunity to see several destinations in one trip, as well as the chance to relax on board a huge choice of different cruise lines.

Clients can also combine adventure and luxury all in one, often at superb value. With Titan, there are a number of added extras, such as VIP door-to-door service, tour manager, local guides, excursions, portage, choice of on-board cabin and on-board benefits. Plus, incredible destinations that wouldn't normally feature together on the same holiday.

With more restrictions being lifted, I am optimistic. While there is always room for a cautious approach, I firmly believe that offering a cruise and tour holiday to potential customers looking for a dream adventure will give them plenty of inspiration. 📌



ROB STAPLEY
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER
TITAN TRAVEL

Fast Facts

She's finally here. The mega ship that is *Iona* is officially sailing. The Excel-class vessel – the largest built to serve the UK market – has been described as “Britain’s most environmentally friendly cruise ship”, is powered by liquefied natural gas and features many top-class attractions, including an on-board craft gin distillery, spectacular aerial shows and an infinity pool with breathtaking panoramas. The ship has been designed to let the outdoors in and create an atmosphere of space, light and tranquillity. With more than 30 venues to eat and drink – some featuring celebrity chefs and other experts leading masterclass events – four swimming pools, star-studded entertainment and an array of cabin categories, *Iona* will not disappoint.

.....

5,200

PASSENGERS

2,614

CABINS

345m

LENGTH

17kn

SPEED

185,000

GROSS TONNAGE

IONA



1



Entertainment

Superstar Gary Barlow is music director of The 710 Club, in what the line says is “a pioneering new partnership set to fuse music with amazing travel experiences”. This atmospheric late-night music venue offers the opportunity for up-and-coming musicians to get their break.

2



Dining

Iona features 30 bars and restaurants, new menus by Marco Pierre White, destination-inspired dishes and what is claimed to be the “best burger at sea”. It is also home to restaurants created exclusively for the ship, including The Keel and Cow gastropub, and the Ripples gelateria.



3



Cabins

A range of cabin options are available including suites and balcony suites, including single occupancy cabins. New for P&O Cruises are *Iona*'s conservatory mini suites. Designed by Richmond International, they bring the outdoors indoors with a conservatory-style balcony.

Image: Richmond International

4



Distillery

Iona is home to the world's first gin distillery at sea, in partnership with Salcombe Distilling Co. This is the place for expertly crafted Marabelle Gin cocktails. The gin is produced in the ship's gin still 'Columba', named after the founder of the abbey on the island of Iona.

Image: Alun Callender

5



SkyDome

The two-deck SkyDome features a glass roof and a pool with a retractable stage, offering views of destinations as well as a unique space for guests. Guests can relax poolside by day, then at night enjoy a change of pace as SkyDome showcases aerialist displays, live performances and party nights under the stars.



PARTY TIME

In October, the leading event in the cruise calendar will return refreshed and ready to celebrate the cruise industry once again

On Friday 15 October, the Wave Awards will return. Organised by Real Response Media (RRM), publisher of *Cruise Trade News*, this event is the highlight of the year, bringing together cruise lines, travel agents, tourist boards and many more for an evening of pure celebration.

Yes, it's been a very long wait. Dates have been rescheduled and many hurdles overcome, but the perseverance of all involved has ensured that once again people can dress up for an evening of socialising and, for want of a better word, fun. Be prepared for a memorable after-party sponsored by Royal Caribbean, featuring Bandeoke and a retro games experience sure to provide plenty of entertainment.

The venue is 8 Northumberland Avenue, London – the first time that the event has been held in this marvellous venue – and the festivities will kick off from

6:30pm. As for health and safety, the event will follow all government regulations and guidance to ensure guests feel safe and comfortable.

A host of awards are up for grabs, such as Best Family Cruise Line, Best for Cuisine, Best Ocean Cruise Line, and many more, including the Grand Prix prize and one very close to the heart of everyone in the cruise sector – the John Honeywell Award, in memory of John Honeywell, champion of the cruise industry and former *World of Cruising* editor, who was affectionately known as Captain Greybeard.

This year, the Wave Awards will also honour Peter Grant, former RRM director and *CTN* and *World of Cruising* publisher, who died suddenly in 2020. During his time at RRM, Peter amassed numerous contacts in the cruise industry and counted many personal friends among both cruise line executives and travel agents. A special award will be bestowed in Peter's memory.

WAVE AWARDS 2021



Stuart Byron

Sales director, UK, Ireland & Spain
Royal Caribbean International

“Royal Caribbean is delighted that the Wave Awards are making their return this year after a hiatus due to the pandemic. We are excited to celebrate the incredible efforts and ingenuity the cruise industry has shown. It is fantastic that the whole industry can celebrate their achievements together in style. We are proud to support the awards this year by sponsoring the after-party and we wish every finalist the best of luck.”



Chris Hackney

UK & I Cruise MD
Tui

“We’re looking forward to celebrating at the Wave Awards this October, after what has been the most challenging time for the cruise industry. We’re delighted that the awards are coming back: the occasion gives us the opportunity to recognise, celebrate and reward some incredible talent across the sector. We’d like to thank our colleagues for all their hard work throughout the pandemic.”



Iain Powell

Head of Trade Sales & Commercial Partnerships
Saga Cruises

“Saga Cruises is thrilled to be headline sponsor once again of the prestigious Wave Awards and we very much look forward to celebrating the innovation and excellence that drive forward our industry. Saga Cruises has helped pave the way for our nation’s return to cruising and we are very proud that our two sister ships, *Spirit of Discovery* and *Spirit of Adventure*, are once again delighting guests with a luxury boutique cruising experience.”



Lynn Narraway

UK & I MD
Seabourn

“The Wave Awards have always represented a fantastic celebration of everything cruise – and a recognition of the outstanding people who work in our UK travel and cruise industry. All of us at ultra-luxury Seabourn are looking forward to 15 October, when it will be so good to be back with our friends and industry colleagues for an evening that we are sure will feel extra special to us all this year, as we celebrate our return to service and the resumption of cruise.”



Geoff Ridgeon

Head of Sales
Fred Olsen Cruise Lines

“The Wave Awards are a real highlight in the industry’s calendar. The past 18 months or so have been extremely challenging for us all, so this will be the perfect opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate all that is great about cruise. At Fred Olsen, we pride ourselves on helping our guests to be travellers rather than tourists, and in helping them to experience the ‘real’ in the destinations we visit.”

