

Summer 2025

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[Cover] **Top:** The MSC Meraviglia in San Juan; **Bottom:** HX's Fridtjof Nansen; **Bottom Left:** Oxtail montadito served at the new Rojo by Razzle Dazzle on the Brilliant Lady.

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FINCANTIERI LEADING SHIPBUILDER

“We have new clients. We are proud to have AIDA. We are also happy to have Marella in our orderbook with very innovative vessels coming in 2030 and 2032,” said Luigi Matarazzo, general manager of the Fincantieri Merchant Ships Division.

It was a busy spring for the Italian shipbuilder, which also confirmed two more Viking newbuilds, a hydrogen project for the same brand, and two newbuilds for AIDA and two for Marella. Both are new customers for Fincantieri.

“Marella is part of TUI, and we have experience with them, successfully delivering Mein Schiff Relax earlier this year. They were very satisfied. The final results in terms of performance and quality have been exceptional. That has facilitated the relationship with TUI. We started developing a project with them a few months ago and now we have agreed to two vessels in the 125,000-ton range,” said Matarazzo.

“Then we have a long partnership with Viking. We have been able to confirm contracts for ocean ships 21 and 22 (to be delivered in 2031), and also further options for an additional two vessels to be delivered in 2033.”

Hydrogen

In the short term, however, Viking’s 2026 and 2027 newbuilds will be able to run on hydrogen.

“Everyone is talking about decarbonization. Everyone is debating the transition period. The reality is, the Viking hydrogen ships are a concrete application,” said Matarazzo.

“We have been able to develop something that is real, not just a design study.”

Six megawatts of power from hydrogen fuel cells will be available aboard the Viking Libra, coming in 2026, and the Viking Astrea, set to be delivered in 2027.

“It is a clever solution, one of the main issues we have is the supply chain. We

are adding a big opening to the side of the vessel to put in two containers. Each container will have 3 MW of power. When the ship is in port, they can change out the containers.

“The ship can be zero emissions in port, but also while sailing in the Norwegian fjords. With the ship at anchor or at low speed, the ship can operate for eight to 10 hours at zero emissions,” he said.

The project dates back to a test hydrogen installation on the Viking Neptune, which had fuel cells capable of delivering 100 kilowatts.

“One hundred kilowatts is nothing. That was the start,” added Matarazzo. “We also had to work with the classification societies. There were no rules.”

Next Decade

Matarazzo said the cruise market is going to continue to grow, predicting a 10 percent annual growth rate year-over-year going forward.

▶ The new Norwegian Aqua was delivered this past spring.

“Everyone is talking about decarbonization. Everyone is debating the transition period. The reality is, the Viking hydrogen ships are a concrete application.”

He attributed this not only to the industry continuing to expand, but also what could be an accelerated pace of retiring older ships as new emissions regulations come in.

“There are two segments in my opinion that are more active. One is the luxury market. I expect more luxury ships and more specialized ultra-luxury ships.

“On the other end, there will be more big, contemporary vessels,” he said.

For older ships, Matarazzo said many options continue to be available.

“There could be engines that can become dual-fuel. You can use or convert existing engines to methanol. It’s not that invasive. We are proposing that to clients and have reached some agreements.”

Costs and Sizes

“One of the consequences of Covid has been an increase in raw material and labor costs,” Matarazzo said. “This has had a significant impact on the overall cost of construction.”

Costs may be up, but so are ship sizes.

“For each segment of the market, everyone is scaling up. A few years ago, a luxury ship was 40,000 or 50,000 gross tons. Today, that range has become 70,000 to 80,000,” he said.

“We have probably reached the maximum sizes. For the contemporary market, I don’t think we can go more than the size of the Icon of the Seas. From a technical point of view, there is no issue, you can go bigger, but the problem is the availability of port facilities. You have limitations.”

Fuel continues to be in a transition period.

“The serious answer depends on the size of the ship, where you operate it and fuel availability,” Matarazzo explained.

Energy Efficiency

“How can you optimize a vessel?” Matarazzo asked. “Last year we delivered the Sun Princess. With the combination of LNG and all the other initiatives, we have been able to reduce emissions by 50 percent compared to the 2008 IMO baseline. How? Working on the hull shape, the propulsion, HVAC and more.

“If you put all these actions together, and if you recover the heat produced aboard, it is another significant way to reduce emissions.”

Sailing speeds have also come down.

“Fifteen to 20 years ago, we added turbines to ships to increase the sailing speed,” Matarazzo said. “Today the ser-

vice speed is much lower, between 14 and 16 knots, and the hull shape is optimized for that.

“We have patented covers for bow thrusters. Ships have three or four thrusters, each about three meters wide. We are adding shutters to these, so the openings will be closed when they are not being used. When you close them, you can gain 3 to 4 percent in efficiency.”

Getting ready for the future, Matarazzo said the Merchant Ships Division has proactively strengthened its organization, hiring over 1,000 new employees in recent years. This has been accompanied by the establishment of structured career development paths at the company, he said, which is committed to talent enhancement and the development of industry-specific expertise.

Matarazzo said that the strength of the Merchant Ships Division lies in the skills of its managers and the majority of its employees. Throughout their careers, they have continuously developed their technical and leadership skills with dedicated training programs and hands-on experience.

Job rotation within the company has further enhanced careers for workers, allowing them to deepen their knowledge and broaden their experience. As a result, the team operates efficiently and consistently approaches the work with a positive and proactive mindset. – *Monty Mathisen*



The new Brilliant Lady ▲

VIRGIN MILESTONE YEAR

VIRGIN VOYAGES PUTS THE BRILLIANT LADY INTO OPERATION THIS YEAR STARTING IN NEW YORK, MAKING IT THE FOURTH LADY SHIP FOR THE BRAND.

Michelle Bentubo,
chief operating officer

“It’s a milestone year and we don’t want to lose sight of the accomplishment,” said Michelle Bentubo, chief operating officer.

Bentubo said the ship would usher in a number of product differentiators and other steps in the evolution of the brand. These include a new Spanish restaurant, new menus and new entertainment.

Following the success of Lucky Lotus by Razzle Dazzle, a Chinese-inspired restaurant that launched aboard the Scarlet Lady in November, Rojo by Razzle Dazzle will be introduced onboard the Brilliant Lady. Guests can look forward to Spanish-inspired cuisine.

Rojo’s new menu will feature Morcilla’s Oxtail Montadito with braised oxtail, caramelized onion, Mahón cheese and crostini.

The restaurant’s brunch entails a Spanish-American twist, with new dishes including jamon croquettes and classics such as acai bowls, pastries and frittatas. The Rojo venue transforms in the evening into a dining experience featuring pintxos, tapas and platos grandes.

According to the company, the space was completely reimagined for Rojo in order to create a venue that honors Spain’s communal dining traditions.

Adding to the ship’s restaurant adjustments is Gunbae, which is introducing kimbap rolls, bulgogi fire meat and bossam (whole roasted pork butt with oysters and caviar).

There are seven productions that will debut on the Brilliant Lady. Entertainment options will now offer more comedy, live music as well as immersive storytelling.

Among the highlights is a new murder mystery show that will debut in The Manor.

Bentubo added: “It’s an elevation of entertainment. As the team took me through the various new concepts, I walked away feeling that it is a growing

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The Valiant Lady is the second of the four Virgin ships.

“It’s a great opportunity to hit some of the lesser-known ports.

up that is occurring with the Brilliant Lady.

“It’s still something unique to us and fits our brand,” she said.

Virgin has a long-term view, having taken delivery of the Brilliant Lady in early 2024, but holding the inventory back and now carefully introducing the ship in New York before moving it to Miami and eventually the West Coast and Alaska for summer 2026.

For her inaugural deployment, the Brilliant Lady will sail roundtrip from New York City between September and October 2025. The ship will offer four voyages from five to 10 nights starting Sept. 5, sailing to both Bermuda and Canada/New England.

Bentubo said being able to offer the Virgin product from New York to the Northeast and Bermuda was a big deal for the brand.

When the 2,770-guest ship arrives in Miami for the winter, it will mean all four lady ships are in the Caribbean. Could there be a fleet meetup or something unique? Stay tuned, Bentubo said.

The additional supply in the Caribbean will allow the company to offer longer cruises.

“It’s a great opportunity to hit some of the lesser-known ports,” Bentubo continued. “St. Kitts is a great example. It’s an amazing port that is not overrun by cruising.”

Following her winter season in the Caribbean, the latest Virgin ship heads west.

From April, the Brilliant Lady will offer four roundtrip sailings from Los Angeles between April and May 2026.

Next summer the brand arrives in Alaska, where it will differentiate its product by turning in Seattle on Tuesdays, meaning the Brilliant Lady will see fewer

ships in the small choice of Alaska ports thanks to leaving Seattle on a Tuesday as opposed to sailing on a weekend.

“We can’t miss. If sailors are going to trust us with their Alaska adventure, let’s make sure we give them the best possible experience,” Bentubo added.

She said the company keeps a close eye on where its web traffic is coming from, and that demand and marketing is strong in Florida, the Northeast and Texas.

“We are seeing those markets grow more and more,” she said. “And as we have put ships in Europe, we are leaning into those markets as well.”

What’s next?

“Now it’s time for the evolution of our product. We spend a lot of time listening to our sailors and first mates, and we’re building the brand together. We want to talk about that feedback and see how we are going to keep it fresh. We want to keep people coming back.” – *Monty Mathisen*

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Port Canaveral Prime Place for New Hardware

The Norwegian Aqua and Royal Caribbean's Star of the Seas will call Port Canaveral home this summer, as the Florida port has a full summer slate of cruises, said Captain John Murray, CEO.

That momentum continues, as the new Carnival Festival will call Port Canaveral home in 2027, as will the new MSC World Atlantic.

"We've always had year-round vessels, and our strongest months are December, March, April and July," he said.

March 2025 was the port's busiest month ever, with 926,000 cruise passenger movements, Murray said.

The Star of the Seas will take the place of the Wonder of the Seas and sail alongside the Utopia, with the Star offering weeklong itineraries and the Utopia on a short cruise program. To prepare for the additional capacity, the port has made some changes, including opening additional doors on the terminal for new entry points for guests, and expanding a baggage screening area. A new awning will also be waiting for guests to keep them out of the elements.

Big Business

"We like all the business," said Murray. "It is challenging for us as we only have six terminals and it's a bit of a Rubik's Cube in giving everyone what they want."

With high utilization rates, it also means different thinking to handle seemingly normal tasks. Maintenance and cleaning that used to take place on non-cruise days is now being done overnight, said Murray. The port has additionally created a consolidated gangway operations team that can operate and fix gangways, as opposed to having those functions separated. Also on order is an extra passenger boarding bridge. It will be rotated so the

port can take down and do maintenance on existing boarding bridges. It will also serve as a backup.

Two More

An expansion is taking place at Cruise Terminal 5, said Murray, upsizing the facility to 150,000 square feet from its current footprint of 90,000, and will be done with the terminal in service, with a completion date of late 2026.

Murray said the plan is to build another two terminals on the south side of the port by the end of the decade, both of which will be sized to serve the latest, biggest ships. The first hurdle to that will be roadway improvements to manage traffic flow.

"The guest experience starts when they drive into Port Canaveral, and we want to make it as seamless as possible. We aren't a cruise line, but we can ruin their ratings," said Murray.

Traffic is a key issue, with more short cruises and bigger ships leading to more drive-in guests.

Facial recognition means guests are off the ships much faster, and there is less overlap between guests leaving the port, and new guests driving in. Port Canaveral has sped this up further by moving its parking garages to prepaid systems.

"We have a sophisticated system to forecast the number of cars coming in per vessel. We can make a fairly accurate estimate based on the cruise line, season and voyage length," he said.

Three thousand new parking spaces were recently added via two new garages on the north side of the port. Flat lots were opened for Cruise Terminal 1 as well, and Murray said that those have filled in, and he soon expects to have to build vertical garages in their space. — *Monty Mathisen*



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Expansion Continues at Mitsui



From left: Tsunemichi Mukai, president, and Anthony "Tony" Kaufman, head of commercial strategies

AFTER EXPANDING LAST YEAR WITH THE MITSUI OCEAN FUJI AND ANOTHER 450 BERTHS, MITSUI OCEAN CRUISES WILL CONTINUE ITS EXPANSION WITH THE ACQUISITION OF THE SEABOURN SOJOURN, WHICH WILL JOIN THE JAPANESE BRAND'S FLEET IN 2026. SHE IS THE SISTER TO THE MITSUI OCEAN FUJI, WHICH FORMERLY OPERATED AS THE SEABOURN ODYSSEY.

“As we look at the market, before Covid, there were 350,000 Japanese guests, and that was a record,” said Tsunemichi Mukai, president. “We had the opportunity to purchase the Seabourn Odyssey, which is now sailing alongside our Nippon Maru, which is Japanese flagged. Now we have the chance to purchase another vessel. We are also looking at newbuilds.”

Mukai said that 350,000 Japanese cruise guests annually represented a tiny penetration rate in a country of 120 million.

“There is significant potential. We need more tonnage,” Mukai added.

He also pointed to Disney coming to the market later in the decade, which he said would be a net positive, as the brand wouldn't really compete with Mitsui and would help educate the broader Japanese market on the idea of going on a cruise vacation.

Market Dynamics

Following delivery from Seabourn in 2026, the Sojourn will be converted, much like the Odyssey, for the Japanese market.

Also in mind: international guests. The company is starting sales and marketing efforts in key international markets, said Anthony “Tony” Kaufman, head of commercial strategies.

Kaufman pointed to the U.S. and Taiwan as key markets that will have select departures available to them. Shore excursions and other programming will be available in the relevant languages.

“A large part of the ship will be Japanese and a smaller part will be international, so they really get the flavor of being in Japan; part of the experience will be sailing with the Japanese guests,” said Kaufman.

In Japan, the plan is to turn up marketing and PR to get the word out.

“We are taking care of our travel partners and working hard with them to give them what they need to talk to their customers,” Kaufman said.

“Traditionally, cruising has been seen in Japan as a vacation for older, retired rich people. But now things are changing. We're really at the start of the expansion of the cruise industry (in Japan).”

Ready

Mukai said there were plenty of deck and engine crew to go around, thanks to parent company MOL, which operates over 900 vessels.

“We have around 1,500 seafarers,” Mukai said. “We are hiring and training for hotel crew (in Japan). At the same time, we are hiring from the Philippines.”

Deployment should open up a bit with more capacity, Kaufman continued. That could include longer cruises to Naha and Okinawa. A longer cruise is already planned heading to Hawaii.

“We're trying to figure out where the guests want to go,” he said.

The Nippon Maru will be retired early next year and with the Sojourn coming into the fleet in 2026, the plan still calls for the company to build new ships, Mukai said.

“We'd like to add (new ships) to our fleet in five to six years,” he explained, noting the ships would be LNG-capable and most likely built at a European shipyard. — *Monty Mathisen*

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Margaritaville at Sea Another Addition



An artist's rendering of the Costa Fortuna in her potential new livery

MARGARITAVILLE AT SEA WILL CONTINUE ITS EXPANSION NEXT YEAR AS THE COMPANY HAS BOUGHT THE COSTA FORTUNA, WHICH WILL SAIL FROM A U.S. HOMEPORT ALONGSIDE THE TAMPA-BASED ISLANDER AND WEST PALM BEACH-BASED PARADISE, SAID CHRISTOPHER IVY, CEO.

"We had the opportunity to acquire the Fortuna, which is a great evolution for us," Ivy said.

Since buying out the Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line operation, Margaritaville at Sea has expanded quickly. The two-night cruise program from West Palm Beach has been reinvented with more ports, a mix of longer sailings and investments in the Paradise.

The Costa Atlantica was also acquired and transformed into the Islander, launching service from Tampa last year.

"That was a significant material step forward for the business, adding the ship and four- and five-night sailings. We have also added some 10-night sailings and are incredibly pleased with the performance of the vessel. It's the right time to continue to expand," Ivy said.

He explained that the Fortuna was an ideal size, at just under 3,000 berths and just over 100,000 tons.

"It has a good balcony mix and the overall space ratio is good. There are going to be a lot of opportunities for us to bring over our concepts," he said.

Margaritaville-themed staterooms on the Islander have been a hit, so expect them on the rebranded Fortuna when the ship enters service following her drydock conversion in late 2026, Ivy said.

"The planning has kicked off and is going at full steam," he said, "and that will continue up and through the drydock. The ship is sailing now (for Costa) and we have access to the ship if

we need it; we can also sail as guests."

Ivy wouldn't elaborate on a ship name or homeport, apart from the ship sailing from the U.S.

"There is a lot of information we have not released and that will come out over the coming months," he said.

That will help drive demand, as the company has recently brought in a chief marketing officer and another senior-level sales manager.

"We have made investments from a team standpoint and that is a big piece of the capacity expansion for us," Ivy said.

Also, the key has been building up relationships with the travel trade.

"Historically, this business has been more direct, so we are now growing with our travel advisors and have a specific targeted outreach program ... the trade element is a big one we continue to focus on."

Other opportunities include packaging in hotel stays at Margaritaville properties, which has happened with the company's hotels in Orlando and Hollywood, Florida. — *Monty Mathisen*



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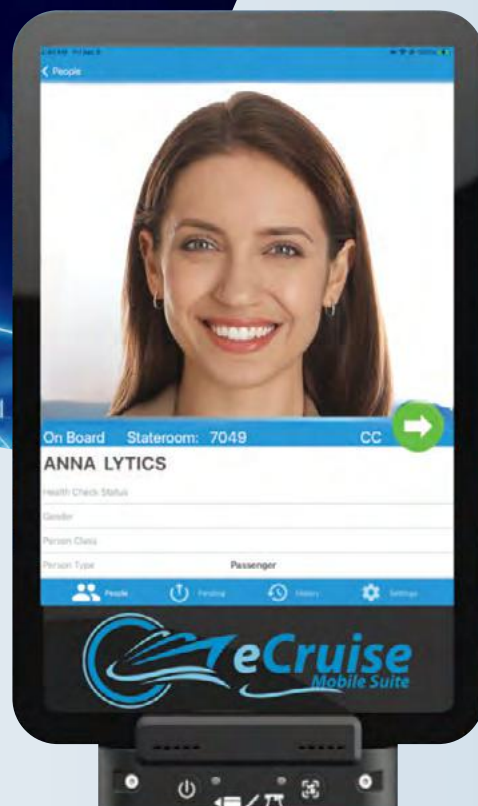
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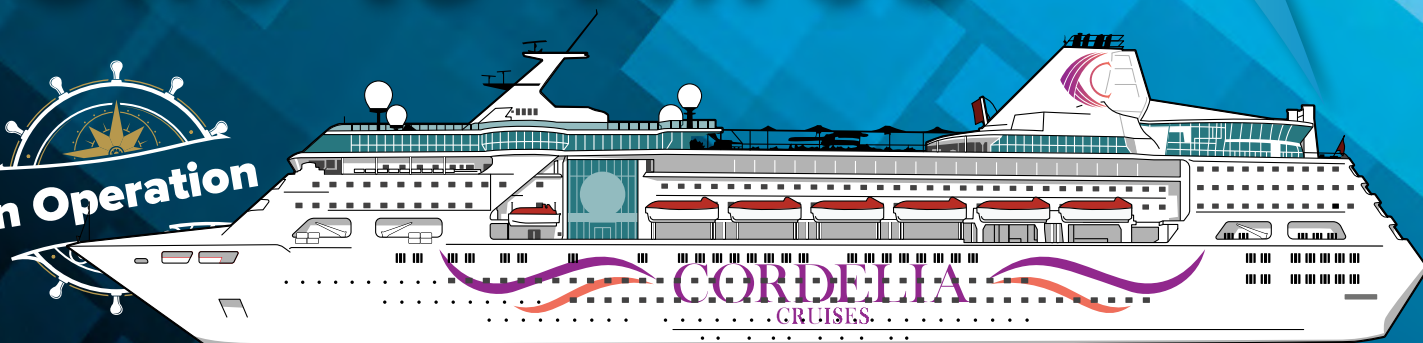
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Cordelia One to Three

In Operation



THE NORWEGIAN SKY AND SUN ARE A GREAT FIT FOR CORDELIA, AS THE SHIPS WILL JOIN THE CRUISE LINE'S FLEET IN 2026 AND 2027, SAID CEO JURGEN BAILOM. BOTH VESSELS ARE ON A 10-YEAR CHARTER-TO-OWN ARRANGEMENT. THE SHIPS JOIN THE COMPANY'S EXISTING VESSEL, THE EMPRESS, WHICH IT ACQUIRED FROM ROYAL CARIBBEAN DURING THE PANDEMIC.

The names Sky and Sun are being retained by the company, as they align with Indian cultural concepts, and their speed capabilities enable Cordelia to sail longer cruises, which Bailom said will be rolled out soon.

"We have been developing the Indian cruise market since 2018," Bailom told *Cruise Industry News*, explaining that they have been looking to grow the fleet since 2021, seeing opportunity in the potentially huge and untapped Indian market.

"The best part of all of it is that the average passenger age in India is around 32 to 34. We (have) the youngest passenger age average globally in the cruise market," he added.

Bailom explained that the company has waited for port development.

"We're working with the government on the infrastructure of port developments. We just opened a new Mumbai port and terminal; we're also working on

an island concept that the government is developing for us to get into the Lakshadweep Islands. And now it is just a matter of getting better hardware."

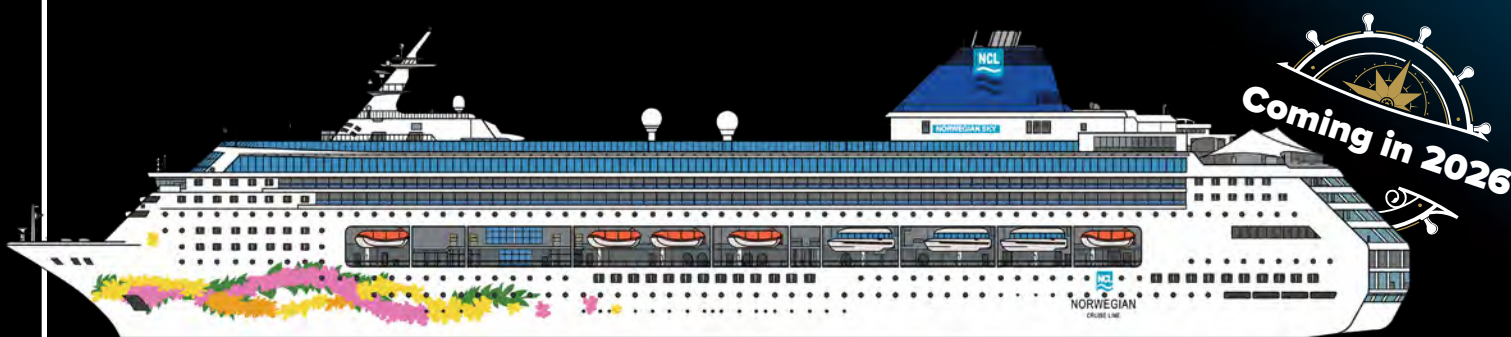
New Ships

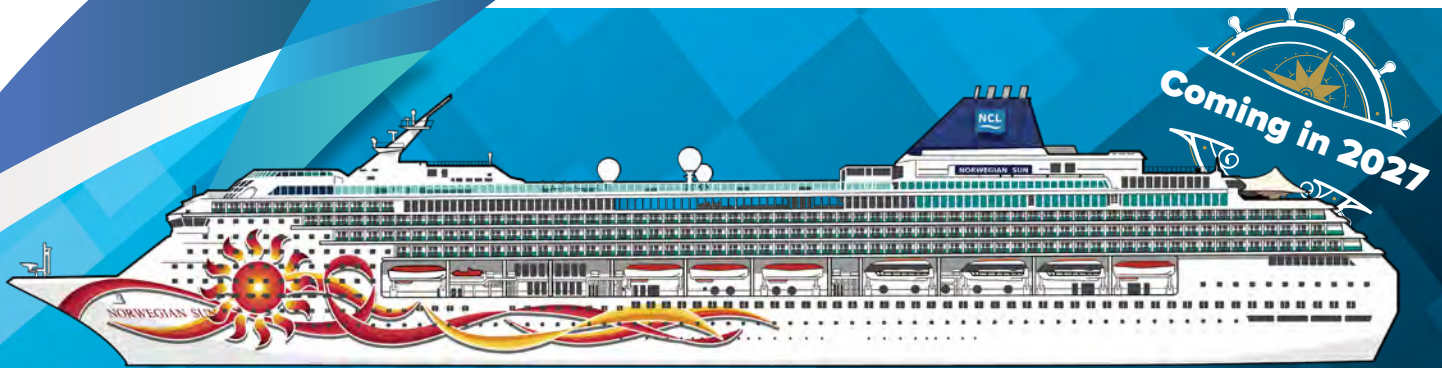
According to Bailom, the new ships provide the hardware Cordelia was looking for. The profile of a Norwegian Cruise Line ship is also oriented to the interior, which worked in Cordelia's favor.

