

Seatrade

Cruise Review

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REPLACING PLASTIC

The battle has begun

War on plastic

Cruise lines are stepping up to attack this scourge of the oceans. **Anne Kalosh** reports.

The seas are awash in it. An estimated 8m metric tons of plastic enter the oceans every year, according to a 2015 report in the journal *Science*. It's not just ugly, it wreaks havoc on marine life.

'Plastic persists in our environment forever. Unless it's incinerated, it never breaks down,' notes Jill Stoneberg, director, social impact & sustainability, Virgin Voyages.

Some types of plastics eventually disintegrate into microplastics containing toxins that are ingested by sea life, killing millions of organisms each year.

Ships are not to blame for the vast bulk of marine plastic pollution. MARPOL Annex V prohibits vessels from discharging any plastics into the sea. The source of this scourge is land-based.

'Ships do not generate plastic that's damaging the environment because we

don't throw it into the sea,' says Gianni Onorato, ceo, MSC Cruises. 'But our battle, as responsible citizens, is how can we help reduce the overall amount of plastic to have a better world tomorrow?'

Awareness of the marine plastic pollution crisis is rising, thanks to shockers like the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a viral video of rescuers removing a straw from a sea turtle's nose and photos of polar bears munching on Styrofoam.

Also, in 2017 the United Nations launched a #CleanSeas campaign to engage governments, the general public and the private sector in the fight. Over five years, UN Environment is addressing the root-cause of marine litter by targeting the production and consumption of non-recoverable and single-use plastic.

UN Environment says 60% to 90% of marine litter is made up of plastic polymers. The most common are cigarette butts, plastic bags,

fishing gear and food and beverage containers.

Cruise lines jumped on the anti-straw bandwagon. But straws comprise just 0.025% of the plastic going into the oceans, according to National Geographic.

'We wanted to do something more than get rid of straws that is really bold and moves the industry forward,' Virgin's Stoneberg says. 'We wanted to go all in.'

The company announced a ban on single-use plastic in tandem with Scarlet Lady's name reveal and float-out last year. At the time, Richard Branson declared: 'Business is a force for good and can and must be the catalyst for global change.'

As a startup, Virgin Voyages has the benefit of tackling plastic from a blank slate, unlike established lines where it's already part of the supply chain and revenue stream. After careful assessment, Virgin reduced standard disposable items used in food and beverage

Richard Branson shows what Virgin Voyages thinks of plastic bottles



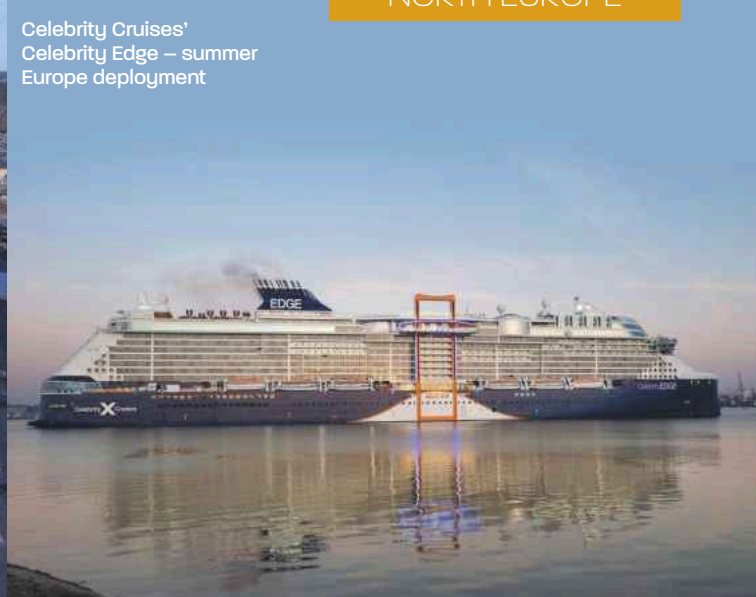
Virgin Voyages office sculpture made from plastic trash collected by employees



Meyer Turku Shipyard



Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Edge – summer Europe deployment



Vibrant hub

By Mary Bond

Europe is the world's second biggest cruise market, both in terms of source of passengers (7m) and as a cruise destination (6.5m passengers embarked).

The cruise market contributed almost €48bn to the European economy in 2017, with 400,000 people employed in cruise and cruise-related businesses.

As the global cruise industry continues to grow and expand into new destinations, Europe remains a vibrant hub for cruising.

This trend is supported by three key factors: it's a thriving source market, a popular destination, second only to the Caribbean, and European shipyards are the heart of the world's cruise ship building/repair industry with spending on newbuilds and maintenance increasing six years in a row.

Europe-based shipyards dominate the orderbook with no less than 106 of the 118 cruise ships on order from 2109-2027 being built at 17 yards domiciled in Germany, Finland, Italy, France, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Croatia, and The Netherlands. Just a couple of years ago 98% of the cruise ship orderbook was placed at just four builders: Fincantieri, STX (as was then), Meyer Werft and Meyer Turku. On the large ship construction sector they have been joined by M/V Werften in Germany who is building on own account parent company Genting Cruise Lines.

The recent surge in new ships being placed for the expedition, luxury yachts and smaller ship sectors has provided an opportunity for European yards with limited building capacity to get a slice of the cruise action.

This has led to the likes of Ulstein, Kleven and Fincantieri's Vard in Norway, Spain's J. Barreras and Metalships & Docks, WestSea Viana in Portugal and Croatian yards of Uljanik and Brodosplit securing orders.