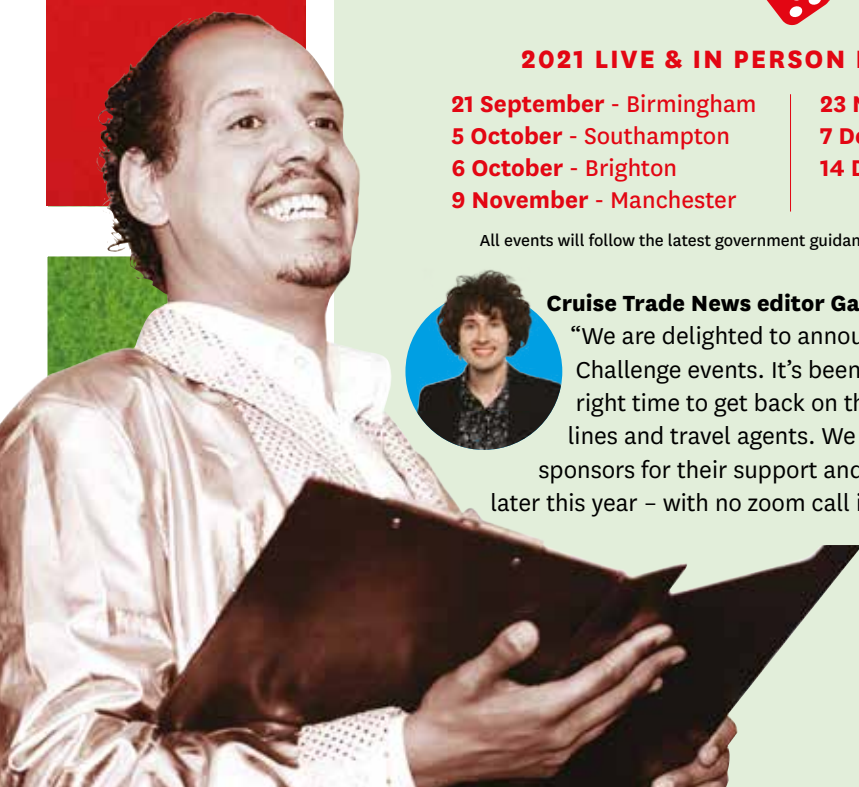


Maria Payne

Chief Client Officer
Accord Marketing

“As we proudly watch our industry sail through the end of the tunnel, we’re counting down the days to the highlight of the cruising calendar. The Wave Awards are always a night to remember but in 2021, after such stormy waters, something feels extra special. We can’t wait to dust off our glad rags and raise our glasses with friends and colleagues in person, once again. Oh, it feels good to be back.”

For more information, contact Rachel Lonsdale on rachel.lonsdale@realresponsemedia.com



The Cruise Challenge

The travel agent roadshow with a difference is back

This September the Cruise Challenge will make its eagerly anticipated comeback with live events taking place through to the end of the year.

This one-of-a-kind roadshow is prepped and ready to put the fun back into events, with its unique combination of education, entertainment and prizes.



2021 LIVE & IN PERSON EVENTS DATES

21 September - Birmingham
5 October - Southampton
6 October - Brighton
9 November - Manchester

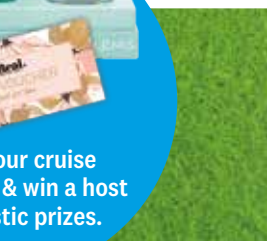
23 November - Newcastle
7 December - Ipswich
14 December - Cardiff

All events will follow the latest government guidance in terms of health and safety.



Cruise Trade News editor Gary Peters said

"We are delighted to announce the return of live Cruise Challenge events. It's been a long wait, but now is the right time to get back on the road and reunite cruise lines and travel agents. We would like to thank all our sponsors for their support and look forward to seeing you later this year – with no zoom call in sight."



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

SPONSORS



For more information on dates and how to get involved, go to the official Cruise Challenge website or contact the events manager Rachel Lonsdale on Rachel.Lonsdale@realresponsemedia.com

@cruisetradenews #CruiseChallenge

Brought to you by

cruise
TRADE NEWS

Comfort & style

Scenic and Emerald Cruises continue to be a popular choice for UK customers looking to explore the iconic rivers of Europe.

Group director of sales **Joseph Grimley** discusses the key selling points and restart plans

River lines traditionally offer a fantastic range of inclusions. How do Scenic and Emerald Cruises compare?

Both our brands include flights from the UK, transfers to the ship, all meals with drinks and a range of excursions, plus gratuities both on board and ashore. This includes local guides and coach drivers when on the included excursions. Scenic goes above and beyond this by including a personal butler for every grade of stateroom/suite, providing room service and a mini bar that is fully restocked daily. Truly all-inclusive means guests will rarely, if ever, have to dip into their wallets to pay for anything. On our Scenic river cruises, chauffeurs will also pick guests up from home and take them to the airport in style and comfort.

Does a river cruise tend to be a relaxing or a busy holiday?

It can be as relaxing or as busy as guests choose. Our ships are extremely comfortable and spacious and include lots of public areas to relax, to be waited on and to watch the world go by as the



“Clients can relax, be waited on and watch the world go by... or join in a hiking or biking excursion”

ships glide elegantly along the rivers. Take a dip in the indoor heated pool on Emerald’s Star Ships or relax on deck with an included cocktail on Scenic. For those wishing for an energetic holiday, Emerald Star Ships all have an activity manager who will run a programme of exercise classes, yoga, and more, and escort guests on Emerald Active hiking, biking or canoeing excursions. Scenic Space Ships have electronically assisted bicycles on board for those who want to explore with a little less effort.

How can agents learn more about both of your brands?

Agents should visit our agent portals – scenic.co.uk/agent-portal and emeraldcrises.co.uk/agent-portal. Here they’ll be able to discover interactive online training modules (Agent Academy), pre-recorded ‘river-specific’ short webinars and a host of other useful selling tools.

Can you tell us more about your agent incentive programme?

We are delighted to be resuming our River Rewards and More agent incentive programme, which awards points for every Scenic and Emerald Cruises booking. Agents can exchange points for some fantastic prizes including vouchers, lifestyle goods, electronics, and so on. Collect enough points and agents can even earn a free river cruise on board a Scenic or Emerald Cruises ship.



Guests can explore nearby countryside by bike or on foot

When will you be resuming your full river cruise programme?