"Indians spend more time inside. They love to eat, be entertained, sing and dance," he said.

"And then on top of it is the cabin categories. The ships have a huge number of balcony cabins, which our guests will love," he noted.

Bailom said that the ships are in mint condition with the latest concepts and technology. The only changes still to be made are additions to the galley for tandoori cooking and enhancements to core venues.





“There are a couple of name changes, which we already have on the Empress,” Bailom said, pointing to planned enhancements that accommodate Indian weddings onboard.

Itinerary Plans

“We want to take Indians further and further the Indian way,” Bailom said.

He said that the Empress will be shifting to a new homeport on the west coast, offering international sailings from Kochi. The Sky will take over the Empress’s itinerary out of Mumbai.

When the Sun joins the fleet in 2027, the Sky will move to Chennai, while the Sun will be based in Mumbai. The Sun is also going to sail a 35-day cruise roundtrip from Mumbai going as far as Sydney.

Indian Cruise Concept

“In India, the concept of cruising is new. Everything we do out of India is visa-free, passport-free. That’s why we chose these itineraries. We’re going to dominate the South Asian market,” Bailom said.

What does Cordelia need to do shore-side to increase capacity?

Bailom said that the company is good to go.

“Our head office is in Mumbai. We have two more offices in Delhi. We are really strong, taking about 75, 80 percent of our bookings directly,” he added.

He noted that Cordelia will have international BSAs with the new itineraries, as Indians living abroad will also be looking to travel on Cordelia’s ships.

“We are glad to be a leader and a true Indian cruise company. We are very proud,” he said. – Robyn Tamblyn



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R Yacht Coming in 2027

Haruka Toyama (far left) and Arai Masahiro (second from left) at the signing ceremony for the new brand

THE R YACHT COMPANY IS GEARING UP TO ENTER THE CRUISE INDUSTRY, WITH WEST SEA BUILDING THE COMPANY'S FIRST SHIP AT ITS VIANA DO CASTELO SHIPYARD IN PORTUGAL. THE SHIP WILL BE OPERATED BY THE NEW COMPANY, WHICH IS 100 PERCENT OWNED BY RYOBI HOLDINGS.

Masahiro Arai, chief operating officer at R Yacht, and Haruka Toyama, project leader, told *Cruise Industry News* that the Ryobi Group, a global manufacturing conglomerate, has grown together with local communities through businesses such as public transportation, real estate and tourism.

"Our headquarters is in Okayama, a region facing the Seto Inland Sea, which is known for its scenic seascape of countless islands and port towns with rich maritime traditions," they said.

Yacht-Style Focus

That attention now turns to cruising, and Arai and Toyama explained that the project was launched out of a desire to share the unique beauty of Japan's coastline with a broader audience.

"While the Ryobi Group has experience operating ferries, sightseeing vessels and dinner boats, this project represents our first full-scale entry into the cruise industry," they said.

"Our long-term vision is to intro-

duce a new lifestyle concept through a high-quality cruise experience originating from Japan. We aim to offer exceptional journeys for affluent and curious travelers from both Japan and abroad, while emphasizing harmony with local communities and showcasing the ports, culture and natural beauty of Japan."

Arai and Toyama said that when it comes to positioning in the market, R Yacht aims to deliver a unique and high-end product within the small ship market as Japan's first yacht-style cruise ship.

This entails offering a product featuring a luxurious atmosphere and attentive service that gives the feeling of being aboard a private megayacht.

"We will deliver a distinctly different experience from large cruise ships by offering personalized onboard service for a small number of guests, access to remote island destinations only reachable by small vessels and flexible itineraries."

The First Ship

The new ship is expected to be delivered in 2027 and to operate primarily in

Japanese waters and nearby countries.

"It is being designed to visit remote islands in the Seto Inland Sea and the southwestern archipelagos, locations inaccessible to large cruise ships," Arai and Toyama said.

It will be equipped with Japan's first onboard marina, allowing guests to enjoy marine activities and make landings on remote islands using small boats.

"We are planning a cruise lifestyle product that delivers a more immersive and unique travel experience," they added. "The ship is expected to carry approximately 120 guests."

The company said that guests will "enjoy Japan's ports at a relaxed pace, away from the hustle and bustle."

Arai and Toyama added that in addition to guests from Japan, the company is also targeting international travelers, especially those with a strong interest in Japanese culture, nature and cuisine.

Future Plans

"While no specific follow-up projects have been finalized at this time, we are considering the possibility of constructing a second vessel in the future," Arai and Toyama said.

They added that with the project currently in progress, the release of more finalized information will follow in due course. — Robyn Tamblyn

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Captain the cat is one of seven cats living on the ship.

Villa Vie Unique Model

Villa Vie Residences is building a niche of its own with its new residential and long-term cruising concept.

Guests live aboard for long stretches of time, either acquiring cabins (called villas) or entering into essentially a very long-term cabin lease on the 1993-built ship.

Combining Staterooms

As owners of the staterooms, the residents can decorate and outfit their space as they want. Some have bought their own furniture (the company provides a list of approved suppliers), while others have combined multiple staterooms to create a larger area.

This has brought on its own set of challenges and the company is still putting new procedures in place to accommodate stateroom refits.

While some of the cabin enhancement projects were carried out during the ship's drydock in Belfast last year, others are

currently being developed by Villa Vie's onboard team.

Once approved, the onboard team gets to work, and there is a constant list of changes being done across the ship, as the ship's maintenance crew can be hired for refit services by residents for an hourly fee. Some projects are contracted out, depending on their complexity.

Differences

Among the unique points to living aboard, staterooms are only cleaned twice a week, although residents can opt for more frequent housekeeping services for an additional nominal fee.

There's also a complimentary laundry service, which can be used by residents twice a week.

The Odyssey offers a communal business center with high-speed internet, and snacks and refreshments around the clock. Those who wish can also rent private office space.

Residents can enjoy the entertainment program, which is not as elaborate as on the big ships as there is no cast as such, but the ship does have a music duo, a pianist, dance instructor and language teacher.

The company doesn't have a shore excursions department onboard. Instead, it provides destination lectures. Villa Vie does not sell shore excursions but only recommends experiences in ports. The company has partnered with a tour operator to create a website that can be used for tour purchases.

Cats Onboard

Cats are welcome aboard, as Villa Vie has helped create standard operating procedures to accommodate them.

Unlike service dogs, which are allowed to move around with their owners, cats can't leave their cabins.

But there are designated times when the cats can go to use a litter area in a specific part of the ship. Guests are mindful of the sanitary conditions, where to dispose of the litter, how to replace it and more.

Seven cats were reportedly living onboard the Odyssey along with their owners during *Cruise Industry News'* visit. — Daniel Capella

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ASIA'S PREMIERE CRUISE DESTINATIONS

COLOURFUL EXPERIENCES BECKON AT ASIA'S
PREMIER CRUISE DESTINATIONS

The four prominent cruise destinations - Hong Kong, Korea, the Philippines and Xiamen present enormous resources to enrich cruise programmes, as well as supportive measures including favorable visa policies and seamless processes to smooth cruise visitations.

From UNESCO-honored gems in Hong Kong to K-culture in Korea, new cruise attractions in the Ilocos Region of the Philippines and the imminent launch of a new theme park and cruise terminal in Xiamen, these leading destinations continue to enrich destination offerings and collectively empower cruising with a difference.

HONG KONG Hidden Gems, New Developments

Cruise visitors to Hong Kong have no shortage for choices when it comes to shoreside experiences. From the city's vibrant charm and UNESCO-recognized heritage sites to unique encounters, which include meeting pandas at Ocean Park Hong Kong, or celebrating magical moments during the 20th Anniversary events at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort.

The area around the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal is also rapidly evolving. The new Kai Tak Sports Park features a 50,000-seat stadium that is designed to host premier events such as world-class sporting events and international concerts. Visitors can enjoy cutting-edge "sportainment" retail experiences nearby, stroll through Kowloon Walled City Park to discover the remains of the once-infamous settlement, or find tranquility at the Chi Lin Nunnery and the adjacent Nan Lian Garden, a classical Chinese oasis.

Joanne Chu, deputy commissioner for Tourism of the Hong Kong SAR Government, said:

"While we continue to elevate the onshore experience for cruise guests, the HKSAR Government is also accelerating efforts to implement shore power and promote green maritime fuels, which are key steps in ensuring the long-term sustainability and future readiness of the global cruise industry."

KOREA 'K-Harmony Wave'

Korea offers a dynamic K-culture experience that flows in harmony, from the elegance of K-Tradition seen in majestic palaces and bustling traditional markets, to the energy of K-Modern reflected in stylish lifestyles and advanced technologies.



Passengers can look forward to K-Gourmet, which showcases the depth and diversity of Korean cuisine, and rejuvenate through K-Wellness, focused on holistic mental and physical well-being.

As Korea hosts the 12th Asia Cruise Forum in Jeju from July 10 to 12, the country continues to focus on building up its cruise infrastructure. Jeju Cruise Port will be the first in Korea to implement 38 new unmanned immigration checkpoints this year. In addition, the Busan Yeongdo Cruise Terminal is set for a renovation.

“We are committed to continually upgrading port facilities and systems to make cruise travel in Korea more seamless. Our goal is to ensure every cruise visitor enjoys a unique journey enriched by Korea’s distinctive atmosphere, living traditions and modern appeal,” said Jae Min Park, deputy director of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea.

THE PHILIPPINES More Destinations

The Philippines is making significant strides in regional cruise tourism development. In the north, the Ilocos Region is emerging as a prime destination for luxury brands, with ports such as Salomague, Currimaio, and Hundred Islands National Park. The region welcomed 6,000 cruise guests in the first two months of 2025.

In the southern part of the archipelago, infrastructure investments continue to expand the country’s cruise capacity. Following the completion of the Jubang Port cruise terminal in Dapa, Surigao del Norte, new cruise terminals are also being developed in Alegria, Coron, Puerto Galera and Balbagon.

Dr. Paulo Benito Tugbang, director for product development at the Philippine Department of Tourism, added:

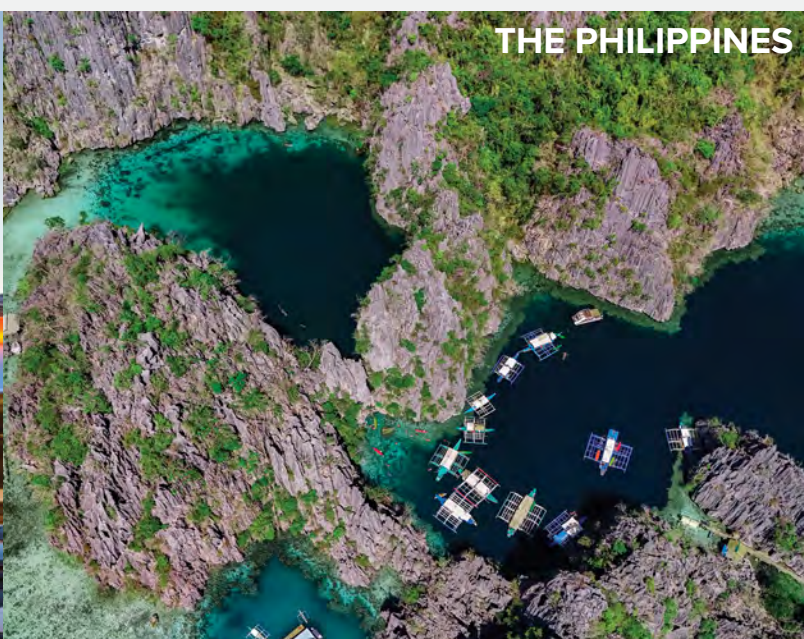
“Cruise tourism has seen exceptional growth, with a 300 percent increase in cruise passenger arrivals during the first five months of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. To further encourage this momentum, the government has launched a cruise visa waiver program, allowing foreign tourists arriving by cruise ships to enter the country visa-free for a limited time.”

XIAMEN Immersive Cultural Experiences

Bringing the rich Minnan culture of Xiamen to life, Time Meets Island, is the world’s first cultural theme park located within a cruise terminal zone. This attraction invites visitors to explore the region’s thousand-year history through themed zones featuring Minnan heritage, culinary traditions, museum-style performances and a vibrant night market.

The new Xiamen International Cruise Terminal 2 opened in April and is designed for efficiency and comfort. It features streamlined security procedures with an average passenger clearance time of just 10 minutes. Ideally situated in the heart of the city, the port provides visitors with convenient access to major attractions, the airport and rail connections.

Wang Guodi, deputy director of the Xiamen Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, said: “We have introduced a 144-hour visa-free transit policy, granting visa-free entry to nationals from 54 countries and qualified tourist groups arriving in Xiamen by cruise ship. Visitors can stay for up to 10 days, giving them the opportunity to explore not only Xiamen but also other destinations across China.” ■



MSC Market Leader



► Gianni Onorato, CEO

MSC has 17 ships in the European market, with 13 sailing in the Mediterranean and four in Northern Europe, said Gianni Onorato, CEO, in an interview with *Cruise Industry News*.

Onorato also pointed out the new 5,400-guest World Asia, which will debut in Europe in 2026, making MSC the only brand putting new tonnage into the European market.

▼ The MSC Divina divides its time between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caribbean.



“The key feature for our European homeporting is accessibility,” he said, pointing to air, high-speed rail and drive-in potential.

“Some ports are responding to this type of need, while others are more difficult.

“With so many embarkation points, we pick up local guests that have easy access in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, the UK and elsewhere.”

MSC has key investments in Barcelona and Marseille in terminals, and Valencia continues to become more important as Spain is a key source market for MSC, Onorato said.

“It is really accessible with high-speed trains from Madrid; similar to Marseille with Paris,” he continued.

‘POTENTIAL’

The core European markets remain full of potential.

“In Italy, the market is about 1 million guests in a country of 60 million people,” Onorato said. “France is very tiny, as is Spain, and in Germany we are offering a different product

from the national brands; it’s the same in the UK. If guests want a British experience they can consider one of the other brands; if they want a more international experience they can choose MSC.”

Germany may represent the market with the most potential, as it is the largest holiday-package market in Europe, Onorato said.

“The key feature for our European homeporting is accessibility.

Emerging source markets include Eastern Europe, highlighted by Poland, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

“These countries have residents who are traveling the world and cruise is an opportunity,” Onorato said. ►



▲ The Armonia will be sailing in South America and the Eastern Mediterranean in 2026.

Yacht Club for MSC Magnifica



The MSC Magnifica will get the company's ship-within-a-ship Yacht Club concept later this year during a large drydock that will also see the introduction of a new spa and gym.

The new Yacht Club staterooms means the ship will experience a drop in capacity, as the 63 high-yielding cabins are taking the place of 80 standard suites.

In other news, the Magnifica will also assume the company's world cruise for 2027, taking over from the Musica, which was originally slated to offer the 121-night cruise. ■

"People love our ships, the brand is appreciated and we tailor the product to local needs."

Those ships are strategically positioned in Europe. The Seaside and Seaview, which have more outdoor deck space, stay in the warmer climate in Southern Europe, while the Poesia and Preziosa, for example, tend to sail in Northern Europe. Of note, capacity in Northern Europe goes up for winter 2026-27 with the 2,550-guest Poesia heading to North America and being replaced by the bigger 3,500-guest Preziosa.

MSC's increasingly larger presence in the U.S. and South America also means more guests are flying to board ships in Europe, Onorato said.

INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

MSC has a unique differentiator in Europe with its inter-porting program, meaning guests can board at any port on an itinerary and then disembark a week later. They are not tied in to starting their cruise on a Sunday for instance.

MSC will then allocate inventory based on multiple home-ports on the same itinerary. This means that a ship with a set seven-day cruise with five ports is essentially five different programs from an inventory perspective.

"You need to respect the cabin allocation," said Onorato. "For the local markets, this makes access to the ships very easy with lower transportation costs."

'GROWING'

The LNG-powered World Asia will add to the company's European presence in 2026, while the World Atlantic heads to the U.S. and Port Canaveral in 2027. After that, two more ►



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MSC



▲ The MSC Opera will be based in the Southern Caribbean year-round.

▼ The 2019-built MSC Grandiosa is set to debut in Port Canaveral later this year.



World Class vessels are on order from Chantiers de l'Atlantique with delivery dates in 2029 and 2030.

"We will have continuous and properly balanced growth," Onorato said.

That includes sourcing European guests for cruises elsewhere, including in Alaska where the Poesia debuts in 2026. MSC's initial wave of bookings primarily came from European customers for the Seattle-based program.

Further south in the U.S., there are cruises out of Miami, Port Canaveral, Galveston and from Brooklyn, while the company expands its Caribbean presence with a year-round program from La Romana with the 2004-built Opera beginning in winter 2026-27 through summer 2027. For the winter 2026-27 season, the Opera will be joined by the 2018-built Seaview, marking the first time the company operates two ships during the season in the South Caribbean.

"I'm bullish on this," Onorato said. "It's an interesting program and going year-round is very exciting. The Dominican Republic is an attractive destination for Europeans, with no visa requirements and good airlift." – *Monty Mathisen*



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Core Innovations

▼ The Costa Smeralda bunkering LNG



Mario Zanetti,
president ►



The focus at Costa is on product innovation, building on the company's Italian product with a new shore excursion program combined with its Sea Destination initiative, said Mario Zanetti, president.

Zanetti told *Cruise Industry News* that Sea Destinations have been a huge hit with guests. The program brings destinations alive with programming matched to ports.

"We brought the concept to the Caribbean and the Emirates this past winter and are rolling it out in Northern Europe this summer," said Zanetti. "We are getting great guest feedback not only for the destinations but for the entire cruise when we offer them."



▲ The 3,700-guest Costa Diadema will return to South America later this year after another season in Northern Europe.

“Our strategies are focused on our core markets, as that helps us prioritize our efforts and better innovate our product to serve these markets and match guest expectations in them.”

Examples include the Costa Smeralda, sailing in the Western Mediterranean on weekly cruises. After leaving Barcelona, the first of the itinerary’s Sea Destinations will be reached: the darkest spot of the Balearic Sea, where the ship will be positioned to allow guests to enjoy a “Sea of Stars,” from an exclusive perspective.

Then arriving in the Capri Bay, guests will be greeted by a “Swing Symphony,” with a live concert happening while they enjoy a Capri breakfast with a view of the Faraglioni rocks lit by the first light of day. Onboard, Piazza di Spagna is transformed into a Capri-style town square.

In Naples, guests will be able to discover the city by choosing “All of Naples,” a new shore excursion. Finally, back onboard and while sailing, the ship will arrive in the heart of the Pelagos sanctuary, offering the potential to see dolphins and humpback whales with an atmospheric light show and an exclusive performance aboard.

A new shore excursion program has been another big change, as Costa has refined its offering and simplified it, said Zanetti, not reducing the scope but tweaking excursions to different groups of guests, including adding more tours aimed at smaller groups.

FLEET CHANGES

The Costa Fortuna will leave the fleet in the third quarter of 2026. That will lead to a domino impact, as the Serena will leave Asia and sail in South America for 2026-27 before repositioning to Europe.

Before that, however, the Serena, which has been positioned in Asia year-round, will enter drydock and be the last Costa ship to complete the brand’s fleet renewal program.

Following the drydock, the ship will sail a number of longer itineraries for the brand in Asia, as opposed to the short cruises she was traditionally operating.

“We are upgrading areas on the ships to match the product we are offering,” said Zanetti.

The drydock program represents an investment of more than 200 million euros across the fleet over the last five years.

The 2007-built Serena will get a new food court featuring the Archipelago and Pizzeria Pummid’Oro. In addition will ►



▲ The Costa Pacifica arriving in Santos, Brazil

be Sushino@Costa, as well as a fresh and modern design update for the ship's other restaurant, a redesign of the pool area and bars, and a complete renovation of the suites aboard.

"Bringing the ship to Europe was an opportunity to refresh the look and feel of the ship, leveraging on the DNA of the fleet. It's the last ship to go through our renewal program, but it will be the icing on the cake," said Zanetti.

CORE MARKETS

"Europe is our core market, as is South America, as we have a long legacy there," Zanetti said. "When we talk about Europe, it's Italy, France, Spain and the German-speaking countries. Of course, we also work everywhere around the globe.

"Our strategies are focused on our core markets, as that helps us prioritize our efforts and better innovate our product to serve these markets and match guest expectations in them."

Among trends, Zanetti said customers were prioritizing experiences.

"New-to-cruise is important to us, and our Sea Destination concept is aimed at this, underlying experiences that we can focus on at sea, and only on Costa," said Zanetti. "Having a unique experience is a way to attract the new-to-cruise and is an attractive selling proposition."

Zanetti likened the concept to the private islands in the Caribbean: an experience unavailable elsewhere.

DEPLOYMENT MIX

Apart from the Serena waving farewell to Costa's Asia presence, which dates back to 2006, Zanetti said the company's deployment mix would be stable going forward.

That means a heavy European presence in the summer, an annual world cruise, a sizable South America program in the winter, plus ships in the Caribbean and Emirates seasonally.

"We are focusing on our core deployment areas and prioritizing our product innovation and itinerary innovation (in these regions), instead of new deployment areas."

One other deployment highlight is the company's world cruise, as the 2027 edition will sail 139 days from Savona with the *Deliziosa* visiting 47 ports in 29 countries.

A shorter 100-day segment is also available, with guests embarking in San Francisco.

Challenges are also opportunities, said Zanetti.

"We continue to focus on delivering the highest quality experience to the guests and trying to anticipate their needs.

"We are focused on keeping and leveraging our DNA; we are an Italian brand under Carnival Corporation. These are the basics, and from there, it's about continuous improvement, continuous innovation and a focus on quality of service.

"We succeed this way thanks to the passion and commitment from our crew, caring for the guests aboard our ships."

– Monty Mathisen

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Food and Beverage Manager Roman Osipov (left) and Executive Chef Markus Landolt launching the local asparagus and strawberry seasons aboard the AIDAdiva.

Reinventing Itself

AIDA Cruises is reinventing itself in the German-speaking markets by modernizing some of its existing ships and with its first newbuilds since 2021. Two new ships will be built by Fincantieri for delivery in spring 2030 and winter 2031-32.

Promising to be a new generation of ships for the German brand, they will be fueled by LNG but also prepared to run on future biofuels and e-fuels, according to Felix Eichhorn, the cruise line's president.

With a guest capacity of approximately 4,200 (double occupancy), the new ships, which are expected to be in the 150,000-ton range, will bring AIDA's fleet to 13, and boost the annual guest capacity to more than 1.8 million by 2032, up from an estimated 1.4 million-plus this year, according to the *2025 Cruise Industry News Annual Report*.

The newbuild order follows comments by Josh Weinstein, president and CEO of Carnival Corporation, that AIDA is pretty

much neck and neck with Carnival (Cruise Line) as the highest returning brands in the company's portfolio of cruise lines.

Describing itself as the third-largest tour operator in Germany (after the TUI Group and DERTOUR Group), AIDA claims to be the best-known cruise brand in the German market.

Estimated at approximately 3 million passengers, AIDA has a nearly 50 percent share of the German-speaking markets of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

AIDA EVOLUTION

Meanwhile, underway is AIDA's 500-million-euro Evolution program, whereby the AIDAdiva underwent extensive modernization in Marseille earlier this year to be followed by the AIDAluna in the fall and the AIDAbella next spring.

During a seven-week shipyard stay, around 300 projects and numerous smaller jobs were carried out on the 2007-built ►



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AIDA



◀ The redesigned Theatrium aboard the AIDAdiva



The AIDAnova connecting to shore power

AIDAdiva, including the renovation of all guest cabins with new color schemes and furniture.

Some cabins were expanded from three- to four-person occupancy to create more options for families, while six new family-friendly suites were installed at the stern.

Suite guests also have access to new, exclusive services, including their own lounge.

Public areas have been redesigned with new restaurants expanding the ship's culinary offerings along with new bars. This also meant that approximately 35,000 glasses, 30,000 cups and plates, and 46,000 pieces of cutlery were restocked, according to AIDA.