We have seen a reprise in cruise ship construction for Italy's T Mariotti, a breakthrough for Damen at its Mangalia yard in Romania, De Hoop in The Netherlands and most recently a re-entering of cruise ship construction by Helsinki Shipyards which picked up a pair of luxury expedition ships on account of a Russian charterer.

This year is likely to be another record in terms of European source market growth across multiple lines operating in Europe although Carnival Corp & plc did report in July its Continental Europe brands have been facing heightened geopolitical and macroeconomic headwinds in 2019 which are impacting this year's financial performance.

Wells Fargo Securities puts Carnival's Europe/UK sourcing at about 30% compared to around 10-15% for Royal Caribbean and 5-10% for Norwegian Cruise Lines Holdings.

In terms of deployment in Northern Europe, both Norway and the Baltics remain popular draws. Last year Cruise Baltic ports welcomed 5.4m cruise guests and the record is set to be broken again in 2019 with 5.8m projected. In Copenhagen, the Baltic's busiest cruise port, growth projections are set at 12.3% in 2019 on the 868,000 passengers which visited in 2018.

Norwegian ports are expecting to receive 2,365 calls in 2019 a 10.7% hike year-on-year for ships and a plus 14% rise in passengers. 56% of passengers visiting Norway's 40 odd cruise ports hail from either UK or Germany. Norway is now a year-round destination with calls every month (in Stavanger) although up and down the country's long coastline June, July and August remain the peak months for cruise tourism.

At North Europe's busiest turnaround port, Southampton, the number of cruise ships has grown from 250 to 500 a year in the last ten years and the port is investing in new infrastructure and facilities to improve peak day capacity between Friday and Sunday.

Associated British Ports has spent £12m in partnership with Carnival UK in infrastructure improvement at Ocean Terminal for the impending arrival of P&O Cruises' LNG-powered Iona in 2020 and sister ship in 2022. The project will compete early next year with the installation of two new airbridges and a further 2,000 roof-mounted solar panels.

Branded as the 'Emotion Ship', A-Rosa's newbuilding from Concordia Damen will commence operation on River Rhine in 2021



PHOTO: A-ROSA FLUSSSCHIFF GMBH

Taking a different approach

By **Frederik Erdmann**

River cruises have long been considered a holiday option mainly for older travellers. Rostock-based A-Rosa Flussschiff is challenging this view focussing on family river cruising.

The company's new flagship, unnamed as yet, and under construction at Concordia Damen Shipyard, is a 'fireworks of innovations' remarked A-Rosa's ceo Jörg Eichler.

Due for delivery in 2021 under the project name 'Emotion Ship' it will be anything but just 'another' rivership.

'It will be tailored to our concept of city breaks for the entire family,' Eichler commented, pointing out what A-Rosa has been doing differently over the past five years.

In contrast to the majority of rivership operators (which mainly concentrate on 50+ year old travellers), his company has

Jörg Eichler with Yvonne Catterfeld, the godmother A-Rosa Alva, in Porto on April 30



PHOTO: A-ROSA FLUSSSCHIFF GMBH / TOM KOHLER

gone to great lengths to attract (young) families with children.

It started back in 2014 when A-Rosa, in a move to differentiate itself from its competitors on the (at that time) somewhat oversupplied German source market, offered the first family cruises with a dedicated entrainment program for children.

The new offer was received well and soon extended. Each region served by A-Rosa got its dedicated family rivership with childcare during the holiday period.

While its fleet capacity remained unchanged, revenues increased by 6% in 2018, with city breaks and family cruising as the main drivers.

Profits increased by 60% year-on-year, despite difficult conditions in the second half of 2018 due to low tides on many European rivers.

2,400 children travelled onboard A-Rosa's ships throughout the year, a volume which – although it may look small compared to some ocean cruise lines – turns A-Rosa into the undoubted family river cruise market leader.

Children up to the age of 15 travel for free in A-Rosa's 'Premium all inclusive' tariff together with at least one adult.

Some ships have been upgraded with family cabins, or with cabins linked by a door.

And August 8, 2019, a dedicated Summer Kids Party was celebrated onboard A-Rosa Flora at Koblenz to commemorate five years of family cruising.

A-Rosa's next step to secure its position as a families' river cruise line of choice will be

the new flagship due to arrive in 2021. The 135mtr long and 17.7mtr wide vessel has been tailored to sail the northern part of River Rhine and will have 140 cabins.

A part of the ship will be dedicated to families, complete with 28 sq mtr family cabins and Kid's Club. The restaurant will be complemented with a dedicated children's area where kids can dine with friends if they want to.

On deck, the adult pool is going to be complemented with a separate pool specifically designed for children.

As a hybrid vessel, the new rivership will switch off its engines on approach to destinations (and while passing city areas), operating exclusively on battery propulsion during the times.

At berth, the ship will – as is already standard on riverships – take shore power to cover the entire energy demand onboard and to recharge the propulsion batteries.

Additionally, the patented Damen Air Cavity System (DACs) will be applied to reduce fuel consumption.

In addition A-Rosa will take delivery of a sistership from Damen in 2023 which will be optimised in line with experiences gained from the first ship in 2021/22.

A-Rosa has 13 riverships in service: Five on River Danube, four on River Rhine, two on the Rhône/Saône, and one each on River Seine and River Douro.

Eichler makes it clear that A-Rosa aims to grow on these existing rivers rather expanding to new areas, although the French presence could be extended to new rivers.