We resumed our river cruise sailings on the Douro at the end of July and introduced other rivers throughout August. For those customers who don’t wish to travel in 2021, I suggest securing their 2022 river cruise sooner rather than later as these are starting to sell out now. If customers have already booked their 2022 holiday, we have opened early access bookings for Emerald’s 2023 European river cruise season. ①



Activities on a river cruise include exercise classes such as yoga

SAVE UP TO
£1,600
per couple

€200
per cabin
ON BOARD
SPEND

Super
Earlybird Offer
SAVE
AN EXTRA
10%

2022 European River Cruises

Emerald Cruises are the small ship experts, bringing contemporary innovation to Europe's rivers on board our award-winning fleet of Star-Ships.

Created with you in mind, an Emerald Cruises river cruise strikes the perfect balance of time spent on board and onshore, you'll spend your days visiting UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites, tasting a region's finest wine and marvelling at the inimitable architecture that has existed there for centuries. Each insightful itinerary has been expertly handcrafted to showcase the very best of what Europe has to offer and, with an included excursion almost every day, you'll love nothing more than returning to the chic surrounds of your innovative and spacious Star-Ship to unwind in comfort.

As part of our exceptional **EmeraldVALUE** promise, return flights and transfers, delicious dining, stylish accommodation, excursions and experiences almost every day, and even all gratuities are included, so all you have to think about is enjoying your holiday.

Book now to **save up to £1,400 per couple**, receive **€200 per cabin** to spend on board on additional holiday treats, and **save an extra 10% off** selected cabins with our **Super Earlybird Offer**. Plus, book one of our **Rhine, Main, Danube or Moselle river cruises** and **save an extra £200 per couple**.

In addition, with our **complimentary Deposit Protection Plan** and **Flexible Booking Policy**, you can book your holiday in complete confidence.



Enjoy all these inclusions

- **Return flights** from a choice of up to 16 UK regional airports. **No-fly options** are also available via Eurostar on selected itineraries.
- **Airport transfers** to and from your Star-Ship.
- **Stylish accommodation** on board our Star-Ships.
- **All on board meals.**
- **Complimentary wine, beer, and soft drinks** to accompany lunch and dinner on board.
- **Complimentary tea and coffee.**
- **Extra-special excursions and experiences.**
- **EmeraldACTIVE** programme including bike rides, yoga and guided hikes.
- **First-class service** from an English-speaking crew.
- **Knowledgeable local guides.**
- **Complimentary Wi-Fi** on board.
- **Complimentary bicycles** on board†.
- **ABTA & ATOL** protected.

PLUS ALL GRATUITIES ARE INCLUDED

For more information visit our Agent Portal at emeraldcruiises.co.uk

Terms and conditions: All our holidays are subject to availability. Prices are correct at time of going to print (13th September 2021) are per person based on two people sharing in low season and include relevant discounts. Valid for new 2022 European river cruise bookings only made between 22nd September and 31st October 2021. Savings of up to £1,400 per couple are valid for new 2022 European river cruise bookings only and include Main, Moselle and Danube itineraries only. €200 on board spend is per cabin, based on two people sharing and will be deducted from your final bill upon departure. The extra 10% Super Earlybird Offer is limited in time before departure. If full payment is not received 12 months prior, the Super Earlybird Offer will be removed. Offers are applicable on the cruise element only, excludes air fares, port charges, hotel stays and other add-ons. Timings, overnight accommodation may be required at an additional cost. Our offers are not combinable, and we reserve the right to withdraw our offers at any time. Our itineraries, hotels, dates, and inclusions are subject to change by Star-Ship. We recommend you seek independent advice regarding visas and vaccinations. For full booking conditions visit emeraldcruiises.co.uk. E&OE.



**2023
NOW ON
SALE**

Highlights from our 2022 European river cruise collection

8-Day **Legendary Rhine & Moselle**



Great
for wine
lovers

Mainz to Bernkastel

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£1,895** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,315** per person

8-Day **Danube Delights**



Best
Seller

Regensburg to Budapest

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£1,745** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,195** per person

8-Day **Secrets of the Douro**



2021
also on
sale

Porto to Porto

Departing: **April - November 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£1,845** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,345** per person

8-Day **Sensations of Lyon & Provence**



No Fly
Option

Lyon to Arles

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£2,095** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,335** per person

8-Day **Danube Explorer**



Passau to Budapest

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£2,045** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,465** per person

8-Day **Jewels of the Rhine**



No Fly
Option

Amsterdam to Basel

Departing: **May - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£1,895** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,320** per person

9-Day **Enchantment of Eastern Europe**



Budapest to Bucharest

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£2,245** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,655** per person

15-Day **Splendours of Europe**



Amsterdam to Budapest

Departing: **April - October 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£3,395** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£4,290** per person

8-Day **Holland & Belgium in Bloom**



No Fly
Option

Amsterdam to Amsterdam

Departing: **April 2022**

Earlybird Stateroom Offer from **£1,895** per person
Super Earlybird Suite Offer from **£2,270** per person

uk/agent-portal or call our Agency Sales Team on 0161 233 1988

counts. Supplements apply for single travellers, upgraded cabins and other departure dates. Offers are
des Earlybird saving where available. Additional savings of £200 per couple are valid on 2022 Rhine,
number and is available on cabin categories C, B, A, P, S, R, SA & RA when paying in full 12 months
ditional items. In the event of suitable flights not connecting with cruise embarkation/ disembarkation
subject to change. Flights may not be a direct service and a supplement may be charged. *Amenities





Tauck is targeting multi-gen groups with gingerbread-making



Floating FESTIVE FUN

A themed Christmas market river cruise is guaranteed to fill clients with seasonal cheer, writes **Jeannine Williamson**

Christmas markets are one of the highlights of Europe's winter calendar, as well as being a firm fixture in themed river sailings. With their roots in history and tradition, a festive cruise of these markets is a fantastic way to soak up some culture alongside a magical Yuletide atmosphere.

Germany and Austria form the heartland of the Christmas markets scene, but these events can be found throughout Europe, including France, Budapest and Bratislava. Short-break sailings are a good way for agents to entice first-time river cruisers, and longer sailings of a week or more are ideal for repeaters keen to experience popular river cruise destinations in a twinkling new light.

A-Rosa River Cruises UK & Ireland MD Lucia Rowe explains: "Our Christmas markets and festive cruises are always popular as the cities of Europe come alive with festive cheer. We have short four and five-night options for those who are new to cruising and perhaps want to get a flavour of what it offers, before embarking on a longer journey."