The Theatrium, spa area and children's club were also redesigned.

And instead of disposing of materials, shipboard furniture was donated and carpeting was recycled and reused.

Commented Marc Spingler, director of hotel maintenance drydocks and refits: "We have many more Evolution projects in the pipeline and are thus constantly expanding our sustainability commitment."

On the technical side, the hull received a new coating to reduce its frictional resistance in the water. New LED lighting is reducing energy consumption.

A reverse osmosis system was installed for onboard fresh-water production, while solid waste processors are compacting waste by up to 95 percent.

In addition, the IT infrastructure was redesigned, replacing 22 tons of electronics, according to AIDA.

In an interview with the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, Eichhorn was quoted as saying that after the three ships have been modernized, "It's the turn of the remaining four (ships in the class)."

LOCAL SOURCING

Among its spring promotions, AIDA launched the asparagus season in May whereby guests could enjoy fresh asparagus grown in Germany until mid-June. Approximately four tons of asparagus were served, from asparagus spears with salmon, ham or steak or as cream of asparagus soup.

May 5 has been proclaimed national German Asparagus Day.

"We want to offer our guests the best quality in the selection and range of meals onboard," said Rene Thiersch, senior manager of culinary programs.

"It is also important where we source our products. Buying locally is not only good for purchasing and transportation but also supports the local economy."

After the asparagus, the strawberry season followed in Northern Germany, with 30 tons delivered to the ships, supplied from local growers.

RECORD YEAR

Commenting on the German market, Eichhorn said in a prepared statement that 2024 had been a record year for AIDA with almost 1.5 million guests, an increase of 10 percent from the year before. There was also a significant increase in revenue.

Guests are booking further in advance, he said, adding that every second booking is at a premium rate.

Eichhorn predicted further growth in 2025, despite a relatively constant guest capacity until 2030, and described cruise as the growth engine of the German tourism industry.

To accommodate the German market, around 80 percent of AIDA's summer cruises are departing from a German port, and eight of the ships are deployed in Northern Europe, according to Eichhorn, for a total of 290 sailings. – Oivind Mathisen



GLOBAL PORTS HOLDING INAUGURATES NEW CRUISE TERMINALS IN LANZAROTE AND FUERTEVENTURA

In May 2025, Global Ports Holding, in collaboration with local partner Sepcan and the Port Authority of Las Palmas, has officially inaugurated new cruise terminals in Lanzarote and Fuerteventura. At Lanzarote Cruise Port, two modern terminals now enhance both transit and homeport operations, supported by a satellite terminal offering auxiliary services for passengers and crew. Fuerteventura's new modular terminal, located near the city center, features a dining area with an outdoor terrace, designed to improve passenger experience and reflect the island's character. All terminals are eco-efficient, built with sustainability and energy efficiency in mind, incorporating solar panels and innovative construction practices.

These openings mark a major milestone in GPH's €40 million investment plan across the Canary Islands. The terminals are expected to welcome over one million passengers annually, creating jobs, boosting local businesses, and supporting the islands' growing role as a premier cruise destination. Official ceremonies drew broad support from institutional and community leaders.



WELCOME TO GREENOCK CRUISE PORT

Greenock Cruise Port has officially welcomed its first cruise call under Global Ports Holding management with the arrival of MSC Preziosa. Guests were greeted with a traditional Scottish welcome by local bagpiper John MacInnes. This milestone marks Greenock's integration into GPH's global network and a new chapter for cruise tourism on the River Clyde. Strategically located just 25 miles from Glasgow, the port offers access to iconic destinations like Edinburgh and the Highlands. GPH aims to enhance the cruise experience and support sustainable tourism growth across Scotland through this key gateway.



EGE PORT KUŞADASI COMPLETES FIRST PHASE OF SOLAR ENERGY INVESTMENT

Ege Port Kuşadası has completed the first phase of its solar energy investment with the installation of a rooftop solar power plant that will generate over 312,000 kWh of electricity annually. This \$300,000 investment marks a major step toward full reliance on renewable energy, helping to reduce the port's carbon emissions by 223 tons per year. A second, ground-mounted solar plant is scheduled for completion in late 2025, which will enable the port to meet 100% of its energy needs through renewables. As Türkiye's leading cruise port and gateway to Ephesus, Ege Port Kuşadası supports sustainable tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean. General Manager Aziz Güngör highlighted the port's commitment to net-zero goals, aligning with Global Ports Holding's mission for a greener cruise industry.



SATS-CREUERS TO EXPAND MARINA BAY CRUISE CENTRE SINGAPORE IN 2025

Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore is set for a major S\$40 million upgrade in 2025—the most extensive since its 2012 opening. The nine-month project will expand check-in areas, enhance passenger amenities, and add a larger Ground Transport Area (GTA) with more bus bays and ride-hailing lots. Capacity will increase from 6,800 to 11,700 passengers, supporting dual ship calls and improving guest experience. In recognition of this investment, the Singapore Tourism Board has extended the concession agreement through 2037. The enhancements aim to position Singapore as a premier regional cruise hub, aligned with global trends toward larger ships and growing cruise demand. GPH Chairman Mehmet Kutman called the expansion a step toward creating "future-ready cruise ports."

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Mein Schiff Aggressive Growth

TUI CruisesFINCANTIERI

◀ Wybcke Meier, CEO of Mein Schiff, and Pierroberto Folgiero, CEO of Fincantieri, at the delivery of Mein Schiff Relax

With the new Mein Schiff Flow to be introduced next year, following the sister ship, Mein Schiff Relax this spring, and Mein Schiff 7 last year, Mein Schiff is on an aggressive growth path, more than doubling its guest capacity from 2023 to 2026.

With nine ships in service, Mein Schiff will have a 35.5 percent share of the German-speaking cruise market as estimated by the *2025 Cruise Industry News Annual Report*.

DEMAND

Mein Schiff is sailing into 2025 with a tailwind, according to the cruise line, noting strong demand from the German-speaking markets, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and also increasingly from neighboring European countries.



Giuliana Rizzo, spa and sport manager, was godmother for Mein Schiff Relax.

The goal is not only to tap into existing demand but also into new customer groups, according to Clas Eckholt, vice president commercial.

“We see great potential for increasing demand and further growth and have set ourselves ambitious goals for this year,” he said.

“The new ships and fleet growth will enable us to appeal to new international guest groups and take the brand to the next level.

“The focus remains firmly on our proven concept: an international cruise experience with a distinctly German touch.”

According to Wybcke Meier, CEO, the largest customer group is those who have never taken a cruise before.

NEW ERA

At some 160,000 tons and with a double occupancy capacity of more than 4,000 guests, the new ship class is not only significantly larger than the rest of the fleet but is fueled by LNG and is described as being future-compatible with low emissions bio- and e-LNG.

Mein Schiff also recently signed an agreement with Signol to address fuel savings and emissions through data analysis combined with crew and officer training, according to the cruise line's head of sustainability, Lucienne Damm.

Signol called it a human-centric decarbonization solution.

In addition, the fleet is equipped for shore power, and Mein Schiff 7, which launched last year, is said to be methanol ready.

The rest of the ships are kept up to date with the latest project being the drydocking of the 2015-built Mein Schiff 4, which underwent a facelift earlier this year.

► Mein Schiff Relax is introducing a new era for the brand.

Work included upgrades to public areas as well as new, more hydrodynamically optimized propellers and a new hull coating.

PREMIUM

Introducing new products, Mein Schiff has announced its first-ever adults-only cruise, sailing from Cape Town to Singapore this fall.

Having also announced its 2026-27 winter program, Mein Schiff will deploy ships in the Caribbean, the Canary Islands, Africa and Asia, while one ship will sail a variety of cruises from Germany.

Meier said in a prepared statement that the clear and differentiated position of the brand and the Mein Schiff fleet is in the premium segment of the European cruise market. – Oivind Mathisen



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Cruise Wales calendar
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Britons Booking Early and Often



Double P&O call in Lisbon, Portugal, with the Iona and the Ventura

P&O Cruises opened summer 2027 sales in early spring 2025.

"It is astonishing that we're so far in advance in sales," said Paul Ludlow, president of Carnival UK and P&O Cruises.

"Even with the addition of the latest 5,400-guest sister ships the Iona and Arvia, the British market seems insatiable.

"The demand that we have seen is unprecedented. So, this industry is very healthy. I think that we have all the foundations to continue the momentum moving forward," he said.

British passengers aren't just booking one cruise a year early, either. They're increasingly apt to take two one-week cruises instead of one two-week cruise.

"There is a bit of a trend that we see that shorter itineraries are perhaps the most attractive ones at the moment," Ludlow

said. "It isn't that people are holidaying fewer days, they're just perhaps coming back more than once."

EVOLUTION

The UK tends to think of P&O as their "home team," Ludlow said.

It's a brand instantly familiar to them because it has changed as British tastes have changed.

"To be British now is diverse. It means people from all backgrounds, and that's the kind of tapestry that makes Britain who we are. And to be the home team brand in the UK, we have to reflect that diversity," he said.

"It even extends through to things like formality. We still celebrate and we have a black-tie night on our cruises. But equally, we have lots of informal opportunities and experiences on our ships because our guests increasingly tell us they like the different pace and different nights throughout the holiday.

"And by offering that choice, you can attract more people," Ludlow said. "Basically, what we need to do is stay relevant to people who want to come away with us."

SUN SEEKING

The deployment is heavily European focused in the summer months. And then in the winter the ships sail world cruises, they are in the Caribbean and on long South American voyages.

"We've kind of got something for everybody, and I think that's why people can come back and keep experiencing something new," Ludlow said.

Some of that newness includes a greater culinary diversity. Increasingly

gastronomically passionate UK passengers are taking their global tastes very seriously.

"Our ships are certainly a reflection of that. We have everything from plant-based menus through to Indian cuisine. We have Asian fusion, American-diner concepts and Italian trattorias," he said.

There is also a broadening of entertainment offered onboard. Traditional West End theater productions are joined by more intimate dining and show concepts, large-format DJ productions on the top deck, and more.

"We're able to offer all these choices to our guests because each day they may want to do something different, and I think that's probably a reflection of society at large in the UK." — *Mat Probasco*

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185 Years of Quiet Wow



◀ Kate McAlister, president

Somewhere on a sunny deck chair, a well-heeled passenger slowly turns the pages of a favorite book. Maybe they gaze lazily out to sea, imagining mariners of centuries past. Surrounded by all the modern comfort and luxury a cruise line could offer, Cunard guests soak in that most lavish and elusive of treats: a moment of peace for quiet reflection.

Cunard Line isn't selling the latest adrenaline rush. It's offering time away from all that, said President Katie McAlister.

This isn't to say there aren't some figurative fireworks planned for the line's 185-year birthday celebration this year.

"We have got this amazing heritage. Not very many businesses get to celebrate 185 years in operation. And I think that is down to the fact that the business keeps evolving and keeps fresh. We offer something which is timeless, which is this excellent service and comfort, and we still retain these things which are very traditional, very much part of our heritage like

▲ The Queen Elizabeth in Seattle

trans-Atlantic crossings. But then we adapt our voyages and our ships as the business evolves and as guest needs evolve," McAlister said.

BRIGHT LIGHTS

The 114,000-ton Queen Anne joined Cunard's fleet in May 2024, offering 3,000 passengers the storied brand's latest evolution. The ship features new culinary twists reflecting British passengers' changing tastes, including overly healthy options. Immersive wellness programs and guest speakers are meant to exercise body and mind.

"The Queen Anne's got an amazing wellness offering," McAlister said. "The menu choices at the wellness cafe, should you want to eat in a way which is super healthy, will be in line with your fitness goals, whatever those may be."

In partnership with *Harper's Bazaar*, Cunard is creating a wellness program concept that will be rolled out fleetwide, she said.

"The Queen Elizabeth, which has just been in a refit, has had that wellness proposition rolled out to her, the cafe, and the program of activities as well. So there's just examples of that where we've got this really nice test bed on the Queen Anne, and then we can work out how we share with the rest of the fleet," she said. ►



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▲ The 3,000-guest Queen Anne

The bold new concept on the Queen Anne, McAlister said, was the Bright Lights Society cabaret.

Invoking the spirit of a lush yesteryear speakeasy, the purple velvet theater is meant to feel intimate, tucked away somewhere out of regular sight.

HERITAGE AND TRADITION

At 185 years old, Cunard has been doing something right. Part of that is continually emphasizing the line's history, while developing in a way modern guests enjoy.

British tradition doesn't mean conformity to one style of dress or mannerisms anymore. It's about expression of individuality.

"We talk quite a lot about formality. At Cunard, we absolutely celebrate ritual and heritage, but that isn't really formality. That's about celebrating those things. We have things like formal nights. That doesn't mean that everyone has to wear a tux. It means you celebrate. You get dressed up and

you celebrate individuality," McAlister said. "Do we like ritual and do we like tradition? Absolutely we do. But that doesn't come at the expense of comfort or inclusivity. I think that's quite an important distinction."

Whether on a traditional trans-Atlantic crossing or elsewhere, Cunard is a British product with global reach. Passengers are sourced from just about everywhere, she said. But that does not dampen the British emphasis. In fact, it may heighten it.

"Afternoon tea is a very big ritual that happens onboard all the Queens every day. So that's something which is very much part of tradition," she said.

ENRICHMENT

Cunard has a series of themed trans-Atlantic cruises slated for the birthday year, including a fashion cruise featuring Christian Siriano, Coco Rocha and Bob Mackie, dubbed Transatlantic Fashion Week.

Other birthday cruises include nods to the British Royals and the history of trans-Atlantic sailing, with an emphasis on women in the maritime industry.

"We have specific-interest cruises as well, so that's something which we evolve all the time. But you know we have everything including an amazing dance-the-Atlantic voyage, which is in partnership with the English National

Ballet. We love fabulous dancing but we'll also have classes and theoretical conversations about dancing," she said.

Beyond that, Cunard guests have always been happy to retreat into the library, get away from overstimulation but still feel like they've come back enriched in some way.

Although she's a longtime Londoner, McAlister maintains a home in her family's native Northumberland, England's least populated county. It's a place far from overstimulation where it's possible to take a long walk and not see another soul.

"It's not that all of it's like that, but there are parts of it which are just really remote and very beautiful," she said.

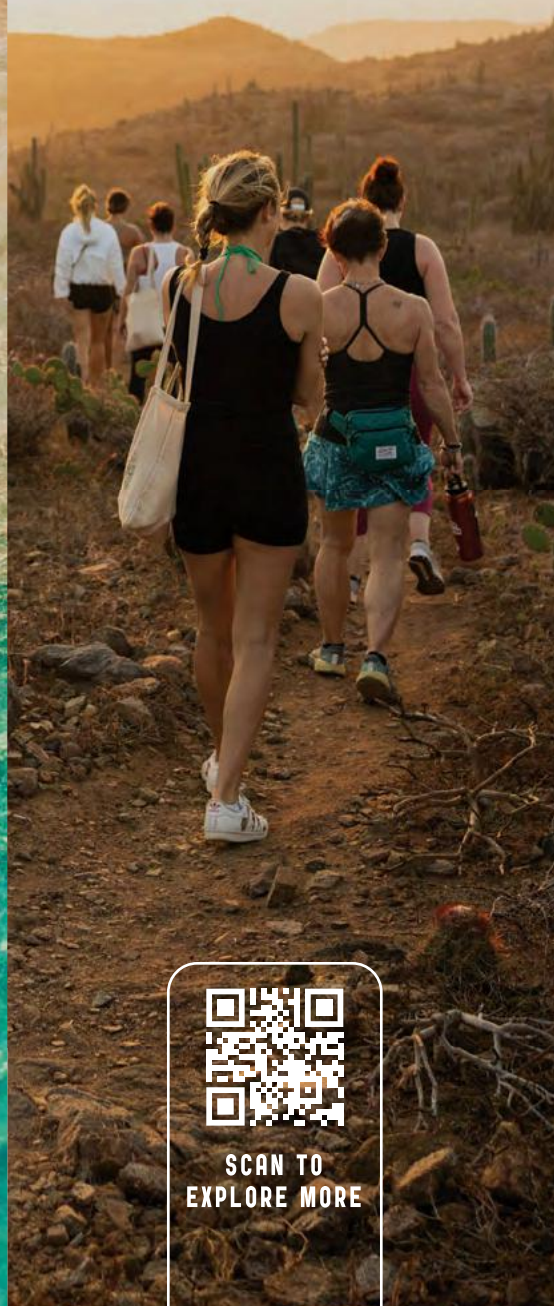
The area isn't exactly a core market for cruise passengers, she said, but the UK has always been drawn to the sea.

"We're a nation of seafarers. Cunard is very much a part of that. With our 185-year heritage, we are very much a part of building that seafaring reputation around the world." — *Mat Probasco*



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New Opportunities



The Celestyal Journey will be joined by the Discovery in the Arabian Gulf for the 2025-26 winter season.

“It is amazing what we have achieved in a short time,” said Chris Theophilides, CEO of Celestyal, pointing to two new-to-brand ships that saw significant updates, year-round operations and the introduction of the Arabian Gulf as a deployment region, where the brand will send both ships this coming winter.

“In the Gulf we have replicated the formula we have in the Eastern Mediterranean,” he said. “We have long port calls where it makes sense, unique immersive experiences, and in many cases, unique shore excursions to us.”

That also includes a mix of deployments, with one ship on a weeklong program and one offering shorter, three- and four-night sailings, he said.

BIOFUEL TEST

The company completed a biofuel test on the Celestyal Journey this past spring.

“While we have equipped both ships with scrubbers, we also want to continue



▲ Chris Theophilides, CEO

lowering our carbon footprint,” Theophilides said.

“It’s a project that was months in the making, that started with a partnership with a major Greek refinery. The fuel was developed for us and we were the first of any kind of ship to bunker biodiesel in Greece.”

MED

Other changes in the Mediterranean include more departures on the company’s seven-night program that visits the Adriatic, with additional cruises scheduled in both 2025 and 2026 aboard the Celestyal Journey.

Those itineraries, which include calls in Croatia, Italy and Montenegro, are more tailored for the American market

“All source markets are important to us. We have widespread sourcing and it’s also risk diversification.”

and returning Celestyal guests, Theophilides said, adding that the Mediterranean cruises were about 40 percent sourced from the North American market. ►



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The Discovery received 47 new staterooms.

BALCONY MIX

When the Celestyal Journey launched service this spring, she was fresh off her second cap-ex infusion, with 47 new staterooms, 30 of which were premium accommodations.

“In the Mediterranean, the ship is running full,” Theophilides explained. “The ROI (on additional staterooms) was quite compelling but not the primary reason we did it.”

Theophilides said that they wanted to elevate the brand standard with more premium stateroom options. The company had evaluated this when eyeing potential ship purchases, he explained, looking at where capacity can be added or repurposed. It also means the company is attracting guests with deeper pockets.

BLANK MAP

Theophilides said the company’s winter deployment in the Gulf had a higher overlap with its source markets in the Mediterranean, including a heavy Eu-

ropean interest and strong airlift from Asia and Australia.

Looking at data for the company’s one-ship season in 2024-25, he said expectations on occupancy were beaten, leading to the decision to deploy a second ship to the region.

For travel partners, a short-cruise program opens up pre- and post-opportunities.

“ We have the whole setup here and have built the platform for growth. ”

“Our travel partners are willing to invest and promote it, and the early signs are we made the right decision,” he said.

It’s a multiyear commitment from Celestyal, which has entered various agreements with tourism boards and invested heavily in developing its own unique-to-brand shore-ex program.

SOURCING GUESTS

“All source markets are important to us,” Theophilides continued. “We have widespread sourcing, and it’s also risk diversification.”

Calling it a mosaic of sourcing opportunities, the most potential, however, continues to lie in North America, where the company has invested significantly in staff and marketing.

Celestyal is different from other smaller operators, Theophilides said, as the company has its own in-house management and operations team and does not contract out any facets of its vessel management.

“We have the whole setup here and have built the platform for growth,” he said. “We have invested in people and have a great team.”

“We expect further capacity to be added to the fleet and are looking at when and what that may look like.”

“We are laser-focused on smaller and mid-sized vessels. That is the heart of our DNA, which creates that intimate experience.” – *Monty Mathisen*

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Aldona Mäkinen, CEO, designer and marine lighting specialist



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Phoenix Reisen



The Amara transiting the Panama Canal.

'Welcome Home'

“We not only welcome our guests onboard and welcome them home; we live up to that sentiment for our guests and our crew,” said Michael Schulze, director of cruise for Phoenix Reisen.

“It starts in the office,” he continued, “where 140 colleagues work in a family atmosphere, and we transfer that feeling, that atmosphere, to the ships.”

“We also visit the ships as often as possible, either at their turnarounds or we join them for a few days aboard a cruise. We sit down for lunch together, and we usually celebrate New Year’s together aboard one of the ships.”

“In addition to our beautiful ships and unique itineraries, the crew is the ultimate key to our success. Each member of our crew serves as a host to our guests, led by the ship and shore management, and



together we create a truly family-friendly atmosphere.”

A major German tour operator, Bonn-based Phoenix Reisen operates three ocean-going ships year-round, the Amadea, Amara and the Artania, and the Deutschland seasonally, in addition to a fleet of 35 to 40 river and coastal ships. Depending on the season, Phoenix Reisen sails a different number of ships on the Nile, Schulze explained.

The company took delivery of its newest river ship, the Aurelia, earlier this year. She is 135-meters long with a guest capacity of 208 and has a crew of 50. Sailing primarily on the Rhine and Danube Rivers, the ship is equipped for shore power connection.

GERMAN NICHE

Looking at the German market, Schulze said that TUI and AIDA are doing an excellent job acquiring new customers in what he called the “volume market.”

“They are positioned more broadly in the market,” he explained, “with big ships and attracting several generations of customers.”

“In contrast, we prefer smaller, more traditional, yet modern ships, and our crew as well as our captains, chief engineers and hotel and cruise directors are much closer to our guests thanks to the more manageable size of our ships.”

The guest capacities for the ocean-going ships range from 520 to 1,200.

“Many people prefer more individual attention, and we are happy to be here for them,” Schulze added.

“In addition, with our worldwide deployment, we also appeal to destination-focused guests.”

Thus, the deployment tends to be off the beaten path, including world cruises.

Shore experiences can also be unique as when the passengers and crew aboard

◀ Michael Schulze, director of cruise

the Amadea were invited to participate in the street parade celebrating the Norwegian national holiday (May 17) in Kristiansund.

Also perhaps unique is the company's "Kreuzfahrer Treff," meaning that former guests get together for an annual celebration.

This year's event, which is the 20th in a row, takes place aboard the Amara sailing from Savona to Bremerhaven Nov. 25 to Dec. 9.

Schulze described the event as a big family reunion.

UPGRADES

Constantly upgrading its ships, all now have the dinner-only specialty restaurant Pichler's, named after the cruise line's corporate culinary chef Fritz Pichler. The fine dining venue serves a six-course menu, which the cruise line describes as a "culinary opera in six acts" with a blend of international cuisines, regional ingredients and a little

touch of Pichler's homeland, Austria.

Reservations are required and guests can book the 80-seat Pichler's up to two times during a cruise at no extra charge. The restaurant rotates the menu every 15 days.

According to Phoenix Reisen, guests that are vegetarian or have allergies can request menu changes. A wine list also includes non-alcoholic wines.

In addition, a new main restaurant, Ocean, recently opened on the Amara, and new buffet and snack outlets were installed on the Amadea and Artania.

The onboard entertainment is a mix of shows and individual performers who join each cruise.

"We feature several new shows every

year," Schulze said, "although our crew show remains one of the guest favorites."

Following drydocks and extensive multi-million-euro upgrades to guest spaces and the technical plants on the Amara in 2023 and Artania last November, the Amara and Amadea are scheduled for drydocks in 2026. – Oivind Mathisen



The champagne bottle breaks at the naming of the Aurelia this spring.

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Positioned for Success



In January, Ambassador merged with Compagnie Française de Croisières (CFC) to form the Ambassador Group.

CEO Christian Verhounig told *Cruise Industry News* in an interview that the merger strengthens the company's presence in the no-fly cruise market and expands product offerings, including the new joint Caribbean fly-cruise program launching this fall with the Renaissance.

The merger also creates an enhanced cruise experience by offering more choice and greater flexibility. The merger enables both brands to capitalize on operational synergies while preserving their distinct national identities, he said.

"CFC will retain a French product for its home market, primarily operating from Dunkirk and Marseille. Itineraries include Northern Europe, the British Isles, the Nordics, the Mediterranean,

“Our priority is to build on the momentum we’ve created, which is demonstrated by our forward bookings that are at an all-time high.”

the Canary Islands and West Africa,” Verhounig explained. “Ambassador will continue to focus on adults-only no-fly cruise experiences combined with multi-generational itineraries.”

The fleet now includes Ambassador's 1991-built Ambience, which launched the brand coming out of the pandemic, plus the 1999-built Ambition, which joined in 2023, and has now been rounded out with CFC's 1993-built Renaissance.

CARIBBEAN PROGRAM

“Our fly-cruise Caribbean program will start in October in partnership with Corendon, a leading European travel operator. Homeporting in Barbados, Martinique and Curaçao, sailings will combine source markets from the UK, France and the Netherlands, marking our entry into the fly-cruise market and enhancing our year-round offerings,” Verhounig said.

“For the Caribbean program, additional adjustments will be made to accommodate British, French and Dutch guests, such as multilingual entertainment, diverse cuisine offerings and tailored shore excursions,” he added.

“A dedicated French team will continue to oversee the French guest experience, while a British team will continue to manage the UK market. Onboard experiences will be curated by specialists to ensure they remain true to each brand's traditions.

“This is particularly attractive to British guests, who have told us that they would love to enjoy a sailing to the Caribbean in the winter months but find themselves unable to commit to a 40-day-plus no-fly itinerary for various reasons,” he added.

“However, as the Renaissance will now operate seasonally, British guests can now sail on a familiar cruise line during the winter while French guests can enjoy their national product during the summer months. The Netherlands has a strong presence in the Caribbean cruise market, so it has also been chosen as a key source market,” Verhounig said.

THE CHALLENGES

According to Verhounig, Ambassador faces macroeconomic pressures, including supply chain challenges, ever-changing government regulations, tariffs and evolving guest expectations.

He explained that all of these are amplified by global geopolitical events. ►

CONNECTING

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CFC has been merged into the Ambassador Group.

“Operational complexity has grown too, not least with the successful merger with CFC, which brings fantastic growth potential but naturally demands careful coordination to preserve the distinct British and French brand identities.

“Sustainability also remains an industry-wide imperative, and our ships already rank in the top 15 percent of environmentally responsible vessels globally,” he added.

The company remains robustly positioned: Occupancy rates exceed 90 percent. It also continues to expand regional UK departures.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Booking trends suggest guests are prioritizing holidays as a necessity rather than a luxury, with many transitioning from luxury brands to affordable, high-quality experiences that don’t compromise on comfort or service, said Verhounig.

“There are (other) several opportunities that we believe are currently shaping cruising: Guest demand for winter cruise options with flight inclusions has grown. Of course, our no-fly sailings continue to perform incredibly well, departing from eight regional UK ports: London Tilbury,

Newcastle, Dundee, Liverpool, Belfast, Bristol, Falmouth and Portsmouth.

“We’re seeing strong demand for our no-fly winter sailings that head north to witness the Northern Lights or explore the Norwegian coast, as well as south to the Mediterranean and the Canaries. These longer-duration adventures will always be part of our DNA,” he said.

He also pointed to the new program.

“The response to the introduction of our Caribbean fly-cruise program from direct guests and valued trade partners has been positive.”

Verhounig also noted that while there will always be demand for last-minute deals, the company has seen a significant shift toward guests planning well in advance of the departure date when availability is high, particularly for longer voyages.

“At Ambassador, we’re already thinking about our 2028-29 itineraries due to increased demand,” he added.

EXPANDING FOOTPRINT

According to Verhounig, Ambassador’s success in the British market and CFC’s strong presence in the French market will provide a solid platform from

which to expand the merged business’s footprint in Europe.

“We are always looking for suitable additions to our fleet. We are exploring several opportunities, and there are many, but we have yet to make a decision. For us, growth has to be natural and, when the time is right, we will provide an update as appropriate.

“Our priority is to build on the momentum we’ve created, which is demonstrated by our forward bookings that are at an all-time high: growing our loyal guest base, expanding our fleet responsibly and continuing to offer a wide range of authentic, accessible cruise experiences,” said Verhounig.

“As we look ahead to 2026, Ambassador will remain focused on sustainable growth, product diversification and improving operational efficiencies and environmental performance across the fleet while enhancing the guest experience.

“We are confident in our potential and ability to become a market leader. With strong forward bookings, high guest satisfaction and a focus on ESG, accessibility and innovation, Ambassador is well positioned for the long-term,” he said. — Robyn Tamblyn

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\$5 BILLION

IN SPEND PROJECTED

\$9.89 per person per day*

THE CRUISE LINES SPENT AN ESTIMATED \$3.8 BILLION ON FOOD IN 2024, WHICH WAS UP FROM \$3.5 BILLION IN 2023, REFLECTING THE INCREASE IN PASSENGERS CARRIED AND MORE CREW ABOARD MORE SHIPS, WHILE THE AVERAGE SPEND PER DAY PER PASSENGER AND CREW DROPPED, REFLECTING SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCIES AND COST SAVINGS INITIATIVES.

The industry-wide average food spend in 2024 was \$9.77 per day, down from \$10.17 in 2023.

In the first quarter of this year, the average food spend per day by the cruise lines was \$9.89, compared to \$10.05 for the same period last year, as calculated by *Cruise Industry News*.

The average spend varies by cruise company and brand.

Over time, however, the average food spend has gone up in line with inflation and upgraded food services offset by cost efficiencies from an estimated \$8 per day for passengers and crew in 2019.

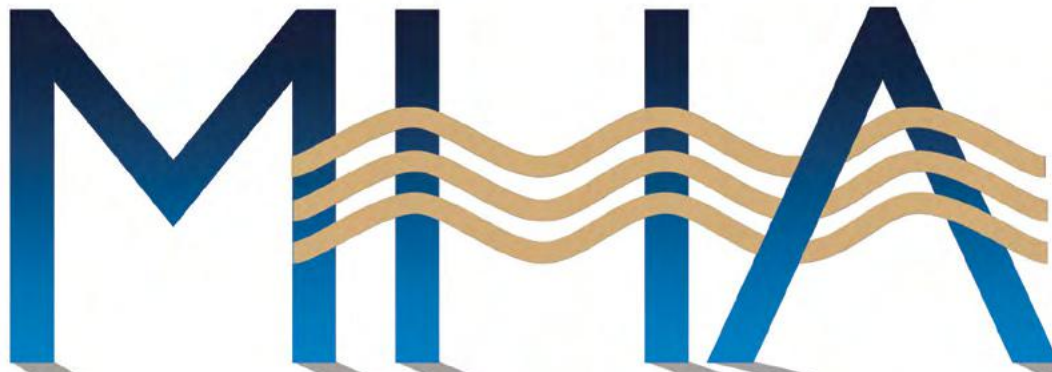
Also, in 2019, the total industry food spend was estimated at \$2.8 billion.

The projected total food spend industry-wide by 2030 will be \$5 billion. ■



*Average spending on food industry-wide for passengers and crew for the first quarter of 2025 as estimated by *Cruise Industry News*.

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“AS A GLOBAL COMPANY, WE ARE CONSTANTLY COLLABORATING ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION, WITH BOTH OUR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND EXTERNAL VENDORS, EXPLORING SUPPLY MARKETS TO BRING NEW AND INNOVATIVE OFFERINGS AND EXPERIENCES TO OUR GUESTS ACROSS OUR EIGHT BRANDS AND SPECIFICALLY WHEN IT COMES TO FOOD AND BEVERAGE,” SAID JON MCKEOWN, CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER FOR CARNIVAL CORPORATION.

“We have a single North American supply chain team and two teams in Europe serving mainland Europe for AIDA and Costa, and a UK team for Cunard and P&O.”

Those teams collaborate where it makes sense, according to McKeown, recognizing that there are nuances between the supply chain requirements of the different brands.

“We have to keep that uniqueness for

each of our brands and that which makes those brands differentiated and special to the guests that travel on them,” he explained.

When the European ships are sailing in Europe, 70 to 75 percent of the food and beverage is sourced in Europe, and the percentage is slightly higher for the U.S. brands operating in the North American region, he said.

Scale and Value

In total, Carnival Corporation has in excess of 20,000 vendors across all product categories, according to McKeown, and for food and beverage,

“The role of the sourcing teams for food and beverage is to identify innovative ideas and bring them to our stakeholders internally, work with our partners and just keep refreshing and adapting with changing tastes and preferences.”

several thousand for some 30,000 different items.

“It is a massive scale across the organization,” he said. “We spend about \$13 billion in total across eight global brands, so it is a big global supply chain.”

While the teams can leverage scale, that does not mean they buy the same thing for all, he explained.

“Leveraging scale is about using our influence, working with our partners, working with vendors we have good long-term relationships with in ways that we can benefit from and our vendors can benefit as well,” he said.

He added that sourcing is carried out in a consistent manner across the globe, and there is local sourcing of specific products that may also be seasonal to differentiate a brand.

How do costs affect sourcing? “I use the value connotation as opposed to cost,” answered McKeown.

“What we are looking for is the product, the service, the vendors that can provide that excellent guest experience and innovation. We are focused on getting the best value through our vendor relationships, throughout the whole supply chain.

“When we sit down with our internal partners and stakeholders who are at the front of the guest-facing operations, we talk about what brings value to the guest experience.”

Bidding Process

The bidding process varies, according to McKeown. He said it can depend on the category of product, the amount of the spend, seasonality, degree of competition in the marketplace, and whether it is a single or multiple source item.

He said that all items over a certain threshold will be competitively bid.

“We tend to select a number of vendors we know are qualified for that product. We like to work with the same vendors, if we can, that know our company, know how we operate and what is important to our guests.

“We work very closely with our stakeholders. It is not a handoff that is passed to procurement. We work together in a partnering approach to support the stakeholders and the end user to determine what product is the best solution.”

Challenges

“We have professional global sourcing and supply teams that support our operation 24/7, 365 days a year. Overcoming challenges is just what they do,” McKeown said.

“As a global company we routinely adjust and adapt to evolving market conditions, whether it is related to pricing, supply chain dynamics or regulatory shifts. So, I have to say this is sort of standard operating practice for us, it is business as usual. Our global scale, our diversified sourcing allows us to remain very, very agile.

“As a global company we routinely adjust and adapt to evolving market conditions, whether it is related to pricing, supply chain dynamics or regulatory shifts.”



▲ Jon McKeown,
chief procurement officer

“I have been in sourcing supply chain 30-plus years and there isn’t a year that goes by when there isn’t something different.”

In terms of products that may be affected by price hikes or shortages, McKeown said that while there are products that are essential, they are usually offset by other things. Everything does not move in the same direction at the same time, so he and his teams are able to adapt, noting that there are many levers of control in terms of adaptability.

“We are a massive organization with more than 90 ships and you cannot operate them successfully unless you have ►



The Queen Victoria and P&O Ventura

a pretty advanced sourcing and supply chain,” he said.

AI is something that may play an increasing role going forward, McKeown added.

“We have used it and applied it to good effect in terms of item rationalization, for example, for technical items, and we are starting to look at it in the food space as well.

“I see AI being an enabler, allowing our teams to get information quicker, cleaner, to be able to affect their sourcing more effectively, more efficiently.”

Recipe

McKeown’s keys to success? “You need great sourcing and procurement people with in-depth market knowledge and market intelligence, whether that be about dairy products, proteins or beverages, and that they have strong, deep and trusting relationships with both

“ We are focused on getting the best value through our vendor relationships, throughout the whole supply chain.

stakeholders and vendors, and they need to understand and be passionate about delivering that brand guest experience day in and day out,” he answered.

“So, it is not one key thing, it is a recipe, pardon the pun, of putting all these things together.”

McKeown said he is proud of the quality and variety of food being served aboard their ships, which he attributed to scale, smart sourcing, sustainable and responsible sourcing and benefiting from global purchasing power and long-standing vendor relationships that secure higher quality ingredients at competitive prices.

“While the per day food spend may seem modest,” he said, “it reflects that highly efficient operation that we run and

prioritizing quality, sustainability, and clearly at the forefront, guest satisfaction.

“The role of the sourcing teams for food and beverage is to identify innovative ideas and bring them to our stakeholders internally, work with our partners and just keep refreshing and adapting with changing tastes and preferences.

“They connect the dots across the business to make sure great ideas and innovations are spread from brand to brand and that they have the option to explore them.

“As we go through the process of forecasting demand, supply planning, strategic sourcing, procurement, warehousing and distribution, each of those has to be viewed as part of an end-to-end process.” – Oivind Mathisen



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The Odyssey of the Seas repositioned to Europe for the summer.



Vina A. Jumpp, associate vice president, global hotel food and beverage procurement

ROYAL CARIBBEAN SMARTER PROCUREMENT

“WHAT HAS CHANGED? IT’S A REALLY LOADED QUESTION. WE’VE LAUNCHED MORE CRUISE SHIPS ACROSS THE INDUSTRY. THERE IS AMAZING NEW HARDWARE IN SEVERAL MARKETS,” ANSWERED VINA A. JUMPP, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL HOTEL FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCUREMENT, ROYAL CARIBBEAN GROUP.

“The Asia market is growing for us, so is Japan. The ships are full and that is good news. The challenges, of course,

are around restrictions and exports. Forecasting continues to be a challenge for us in working with suppliers to come up with an accurate forecast.”

Jumpp was speaking at the 40th anniversary Marine Hotel Association Trade Show and Conference, which took place in Naples, Florida, in March.

Optimizing

“Challenges include deployments, and what demographics are aboard, and for example, how much pizza they are going to consume. How do you really plan ahead for that? Everyone talks about AI, but what does it really mean? For us, it’s about getting an accurate forecast by market and region so we can provide our suppliers accurate numbers

for inventory to avoid shortages,” she explained.

“We have developed an AI tool that is currently giving us about 85 percent accuracy in doing this.

“We struggle to fill orders every week so it’s important for us to have a 100 percent delivery rate.

“For example, there are more kids aboard, which means more pizza, crust and cheese. AI can allow us to bring this data in by market.”

Going Local

Jumpp said Royal Caribbean was continuing to push forward with as much local and regional sourcing as possible.

Some of this has been driven by climate goals, such as getting trucks off the

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The Voyager of the Seas docked in Port Canaveral

“For example, there are more kids aboard, which means more pizza, crust and cheese. AI can allow us to bring this data in by market.

road, while other efforts have been due to regulatory changes.

“Exporting beef and dairy to Europe has become more complicated,” she said.

“Regulations from some of these countries are just not clear. You don’t even know what the regulations are, and (so) how can you comply if you do not know what a regulation states?”

“For example, I’m looking at lamb currently. We purchase lamb from New Zealand and Australia and exporting that to Vancouver is becoming a challenge. Same for cheese and cold cuts, we are not able to bring that into Vancouver.”

Jumpp said that the company has created a new role in the procurement department that entails keeping an eye on regulations globally, as well as the interpretation of them in various countries.

“Having one product in a container

that is restricted will lead to the entire container getting seized, and now that ship is not getting anything in that container. That’s how complicated it is,” Jumpp explained.

This summer, she said about 80 percent of the company’s food supply in Europe will be purchased locally, while 20 will be shipped in.

And in North America, Jumpp noted more suppliers are opening regional warehouses near Galveston and Port Canaveral, where cruise capacity continues to build up.

“We talk about sustainability, and reducing containers out of Miami is essential for us. We have eliminated all containers, frozen and chilled, going to our ships in Alaska. We are looking at doing the same for Galveston,” she said.

Cost Savings

While cost savings is important, Jumpp said it was important to see the complete picture of the value a vendor provides.

“You may be able to purchase an item 10 cents cheaper, but I won’t switch (suppliers) for 10 cents unless there’s a valid reason behind that.

“For example, maybe suppliers are willing to get up on a Saturday or Sunday to work with us to help us with an emergency ... it may be that we ran out of toilet paper or need more milk,” she said.

While there is pressure to cut costs and keep an eye on rising prices, a better solution may be to source locally and/or find alternative products.

“Looking at different products is one, but also key is how you source. Shipping containers around the world costs us money. It’s not just the product cost but the shipping cost and carbon footprint.”

Going forward, Jumpp said she had worries about the number of ships in places like Miami, and being able to supply them on a turnaround day, pointing to traffic and limitations on just the number of trucks that can make it to the port.

“There are some challenges ahead of us we need to think about,” Jumpp said.

The best opportunities going forward for suppliers, she said, are in Texas and the Alaska market, where there are few local vendors.

For ships sailing to Alaska from Seattle and Vancouver, Royal Caribbean is using a consolidator in the region, she said.

“But for beverages, I cannot find a beverage supplier in Seattle or Vancouver. Everything is being sent from Miami.”
– Monty Mathisen

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ROYAL CARIBBEAN STAR OF THE SEAS



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Debating onboard the Star of the Seas, the Lincoln Park Supper Club offers a multi-course dining journey inspired by 1930s Chicago.



CELEBRATION TABLE

Celebration Table is making a return on the Star following its debut on the Icon. The private dining experience offers VIP treatment for 12 guests, along with a choice of exclusive American, Italian, Asian and seafood menus.



THE GROVE

Available for guests staying in the Star's Suite neighborhood, The Grove offers an al fresco and casual Mediterranean dining option. The venue complements Coastal Kitchen, which serves as the main restaurant for suite guests.

KEY DINING EXPERIENCES



5
options

AQUADOME MARKET

The AquaDome Market, the ship's food hall concept, offers five different stations with options including Pig Out BBQ, Mai Thai and La Cocinita, the hall's South American concept. In addition is Crème de la Crêpe and Feta Mediterranean.



SURFSIDE EATERY

The Star of the Seas offers a new buffet restaurant dedicated to young families, the Surfside Eatery. Options include twists on kids' classics for grown ups.



Walk-up
Snack
Window

BASECAMP

Located near the Star's pool decks and water park, Basecamp is a new spot to refuel with drinks and snacks, including pretzels with cheese and shrimp bao buns, as well as sweets at the nearby Desserted milkshake bar.



Armando Carrara, vice president of procurement and logistics



The new World America on her debut in Miami

MSC GLOBAL DYNAMICS

Bidding Process

Carrara said MSC has a structured bidding process for all product categories.

“Each category follows tailored strategies, and our supplier base includes both global and local suppliers, from producers to importers and distributors. Distribution varies by region, and contract types and length depend on global and local market conditions, market trends, product availability and various other factors,” he said.

Priority is given to local purchasing, but other criteria include product quality and specifications, product shelf life and the total cost of ownership.

Carrara said that this strategy not only supports local economies but also guarantees freshness, cost efficiency and lowers supply chain risks.

70 Percent

“In 2024, approximately 70 percent of our food and beverage spend was locally sourced,” Carrara added. “Being close to the source makes distribution more efficient, and when it comes to perishable items, local sourcing is the best way to keep things fresh. Thanks to our scale and global presence, we have the flexibility to explore different strategic options.”

While the company’s food and beverage

supply chain is global, approximately 50 percent of the spend happens in Europe, Carrara said, with Italy being the biggest market MSC buys from.

“Italy is a key sourcing market for us, thanks to its high-quality products and strategic location. Our main warehouse is located there, enabling efficient distribution across the Mediterranean.”

Other warehouse locations include the United States, where MSC is expanding quickly with more tonnage in Florida, its coming entry into Texas and an Alaska operation slated for next summer.

Carrara said that good inventory management is essential to the operation, keeping guests happy and making sure money is being spent efficiently.

“We use digital platforms with predictive analytics to stay on top of inventory, while data management lets us closely track stock levels and consumption,” he said. “By analyzing guest preferences and menu trends, we can forecast demand more accurately, adjust procurement and cut down on waste. At MSC and Explora, procurement and hotel operations work hand in hand to deliver smart, efficient sourcing. With our global footprint and complex supply chain, digitalization is a key part of our operational performance.”

— Monty Mathisen

“Today, and especially in food and beverage, recent geopolitical shifts have changed the way global sourcing and supply chains operate,” said Armando Carrara, vice president of procurement and logistics for MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys.

The purchasing landscape is not just seasonal, he said, and is more influenced by global dynamics than ever.

“At the same time, guest expectations are evolving. There’s a growing appetite for authentic, health-focused and immersive dining experiences, with locally sourced ingredients that not only taste better but are also more sustainable,” he added.

In addition, Carrara has to keep up with growing demand; MSC has added ship after ship and continues to expand aggressively.

“Given our unparalleled growth in the industry, my primary objective today is to enhance structured procurement processes to sustain this expansion effectively,” he explained.



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▶ Christian Pratsch, vice president of food and beverage operations



Thai cashew chicken with toasted cashews, zucchini, yellow onions, dried chilies, scallions and sesame oil

Nothing is pre-made, so it is all very fresh, and what you see is what you get.”

Plant-Based

Also new is the Planterie in the Indulge Food Hall. It is not vegan but has a plant-based menu that changes for lunch and dinner, Pratsch explained.

“We offer different bowls that are flavor- or country-themed,” he said. “There is, for example, a Moroccan bowl with lemon saffron couscous, eggplant tomato salad, roasted sweet potato, zucchini, red onion and pomegranate seeds.

“Previously, with our garden concept, guests could add chicken or fish as proteins, but now we offer falafel, smoky tempeh, jackfruit cake and tofu katsu. They are basically reminiscent of the flavors of anything you can imagine or would savor in the flexitarian world.

“The Planterie is in the food hall, where we have eight different stations so guests can also add items from the Texas Smokehouse or the Seaside Rotisserie.”

Each dining venue has its own galley and dedicated team, according to Pratsch, who said that the dishes are prepared fresh to order.

“You will see our staff cook not only in the Thai restaurant, but also in the food hall and the buffet,” he added.

“Everything here is made to order right

NORWEGIAN AQUA ‘UPPING THE GAME’

Among the restaurants new to the brand aboard the Norwegian Aqua, vice president of food and beverage operations for Norwegian Cruise Line, Christian Pratsch, highlighted Sukhothai, a Thai specialty restaurant.

“The name means ‘happiness,’” he told *Cruise Industry News*. “And I was particularly happy to add a Thai concept to our signature dining and our vast offering of multiple cuisines.

“We have our staples like Cagney’s Steakhouse, Le Bistro for French cuisine, and we introduced Palomar, our new seafood restaurant, aboard the Prima class.

“It was time to up the game. It goes back to the Indulge Food Hall, where we have a venue called Nudls, and one of our most popular dishes there was pad Thai, which is a stir-fried noodle dish. So, we basically used the Indulge Food Hall as a canvas to see what dishes were popular and, fast forward, that brought us

to a full-service Thai restaurant aboard the Aqua.”

Thai Specialties

At Sukhothai, Pratsch said he would like to start guests with green papaya salad or Tom kha gai, a Bangkok-style soup with sliced chicken, coconut milk, mushrooms, galangal, lemongrass and kaffir lime.

“We have a beautiful cashew chicken dish as well as shrimp, tender beef, roasted duck, pad Thai and various curries that we make in-house: yellow, green and red.

“The beauty of this offering,” he said, “is that it can be adapted to all kinds of dietary requests, because it is mostly gluten and dairy free, and guests have their choice of protein; whether they like fish, shrimp, chicken, beef or vegetables, we can cater to anybody’s needs.

“The dishes are cooked right in front of the guests in the moment and to order.



Nam tok neua from Sukhothai with sliced, charbroiled beef, green and red onions, cilantro, mint leaves, fresh chilies, lime juice and toasted rice powder

“You can expect that with every newbuild we will live up to that reputation, reset the benchmark and introduce something new to the brand and maybe new to cruise.

in front of the guests too. And with our training and quality control, guests can expect the same dish every time.”

The ship also has many new designs and larger spaces, including Swirl, a wine bar with a variety of wines by the glass.

Also featured is a virtual reality tasting, where Pratsch and his team went to Chile with one of their wine partners, and followed them through the whole process from picking grapes to bottling.

Innovator

“We are known as the innovator among the cruise lines,” Pratsch continued. “You can expect that with every newbuild we will live up to that reputation, reset the benchmark and introduce something new to the brand and maybe new to cruise. But it comes down to how we put the guests front and center of everything we do. We listen to them in direct interactions and through the guest surveys.”

He said he is very proud of Palomar, the seafood restaurant that was first introduced on the Norwegian Prima, and later on the Viva and Aqua, as well as being installed on the Encore and Breakaway during drydocks.

So, with all these offerings, how can guests have the opportunity to best sample them during a seven-day cruise, for example?