Traditional temptations

Ships moor close to bustling city squares filled with wooden huts piled high with decorations, traditional toys and crafts, and tempting aromas fill the air from food stalls selling gingerbread, nuts, pancakes, bratwurst and warming mulled wine.

Nicko Cruises features a market in every port – Passau, Vienna, Melk and Linz – on its season of English-speaking Danube cruises sailing on the ultra-modern *Nicko VISION*.

Rupert Thomson, managing director of river cruise specialist Light Blue Travel, which is the UK sales agent for Nicko, says: "The German and Austrian Christmas markets are world famous, with crisp, cold weather – maybe even snow – amazing backdrops, tasteful festive decorations and, of course, quality stalls. Vienna has a choice of markets, with the most famous being at Stephansplatz, Rathausplatz and in the forecourt of the Schonbrunn Palace, with its giant Christmas tree and imperial splendour."

More choice

VIVA Cruises has nine departures this November and December for its three-night Rhine Winter Fairy Tale itinerary on *VIVA Tiara* and, for clients looking for a longer sailing, one seven-night Danube Christmas Miracle cruise aboard *VIVA Moments*. These two top rivers are also featured in Riviera

Selling TIPS

It's a good idea to switch-sell Christmas market itineraries to city-break clients to introduce them to river cruising

•

A sailing near the festive period is ideal for multi-gen groups to spend quality time together and celebrate Christmas

•

There's a wide choice of itineraries, ranging from three nights to week-long sailings, and new sailings and ships launching in 2022, so even repeaters can find something that appeals



Christmas markets are a vivid tradition in Europe



There are nine VIVA cruises available in November and December this year

“Vienna has a choice of markets – at Stephansplatz, Rathausplatz and in the forecourt at Schonbrunn”

Travel’s schedule, which offers the four-night Enchanting Rhine & Yuletide Markets itinerary and a five-night trip, The Danube’s Imperial Cities & Yuletide Markets.

For multigenerational groups, Tauck offers a seven-night Danube Christmas markets cruise, one of the Tauck Bridges family journeys. Fun activities include medieval games and a scavenger hunt in Bratislava, a gingerbread and marzipan-making class and a waltz lesson.

This year, AmaWaterways is offering festive itineraries on the Rhône for the first time. Sailings aboard *AmaKristina*, which has been transferred from the Rhine to the French river, will showcase the Christmas markets in Lyon and Christmas celebrations in Avignon and Arles.

Following the delayed launch of Arena River Cruises’ new flagship, *MS Arena*, this winter will see the first opportunity for travellers to explore the Christmas markets of the Rhine Valley aboard the new vessel.

Cruises start and finish in Cologne, where there are different markets to explore including a harbour market on the banks of the Rhine and one adjacent

to Cologne’s gothic cathedral. There are three four-night sailings this year, and agents can also book clients on Arena’s 2022 departures.

New for 2022

Also looking ahead to next year, CroisiEurope is introducing two new four-night itineraries on the Elbe, which will appeal to clients looking for a more unusual Christmas market cruise. One itinerary is a round-trip from Prague, taking in the markets in the Czech capital and in Dresden, and the second is a round-trip from Berlin with visits to the markets in Potsdam as well as in Germany’s first city.

APT Travelmarvel also has a new itinerary in 2022, the seven-night Rhine & Moselle Christmas Markets sailing from Amsterdam to Basel. Passengers will sail on one of APT’s new Travelmarvel Contemporary ships. Highlights include visiting Germany’s Black Forest region.

A-Rosa’s hybrid E-Motion ship, *A-Rosa Sena*, launching in 2022, will feature a four-night Rhine Advent City Experience with visits to Cologne, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht. A new five-night Enchanting Danube Advent cruise has been added for 2022 on *A-Rosa Flora*, with an overnight in Vienna plus stops in Bratislava, Linz, Krems and Melk. For next year, Bratislava has also been added to the line’s four-night Danube Advent Season cruise. Agents can arrange cruise-only rates or book through operators including Gold Medal and Newmarket Holidays. ❶

ITINERARIES

Arena River Cruises

- Prices for the four-night Festive Cheer & Markets in the Rhine Valley Cologne round-trip itinerary on *MS Arena* start from £549pp, departing 9 December 2021.

➡ arena.travel.com

Nicko Cruises

- The four-night Winter on the Danube Passau round-trip itinerary, departing 15 December 2021 on *NickoVISION*, is priced from £795pp.

➡ lightbluetravel.co.uk

Tauck

- Prices for the seven-night Holiday Magic: Danube Family River Cruise from Regensburg to Budapest on *MS Joy* start from £2,860pp, departing 10 December 2021.

➡ tauck.co.uk



Idyllic LIVING

Vicky Mayer uncovers the top spots to visit when cruising in Greece and Cyprus

People will look back on 2021 as the year when cruise made a comeback, starting with some great British seacations. The good news is that all the major cruise lines are back sailing round the Med too and, not surprisingly, cruises to the Greek islands are proving very popular.

From the most feted spots such as Santorini, Kos and Mykonos, there's plenty to see and do, and those who join Royal Caribbean's special Greek Isles cruise will also get to see all the sights of Limassol in Cyprus.

Such is the demand that during the summer Royal Caribbean's *Jewel of the Seas* has been

sailing a series of seven-night itineraries from Limassol – the first time that the line has called Cyprus home.

"Cyprus is a beautiful country with a multitude of must-visit regions, and it is an extremely popular destination among our European guests – we know they are ready and waiting to enjoy a Cyprus and Greek Isles getaway," said Royal Caribbean International vice-president EMEA Ben Bouldin.

October is one of the best months to sail around the Greek islands because the temperature has dropped, so guests can swim, sightsee and sunbathe comfortably – and a lot of the summer crowds have moved on. So, what are some of the top spots to recommend to clients?



Athens is a classical treat for visitors to Piraeus



Holiday central: Mykonos extends a sunny welcome

Athens-Piraeus

Piraeus, serving Athens, is home to one of the busiest ports in Europe and is a huge draw for cruise ships from around the world. There are several museums and art galleries to explore there, while Mikrolimano Port is filled with fishing boats, small ships and luxurious yachts. Athens itself needs little introduction. It is the historical capital of Europe, boasting attractions including the Acropolis, the ancient Theatre of Dionysus and the National Archaeological Museum.

Mykonos

Mykonos is a great cruise port stop. There are picture-perfect streets, whitewashed houses with colourful doors, charming classic Greek dishes and some great stores to buy Greek bags and clothes. A quirky, yet fun, fact to pitch to clients is that in Hora they might be lucky enough to spot the island's famous local pelican on the waterfront.