“Our More at Sea program (Norwegian’s most inclusive onboard package),

which was introduced in January, includes three specialty restaurant reservations,” Pratsch answered.

“It is obviously the guest’s choice, but I can always recommend our signature dining, Cagney’s Steakhouse, Le Bistro and on the newer ships we have an upscale Italian restaurant, Onda by Scarpetta.

“Our complimentary offerings are also vast and varied in the main dining rooms and buffet, as well as in the Indulge Food Hall, with changing menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and up to 10 venues with six to eight different items in each. That gives you more than 50 opportunities to have a taste or enjoy a meal.”

Dedication

His keys to success? “Having dedicated teams and galleys in each venue and on the day, for the day, preparation that guarantees freshness,” Pratsch answered.

He said that it starts with the supply chain and the logistics for securing the products from the various countries and regions the cruise line sources from seasonally.

“For cruises in Europe, for

The Mediterranean goddess bowl from the Planterie with quinoa and kale tabbouleh, hummus, cucumber, cherry tomato, kalamata olive, honey sweet potato and seasoned chickpeas



example, we source in Europe. We do not procure everything in the United States or ship a container from here, four to six weeks in advance, with frozen foods.

“Instead, we can guarantee peak tastes and flavors from products that are just in season where we are sailing.”

Scale keeps the costs down, according to Pratsch.

“We have pricing power because of the large volumes we buy,” he explained. “If you take pineapples, for example, and consider that one vessel might use 5,000 pineapples and then multiply that by 20 just for the Norwegian Cruise Line vessels, that is a lot of product that enables us to go directly to the vendor and get the quality we want as well.

“Norwegian also has a test kitchen at our Miami headquarters where every dish is cooked before it goes onto a ship not only to test it but to standardize recipes, ingredients and presentations.”

Pratsch said they also visit with vendors regularly to see where the product is coming from and how it is being handled and shipped.

“We follow the entire process from beginning to end,” he said, “from the growing or breeding stage to the plate.”

— Oivind Mathisen

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

LOCAL AND REGIONAL



The new Norwegian Aqua sailing out of Port Canaveral

“THERE IS A LOT OF CHANGE THIS YEAR. ONE OF OUR KEY AREAS OF FOCUS IS LOCAL AND REGIONAL SOURCING. THIS IS IMPORTANT AND WE TALK ABOUT IT EVERY YEAR, AND EVERY YEAR OUR GOAL IS TO DO BETTER,” SAID MICHELLE SOLORZANO, VICE PRESIDENT, FOOD AND BEVERAGE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT, NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE HOLDINGS.

Supply Chain Management

“Suppliers are opening locations closer to where the ships are loading and we really appreciate that,” said Solorzano.

“We are looking to continue growing local sourcing.”

Another area keeping her busy since early this year has been the ongoing tariff discussion, plus the egg shortage in the United States that drove up pricing.

“Anyone involved in the egg story, either buying eggs or supplying eggs, understands the rollercoaster we have been on,” said Solorzano.

“It’s been crazy and hectic. For us as

a supply chain team, it’s about mitigating risk. That includes coming up with different ways to source and even menu changes; it’s anything we can do to get back on track.”

Regarding the tariffs, she said in late March that her department was busy working to understand the company’s grocery basket and countries of origin for items, and what the potential risk may be.

“We are all looking for alternative sources should tariffs come to life; we need to be able to quickly pivot to find those products in alternate places of origin,” Solorzano explained.

Working Smarter

Behind the scenes, Norwegian has trialed a number of new technology platforms to work more efficiently.

“We have spent the last year looking at different e-sourcing tools.

“After we finish this round of bids on this platform, we are going to go back and see what platform worked best for us.

“For our grocery bid, typically in the U.S. we would send it to 15 distributors and a couple of manufacturers. Our last round of grocery bids went out to 200.

“That is 2,000 items times 200 suppliers,” Solorzano said. ■

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"Spain has an amazing, exquisite cuisine, and our sailors (guests) have asked for a little bit more of a European influence on our ships, so it's just one of those things we are happy to deliver."

Spanish Inspiration

The concept was created in partnerships with Spanish chefs.

"It is always fun to partner with amazing chefs," said Mezick, "and this is a labor of love. I just turned 49 and have been cooking since I was 16 years old in Charlottesville, Virginia, and I look for people with true passion for creating food."

"When we consider chefs to partner with, we go to their restaurant, talk to them and try their food. We want their engagement not just for menu and recipe development, but also to come and help train our crew," he explained.

"It starts with having an open and hon-

est conversation about what is possible, what is not and how we can put it all together."

"There are many people who get involved along the way, all the way from the CEO and down to me. Other executives including marketing give their input as well."

The next step is to invite the chefs who have been picked to the cruise line's culinary center, Mezick explained. There, each dish is prepared one at a time and tasted to ensure it is exactly what they are looking for. It is all documented down to the last gram and making sure it can be produced onboard.

Next, the sourcing process is laid out,

Oxtail
montaditoLobster
paella

and then, if there is a go ahead, the chefs come back and work with the crews on-board the ships.

While Rojo by Razzle Dazzle is a big part of what is new at Virgin this year, menus are constantly being refreshed throughout the fleet, according to Mezick.

"We are staying modern; we are staying with the trends and continue to work with our consulting chefs.

"What is important to me is that we do not have one style, but we are involving these people so we can have multiple styles.

"You can say we play with the food and try new things. Since we launched the Scarlet Lady, for example, we have made a lot of changes based on sailor feedback."

Authentic

"We do not copy and paste. We really do cook and taste all the recipes in our culinary center and document everything to make sure the quality, consistency, taste and flavors are there. Some concepts take a little longer time, some shorter," Mezick said.

"Rojo by Razzle Dazzle took about six months to create and implement, including the sourcing.

"It is not so easy to find Jamon Iberico ham in the United States, for example. We are also using Spanish paprika and dried chorizo, and a variety of Spanish cheeses, and we need to have these products wherever the ship is.

"This is classic Spanish cuisine."

The dishes include baby back pork ribs, oxtail, braised chicken, grilled rib

eye, octopus, lobster paella and more.

When introducing new products, Mezick said there are development and traveling teams that go onboard.

"We need to 'touch' the food and get involved with the onboard teams from the very beginning," he said. "We put on our jackets, our aprons and go in the kitchen. There is no other way to do this if you want to do it right.

"We cook the food with the crew, we taste it with them, and we ask what they think.

"Whenever I come onboard, I bring a bunch of forks and look for the chefs, the cooks and the assistant cooks and start handing them out. I want them to eat the food and tell me what they think. After a few days we have a nice camaraderie going.

"People who are happy and love food will make better food."

Chefs are also encouraged to eat in the restaurants so they can better understand the importance of the food combined with the service.

"Food scores are important but so are restaurant scores," Mezick noted. "At the end of the day, it is the collaboration between the teams in the kitchens and the restaurants that counts."

The Brilliant Lady will also feature specialties from her maiden ports, Mezick explained, including hot dogs and chopped cheese sandwiches in New York, a roasted suck-

ling pig in Miami and a salad with smoked salmon as well as Dutch babies (large, sweet pancakes) in Seattle.

Pushing Boundaries

His keys to meeting and exceeding sailors' expectations? "By constantly giving them something new, pushing the boundaries a bit," Mezick answered. "By changing, evolving and staying with culinary trends, paying attention to what is going on.

"I read all the reports on a day-to-day basis from all the ships, and I read a fair amount of post-voyage reports. We talk to the wait staff; we go into the restaurants and ask them what is popular and what is not and why.

"Listening to guest feedback and constantly trying to innovate and push things forward leads to new and interesting experiences such as Rojo," he said.

"We have more projects in the pipeline," he added. "We always have new things in the pipeline. I am sure we will reinvent ourselves. I would also like to do something different in Bimini." — Oivind Mathisen

Goat cheese
dessert



MEIN SCHIFF RELAX CULINARY JOURNEY



The Atlantik dining room

Michelin-starred Chef Tim Raue

Mein Schiff Relax, the newest ship in the fleet, features a number of new dining venues with a total of 14 restaurants and bistros, as well as 17 bars and lounges.

Every cruise can be a culinary journey of discovery with a variety of gastronomic experiences, according to the cruise line.

Fugu Mit Tim Raue is among the highlights with Far Eastern cuisine. The 100-seat restaurant offers a five-course menu of Japanese dishes created by Michelin-starred chef Tim Raue.

Dishes include spicy tuna, hamachi sashimi, crispy chicken and braised wagyu beef served with red and green bell peppers, sweet potato puree, sour cream and gochujang sauce.

The charge is 119 euros including wine.

Another new experience for guests is the Scandinavian-inspired Høfde venue for seafood and meat, as well as a breakfast menu.

Dinners include steak, lamb, mussels, crab, cod, turbot and lobster.

Also new on Mein Schiff Relax is the Chalet, combining so-called alpine cuisine from France, Austria and Switzerland and that translates into beef gou-

lash, steak, pork, veal schnitzel, chicken breast, and salmon and trout filets among the options.

The corn-fed chicken breast is served with oven-roasted vegetables, apple slices and dumplings.

The fish is sauteed and served with a white sauce, risotto, tomatoes and carrots.

Sur Mer Bistrot offers what the cruise line calls typical Parisian café flair, while Taverna Dionysos serves Greek specialties.

In addition, the main restaurant, Atlantik, has been relocated to the stern of the ship, spanning two decks.

Another dining option is Osteria Pizza and Pasta, serving Italian classics with table service for lunch and dinner, and the Harbour Market, the ship's buffet restaurant.

The ship has one main galley and four smaller galleys. ■

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HURTIGRUTEN

STRATEGIC ITINERARIES



Øistein Nilsen,
culinary
director

ØISTEIN NILSEN, HURTIGRUTEN'S CULINARY DIRECTOR, TOLD CRUISE INDUSTRY NEWS THAT THE COMPANY'S NEW CULINARY AND DRINK-THEMED ITINERARY, WHICH LAUNCHES IN THE FALL, WAS DEVELOPED AS A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE TO ATTRACT GUESTS DURING THE SHOULDER SEASONS.

Four departures for the seven-day voyage are currently on offer for 2025 onboard the Nordnorge, Nordlys, Polarlys and Midnatsol between September and November. The itinerary includes culinary-focused activities both ashore and aboard. Overland highlights include visits to partner farms in Lofoten and Vesterålen. Additionally, a night is included at a distillery near Lyngen Fjord, followed by a visit to a brewery in Tromsø.

"The idea was to create a premium gastronomic journey rooted in the local flavors we have on the coast, seasonal products and storytelling, really highlighting the culinary heritage of Norway," said Nilsen.

"The concept, which we call the Coastal Kitchen, is way more than what happens onboard the ship.

"You need to have an interest in culinary to do this itinerary. It's tailored for food enthusiasts and a younger crowd because there is a lot of walking ashore."

Unique Offering

"It's more than just food tastings," Nilsen continued. "This is an immersive cultural experience.

"Hurtigruten is all about unique destinations and each region has its own flavors and traditions. We take our guests directly to the source so they can see the producers, see what they go through in this raw, beautiful climate that we have in Norway.

"It's about bringing our guests to the destination and letting them see what's involved and meet the people."

Nilsen added that as part of the experience, guests see the recycling of the food waste from the ship as well, which is composted and goes back to fertilize the farms the company buys from.

"This is a part of our Zero Food Waste Project," Nilsen explained.

"Guests can see the circular economy."

Nilsen, who has been with Hurtigruten for 12 years, said that the company's culinary ambassador program allowed Hurtigruten to go straight to the culinary sources.

"We have good relationships with all the suppliers. So, I knew the route that I wanted to take. I knew I wanted certain suppliers, so I just made contact. And here we are."

Special Inclusions

"Everything is special. When the guests come onboard in Bergen, they will get a shellfish platter that's only made with products from a supplier in Bergen who actually dives for ingredients himself. And then we have a Sami-inspired dinner. We have a big focus on Sami culture and cuisine," Nilsen said.

"Seaweed, whiskey dinner and a beer tasting ... every day has a highlight on the trip, a theme for each day," he added.

The sailing also includes a visit to Chef Halvar Ellingson's farm, where almost everything served at the restaurant is produced on the farm.

Coastal Kitchen Network

Nilsen said that local suppliers were the backbone of the program.

"The Coastal Kitchen is our way to reduce reliance on the global supply chain. We shouldn't need to import things when we have such good products here.

"We also want to focus on regional identities through the food and tell stories, so the guests understand what they are eating. It's special when you eat cheese, for example, and you can see the animals grazing that have produced the cheese."

— Robyn Tamblyn



DAY 1 BERGEN

Guests board in Bergen, with a shellfish platter among the early favorites aboard.



DAY 2 ÅLESUND

Guests can learn about Norwegian bacalao (salted cod) on deck. The company brings on organic products from the local Feddie Ocean Distillery, including blended and single malt whiskies, botanical gins and aquavit. A five-course locally sourced dinner follows.

DAY 3 TRØNDELAG

Includes a Sámi cooking demonstration led by an expert chef; a Nordic afternoon tea with Havets Bobler, a wine crafted for Hurtigruten; and a Sámi Culinary Ambassador presenting a four-course dinner.

DAY 4+5 LOFOTEN

Guests visit Myklevik Gård, an ecological farm for lunch and for a family-style dinner, and retire to (overland) accommodations in Stamsund. Staying on land, guests then connect with the Lofoten Seaweed founders and have a chance to forage on the shoreline; there's also a seaweed-inspired lunch; and a visit to the farm Kvitnes Gård for a 20-course dinner and overnight stay.

DAY 6 LOFOTEN

Includes a visit to the Aurora Spirit Distillery; a mystery surprise Arctic experience; and a three-course dinner.

DAY 7 TROMSØ

Passengers head to the Mack Brewery for a behind-the-scenes tour and beer tasting.

DAY 2



DAY 3



DAY 4+5



DAY 6



DAY 7



VILLA VIE RESIDENTIAL DINING



The Odyssey sails a continuous world cruise with guests living aboard.



Stanislav Stoyanov, food and beverage manager

THE VILLA VIE ODYSSEY OFFERS A LIFESTYLE AND DINING EXPERIENCE THAT SETS IT APART FROM TRADITIONAL CRUISE OPERATIONS, SAID FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANAGER STANISLAV STOYANOV.

“I worked for the big cruise lines, with the huge ships, and I see a lot of differences on the Odyssey,” he told *Cruise Industry News* during an exclusive interview.

Local Delights

Villa Vie incorporates local dishes and options from destinations into its menus and experiences.

“We shop for local products and show our residents what people in each part of the world are eating. This is also something that makes the concept unique,” Stoyanov continued.

This approach to food and beverage is driven by the ship’s continuous world cruise itinerary, which presents a challenge for provisioning but also an opportunity, Stoyanov said.

“Since we sail around the globe, we can’t rely on just one supplier; we deal with suppliers from all over,” he explained.

“We buy local; fish and meat in Argentina, for example. These are featured as special dishes in our menus, such as destination or local specials,” he said.

Largest Department Onboard

“We have 112 people in food and beverage, with 36 in the restaurant and 33 in the galley,” Stoyanov said.

With nearly 250 residents onboard at the time of the interview, the Odyssey was operating with two main dining venues.

“We have a main dining room and a self-service buffet, plus room service and snacks available, including midnight snacks and afternoon cookies,” he explained.

A third, smaller restaurant is expected to open in the near future, probably as an alternative venue, he said.

With residents living onboard, menu rotations are a challenge, Stoyanov said. The company uses a 14-day cycle to maintain variety.

“We don’t repeat the same menu twice within those 14 days. We also always have some items available every day, like steak, shrimp and Caesar salad, even if they are not on the menu.”

Drinks and Packages

Residents can look forward to beer, wine, juice, soft drinks and water during mealtimes.

Villa Vie also offers an optional all-inclusive drink package with a broader drink selection available at bars and lounges.

The package costs \$25 a day and includes up to 14 beverages.

Guests are also welcome to bring their own alcoholic beverages onboard.

As part of the Columbia Cruise Services team since 2018, Stoyanov joined Villa Vie Odyssey when the project started in 2024.

After a 30-year career in the industry, he decided to take part in what he called a unique project.

After spending several months onboard, Stoyanov said that he is happy with his decision to join the ship.

“It’s not just that I’m doing it because it is a task given to me by the company. I’m doing it because I chose to be here, and I believe in the project.” — *Daniel Capella*

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CELEBRITY BORA FOR XCEL



Chef Sidney Semedo, senior director of culinary operations (left)

WHEN THE CELEBRITY XCEL DEBUTS LATER THIS YEAR, THERE WILL BE AN ENTIRELY NEW VENUE, THE MEDITERRANEAN-INSPIRED BORA, FOCUSED ON A REINVENTED BRUNCH PLUS DINNER.

Situated at the top of the vessel, guests can look forward to an al fresco dining experience. Brunch will feature a Bloody Mary bar while dinner will have chef-led tableside food prep.

Chef Sidney Semedo, senior director of culinary operations for Celebrity Cruises, said the menu is seafood forward, with the restaurant named after the Bora winds that traverse the Mediterranean region.

“Brunch highlights include classics like chicken and waffles and eggs Benedict; sweet favorites like French toast; Mediterranean-inspired fare like shakshuka and lamb kofta; and seafood standouts like garlic prawns, oysters and a seafood tower,” said Semedo.

The Bloody Mary bar, which Celebrity is hoping will resonate well on social media, will let guests choose from more than 20 garnishes to create their perfect Bloody Mary at brunch.

Dinner dishes include the shareable Salt Crusted Branzino, which is prepared tableside; Celebrity’s take on lamb tagine, served with saffron couscous and dried fruits; and what the chef said was his personal favorite: a crispy Berkshire pork belly finished with date syrup and pine nuts.

Roving musicians will play hits to liven the brunch mood while evening entertainment will feature musicians sharing soulful songs including Greek ballads and Italian love songs.

The venue will seat just over 60 guests, with pricing set to be determined prior to the ship entering service later this year, Semedo said. ■



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Il Viaggio

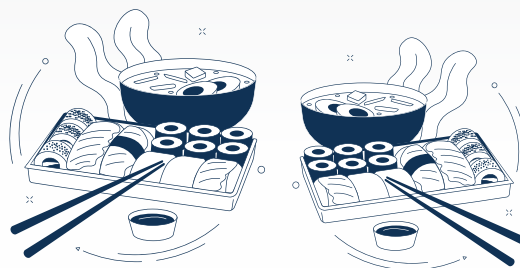
Carnival's newest venue, Il Viaggio, debuted onboard the Carnival Venezia in 2023. Created for the company's Italian-themed vessels, the restaurant is said to offer a journey across the cuisine of the European country. Each item on the menu represents a regional specialty, bringing together different tastes from all areas of Italy.



STAMP
HERE

Trattoria Rossa

Revealed earlier this year, Celebrity's new Trattoria Rossa is set to debut onboard the Celebrity Solstice in 2026. The Italian hideaway "blends opulence with modern design" and offers authentic tableside preparations of dishes inspired by Italian classics, including fresh pasta.



Morimoto by Sea Sushi Bar

Holland America is rolling out its Morimoto by Sea Sushi Bar to more ships in 2025. As part of the company's partnership with Chef Masaharu Morimoto, the venue will soon be available on five ships in the fleet.





PC



Paxos Greek Taverna

Introduced onboard the MSC World America earlier this year, Paxos Greek Taverna is the newest concept developed by MSC Cruises. Designed to immerse guests in the culture of Greece, the restaurant offers a seafood-focused menu and serves as a multi-service venue, providing different experiences throughout the day.

STAMP
HERE

Sukhothai

Sukhothai is one of the new concepts introduced by Norwegian Cruise Line's Prima-plus class. As the company's first Thai restaurant, the menu offers traditional and creative dishes for dynamic flavors. Choices include Thai cashew chicken and salt and pepper prawns.



Basil + Bamboo

Debuting in December onboard the Star Seeker, Basil + Bamboo is Windstar's newest restaurant concept. Complimentary for all guests, it will offer a blend of Mediterranean and Asian cuisine in an intimate setting. Menu choices include miso black cod with pea purée, crispy brussels sprouts glazed in Korean honey-soy and more.

VARIETY

STRATEGIC SOURCING



Valantis Drakos, fleet hotel manager

EACH MONDAY, VALANTIS DRAKOS, FLEET HOTEL MANAGER AT VARIETY CRUISES, RECEIVES A REQUEST FROM ALL EIGHT SHIPS FOR THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS THEY NEED AND HOW MUCH.

Those requests are put into the company's ERP system, Benefit, and if approved, they are sent to the company's purchasing department by Tuesday morning.

At that point, emails are sent to suppliers globally who have about 24 hours to let the company know if they can fulfill the requests or not.

If not, Variety's purchasing department starts talking to port agents to fill in any missing items.

Local Sourcing

Drakos said the company was buying everything locally and was not sending any containers from Greece.

"We work with local suppliers, small farms, local wine producers and more, in order to support the communities we visit," he said, describing the company's culinary program as sustainable and regionally inspired.

"Our purchasing department focuses on sourcing the best seasonal ingredients. One such valued partnership is with our long-standing olive oil supplier in Greece. His high-quality extra-virgin olive oil, produced with traditional methods, represents the kind of artisanal excellence we aim to showcase across our menus."

Rotating Menus

Menus generally rotate seasonally and line up with what the company can get and what's in season. Among trends, Drakos said guests were eating less meat and more fish.

"Our costs can be totally different; we have ships in Greece versus one in Tahiti," he said.

"We've developed a custom Excel

tool with tailored formulas to calculate recipes per guest. This allows us to accurately forecast requisitions based on passenger counts and menu cycles, ensuring efficient planning, reduced over-ordering and a consistent culinary standard across the fleet," he explained.

"It's a hands-on system that combines data with our chefs' creativity and flexibility."

The company's ERP system contains not only all the suppliers' information, but also ingredients, quantities and more, including all the history.

Drakos said the company would do its best to not change menus or substitute items.

"I am strict; we stick to the recipes," he said. "If we don't find it from our suppliers, we will go to the (port) agents. For example, if we need beef and it's a wagyu ribeye A5, and I need two kilos of it, they will find it."

Supplier Relationships

The fleet's weekly requisition requests also take into account special occasions that may need unique items, as well as the existing inventory on-board each vessel.

The company's process is working well, Drakos continued, meaning it's hard to take on entirely new suppliers.

"We have established connections with our suppliers," he said. "If we add a new one, it's going to be for something new, and then we're going to keep a close eye on it, making sure we get the right items, the right quantity and quality and the right expiration dates."

Hotel managers are also responsible for evaluating everything that gets loaded onto the ships, he said, meaning they send feedback on a regular basis.

— Monty Mathisen



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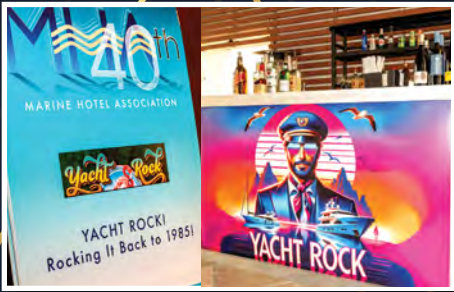


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At the Helm of a Unique Ship



Zeljko Jurac, captain

WITH OVER 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT SEA, ZELJKO JURAC IS EXPERIENCING A UNIQUE CHAPTER OF HIS CAREER AS CAPTAIN OF THE VILLA VIE ODYSSEY.

“I’ve worked on ferries, traditional cruise ships and expedition vessels. Each type has its own operational rhythm, but the fundamentals of safety and seamanship are constant,” Jurac told *Cruise Industry News*.

His background includes 15 years with Norwegian Cruise Line, as well as stints on casino ships in Asia, marine consultant jobs and more.

“We’re not dealing with a new group of passengers every week. The people onboard live here. That changes the dynamic and how we manage day-to-day operations,” he continued.

“The standard of the industry is to remain onboard while the guests change. Here it’s the other way around. We leave, and they stick around.”

The different dynamic forges closer crew and guest connections, Jurac said, with the creation of bonds that may not be found on regular vessels.

While the guest dynamics are different, all of the navigation, safety and compliance policies remain the same, he added.

Close Eye

Since entering service in 2024, the Odyssey has undergone various inspections

by different parties and authorities, including a two-day state control inspection by the UK Coast Guard.

“They were really assessing how we are keeping the vessel safe and how we maintain the knowledge of the crew,” Jurac noted.

As passengers, the residents are also subject to standard cruise ship regulations. Every new resident must attend a safety briefing soon after boarding the ship, he explained.

“We then conduct mandatory drills once a month, and I personally make sure that both new and returning residents are familiar with the procedures.”

Dynamic Itineraries

As part of Villa Vie’s concept, the Odyssey is constantly circumnavigating the world.

“We’ve had to become very adaptable,” Jurac explained, noting that good communication is key when conducting a three-year-long cruise.

When calling at unfamiliar ports, it’s necessary to rely on the right partners, including local pilots and agents, he continued.

“We always contact the port ahead of time to get the latest information on approach, weather and docking. Local knowledge is important when we enter ports that the ship has never visited before.”

Traditional Setup

According to Jurac, the Odyssey uses a conventional propulsion system with two propellers, two rudders and two bow thrusters.

“It’s a traditional setup, but very reliable,” he said. “We don’t have pods, but we can maneuver well in port with what we have.”

For navigation, the 25,000-ton ship relies on ECDIS, an electronic chart display system that is integrated with ►

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The Villa Vie Odyssey

“The standard of the industry is to remain onboard while the guests change. Here it’s the other way around. We leave, and they stick around.”

other systems, including track pilot software.

“Basically, to navigate the vessel, you can use a joystick that we call the ‘officer PlayStation.’ The system is unbelievably accurate because it’s fully integrated,” Jurac said.

The software is not fully automated, however, as officers plan the routes and enter them into the system.

“And then when it comes to navigation, we just press ‘execute,’ and the ship navigates very accurately.”

Drydock in Belfast

Acquired from Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, the Odyssey underwent a five-month-long drydock in Belfast before entering service for Villa Vie.

“We conducted a full inspection and servicing of all critical systems. That

included engine maintenance, painting and lifeboat checks,” Jurac said.

The drydock was marked by an issue with the ship’s rudder stocks, which postponed the inaugural voyage significantly.

“They were requested to be replaced, and that was successfully done,” Jurac said. “It delayed the departure and the itinerary, but when we finally came out, it was kind of a relief, an amazing feeling.”

Positive energy at a high level and support from the owners of the ship were key to overcoming issues while the Odyssey was in the shipyard, he added.

Future

Villa Vie is now preparing the Odyssey to sail to polar regions in the near future.

“We are working on getting Polar Code certification. Antarctica is on our radar,” Jurac said.

“The plan is to stay there for a few days and do some scenic navigation. The residents are pretty excited for it.”

The ship is set to visit the destination in early 2028 as part of the company’s new World Uncharted Voyage, which also features visits to Greenland and the Arctic.

While the Odyssey doesn’t offer its residents an open-bridge policy, visits are allowed on certain dates and times.

The long-term relationship between crew and residents requires a different leadership approach.

“There’s more continuity in the interaction. Some of the residents I see every day. But we have to maintain a certain distance as the ship is still a working vessel,” Jurac said.

“When compared to other ships, we follow the same international rules, the same safety codes and the same maintenance schedules. But it’s a different kind of approach and environment; it’s all very new. Every day we are upgrading ourselves and working to have a smoother operation.” – *Daniel Capella*

New Market Niche



Rodrigo Lopes, hotel manager

RODRIGO LOPES JOINED VILLA VIE RESIDENCES EARLIER THIS YEAR TO TAKE ON A NEW CHALLENGE AS THE HOTEL MANAGER OF THE VILLA VIE ODYSSEY.

In his position, he is responsible for coordinating a team of 165 crew members across the housekeeping, food and beverage, entertainment and maintenance departments.

With experience in the luxury market and nearly two decades at sea, Lopes was attracted to the company by the chance to create something new.

"I thought it was an interesting challenge to work on such a different and innovative project," he told *Cruise Industry News*. "I saw an opportunity to show my personality and implement my own ideas."

Residents

To Lopes, Villa Vie is now operating in a market niche of its own.

"This uniqueness is attested to by guests who believe in our vision, some of whom have even sold their homes to pursue the dream of living onboard a ship," Lopes continued.

The company has created a floating community that is more relaxed and

and slow placed. The ship often stays multiple days in ports on its continuous world cruise.

Another highlight is a business center aboard with high-speed internet that allows guests to work while living onboard.

Cost is another key factor in the product's success, Lopes said, noting that the cruise fare is equivalent to living costs in the United States.

Relaxed Crew

The slow-paced itineraries also favor a better work environment for the ship's crew, Lopes said.

"It reduces the normal stress levels typically present on a cruise. Since people are not confined, the atmosphere is more relaxed. If they can't go out today, it's not a problem; they can go out tomorrow and get to know the area," he explained.

While crew staterooms were undergoing refurbishment at press time, most of the crew are living in yet-to-be-sold guest cabins for the time being.

Product Level

According to Lopes, while Villa Vie doesn't intend to offer a luxury experience to its guests and residents, it does offer a quality product.

"We are creating a concept and trying to find our own way. Our goal has always been to come up with something that is relaxed and tranquil.

"If we look at our buffet, for instance, compared to Silversea's, we have the same level of offerings, with hot and cold dishes, starters and salads," he continued.

"We have the same product and try to achieve the highest quality, offering chef-created recipes and good products."

As it gets ready to visit more remote destinations, Villa Vie is also working on sourcing with a focus on local products.

"We are seeking to open our doors to local suppliers," Lopes said. "It is a big project."

Some products, however, depend on geography and timing and need to be sourced through traditional channels.

"In Asia, we will need to plan more in advance due to regulations and availability. For example, some fresh fruits like berries may be hard to find in certain areas, so we stock them in advance and store them properly." — Daniel Capella



The Apollo Group Partners in Sustainability

Maria Mondino, head of sustainability and ESG

FROM GREENER WAREHOUSING TO PROCUREMENT AND FOOD WASTE, MARIA MONDINO, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ESG FOR THE APOLLO GROUP, IS WORKING ON MULTIPLE INITIATIVES NOT ONLY FOR APOLLO BUT FOR THE COMPANY'S WIDE ARRAY OF CRUISE CLIENTS.

Apollo has a large footprint, including operations in Mexico, Spain and Miami, where local warehousing now includes electric trucks, electric forklifts and LED lighting, she said.

"We have implemented a recycling and upcycling program. We are making sure that our plastic and metal recycling is being reused; it's the circular economy," she explained.

Beyond being a supplier for most cruise lines, Apollo has a key role in vessel management and hotel operations for Regent, Oceania, Virgin, Marella, Cordelia and others.

Food Waste

"Onboard the ships, food waste is one of the major issues and we have implemented rigorous processes that don't compromise quality," Mondino said.

That process may vary by client but starts with educating the crew.

"We have created a sustainability training program that everyone takes," she continued. "We are a tech-oriented company so we are measuring ingredients, portions and calculating food waste, which also relates to cost ... it really starts with awareness, education and having procedures in place with accountability."

Food waste is now measured up to three times a day on some ships, and is all electronically logged.

Apollo also recently helped Marella trial a new reusable coffee cup aboard the Marella Explorer.

“Food waste is one of the major issues and we have implemented rigorous processes that don't compromise quality.”

The three-month trial started in April, when 2,500 reusable coffee cups and lids were stocked onboard at The Coffee Port, the ship's coffee shop.

The company said in a press release that 3,500 takeaway coffees are served every week aboard the ship, so introducing the option of reusable cups would help cut down on single-use items.

Just trialing reusable coffee cups was an exercise that required planning in advance, working with the client and the TUI Group, which owns Marella, and then creating operating procedures for the cups, designing and sourcing the cups, finding space to store them aboard, con-

sidering the weight of them as it relates to fuel use, training programs for crew and looking at a cost-benefit analysis.

Training Program

Mondino said she was most proud of the training program Apollo had put in place for crew. The program covers everything from food waste to recycling and water use.

“There is an impact and ripple effect,” she said. “Crew also take the training home to their local communities.”

More sustainability initiatives will be found in the supply chain, according to Mondino, as Apollo executives are fresh

off a seven-week training course with the University of Miami for sustainability and innovation in the supply chain.

Opportunities include more traceability, blockchain technology and managing any risk when it comes to human rights, modern slavery and animal welfare.

Among trends, Mondino said that European cruise lines were much more focused on a circular economy, while American brands were increasingly asking about animal welfare and food sourcing.

“Clients are focused on sustainability and if it costs more now, it can be okay. In the end the clients and their customers will be happy. Some of the initiatives are more expensive in the short-term, but the long-term value and ROI is going to be higher. ESG is a long-term strategy tool to add value and de-risk your company.”

— Monty Mathisen



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ADDING CAPACITY

Cruise lines have employed a number of different strategies to add capacity to existing ships, which flows right to the bottom line.

Presented by Cruise Industry News

Silver Muse +36 Guests

During the Muse's upcoming drydock, scheduled for later this year, smaller staterooms are set to replace bigger suites.

BEFORE ▶ 596 Guests

AFTER ▶ 632 Guests

Year Built: 2017 • Tonnage: 40,700



Celebrity Eclipse +20 Guests

New interior staterooms added during a recent drydock replaced the vessel's technology shop, internet cafe, card room and video arcade.

BEFORE ▶ 2,850 Guests

AFTER ▶ 2,870 Guests

Year Built: 2010 • Tonnage: 122,000



BEFORE ▶ 1,270 Guests

AFTER ▶ 1,364 Guests

Year Built: 2003 • Tonnage: 42,200



Celestyal Discovery +94 Guests

Forty-seven new staterooms were added to the Celestyal Discovery earlier this year. Some of the cabins took over part of the ship's spa, which was relocated, while others replaced an open deck. The new staterooms include 32 suites, as well as 15 interior cabins.

BEFORE ▶ 4,200 Guests

AFTER ▶ 4,252 Guests

Year Built: 2018 • Tonnage: 164,600



Norwegian Bliss +52 Guests

In line with the changes made to other vessels in Norwegian Cruise Line's Breakaway-Plus class, the new balcony staterooms replaced a section of the ship's Observation Lounge.

BEFORE ▶ 2,124 Guests

AFTER ▶ 2,134 Guests

Year Built: 2004 • Tonnage: 88,500



Carnival Miracle +10 Guests

The Carnival Miracle saw the addition of two inside and three ocean-view staterooms earlier this year. Located on Deck 1, the new cabins replaced the lower deck of the Dr. Frankenstein's Lab Dance Club.

Expedition Market Ready to Charge to 2030



The players operating in the expedition cruise market are nothing short of bullish heading into the rest of the decade.

The supply-demand equilibrium is returning to normal, a number of older ships have exited the market and the panic and unintended consequences surrounding Covid, from air travel costs to supply chain chaos, have quieted down.

Over 30 new expedition ships entered the market over the last 10 years, as ships were relatively easy to order, well-priced and cruise operators had to respond to their peers that had new hardware.

New ships bred more new ships as new vessels commanded a higher ticket price, drove marketing and public relations, and were significantly more economical to operate on a per passenger

basis. They could also be designed from a blank slate for their intended purpose of expedition travel.

Entering 2025, supply has leveled out with only one new expedition ship set to be delivered this year.

Other ships have exited the market, either being scrapped or heading to non-competing companies.

Operators are waiting to grow, either still waiting to see what shakes out, or perhaps negotiating newbuild prices that are anywhere from 20 to 40 percent higher than they were before the pandemic. There's also the long-term fuel question, as the industry will need to be at net zero emissions by 2050. Ships built today will need to be future-proofed.

The average age of an expedition ship this year is just over 21 years old and most suggest the normal lifespan of a cruise ship is roughly 30 years.

The newbuild pipeline appears poised to start up again, based on comments from CEOs at multiple expedition operators.

There are also new market entrants, and the first Chinese-owned expedition brand starts operations this year. Could more follow?

There is additional potential outside the poles: from the warm waters of southeast Asia to Australia, the Great Lakes and other regions. As the cruise market continues to expand, more travelers are expected to "graduate" from large ships to premium lines, luxury cruises and eventually expedition voyages. With a growing number of retiring Americans who have both the resources and the desire to travel, there should be no shortage of guests. Younger travelers and millennials, eager for bucket-list experiences, also contribute to a promising future. ■

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Lindblad

One-Stop Shop for Adventure Travel



← Natalya Leahy, CEO

Lindblad Expeditions is committed to continuing to grow its expedition cruise programs, but also wants to highlight its five land brands, according to Natalya Leahy, CEO.

“If people love their experiences on our ships, they will also love the experiences we offer on land. We have this amazing collection of brands, and I would like for travel advisors, our travel partners, to fully understand we are a one-stop shop for adventure travel to the most amazing destinations in the world.”

The different brands offer opportunities to experience the planet and get close to wildlife, Leahy noted. Clients can do

expedition cruises, safaris, bear camp in Alaska, polar bear tours, bicycling adventures, or walking tours in places like Cuba or Morocco and have in-depth cultural experiences.

She said the guest profile is similar although there is a range of ages.

The brands include National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions, Natural Habitat Adventures, Thomson Safaris, DuVine Cycling + Adventure Company, Classic Journeys and Off the Beaten Path.

FUNDAMENTALS

Named CEO effective Jan. 1 of this year, Leahy said that there are three fundamentals that differentiate Lindblad in the expedition cruise segment.

“Sven-Olof Lindblad’s father (Lars-Eric) pioneered this business, and not only did they start the company, they have amassed the most expertise in expedition travel, and that is hard to build or replicate. That is a really important differentiator.

“Second is our National Geographic partnership. It is a fully integrated partnership that provides National Geographic explorers, photographers and naturalists. That is really meaningful when it comes to the onboard experience.

“Third is our ability to execute expeditions. Visiting the ships when I first started, I was so impressed by the agility of the synchronized coordination between deck and engine officers, the expedition teams and the hotel managers. Together, the way they orchestrate seamlessly truly maximizes the experience for the guests.”

She said the ships were able to do as many as four landings a day where most other companies are happy if they can do two.

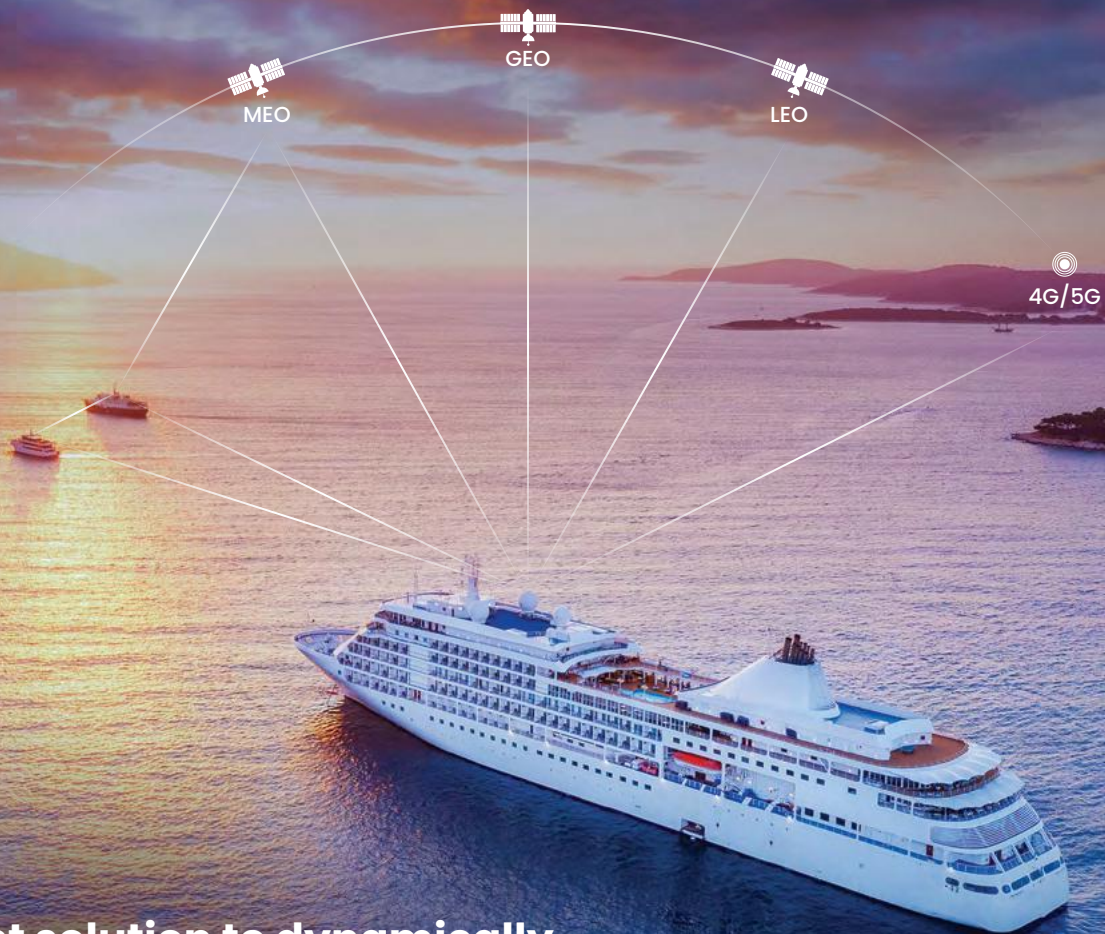
And the experiences cover the age range, as well.

In the Galapagos, for example, Leahy said that guests, whether they are five or 95, will have experiences that are appropriate for them and feel they are truly immersed in the destination both onboard and ashore and in the culinary and art programs.

The company has also found local artisans, according to Leahy, so the ships’ shops offer unique souvenirs, which in turn support local communities.

“We also offer local culinary experiences onboard,” Leahy continued. “When we go to Iceland and elsewhere in the Arctic, we have local musicians, speakers and community leaders onboard, so our guests feel more integrated.” ►

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Lindblad

↓ The National Geographic Quest sails in Alaska during the summer and in Central America in the winter.



22 SHIPS

Sailing 22 ships to more than 100 different destinations in some 70 countries, Leahy said that the average itinerary duration is now seven days.

Launched this summer, for example, is a seven-day itinerary around Iceland, which, she said, is very doable for families and people who are time-constrained.

Lindblad's fly-cruise program in Antarctica also shaves time off the expedition cruise by eliminating the Drake Passage crossing.

"We have doubled our fly-cruise capacity," Leahy said. "It has been well received by our guests and by new guests to the brand."

"We have also just launched Indonesia cruises, and we are about to announce more new products."

The Indonesia program promises to "explore undersea and shoreside wonders."

Last year, the company expanded its Galapagos operation with the addition of two more vessels, doubling the size of its fleet there.

Of the 22 ships, 12 are owned by Lindblad and 10 are chartered. They range in size from 16 to 148 guests. ►

First-Ever European River Program



Artist's rendering of one of the new Transcend river ships that will be chartered by Lindblad Expeditions.

Lindblad Expeditions' next move is onto the rivers of Europe. The company announced a multi-year charter agreement with Transcend Cruises in May, starting with eight-day sailings between Cologne and Basel and Amsterdam and Brussels in 2026.

Transcend is a startup charter-only river cruise company that is building two new 120-guest, 135-meter-long vessels, the Transcend Connect and the Transcend Evolve.

The ships have been designed by Tillberg Design of Sweden and will offer customized spaces and services created for the group market and, according to Transcend, promise to redefine the luxury group experience.

Each ship will have five venues that can accommodate all guests, including a two-story amphitheater for group programs and expert-led presentations, concerts and other performances.

Oversized staterooms can be converted in pairs to suites, allowing a charterer to flex the guest capacity between 30 and 120.

Lindblad said the two companies are jointly developing itineraries "crafted to provide curious travelers the opportunity to embark on journeys of deep discovery and venture closer, deeper and farther into the river side cities, towns and villages."

Each voyage will be staffed by one of Lindblad's veteran expedition leaders, field staff and at least one National Geographic expert.

The European aspect will add to the company's river product range that already includes the Peruvian Amazon, the Nile in Egypt, and the Columbia and Snake Rivers in the Northwest. ■

MANAGING RETROFITS IN A CHAOTIC ENVIRONMENT

In today's ship retrofit and conversion landscape, complexity is on the rise. LTH-Baas can play a key role in hybrid project management. It takes more than good intentions to succeed.

LTH-Baas is a high-end, innovative, and rapidly developing international company with over 1,200 personnel engaged in shipbuilding, retrofits and conversions globally. The company's uniqueness lies in its equal competence and obsession with both complex technical, electrical and outfitting projects.



Grigori Gvozдовski, MSc, PMP®
Project Director, Retrofit Projects

A Data-Driven Approach

Q: What project management methodology is currently used in ship retrofit, and conversion projects?

A: LTH-Baas currently favors hybrid project management—a strategic mix of waterfall and agile methods. For ship retrofits and conversions, this combines thorough upfront planning with flexibility to adjust for added scope or unexpected issues.

Q: Why is hybrid management relevant in ship retrofit projects now more than ever?

A: Modern ships are more complex, and there are ever increasingly tighter timelines and higher demands for precision and flexibility. Hybrid management balances structure and adaptability, offering better control over schedule, cost, and scope changes.

Q: Is there a risk when hybrid management is poorly implemented?

A: Absolutely. When hybrid methods are not applied with the right expertise, especially under pressure, projects can shift into what's called a chaotic environment, a concept from the Stacey Matrix. The problem and the solution are unclear, and teams react rather than plan.

Q: What does “chaotic environment” mean?

A: It shows that when both requirements and solutions are uncertain, traditional methods fail. Hybrid management can work well up to a point, but if not managed properly, the project descends into chaos. In ship retrofits and conversions this often happens when:

- Hidden damage (like corrosion or fatigue cracks) is found during dismantling which requires scope expansion despite a fixed project timeframe.
- Design or spec changes by the owner or class society cause rework or delays.
- Delays in critical parts can throw off the entire work schedule, especially if no buffer was planned.
- Ship owners, class societies, shipyards, subcontractors may have conflicting priorities or unclear communication lines.
- Incomplete drawings, missing technical specs, or language barriers contribute to misunderstandings and errors.

Q: Can every contractor manage this kind of complexity?

A: No. Not all contractors are equipped for hybrid methods, especially in chaos. It demands experience, flexibility, and real-time decision-making tools. Only teams like LTH-Baas, with the right balance of planning and agility, can regain control.

Q: So how does LTH-Baas stand out in this regard?

A: We've built our reputation consistently demonstrating perseverance managing complexity. In an industry where surprises are guaranteed, the ability to manage hybrid projects without losing control in a chaotic environment is not just a trend, it's a mandatory criterion.





✦ The National Geographic Endurance in Antarctica, one of two newbuilds for polar operations

STRONG BACKGROUND

While new to Lindblad, Leahy has a strong and diverse track record in the cruise industry, but also outside the industry, with iconic brands.

“My experience is valuable when we talk about telling the brand story and communicating the different products to travel advisors and consumers,” she said.

“It has been a learning journey through the ranks and in many different functions. Starting in finance, I made my way up to CFO and CEO and have also been very deep in technical issues, port operations, HR, crewing and supply chain management, which gives me a depth of appreciation for complexity and the experience to improve and move forward.

“I understand and appreciate running a relatively small business in terms of challenges, but also in terms of opportunities.”

GOING FORWARD

“Getting back to the fundamentals, I am not going to change anything, but will build on them,” Leahy said. “Those fundamentals are what have made this company great.

“We are guest centric. Everything this company has ever done has been centered around providing the most amazing experiences for our guests, and that will continue.

“Our focus is also on safety and compliance. As we take people to some of the most challenging destinations in the world, we do it in the safest way with true experts onboard and really good vessels.

“This is where the experience of our captains and technical officers comes into play, and our commitment to run a very safe business. We have one of the highest safety scores in the industry.

“And we are committed to responsible exploration.”

Thus, Leahy said she will build value going forward based

on those principles and maximize the revenue potential by continuing to offer unique deployments, unique destinations and partnering with travel advisors.

What she called smart cost innovation is another tool. One example is the optimization of drydock planning which has given Lindblad two more voyages in 2025 and three more in 2026, all through smarter planning, according to Leahy.

Growth will come from expanding the fleet as well as the potential acquisitions of other brands.

She said there are 22 million households in the United States alone, four million in the UK and a little less than four million in Australia that have been defined as potential adventure cruise guests, creating a huge potential market compared to less than 40,000 that are currently sailing with the brand.

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Antarctica, for example, is a trip of a lifetime for most people, so they should choose it carefully, according to Leahy.

Her advice is to go with Lindblad which has an established safety record and has the expertise and experience from sailing in that environment. She said that guests should also look for a comfortable experience on ships that are big enough to handle the waves of the Drake Passage or do a fly-cruise program.