Santorini

Clients will need little introduction to this iconic destination, which is known the world over from images of its blue and white painted buildings perched atop rugged cliffs. Fira, high on the edge of the Caldera, is the picturesque capital of the island and guests can travel there on a donkey. Oia, Imerovigli and Firostefani, located high on a cliff, make up the so-called 'Caldera's eyebrow', where visitors can admire views of the island's volcano.



Limassol offers a modern buzz as well as medieval treasures

Check out the car museum and then head to the seafront for traditional Cypriot food

Rhodes

Medieval castles, Byzantine churches, stunning beaches and ancient archaeological sites dominate Rhodes. Clients with a real hankering for history will not be disappointed, as medieval fortress-like buildings, ancient walls, gates, narrow alleys and minarets plus well-preserved houses and busy squares are easily found while exploring. The Palace of the Grand Master, which is now a museum, is the highlight of the Old Town. No visit to Rhodes would be complete without exploring the Acropolis of Lindos, a natural watchtower facing the open sea.

Limassol

This buzzy city on the southern coast of Cyprus is well known for Limassol Castle, home to the Cyprus Medieval Museum and its collection of pottery and tombstones. If guests have the time, they should check out the Cyprus car museum. Foodies should visit the seafront to enjoy a traditional Cypriot meal. 🍷

Selling TIPS

Cruises to Greek islands and nearby destinations offer some of the finest sights possible, with medieval old towns providing a welcome contrast to pristine beaches

- Culture-rich ports of call are readily available on these itineraries, so explain to clients that it's easy to mix lazy, sun-drenched days with something a little more stimulating

- Lines such as Royal Caribbean have shown that cruising in the region is safe, with tried and tested safety measures in place on board and ashore

DETAILS

Royal Caribbean is offering a seven-night Greek Isles cruise on four dates in October, beginning at Limassol in Cyprus before sailing to Piraeus (Athens), Mykonos, Santorini, Chania in Crete and Rhodes. Prices start at £599pp, including airfare.

🌐 royalcaribbean.com



History fans will relish a visit to Rhodes



Land of **DREAMS**

Cruises have resumed to America's last frontier, and it's filled with natural wonders British passengers can look forward to in 2022, writes **Jeannine Williamson**



Ponant is joining forces with National Geographic for immersive cruises



Kayak trips, such as those with Seabourn, give a close-up view of glaciers



trade to promote Washington state cruise-and-stay itineraries once border restrictions allow.”

For the majority of clients, an Alaskan cruise is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. This is summed up by Edwina Lonsdale, MD at Mundy Cruising, who says: “Alaska has

to be one of the most exciting cruise destinations in the world, an extraordinary wilderness that appeals to all ages and tastes.

“While the icy glaciers are magnificent, more unexpected is the glorious, lush vegetation that arises as a result of the mild and temperate summers. Teeming with wildlife, boasting a fascinating gold-rush history alongside the ancient culture, myth and folklore of the native Americans, not to mention spectacular scenery, Alaska has so much to offer.”

New adventures

In 2022, Holland America Line celebrates 75 years of Alaskan exploration, longer than any other cruise line. The milestone will be marked by a series of cruises aboard *Eurodam*, *Koningsdam*, *Nieuw Amsterdam*, *Noordam*, *Oosterdam* and *Zuiderdam* – all featuring special on-board programmes to mark the anniversary – plus land and sea journeys combining a three, four or seven-day cruise with an inland exploration of Denali National Park. HAL is the only cruise line that extends land-tour options up to the unspoiled reaches of Canada’s Yukon Territory.

Victory Cruise Lines, operated by the American Queen Steamboat Company, has revealed details of its brand-new 200-passenger expedition vessel, *Ocean Victory*, delayed for a year due to Covid and now launching in 2022.

Sailing between Vancouver and Sitka, it features an innovative X-Bow design to navigate less-travelled regions and includes ports of call

After a pause of 18 months, Seattle – gateway to Alaska – welcomed the return of cruising when Royal Caribbean’s *Serenade of the Seas* arrived in the city’s port in July. While a handful of ultra-small ships sailed in Alaska during the pandemic, July’s watershed moment marked the return of large-ship sailings and heralded 84 departures by various lines before the end of October, including Royal Caribbean’s *Ovation of the Seas* completing the line’s Alaska comeback.

Port of Seattle international tourism development manager Patti Denny says: “Passenger, crew and port staff safety is of paramount importance for bringing back cruising to and from the city and the strides to address this over the past 18 months by the port authorities and our partners have been tremendous.

“We look forward to the safe return of passengers from the UK, Ireland and Europe in 2022 and continuing our work with the travel

ITINERARIES

Cunard

- Prices for a 15-night Alaska itinerary from Vancouver to Los Angeles on *Queen Elizabeth* start from £2,199pp, departing 11 July 2022.

🔗 [cunard.com](https://www.cunard.com)

Victory Cruise Lines

- The 14-night Sitka to Vancouver sailing on *Ocean Victory* is priced from £5,295pp, departing 26 June 2022.

🔗 lightbluetravel.co.uk

Holland America Line

- A seven-night Alaskan Inside Passage round trip Vancouver sailing aboard *Zuiderdam* is priced from £899pp, departing 27 April 2022.

🔗 [hollandamerica.com](https://www.hollandamerica.com)

The X-Bow design will give *Ocean Victory* easier access to smaller ports



Selling TIPS

Talk clients through the wide range of ships on offer in Alaska, including luxury expedition lines that seamlessly merge adventurous itineraries with first-class service and amenities on board

- Emphasise exciting excursion opportunities such as helicopter rides and fishing, or recommend a pre or post-cruise stay in Washington State's national parks for wildlife lovers or vibrant Seattle and Vancouver for city break fans

- Research the best time of the five-month cruise season for different clients – July and August are hottest and ideal for families, while May and September offer lower prices and suit those who prefer to travel without children

that larger ships cannot access, including Baranof Island's eastern coast.

In addition, Silversea has increased capacity in Alaska in 2022. *Silver Shadow* will join *Silver Muse* for a season of seven-day trips between Seward and Vancouver, showcasing Alaska's dramatic scenery in ultimate comfort. The line has also announced a new 18-day expedition on *Silver Wind* that combines Alaska with the wilderness of the extreme north of Russia.