It is really important, she said, that once people go to a destination like this, they are able to visit the right places at the right times, which, she said, comes down to the synchronized expertise between the naturalists and officers who navigate the ship.

“How you see these places matters,” she said, “and with National Geographic we not only take people to places, we show them how to see it, and I think that is really what makes us different.” – Oivind Mathisen



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↓ The hybrid battery-powered Roald Amundsen



“2026 marks our 130th anniversary,” said Gebhard Rainer, CEO of HX Expeditions. “To celebrate, we are introducing a range of commemorative offers and onboard programming. Guests can expect suite upgrades, exclusive fares on signature routes like the Galapagos and Norway, and special onboard touches like science lectures, curated culinary events and more.”

“We are also excited about our return to Norway (winter season 2025-26),” he continued. “Norway is the birthplace of our expedition legacy dating back to 1896. Our new winter expedition will spend seven nights above the Arctic Circle. It is a way of honoring our heritage while continuing to innovate for the next generation of explorers.”

In other news, HX is also offering a total solar eclipse expedition next summer, where guests will have the perfect vantage point in Greenland’s Scoresby Sund, according to Rainer. Solar experts will also be onboard, including a NASA



↑ Gebhard Rainer, CEO

Artemis engineer and a German astrophysicist providing lectures and insight throughout the voyage.

GREENLAND

Starting this summer, HX is offering a full season of flight-inclusive expeditions from New York to Greenland with four distinct itineraries ranging from 12 to 26 days.

Every sailing begins with a night in Nuuk before exploring the region, including Disko Bay, Ilulissat, Thule and the full Northwest Passage.

The Greenland program is truly seamless, said Rainer, with direct access to the Arctic from a major U.S. gateway.

Having sailed in Greenland for more than 20 years, he said, the itineraries are designed by Greenlanders with chefs, musicians, storytellers and historians joining each voyage.

“Our culinary ambassador program is led by Inunnguaq Hegeland, Greenland’s most celebrated chef and a champion of Arctic culinary heritage,” Rainer added.

“We are sourcing 30 percent of the ingredients locally, supporting Greenlandic producers and offering guests an authentic taste of the region with such dishes as bisque of Greenlandic shellfish with snow crab and South Greenland lamb shoulder.”

SEASONAL

For 2026, HX’s five ships will be deployed to maximize seasonal explorations.

The two newest and largest vessels, the hybrid battery-powered Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen, both sail in Antarctica during the austral summer, along with the Fram that sails longer and more in-depth Antarctic itineraries, including voyages to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

During the northern summer, the Roald Amundsen will be deployed in Alaska, while the Fridtjof Nansen focuses on Greenland. Both ships also sail the Northwest Passage.

The Fram spends the summer in Svalbard.

The Spitsbergen will explore Europe, Iceland, Scotland and the British Isles ►

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HX

The Fram is deployed seasonally in Antarctica and Svalbard.



before heading to Svalbard for most of the summer. For winter 2025-26, however, the Spitsbergen will operate in Northern Norway, launching the company's new Arctic/Northern Lights expeditions.

In addition is the Santa Cruz II sailing year-round in the Galapagos.

The Fram and the Spitsbergen are slated to undergo substantial refurbishments this year to the tune of seven million euros.

In addition to renovations of suites, both ships will receive new state-of-the-art science centers, interactive spaces designed to engage guests in the expedition experience through hands-on learning.

LEARNING AT SEA

"We set the standard for science, learning and education at sea," said Rainer.

"HX was the first cruise company to appoint a chief scientist, and our science and education program continues to lead the industry.

"Every ship has a full science center onboard, and we regularly host guest researchers and field scientists doing real work in real time. In 2024 alone, we donated more than 1,900 free cruise nights to scientists and supported more than 30 third-party research projects."

Guests can participate in hands-on citizen science, he said, and in lectures, wildlife briefings and other expert-led activities onboard.

"We have one of the most experienced and consistent expedition teams in the

industry," Rainer continued. "Unlike many operators who rely on part-time contracted staff, our expedition leaders are employed full-time. That means our teams are not just guides, they are experts in the destinations they return to season after season. The continuity creates an exceptional onboard dynamic and a much richer expedition experience."

For those heading to Antarctica, there is a pre-voyage, university-accredited course developed in partnership with the University of Tasmania for which more than 1,850 guests have already enrolled.

In Arctic Canada, HX has also co-designed the industry's first excursions with Inuit elders and community leaders. Experiences include traditional fishing methods, cultural storytelling and ceremonies like Qulliq lighting, Rainer explained.

HX takes a zero margin with 100 percent of the revenue going directly to Inuit artists, guides and businesses.

SUSTAINABILITY

HX claims to lead the industry in sustainability.

"We were the first cruise line to eliminate heavy fuel oil back in 2009," Rainer said, "and we were the first to ban unnecessary single-use plastics in 2018, and the first to launch hybrid-powered ships in 2019.

"Our ESG reports are transparent and track our measurable progress in everything from food waste to emissions.

"Ultimately, we believe travel should change you and benefit the places you go," Rainer said. "Our goal is to create life-changing experiences that leave destinations better than when we found them and allow our guests to travel deeper and become part of the story."

EXPEDITION DEDICATED

HX evolved from Hurtigruten Expeditions into a standalone expedition company.

"HX is now fully dedicated to global expedition cruising," Rainer said, "while Hurtigruten continues to operate its iconic coastal voyages along Norway's coast.

"This strategic move, backed by 140 million euros in new investment, gives us the flexibility to scale more effectively, innovate faster and sharpen our focus in the expedition segment."

Headquartered in London, key operational functions, including marine and hotel operations, are managed from Hamburg.

The top markets are the Americas, DACH (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), and the UK, and there is growing support in Australia, New Zealand and China.

"Looking ahead to 2026, performance is already strong across both yields and volumes," Rainer said. "The U.S. and the UK are delivering particularly robust early growth, making them two of the most important growth markets for HX moving forward." – Oivind Mathisen



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SunStone

New Standards



← Carsten Lund,
chief commercial
officer



↑ Concept rendering for the Boundless-class ships, which will be able to carry between 200 and 300 guests.

Niels Erik-Lund has turned SunStone Ships over to his sons, Carsten and Christian, and was set to resign on July 1, 2025, staying on as a non-executive board member.

“My brother and I are incredibly proud and honored to be given the responsibility of carrying SunStone forward and building on the strong foundation our father has built during the past 35 years,” said Carsten Lund, chief commercial officer.

The year promises to be exciting for the company. The seventh and final ship in the Infinity class, the Douglas Mawson, will be delivered in China and then sent on her long-term year-round charter to Aurora Expeditions.

BOUNDLESS

In addition to finishing the Douglas Mawson, Lund said he was working full speed to have a deal in place this year to build a series of new ships, the Boundless class, for a variety of charter clients.

“The first step was to revisit the choices made on main equipment and technology, as we all know how quickly this industry moves. We adjusted a few choices to ensure that we continue building vessels that are as safe, efficient and environmentally responsible as possible. Since then, we have continued reducing our shipyard shortlist. We expect to have a letter of intent in place with a shipyard during the second quarter of 2025 and the first shipbuilding contract signed by end of year 2025,” he said.

What do clients want? That is answered in the design of the Boundless ships, which will be about 20 meters longer than the Infinity-class vessels.

“The passenger capacity will depend on the charterers’ needs, but we will be able to accommodate between 200 and 300 passengers. In addition to being capable of running on biofuel like the Infinity class, the Boundless will also be prepared for ethanol and methanol, as well as having battery packs to reduce the need for diesel generators to be online for redundancy.”

Additionally, plans call for a top deck pool midship under a retractable roof. The ships will offer an enclosed garage able to store up to 20 zodiacs or other equipment such as jet skis, submarines, or small tenders.

“This makes the Boundless an ideal choice for warm water operators and polar operators alike, as we have more outdoor space and equipment flexibility combined with a Polar Class 6 ice-strengthened hull and propulsion systems,” Lund said.

While a shipyard had not yet been secured as of April, Lund said decision criteria would come down to price, and being able to deliver a quality ship on time.

“Being a shipowner and a tonnage provider, we have charterers who depend on these deliveries. Delays not only affect us, but they also affect our charterers, some of which we have worked with for nearly 20 years. It is therefore vital for us to work with a yard that is both committed and capable. This was achieved with the Infinity class, and it is a must for the Boundless class as well.”

BUSINESS DYNAMICS

Lund said there was more interest in warm-water charters as of late.

It represents a shift for Lund, as most of the company's clients are operating in the polar regions.

"During the past year, we have seen an increased interest in our vessels outside the expedition market. We maintain a narrow focus on what type of vessels we build, but we are broadening the range of clients for which our vessels are built.



This makes the Boundless an ideal choice for warm water operators and polar operators alike, as we have more outdoor space and equipment flexibility combined with Polar Class 6 ice-strengthened hull and propulsion systems.

With the addition of the Boundless, we are confident that more warm-water operators will be operating SunStone vessels in the future," Lund said.

Other changes include the Ocean Albatros, which has been sold to the new owners at Albatros Expeditions, as well as

the Ocean Atlantic, Ocean Endeavour and Ocean Adventurer, which are older expedition ships coming off charter deals.

Lund said the Ocean Atlantic has been sold to be recycled following her last voyage in May.

The Ocean Adventurer is heading to G Adventures later this year, while the Ocean Endeavour will either be sold or chartered out after the summer, either as an accommodation vessel, or potentially for further cruise operations, Lund said.

"Our strategy continues to be to slowly retire the older tonnage and focus exclusively on new tonnage; however, most of the older vessels are still attractive assets for different reasons," he continued. "The Ocean Adventurer had major upgrades in 2017 when the owners of the ship invested \$15 million on six new engines, all new bathrooms, as well as an added superstructure with additional passenger suites and refurbished all public spaces."

Following a boom in the expedition market, Lund said the recovery coming out of Covid had been delayed with over capacity.

"The passengers have now come back, and we expect to see continued growth in the expedition market in the coming years. As a substantial share of the global expedition fleet includes first-generation, older vessels that are close to or past the age of retirement, we could soon see the demand outweigh the supply, as purpose-built vessels become the new standard for expedition cruising." – Monty Mathisen

THE COMPLETE CATERING SYSTEMS



Sovereign of the Seas, Seaward, Seabourn Pride, Star Princess, Seabourn Spirit, Club Med J, Fantasy, Westerdam, Nordic Empress, Crown Princess, Horizon, Silja Serenade, Ecstasy, Regal Princess, Monarch of the Seas, Hanseatic, Silja Symphony, Majesty of the Seas, Dreamward, Zenith, Royal Viking Queen, Club Med SS, Crown Jewel, Graciya, Costa Allegra, Barfleur, Normandie, Windward, Crown Dynasty, Costa Romantica, Kazakhstan SS, American Adventure, King Harald, Richard With, Nordlys, Oriana, Legend of the Seas, Century, Splendor of the Seas, Sun Princess, Carnival Destiny, Galaxy, Costa Victoria, Grandeur of the Princess, Mercury, Enchantment of the Seas, Sea Princess, R One, R Two, Voyager of the Seas, R Norwegian Sky, Seven Seas Navigator, Explorer of the Seas, Carnival Spirit, Radiance of the Constellation, Coral Princess, Navigator of the Seas, Serenade of the Seas, Carnival Miracle, Jewel of Valor, Pride of America, Norwegian Jewel, Seas, Crown Princess, MSC Musica, Norwegian Orchestra, Norwegian Gem, Ventura, MSC MSC Fantasia, Celebrity Solstice, MSC Splendida, Carnival Dream, Silver Spirit, Agra, Celebrity Eclipse, Seas, L'Austral, Disney Dream, Carnival Magic, Celebrity, Celebrity Reflection, MSC Preziosa, Regal Princess, Mein Schiff 3, Regal Princess, Quantum of the Seas, Mein Schiff 4, Britannia, Anthem of the Seas, Carnival Vista, Elation of the Seas, Harmony of the Seas, Mein Schiff 5, Silver Muse, Seabourn Encore, Majestic Princess, MSC Meraviglia, MSC Seaside, Symphony of the Seas, MSC Seaview, Seabourn Elation, Mein Schiff 1, Aida Helios, Celebrity Edge, Mein Schiff 2, Costa Venezia, MSC Belissima, Spectrum of the Seas, Sky Princess, MSC Grandioze, Carnival Panorama, Celebrity Apex, P&O Iona, Enchanted Princess, Silver Moon, Odyssey of the Seas, Costa Firenze, Mardi Gras, MSC Virtuosa, Aida Cosma, MSC Seashore, Silver Dawn, Discovery Princess, Wonder of the Seas, Celebrity Beyond, Disney Wish, Celebration, MSC Seascape, MSC Enrichia, P&O Arvia, Oceania Vista, Icon of the Seas, Celebrity Ascend, Carnival Jubilee, Sun Princess, Queen Anne, Mein Schiff 7, Utopia of the Seas, Disney Treasure, Mein Schiff Relax

66° Expeditions

New Player



↑ The Seaventure has a new livery and a new owner.



← Alan Tao, CEO

6° Expeditions bought the Seaventure (the original Bremen) from Scylla last year and intends to build up its own expedition operation in China, said Alan Tao, CEO, in an interview with *Cruise Industry News*.

This summer the brand will operate its own program in the Arctic, while the ship will be chartered, as part of a previous agreement, to Polar Latitudes for the 2025-26 Antarctica season, as well as for a handful of sailings for the 2026-27 season.

The ship was handed over last November, said Tao, who added that he plans to bring Eastern and Western travel philosophies together for his new cruise product.

LAUNCHING

Operations launched with a 13-cruise Arctic season that began in May. Tao said the brand will also offer two departures in Antarctica. His goal? 80 percent occupancy.

Despite being a latecomer to the expedition market, Tao said there was no shortage of demand for a polar region product from the Chinese market.

The company's brand, 66° Expeditions, originates from its pursuit of innovation and extreme experiences.

"We hope that each of our Antarctica voyages can cross the Antarctic Circle and deliver an unparalleled experience," said Tao.

The company's slogan, translated from Chinese, is "Beyond Adventure," with further branding expressing going "South of the South Pole and North of the North Pole."

A shoulder season operation is slated for the British Isles.

For 2026, the company has announced 22 voyages, including a "Great Voyages of Discovery" itinerary that traces historic European exploration routes. This journey, a repositioning cruise, sails from Cape Verde through Mauritania, the Canary Islands and the remote Bijagós Archipelago.

Another key departure is on Aug. 8, 2026, being a solar eclipse voyage.

"We're blending adventure with cultural storytelling," Tao explained, highlighting plans to integrate more Asia-centric innovations by 2027.

CHINESE TWIST

The 1990-built Seaventure saw a number of updates during a spring drydock at Naval Rocha. Tao said the company put in new safety systems alongside an interior refit and new exterior livery. The onboard product will be tweaked for the Chinese market with specific food and beverage offerings alongside Mandarin-language services and culturally tailored entertainment.

Originally aiming for an even 50/50 split between Chinese and international passengers, the 2025 season has so far leaned more heavily toward Chinese charter groups. Nonetheless, Tao remains dedicated to promoting cross-cultural exchange, noting: "Travel's greatest value lies in cultural dialogue."

The company is ramping up outreach efforts in Europe and North America, with a particular focus on overseas Chinese communities, drawn by their strong ties to Eastern heritage.

What's next? Tao hinted at newbuild plans.

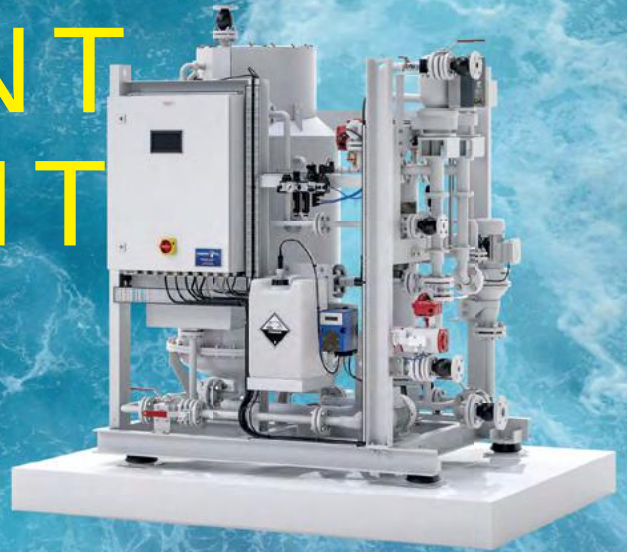
However, he said that 66° Expeditions faces challenges such as attracting top talent and adapting operations to regional markets.

Still, he remains optimistic: "No other company blends China's market potential with our uniquely hybrid cultural approach." — Eng Hong Ngoh

SEWAGE TREATMENT EQUIPMENT

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← Two helicopters aboard the Ultramarine give the company an advantage.

Polar Focused



← Sam Seward, CEO

Quark Expeditions had over 2,000 guests on its helicopters aboard the Ultramarine this past season in Antarctica, giving it a distinct advantage, said Sam Seward, who took over as CEO in late 2024.

The three-ship brand does polar expeditions in Ant-

arctica and the Arctic and continues to freshen its fleet.

The 2021-built Ultramarine was joined late last year by the Ocean Explorer, which the company was able to take on following the demise of Vantage.

Meanwhile, the World Explorer will exit the Quark fleet and be replaced by the sister ship, the World Voyager, on a

three-year Antarctica charter deal with Mystic starting with the 2026-27 season.

“We have a fair bit going on in the Canadian High Arctic this summer,” said Seward. “We are trying to build on and replicate those big moments guests are coming to us expecting.

“

For North Americans, there is high demand for our fly-cruise program from King George Island, and a decent level of demand for our marquee trips, like seeing Snow Hill.

“We are building on our tundra-to-table-food program, which has been a huge success. It is based on working with Inuit chefs and bringing food and food stories onto the ship.”

Seward also noted a very well sold solar eclipse voyage in Greenland, and more plans to lean into themed voyages.

“This is a market where there is a lot of competition, so we are looking for ways to make voyages more unique and interesting,” he said.

SOLID DEMAND

“Looking longer term, we are currently in the early stages of investigating more capacity in the 2028-29 horizon for Antarctica,” Seward said. “We’re not ready at this point to make any firm decisions.”

Nevertheless, demand is solid, he said, with most guests coming from North America, and other key markets being the UK and Australia. British and European guests have taken a liking to the company’s Svalbard program.

“For North Americans, there is high demand for our fly-cruise program from King George Island, and a decent level of demand for our marquee trips, like seeing Snow Hill,” Seward said.

Quark’s fly-cruise program, which is offered on all three ships, allows guests a quicker path to Antarctica, skipping two days of Drake Passage sailing each way and instead flying to King George Island to board a ship.



We are trying to build on and replicate those big moments guests are coming to us expecting.

“That has led to a higher proportion of working, professional-aged guests that want a shorter itinerary,” Seward said.

And in China, Quark has had a successful track record of full-ship charters, with a dedicated Mandarin-language program available if needed.

“China is a very price-sensitive space,” Seward continued. “There is a fair bit of competition among all of us.”

POLAR OBSESSED

Quark’s mantra is that it has been polar obsessed since 1991, meaning there are no plans to do other programs or find warm waters, Seward explained.

One growth area before more capacity could come in the form of pre- and post-expedition options for guests in Buenos Aires and Punta Arenas, he said.

Capacity in Antarctica has plateaued for now.

“Some operators that have moved capacity into the cold-water regions are starting to back out and we are seeing redeployments and some consolidation of the market,” Seward said. “What I think is playing out is that some had aspirational ticket pricing with new ships and they are not achieving those prices yet. Demand and capacity is not quite balanced.



↑ The Ultramarine

“The Arctic is really challenging with an increasingly difficult regulatory environment in Svalbard and Greenland, and geopolitical dimensions that also make it tricky to make long-term plans at the moment,” Seward added.

Quark has its big advantage: small ships and the Ultramarine with its helicopter program.

“It gives us that differentiation and allows us to flex our brand proposition,” Seward said. “It makes a huge difference to have the capability to have every one off the ships (at once) and a high ratio of expedition guides to guests.” – *Monty Mathisen*



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↑ The Silver Endeavour

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“At Silversea, we believe the journey is as meaningful as the destination — and that’s the essence of our new brand positioning: ‘To Finding More,’” said Conrad Combrink, senior vice president of expeditions.

“It speaks directly to the heart of our expedition experience: immersive, transformative, and deeply personal. We take guests to the farthest corners of the Earth, but we also invite them to discover new perspectives, new connections and new stories along the way.”

Combrink explained how Silversea pioneered luxury expedition cruising in 2008 when it became the first cruise line to offer luxury Antarctic expeditions.

“That pioneering spirit is core to our expedition DNA,” he added.

3 SHIPS IN ANTARCTICA

Silversea will continue to operate three ships in Antarctica, the Silver Endeavour, Silver Cloud and Silver Wind, according to Combrink, offering a range of journeys that will now include stays at the line’s new 150-room hotel, The Cormorant at 55 South, in Puerto Williams, Chile, which is set to open for the 2025-26 season.

“The hotel will allow us to create the most comfortable and seamless journey to the seventh continent,” he said. “With both our fly-cruise sailings and traditional Antarctica sailings, we’re giving our guests the flexibility of choice to visit this bucket list destination.”

Guests embarking on the Antarctica fly-cruise program will fly directly to Puerto Williams from Santiago.

The Cormorant will have its own dedicated staff, all trained to provide the level of service that is synonymous with Silversea, he added.

“Beyond Antarctica, we also have exciting programs in the Arctic, including Svalbard, the British Isles, Iceland, Greenland and Canada.”

In addition, the Silver Origin, which was purpose-built for the Galapagos, will maintain the brand’s year-round presence there.

Other expedition programs are offered in Asia, the South Pacific and West Africa.

“And we are continuing to expand our cultural programming across expedition regions, from new indigenous-led experiences in the Kimberley to science and photography-focused sailings in the Arctic, and deeper, guide-led wildlife encounters in the Galapagos,” Combrink noted.

PARTNERSHIPS

“Our approach is rooted in building long-term, authentic partnerships with local communities, whether through employment, sourcing, or cultural collaborations,” he continued.

“Supporting local communities has long been an essential part of Silversea’s approach to travel. Across our expedition footprint, we prioritize long-term partnerships to offer the most meaningful guest experiences.

“In the Galapagos, Silver Origin is staffed entirely by Ecuadorian nationals, and we work closely with local farmers, artisans and conservation groups to ensure our operations contribute positively to the region.

“Our hotel in Puerto Williams, Chile, is also being built in partnership with a consortium of Chilean investors and will showcase handicrafts and art by local and regional artisans.

“We also integrate community support into our culinary programming through our S.A.L.T. (Sea and Land Taste) culinary program. For this, we collaborate with local chefs, farmers and producers to bring regional cuisine to life, from market tours and shore excursions to onboard menus crafted with ingredients sourced directly from the places we visit.”

VISION

Driving Silversea’s product delivery is its commitment to immersive discovery in uncompromised comfort, Combrink said.

“We understand that our guests want more than just to ‘see’ a destination — they want to feel it, taste it, understand it. And we’re uniquely positioned to deliver that experience across all seven continents.

“Our vision is to keep pushing boundaries: to discover new destinations, elevate guest programming and continue delivering enriching expeditions.” ■

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Hurtigruten



← Hurtigruten's zero-emission concept ship for the future

Adventure Experience

Hurtigruten is a combination of river cruising, expedition cruising and traditional cruising, Hedda Felin, CEO, told *Cruise Industry News*.

"We are definitely more of an adventure cruise experience than a traditional cruise, so closer to what an expedition cruise would be like compared to a Caribbean cruise, for instance," she said.

"The original coastal express service stops at 34 ports on our roundtrip sailings from Bergen to Kirkenes, whereas our signature voyages to Svalbard during the extended summer season and to the North Cape during the winter are more like traditional cruises, with longer port calls, up to a day and a half, allowing for a different experience.

"We have a lot of repeat guests who want to experience the different seasons. If they first sailed during the winter for the Northern Lights, they may come back for the opposite, the Midnight Sun."

10-SHIP FLEET

With 10 ships, Hurtigruten sails eight ships on the year-round coastal route in addition to one ship, the all-inclusive



↑ Hedda Felin, CEO

Trollfjord, on the signature voyages to Svalbard and the North Cape, and another ship, the Finnmarken, out of Hamburg, dedicated to the German market.

"Luckily for us, Norway is a bucket-list destination for travelers across the globe."

Felin referred to a "Norwegianness" campaign that Hurtigruten launched last year.

The focus will always be on nature, she said, being immersed in Norway, Norway's coastal kitchen and the company's sustainability-leading efforts.

Hurtigruten has partnered with more than 70 local companies along the coast providing locally sourced meats, seafood, dairy products and more, ensuring that guests will enjoy the freshest foods possible at sea, she said.

"It is truly a fjord-to-plate concept," she added. "We source locally, and each menu will highlight what is typical for that region."

SUSTAINABILITY

Felin said that Hurtigruten is nearing the completion of a 100-million-euro upgrade program.

The Richard With was upgraded to a battery-hybrid ship a year and a half ago, and the fourth is about to be completed, she said, meaning that all the Hurtigruten ships will soon have been upgraded to reduce CO2 emissions by 25 percent and NOx by 80 percent.

Meanwhile, the target is to have the first zero-emission ships by 2030, according to Felin.

"We are currently in the R&D phase and are improving and fine-tuning the concept," she said.

"We are excited to continuously grow and evolve the Hurtigruten brand," Felin added, "especially now that we are separated from our former expedition sister brand. Following the split, we can now fully focus on what we do best: deliver the most authentic Norwegian travel experience to our guests." — Oivind Mathisen

Ensuring the voyage



Courtesy of Costa Crociere

When you enjoy a trip aboard a cruise ship you can only imagine what is going on behind the scenes. Safe and reliable power supply is needed for the essential services – and is also deputy to the main payload of the ship, hotel etc.

You can realize this in detail when the ship is going to drydock for the necessary scheduled or extraordinary maintenance, a call of duty to keep the vessel in operation and compliance.

The heart of the power control are the two main MV switchboards, port-side and starboard, connecting generators with all the other main electrical utilities.

In that complex and extremely challenging environment, stuckeGROUP, located in Hamburg, a global leader for control and protection systems since 1968, has been selected by Carnival Maritime GmbH for the retrofit of the medium voltage protection aboard two of their Costa Crociere ships. “We were looking for a partner who is able to handle both projects at the same time, one in Italy and one in France. Challenges are a tight schedule, very restricted space and no power cutoffs at any time as different retrofit works for cabins, restaurants etc. are going on at the same time. We chose stuckeGROUP because of their references and specialization” says Astrid Hoffmann, Senior Manager Strategic Sourcing of Carnival Maritime in Hamburg.

Costa Fascinosa and Costa Deliziosa were in drydock last November 2024. Scope of supply was to replace multiple devices with SYMAP®, a flexible digital protection and control device for low, medium and high voltage power systems, designed and made exclusively in Germany by stuckeGROUP. It has three powerful micro-processors, integrated protection functions and HMI interface. This efficient and cost-effective solution for all types of switchgear offers comprehensive protection and control functions for generators, transformers, motors, feeder, power lines, networks, DP systems, battery solutions etc. It has type approvals from common ship classification societies as well as type approval for cyber security and power management.

stuckeGROUP’s philosophy of a „one fits all” device is an optimal solution for this scope.

When approaching the two projects, it was clear that during drydock operations, restricted time and many companies working in the same area require good planning to optimize the replacement of devices. “The good cooperation and support we received from the electrical departments of the two cruise ships helped a lot during the whole assignment”, confirm stuckeGROUP Project Managers Filip Stanojev and Veljko Božić.

“They did an excellent job” says Guiseppe Aiello, Superintendent of

Costa Fascinosa, “from the installation of new doors for the switchboards to adapt to compact dimensions of the devices, embedded functionalities maintaining the same operation concept interfacing with the existing automation and controls, executed protection tests, provided spare parts and training of the technical crew to operate the new system.” And Roberto Cevasco, Superintendent of Costa Deliziosa adds: “stuckeGROUP adhered to all agreed timelines and really met our expectations as a leading global cruise company.”

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Antarctica21

Building Momentum



← The Magellan Explorer entered service in 2019.

“We are in a growth phase. We are replacing the 67-guest Ocean Nova that gets an average price of about \$13,000 per passenger with a new ship that carries 76 guests with an average price of \$19,000,” said Francesco Contini, executive vice president, sales and marketing at Antarctica21.

The Ocean Nova exits the fleet after the coming 2025-26 season. Taking its place is the Magellan Discoverer, which joins the Magellan Explorer and is an evolution of her older sister.

Both ships can carry more guests, but capacity is trimmed down with plane limitations for guests flying into King George Island to board the vessels.

Each deck is about 10 centimeters taller, said Contini. There’s also a wet lab aboard available to scientists, and the ship will feature podded propulsion. Interiors have been designed by Tomas Tillberg.

The company operates seasonally in Antarctica and 92 percent of its revenue

“We’ve also launched the 2026-27 season and it’s going very well, especially with the new vessel. We are significantly ahead of where we expected to be.”

comes from fly-cruise operations to King George Island.

Giving the company a competitive advantage is the company’s Explorer House, located in Punta Arenas, where guests gather ahead of the flight.

Described as a club, it features a restaurant, bar, lecture areas and more. An added benefit: The company does not need to compete for hard-to-find restaurant or event space with its tourism peers in the region.

GROWING

Contini said that the brand was evolving, going from a four-star product to five stars, and that involved the appointment of a new CEO and various back-office improvements.

Recent hires include a new business development manager in England. A similar role has been added in India, which represents a key long-term market for Antarctica21.

In China, the company has hired a key account manager and a dedicated Chinese marketing manager. Greater China represents about 30 percent of guest sourcing, Contini said.

Antarctica21 first went into China some 13 years ago and has built that business up, including full charter clients and groups. There are also high-net-worth travelers from China booking independently, Contini said.

STRONG MOMENTUM

Coming off a 2024-25 season that was basically sold out, the company was 62 percent booked for 2025-26 as of early April.

“We’ve also launched the 2026-27 season and it’s going very well, especially with the new vessel. We are significantly ahead of where we expected to be,” Contini added.

Operating seasonally, Antarctica21 has extended the calendar a bit, closing out the 2025 season in the Falklands and South Georgia in April.

“We are really focused on our fly-cruise model and being the specialists there. We are running the vessels 200 days of the year and will consider ideas for additional deployment, but it is not a strategic priority.

“The vessels are not used fully throughout the year, and we have developed a model that works. The Arctic is just not an attractive destination. It’s congested and the prices are depressed.”

Among new pilot projects, the company is working on new synthetic fuels. A special fuel is being trialed in the line’s zodiacs using carbon-neutral gasoline, which could eventually power the brand’s airplanes and ships. — *Monty Mathisen*



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Among the highlights at Heritage Expeditions are two 28-day Ross Sea voyages and a new cherry blossom expedition that departs next March on the Heritage Adventurer, which is the former Hanseatic.

“That is based on responding to customer requests and demand,” said Aaron Russ, commercial director of the family-owned, New Zealand-based company.

“We believe in the luxury of the experience, which is focused on the destination, time in the destination and the quality of the expedition team. We are not a cruise line that decided to put some zodiacs on a luxury ship,” he told *Cruise Industry News*.

Sailing its Antarctica program from New Zealand, the company has a different deployment strategy as opposed to its peers, which mainly leave from Argentina and Chile and head toward the Antarctica Peninsula.



“Others have tried and failed; there is a steady stream,” Russ said. “The Ross Sea is the true heart of Antarctica and it’s not the easy Antarctic Peninsula they are used to. It’s a tough place to operate and you need to have the best captains, expedition leaders and guides aboard.”

“For our northern summer season, we start in spring and go through early June, which is a great time to be traveling in Japan, and the ship is a great way to be moving around the coastline. We bring that expedition essence to a country that is more populated, with an expedition team aboard,” Russ said.

Plans for summer 2027 were being finalized in April, and Russ said he would stay with a similar deployment pattern. The company, he said, has no plans to go to Alaska.

“Everything is booking well across the board. There is a good uptake in our two Indonesia voyages, and our Asian island odyssey going from Indonesia to Papua New Guinea.”

Demand is good for Heritage, which also has an 18-guest ship that offers local expeditions in New Zealand, and Russ said the expedition market was still in a state of some correction.

“Lots of people piled in from outside the market with newbuilds,” he explained. “It’s fair to say the global market has seen overcapacity in the last couple of years and there is certainly a reorganization going on.”

“We’re still mid-cycle on that,” he said. “Now there is a distinct difference in the market between categories of



product, and everyone is looking to find a magic bullet for their solution. We’ll see where it ends.

“For us, we’re a family business and we have a different lens. Other companies may have investment cycles and are looking for opportunities for growth. We want to do what we believe in and makes good business sense ... We also want the right ship for the right destination.” – *Monty Mathisen*

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New Ship, New Plans



▲ The Ocean Adventurer in her new colors

◀ Bruce Poon Tip, founder



GAdventures will introduce the Ocean Adventurer as a replacement for its “little red ship,” the Expedition. Founder Bruce Poon Tip said several factors drove the decision.

“The Expedition was originally a car ferry from Finland. We converted it to a unique experience. We’ve loved it for over 15 years now, but a lot of the rules have changed, specifically with the 2030 climate accord and the climate goals; emissions have become a real issue. We’ve been working very hard to get the emissions down,” explained Tip.

“We were literally two weeks away from drydock this year and were going to put a lot of money into the Expedition, and it wasn’t guaranteed that it would bring the emissions down,” he said. “Then the opportunity for the Ocean Adventurer came up, which is one of the most fuel-efficient ships I’ve ever seen. It’s the strongest class hull; it’s the safest ship in Antarctica. It’s over 30 percent more fuel-efficient than our ship.

“We used to do Arctic and Antarctic. But since we’ve come out of Covid, we’ve kept it south only because of the fuel consumption. And we’re going back to the Arctic in summer 2026. This ship gives us the ability to do it ... it’s an ex-scientific research vessel, which is also a unique experience,” he said.

The Ocean Adventurer is scheduled to enter operation for the company for its upcoming Antarctic season.

According to Tip, the ship’s owners have installed six new engines and overhauled the interior.

“It’s in mint condition,” Tip said.

“This is the start of quite a big investment for us. We’ve always thought we had to address this issue, and now we have the opportunity to do it,” Tip continued.

He also noted that there will be more news in the future about further plans for the polar regions.

“We’re pretty excited to return to Greenland, Iceland and Spitsbergen. The Norwegian Arctic is a big bulk of it, but we’re looking at the Norwegian fjords, Greenland and Iceland. There’s even been talk of northern Canada. We’re just excited to have a ship that meets our climate goals so we can start looking at those programs again,” Tip said.

THE GUESTS

Across G Adventures’ brands and styles of travel, the company accommodates 300,000 guests annually.

“With our National Geographic programs, we’ve invested much more in the over-50 market,” he explained.

Tip pointed out that since Covid, guests are booking closer to departure.

“The biggest trend we’re seeing is that people are taking longer trips. Our average time to travel and stay with us is a few days longer than prior to 2019,” he added.

G Adventures has guests booking trips from 150 countries every year, with its biggest markets hailing from Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the German-speaking countries.

“We do get a significant number of Scandinavians and South Africans,” Tip noted.

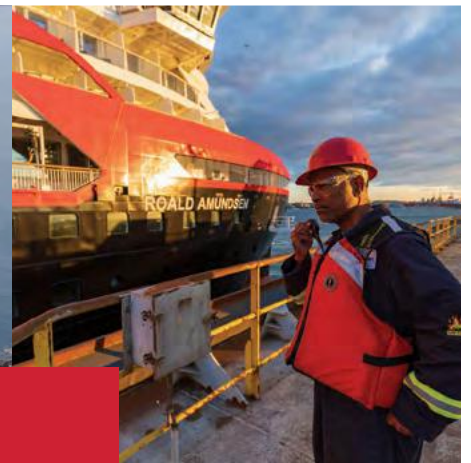
“We’re trying to create opportunities for our crew to come on the new ship. A lot of the crew have been with us for 20 years, but they’re through an external company ... we’re trying what we can to bring them over because we feel that they create a very important experience for the customers,” he said. “Our expedition program has the highest NPS score of all our programs, and that’s because of the crew.” – *Robyn Tamblyn*

LIGHTER **ANTTI DOOR** – LESSER **LOAD** **FOR THE SHIP**

Fire safety, sound insulation, and durability requirements make ship doors relatively heavy. However, thanks to over 30 years of experience and active product development, Antti Marine has now successfully managed to reduce the weight of its next-generation doors. The new optimized structural and insulation solutions in Antti doors benefit both shipowners and our shared environment.



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Located in beautiful British Columbia, Seaspan's Vancouver Drydock has been a one-stop-shop service provider for more than a century. Our newly-commissioned third drydock, alongside our two existing 30,000-tonne lifting capacity drydocks, ensures that we have the capacity to get your cruise ship's maintenance or repair completed on time, on budget, and to the highest standards.

Global Orderbook

	75		2,510		108,891		\$878 Million		\$349,832		188,259		\$65.9 Billion
Ocean Ships On Order Through 2036		Average Pax Capacity		Average Tonnage		Average Cost		Average Price Per Berth		Total Berths		Total Value	



	Cruise Line	Ship	Cost ⁽¹⁾	Tonnage	Capacity	Yard	Sailing	Delivery
2025:								
✓	TUI Cruises	Mein Schiff Relax	\$850	161,000	4,000	Fincantieri	Europe	Q1
✓	MSC Cruises	World America	\$1,200	205,700	5,400	Chantiers	Carib	Q1
✓	Norwegian	Aqua	\$1,000	156,300	3,571	Fincantieri	Carib	Q1
✓	Asuka/NYK	Asuka III	\$650	51,950	744	Meyer Werft	Asia	Q2
✓	Royal Caribbean	Star of the Seas	\$1,600	250,800	5,610	Meyer Turku	Carib	Q3
	Oceania	Allura	\$660	67,000	1,200	Fincantieri	Eur/Carib	Q3
	Viking Ocean	Viking Vesta	\$446	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	Q3
	Ritz-Carlton	Luminara	\$350	37,000	456	Chantiers	World	Q3
	Princess	Star Princess	\$1,000	175,000	4,300	Fincantieri	Eur/Carib	Q3
	SunStone²	Douglas Mawson	\$65	8,000	186	CMIH	World	Q3
	Four Seasons	Four Seasons I	\$425	20,000	190	Fincantieri	World	Q4
	Celebrity	Xcel	\$1,000	140,600	3,260	Chantiers	Carib	Q4
	Windstar	Star Seeker	\$130	10,000	224	West Sea	World	Q4
■	Disney	Adventure	\$1,800	208,000	6,000	Meyer Wismar	Asia	Q4
■	Disney	Destiny	\$900	140,000	2,500	Meyer Werft	Carib	Q4
2026:								
	Emerald	Kaia	\$125	11,000	100	Halong	World	Q1
	Norwegian	Luna	\$1,000	156,300	3,571	Fincantieri	Carib	Q1
■	Royal Caribbean	Legend/Seas	\$1,600	250,800	5,610	Meyer Turku	Eur/Carib	Spring
■	TUI Cruises	Mein Schiff Flow	\$850	161,000	4,000	Fincantieri	Europe	Q2
	Viking Ocean	Viking Mira	\$501	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	Q2
■	Orient Express	Corinthian	\$300	30,000	108	Chantiers	Europe	Q2
■	Explora Journeys	Explora III	\$600	64,000	922	Fincantieri	World	Summer
■	Antarctica21	Magellan Discoverer	\$65	590	100	ASENAV	Polar	Q4
■	Adora	Adora Flora City	\$850	141,000	5,300	CSSC	China	Q4
■	MSC Cruises	World Asia	\$1,200	205,700	5,400	Chantiers	Europe	Q4
	Viking Ocean	Viking Libra	\$501	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	Q4
	Regent	Seven Seas Prestige	\$885	77,000	850	Fincantieri	Eur/Carib	Q4
■	Mystic/Atlas	World Adventurer	\$120	10,000	200	West Sea	World	TBA

2 On charter to Aurora Expeditions

(1) In Millions, Costs May Be Estimated
TBA = To Be Announced

■ Alternative Fuels
■ Expedition

■ China/Asia Market Dedicated Vessel
Orderbook current as of June 20, 2025

✓ Delivered

Global Orderbook



Cruise Line	Ship	Cost ⁽¹⁾	Tonnage	Capacity	Yard	Sailing	Delivery
2027:							
Emerald	Raiya	\$125	11,000	128	Halong	World	Q1
Carnival	Festivale	\$1,200	183,900	5,400	Meyer Werft	Carib	Q1
Explora Journeys	Explora IV	\$600	64,000	922	Fincantieri	World	Spring
MSC Cruises	World Atlantic	\$1,200	205,700	5,400	Chantiers	Carib	Spring
Emerald	Xara	\$125	11,000	128	Halong	World	Q2
Viking Ocean	Viking Astrea	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	Q2
Aman at Sea	Amangati	\$400	23,000	94	T. Mariotti	TBA	Q2
Oceania	Sonata	\$980	86,000	1,450	Fincantieri	TBA	Q2
Four Seasons	Four Seasons II	\$425	20,000	190	Fincantieri	World	Q4
Orient Express	Olympian	\$300	30,000	108	Chantiers	TBA	TBA
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,300	169,000	3,650	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Mystic/Atlas	World Discoverer	\$120	10,000	200	West Sea	World	TBA
Explora Journeys	Explora V	\$600	70,000	922	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Ryobi Holdings	Unnamed	\$150	20,000	150	West Sea	Asia	TBA
Royal Caribbean	Unnamed	\$1,600	250,800	5,610	Meyer Turku	TBA	TBA
Disney	Unnamed	\$1,300	105,000	3,000	Meyer Werft	TBA	TBA
Aranui	Aranoa	\$200	7,000	198	Huanghai	Asia	TBA
2028:							
Crystal	Unnamed	\$720	61,800	690	Fincantieri	TBA	Q2
OLC/Disney	Unnamed	\$900	140,000	2,500	Meyer Werft	Asia	Q4
Carnival	Tropicale	\$1,200	183,900	5,400	Meyer Werft	TBA	TBA
Explora Journeys	Explora VI	\$600	70,000	922	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Royal Caribbean	Unnamed	\$1,550	231,000	5,714	Chantiers	TBA	TBA
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,300	169,000	3,650	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Celebrity	Unnamed	\$1,000	140,600	3,260	Chantiers	TBA	TBA
2029:							
Carnival	Unnamed	\$1,750	230,000	6,200	Fincantieri	TBA	Summer
Disney	Unnamed	\$1,300	105,000	3,000	Meyer Werft	TBA	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Oceania	Unnamed	\$980	86,000	1,450	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Regent	Unnamed	\$885	77,000	850	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
MSC Cruises	Unnamed	\$1,200	205,700	5,400	Chantiers	TBA	TBA



Global Orderbook

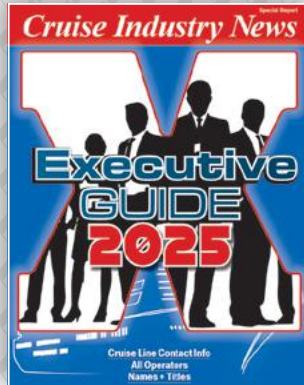
Cruise Line	Ship	Cost ⁽¹⁾	Tonnage	Capacity	Yard	Sailing	Delivery
2030:							
AIDA	Unnamed	\$1,300	150,000	4,200	Fincantieri	TBA	Q1
Crystal	Unnamed	\$720	61,800	690	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,800	225,000	5,100	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Disney	Unnamed	\$1,300	105,000	3,000	Meyer Werft	TBA	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Marella	Unnamed	\$1,000	120,000	3,200	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
MSC Cruises	Unnamed	\$1,200	205,700	5,400	Chantiers	TBA	TBA
2031:							
Carnival	Unnamed	\$1,750	230,000	6,200	Fincantieri	TBA	Summer
Disney	Unnamed	\$1,300	105,000	3,200	Meyer Werft	TBA	TBA
AIDA	Unnamed	\$1,300	150,000	4,200	Fincantieri	TBA	Q4
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
Viking Ocean	Unnamed	\$517	54,300	998	Fincantieri	World	TBA
2032:							
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,800	225,000	5,100	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Crystal	Unnamed	\$720	61,800	690	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
Marella	Unnamed	\$1,000	120,000	3,200	Fincantieri	TBA	TBA
2033 – 2036:							
Carnival	Unnamed	\$1,750	230,000	6,200	Fincantieri	TBA	2033
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,800	225,000	5,100	Fincantieri	TBA	2034
Norwegian	Unnamed	\$1,800	225,000	5,100	Fincantieri	TBA	2036
COASTAL SHIPS:							
American	Patriot	\$65	5,000	125	Chesapeake	U.S.	2025
American	Pioneer	\$65	5,000	125	Chesapeake	U.S.	2025
American	Encore	\$75	6,000	180	Chesapeake	U.S.	2026
American	Maverick	\$65	5,000	125	Chesapeake	U.S.	2026
American	Ranger	\$65	5,000	125	Chesapeake	U.S.	2026
American	Anthem	\$75	6,000	180	Chesapeake	U.S.	2027

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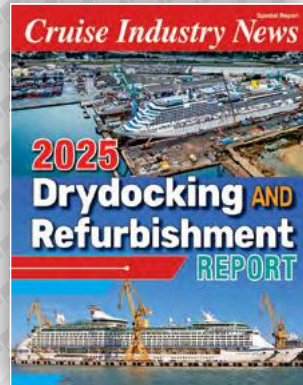
Digital Reports



Luxury Market



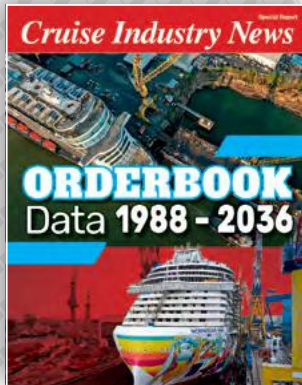
Executive Guide



Drydocking Report



Annual Report



Orderbook Report



Global Cruise Ship Index



China Market Report



European River Report



Expedition Market



Secondhand Market



USA River Report



Current Orderbook



Magazine Subscription

voyage plan: summer 2025

A look back at the last few months

SMOOTH SAILING

ADRIFT

ON COURSE

+ Norwegian Cruise Line **adds** 50 staterooms to existing ships



+ Emerald **orders** two additional luxury yachts



+ Budget cuts **threaten** CDC's cruise ship inspections



+ Over and out: Alma Cruceros **shuts down** after just two cruises



+ Cruise stocks **fluctuate** with U.S. government tariff threats



+ MSC and Norwegian **launch** new ships in Miami



+ AIDA completes first Evolution drydock; **confirms** refits for more ships



+ Royal Caribbean and MSC plan year-round service in Southern Caribbean



+ Antarctica: IAATO mandates acoustic mitigation measures **to protect** whales



+ 77-year-old Astoria **sold** at auction in Rotterdam



+ Lindblad welcomes two new ships in the Galapagos; **announces** European river cruising expansion



+ Carnival **expands** its Australian fleet with former P&O ships



+ Japanese market: Asuka welcomes newbuild as Mitsui announces plans to **retire** the Nippon Maru



+ NCLH to **shed** 5,000+ berths in fleet strategy shift



+ End of the line: Ocean Atlantic and former Celestyal Crystal are **beached** for scrapping



+ Viking **reveals** first hydrogen-powered cruise ships



+ Crescent Seas **to start** residential line with former Regent and Oceania vessels



+ Cordelia to **expand** operations in India with former Norwegian ships



+ Costa Fortuna **sold** to Margaritaville at Sea



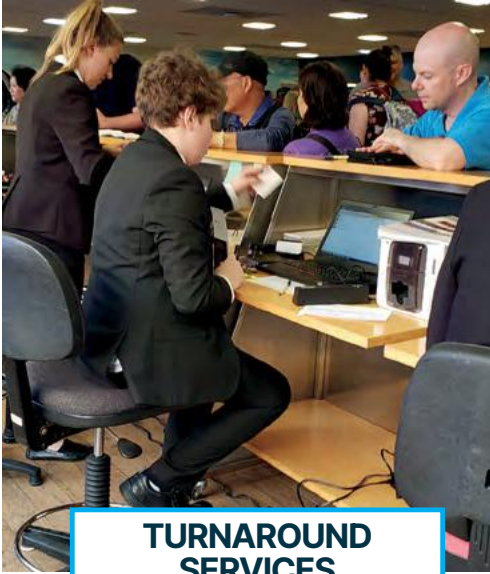
+ More visits to Labadee **cancelled** as violence surges in Haiti



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