Fellow luxury line Seabourn will sail to Alaska and British Columbia during summer 2022 with a series of seven to 11-night voyages on *Seabourn Odyssey*. All itineraries will feature optional Ventures by Seabourn outings offering kayaking, zodiac cruising, and hiking.

Immersive experiences

Princess Cruises' forthcoming Alaska cruise and cruisetour programme will feature six ships, including the newest addition to the fleet, *Discovery Princess*, launching in spring 2022. The 3,660-passenger vessel will sail a six-night Inside Passage itinerary and also mark her inaugural season as the youngest ship in Alaska departing from Seattle.

Additionally, *Majestic Princess*, *Sapphire Princess* and *Grand Princess* will sail a six-night Voyage of the Glaciers itinerary, featuring two glacier viewing experiences on every cruise, including Glacier Bay National Park.

Small-ship line Windstar Cruises has a brand-new six-night Scenic Alaska sailing that is ideal for clients unable to take a longer cruise. It is Windstar's shortest Alaskan

itinerary and will feature an inaugural stop in Haines. The line's newly revamped *Star Breeze* will also sail for the first time in Alaska in 2022. The yacht was cut in half and lengthened to provide 50 extra cabins. It now has capacity for 312 guest, new restaurants and a spa.

Also operating small ships, Regent Seven Seas Cruises' itineraries offer exciting optional excursions for adventurous travellers, such as flying over the magical Mendenhall icefields from Juneau in a helicopter, followed by dogsledding on a snow-covered glacier. Guests with a thirst for knowledge can join a cruise on a scientific vessel from Icy Strait Point, where they will assist in marine life research with the scientists on board.

Ponant has two immersive Alaskan journeys in 2022. The 14-night Alaska & Its Fur Traders trip is operated in partnership with National Geographic and will follow in the tracks of indigenous peoples. The 12-night The Russian Arctic: Between Wrangel & Chukotka cruise takes in extraordinary landscapes of tundra and flowers that bloom in the Arctic summer.

Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Millennium* will sail on three Alaskan itineraries next year, showcasing enhancements that are part of the line's \$500-million modernisation programme. The vessel has new staterooms, refurbished restaurants and lounges, plus the addition of The Retreat lounge and sun deck, exclusively for suite passengers.

In June, American Cruise Lines became the first small-ship line to dock in Haines since September 2019 and is now poised to welcome back British guests. It offers sailings on *American Constellation*, one of its newest, fully stabilised 175-passenger coastal ships, with most cabins featuring a private balcony. 📍

Alaskan wildlife is within passengers' reach





CUNARD

Alaska, by Cunard.

Your customers can discover remarkable natural wonders, unparalleled wildlife, and the rich cultural legacy of 'The Great Land', as they explore this wild frontier with Queen Elizabeth.

Visiting by ship is perfect for these icy northern reaches as many destinations are not easily accessible by land. Each day in Alaska presents awe-inspiring wonders, blue hues of the immense Hubbard Glacier and a journey through the Inside Passage, which culminates in Glacier Bay – where guests experience some of the world's most spectacular tidewater glaciers.

Example voyage.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

1 – 11 Jul 2022 ♦ 10 nights ♦ Q221

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Stateroom	Cunard Fare	Early Saver Fare
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Guest speakers.

Cunard Insights is a programme of talks, seminars and Q&As with specially invited guest speakers who are renowned in their field of expertise, each guest brings their own extraordinary insights and stories to share.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Explorer



Kenton Cool, Mountaineer



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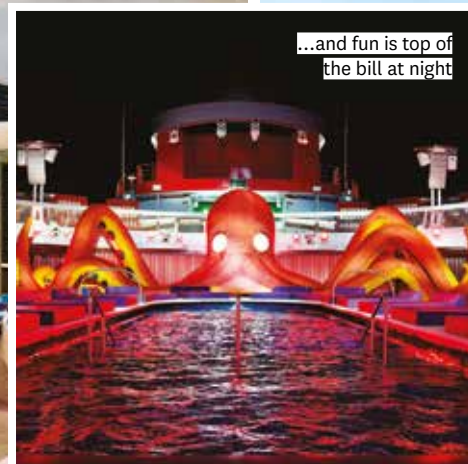
Terms & conditions apply. Fares are subject to change and are based on two adults sharing. Please refer to the Cunard website for the latest T&C's. Sir Ranulph Fiennes will be on board on Q217N 1 May 2002 and Kenton Cool will be on board on Q220 24 June 2002 and Q221 1 July 2002.

 **ABTA**
Travel with confidence

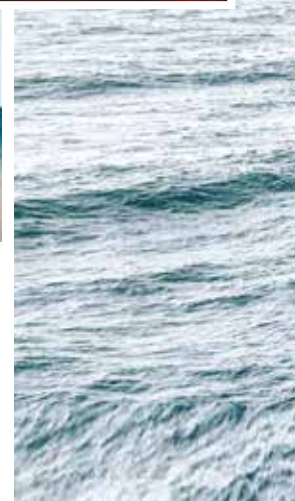




Wellbeing is the focus at the Redemption Spa...



...and fun is top of the bill at night



LADY IN RED

Cruise vloggers **Richard and Helen Chalu**, known for their popular Visit With Us YouTube channel, report back from their time on Virgin Voyages' sleek first ship, *Scarlet Lady*

Following her exuberant launch last year, we are prepared for our experience on *Scarlet Lady* to be very different from the cruising norm. As soon as we board this vibrant, energetic ship, we are greeted with music reverberating around the 'roundabout' ('atrium' to cruise traditionalists), but we're pleasantly surprised to find no glittery boas or dayglo dancers with whistles – instead simply a warm, friendly welcome from the crew.

Before boarding, it's wise to download the Virgin Voyages app. Once on board, this replaces the traditional daily planner, becoming the main resource for everything from restaurant

reservations, menus and guest services to the entertainment line-up. Cruise cards are replaced by a trendy rope bracelet wearable, used to open the cabin door, buy items and book shows. On our cruise, we find both the wearable and the app easy to use and very convenient.

But, back to the ship. *Scarlet Lady* is a delight, with plenty of small, secret venues to discover. Each has been beautifully and individually designed, and thoughtfully and

comfortably furnished. Similar attention and variety have been applied to the open decks, which are generously furnished with cushioned day beds and oversized loungers.

A quirky vibe

The quirkiness is also reflected in the cabins, with each one containing a tablet that controls the curtains, lighting, temperature and TV, including the option to activate 'cinema mode' when watching a movie. The standard Sea

Terrace bed is reassuringly comfortable, given that it can be set up as a sofa during the day. A small bathroom redeems itself with a powerful drench shower. Storage is limited, but the cabins are

thoughtfully designed to make the most of the space.

The balcony is much deeper than on many of the new, larger cruise ships and the hammock, which might be thought of by some as a gimmick, is a genius addition. Once in, and listening to the waves and enjoying the gentle sway, it's hard to summon the energy to get out.

As for the entertainment, the choice is vast. From trivia, cocktail singers, jazz bands, solo

Cruise cards are replaced by a trendy bracelet on board





Scarlet Lady has cruised from Portsmouth this summer



All food is included in the Scarlet Lady cruise price



Richard and Helen: 'a unique experience'

guitarists, pool parties, comedy, an incredible acrobatic show and a signature scarlet night, to stargazing, pyjama parties, guest bands and DJs – there really is something for everyone.

Guests can book main shows through the app and all are included in the price, but equally interesting things occur when we're least expecting it. Whether it's a comedy skit or a musician popping up to perform, and then melt away back into the scenery, *Scarlet Lady* is full of surprises.

Suitable for all

The ship is not all about the night-time festivities, though. For those who prefer to focus on wellness, every day is filled with a range of complimentary fitness classes, from meditation and yoga to spin classes and HIIT sessions, and our personal favourite, the 80s VHS workout – complete with complimentary leg warmers and headbands.

The well-equipped gym is divided into two sections, Build and Balance, for resistance training, and Burn & Bike, the cardio area, as well as the extensive open air Venice Beach-style equipment in the Athletic Club.

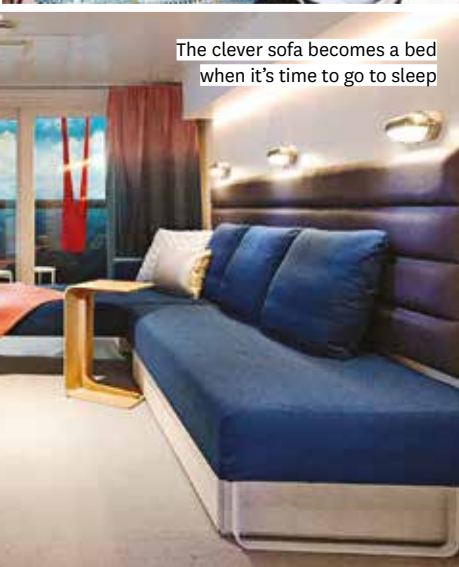
There are six speciality restaurants and many smaller outlets offering delicious and

varied food, which is a highlight of the *Scarlet Lady* experience, and all restaurants and food are included.

According to Virgin Voyages, The Galley is not a buffet. Rather, they say, it's table service, so food ordered from any of the kiosks is served directly to us. As with a traditional buffet, the food is instant but the system avoids bottle-necks and wandering around trying to choose what to eat.

All in all, Virgin has created a unique cruise experience that will appeal to clients who appreciate great food, eclectic entertainment, live music, and a good time. And then, for those who want a quieter, more laid-back cruise, there are the serene beach-club vibes in the Dock House.

Virgin Voyages has been bold in moving away from the norm, making *Scarlet Lady* a little bit different and slightly quirky, with strong flavours of happiness. 🍷



The clever sofa becomes a bed when it's time to go to sleep

Dinner at Murano costs a little extra, but the food and the atmosphere are worth it



Sublime SILHOUETTE

On board *Celebrity Silhouette* for her first cruise in 15 months, **Vicky Mayer** enjoys a fantastic UK trip where fun and celebration are the order of the day

It's been more than a year since I stepped on a ship and now the day has come – I'm booked on a six-night UK cruise on *Celebrity Silhouette* and emotions among her passengers are running high.

The itinerary – a round trip from Southampton via Dover, Belfast and Liverpool – may not be the most glamorous in the cruising world but that doesn't really cross my mind as I prepare to hop on board and enjoy all the ship has to offer.

As I head down the gangway with my fellow guests, the crew clap us on board – a surreal

but heart-warming experience. We are all wearing masks, but the smiles are obvious.

I'm lucky to be travelling on *Celebrity Silhouette's* first 2021 UK sailing and it's exciting to be stepping on board such a glamorous ship. The vessel was given an extensive makeover in 2020 with the addition of The Retreat, a stylish all-inclusive area on the ship for suite guests, and the updated Lawn Club, which features eight private cabanas and a giant outside screen, plus many more updated public spaces. Not surprisingly, she's now one of the line's most popular vessels.





Reunion with old friends

Stepping into my stateroom on deck 7 is a real treat – the cabin is warm and airy with a super comfy bed and my balcony promises the chance of venturing out to enjoy a sea view. I'm also delighted to see some lovely little touches such as British tea and a proper kettle.

Just two hours after I board, a meet-up with old cruise friends at the Sunset Bar on deck 15 beckons and, together with what feels like most of the passengers on board, we toast the ship and give a big cheer as it sails away from Southampton at 6pm on the dot.

Many of the guests are big Celebrity fans, with some saying they had deliberately chosen to travel on *Celebrity Silhouette* because the staff on board are such a great bunch.

The vibe on board is surprisingly relaxed, though everyone is very diligent about sanitising their hands. The staff are wearing masks and are keen to tell me that they've been fully vaxxed, so I feel I'm in safe hands. Moving forward as the pandemic subsides, expect to see the rules for guests wearing masks loosening up.

Staff will probably continue to wear them for safety reasons, however.

Celebrity Silhouette usually carries up to 2,886 passengers but because Covid restrictions are still in place during my cruise, capacity is capped at 1,000. Pre cruise, I was worried that this might make the atmosphere on board a bit subdued but, on the contrary, everyone is keen to make up for lost time so busy dinners are followed by late night drinks and fun nights out at the theatre.

Trips around the UK this year have been a great success for the cruise industry and when the sun is shining, it's easy to forget the ship is in home waters. The big difference comes on the shore excursions. Belfast is not Barcelona and Liverpool is not Lanzarote, but what's great is cruises such as this are giving guests the chance to explore deeper into the UK.

First up, though, before exploring on land, I'm keen to work my way around the ship, and here the Celebrity app is very helpful, assisting guests with navigation around the ship, booking speciality restaurants and finding out what entertainment is on each day.

The staff are wearing masks and have been fully vaxxed, so I feel I'm in safe hands

The Lawn Club features eight private cabanas



The sundeck at The Retreat offers suite guests a place to relax

One price, always included

Equally handy is Celebrity's new Always Included package. Essentially, it gives guests an all-inclusive cruise that includes food, classic drinks, wifi and tips in the price of the ticket. Guests can also upgrade the package before boarding to Elevate (for \$30pp per day). This will upgrade the package to premium drinks and up to \$200 on-board credit per person for a shore excursion. Even better is the upgrade to Indulge (for \$60pp per day), featuring premium drinks, streamed wifi, up to \$200 on-board credit per person to spend and up to \$200 on-board credit per person for a shore excursion.



Cabins are warm and welcoming, and some offer sea views from a balcony



A special night out could involve the Tuscan Grille



The Always Included deal is popular with *Silhouette's* guests

Selling TIPS

Celebrity Silhouette has been through a comprehensive makeover, known as the *Celebrity Revolution*, so for guests who have sailed on the ship before, agents should talk up the new public spaces and opportunities available on board – and of course the same goes for clients who are new to *Celebrity*

- *Celebrity's* Always Included initiative is a new concept that has put an end to confusing promotions and complicated add-ons, so highlight to clients what's available in the base fare and put their minds at ease

- Encourage guests to upgrade their booking to benefit from a host of little extras, such as *The Retreat*, a stylish all-inclusive area on the ship for suite guests

The Always Included package has been a real hit with guests – they like its simplicity. On my trip I enjoy complimentary breakfast and lunch at the Oceanview Cafe, where the buffet is still in full swing but guests are served expertly by the staff – so well, in fact, that one very patient waitress even manages to find me a pot of Marmite.

Guests can also eat lunch and dinner for free at the spacious Grand Cuvée restaurant on decks 3 and 4, where the enormous menu, which changes daily, offers a huge selection. The Caesar salad is fantastic and I enjoy some delicious fish dishes here, too.

As for the speciality restaurants – Tuscan Grille, Blu, Murano, Sushi on Five, Le Petit Chef at Qsine or The Porch – guests should make a reservation for a special night out. The extra cost of between \$20 and \$50 per person is worth it and my personal favourite is the stunning Blu, with its healthier menu and jaw-dropping ocean views.

A time-honoured tradition

Cruising is not just about the food. The lovely ritual of pre-dinner drinks is in full swing on *Celebrity Silhouette* and by day two, guests are heading off to The Theatre to see some great live acts. I really love the Barricade Boys with their note-perfect renditions of numbers from shows such as *Les Misérables* and *Jersey Boys*.

There's always one bar that becomes *the* place on a ship and for our trip, it's the Martini Bar. Beautifully decorated, with an amazing bar that boasts powdered ice to keep drinks super cool, it's fun and smart at the same time. The bartenders here really know how to mix a cocktail and the giant white sofas lend themselves to meeting up with friends.

Celebrity Silhouette also offers the perfect refuge from inclement British weather with its impressive sea-view gym, now complete with Peloton bikes, indoor pool and a fantastic spa. And on a rainy day, the exquisite Persian Garden Spa is perfect for a bit of me-time. For an extra cost, guests can use the hotbeds, steam room, sauna and tropical walk-in shower.



Excursions to Liverpool might include an encounter with The Beatles



There's always one bar that becomes *the* place on a ship and for our trip, it's the Martini Bar

History lessons

Over the course of my trip, I leave the ship at Dover to enjoy a leisurely ride through the Kent and Sussex countryside on the Kent & East Sussex Railway heritage line, take a tour of Belfast that includes a visit to the Titanic Belfast Museum and a coach ride around the city, and stroll around Liverpool on a very enjoyable Beatles tour.

All the trips are great fun, but the stand-out excursion is the visit to Titanic Belfast. Informative, innovative and immersive, it's the best museum I have ever visited. Of course, leaving a ship to visit a museum about a ship that tragically sank feels slightly weird, but the museum provides more about Belfast than just the story of how the world's most famous ship was built there.

Six days at sea on board *Celebrity Silhouette* is a total treat. All the great things about cruising soon come flooding back: the service; the sheer joy of being on a big ship; the luxury of taking it easy in a super comfy cabin with a sea view; the endless dining possibilities and the total relaxation of travelling by ship. ❶

DETAILS

A nine-night Spain, Portugal & France cruise aboard *Celebrity Silhouette*, round trip from Southampton via Vigo, Porto, La Coruna, Bilbao, Bordeaux and Paris, departing 21 April 2022, from £1,199pp.

Fish dishes put health high on the menu



The last word

Ponders Travel managing director **Clare Dudley** explains why it's crucial to promote cruises and tempt holidaymakers, even if bookings are slow

One of the things I have total respect for – and more so since March 2020 – is that each and every agency business is different. Understanding

this stops me attaching too much importance to anything I read about trends or how things are going for any particular business. We know we're not alone in what we're going through.

I am determined not to lose sight of attitude and belief. I can guarantee that all my friends in travel have suffered in the past 18 months, but we are all hopeful of better times to come.

Travel is very high in clients' minds. What we have to work out is when they will feel safe not only to travel, but to book again. This is the part I find interesting and where I think some agents will fare better than others.

I have travelled to a number of cities and towns in the UK only to see the travel



“We need to remember that our business is about inspiring people to travel and helping them dream – we have to earn their trust”

agents in those towns with closed doors, no offers in the windows and just a note to say they are open only during certain hours each day – the shops look sad. They don't look inviting or indeed approachable. We need to remember that our business is about inspiring people to travel and helping them dream – we have to earn their trust.

Be there, be ready

No doubt, by now, some of you will want to hit me, as you will say in response to my comments (and someone actually did say this to me), ‘but no one wants to book right now, so what's the point of promoting anything?’. I say, the point is that we have to be there for when clients are ready; we must show them they can trust us and we must tempt them.

Clients are certainly booking, with many opting for higher-value holidays and special trips – they feel they deserve it. Also, they haven't spent money on a holiday for the past two years, so many can afford to spend a little more.

I encourage you all to be brave, to start promoting and selling again. The luxury cruise lines are a wonderful example to us, with world cruises selling out and long waiting lists. Clients are eager to see itineraries for 2024 holidays and, due to high demand for 2022 and 2023, many cruises are already full.

So, let's make our windows bright again, encourage customers to think of the far-flung destinations they've been longing for, and get them booking. 📌



Everyone is hopeful of better times to come, including the Ponders team



“We have to be there when clients are ready,” says Dudley

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