

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Cunard brings fashion, food, music onboard to foster sector ties

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*Cunard's Queen Victoria ship*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Global cruise line Cunard is showing off its creativity with a pair of newly announced event programs.

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"Transatlantic Fashion Week" will put patrons in touch with industry members in the lead up to New York Fashion Week, while "British Isles Culinary Discovery" will do the same with gastronomical celebrities. Creative "event" cruises help differentiate Cunard from other cruise lines and foster a reputation of "luxury" because of its ties to other sectors, events and people.

"High fashion, entertainment, formal evenings and elegant dining have always been a part of the Cunard experience," said Jackie Chase, Director of Public Relations for Cunard North America. "Our discerning guests expect a high level of service, engaging and thought provoking programs and fine dining that exceeds expectations.

"Therefore, every specially curated cruise or partnership that Cunard endeavors to offer returning or new guests are meant to continuously push the boundaries of curating timeless experiences onboard. Cunard's ability to preserve 175 years of history and tradition, while also predicting or adapting to emerging trends, are what sets the brand over its competitors."

### Fashion and food on the seas

For Transatlantic Fashion Week, the Queen Mary 2 will leave Southampton, Britain, on Sept. 1 and arrive in New York on Sept. 8. Fares begin at \$1,349 per person, based on double occupancy.

The arrival date is timed in conjunction with the beginning of New York Fashion Week, but the cruise liner itself will have plenty of happenings that will please fashionistas.

Onboard, British designer Dame Zandra Rhodes, who dressed former Queen frontman Freddie Mercury and former First Lady Jackie Onassis, as well as fashion writer Colin McDowell and New York Fashion Week founder/fashion historian Fern Mallis will host events and talks for guests.

Storm modeling agency will also be on hand, with models there to show some of Dame Rhodes' designs. Rounding out the talent are students from the Royal College of Art, home to one of the world's most prestigious postgraduate fashion programs.

The Queen Elizabeth will host the British Isles Culinary Discovery in a much longer trip, lasting from June 23 to July

5. Fares will range upward from \$2,199.

Similar to Transatlantic Fashion Week, British Isles Culinary Discovery will include gastronomical talents, including Maison Sichel's Charles Sichel and wine critic Jilly Goolden. On-board events, curated menus and trips onto the isles will provide guests with a culinary experience to last a lifetime.

Also announced were three Big Band Balls beginning in November, ranging from three days to more than a month. Orchestras will perform jazz standards from the likes of icons Glenn Miller and Duke Ellington.

"These special event voyages will heighten the Cunard ocean travel experience in a uniquely vibrant and memorable way, immersing our guests into the worlds of fashion, high style, the best of British culture, world class cuisine and the Big Band music and dance experience - all hallmarks of Cunard's storied legacy," said Richard Meadows, president of Cunard North America in a statement.

Unlike other vacations, patrons on a cruise are often more concerned with the journey rather than the destination, meaning that on-board entertainment is essential.

By involving the biggest names in other industries, Cunard positions itself more closely with luxury. Having a number of event cruises with a focus on different industries not only will reach more consumers, but it also indicates great service and brand ideals that naturally satiate customer desires.

#### Creative cruising

The cruise line has previously shown its willingness to incorporate musical events into its offerings.

Cunard announced in February that it is teaming with jazz label Blue Note Records to bring passengers aboard the Queen Mary 2 for intimate performances during its trans-Atlantic journey.

On Oct. 29, 2015, the ship will leave New York for Southampton, United Kingdom with the Blue Note 75th anniversary all star band, "Our Point of View." The celebration of the record label's anniversary coincides with Cunard's 175th anniversary and the duo celebration will likely attract attention as music and boating enthusiasts come together for the week-long journey across the sea ([see story](#)).

Likewise, this is not the first time that Cunard has brought journalists on-board.

The brand announced in March that it and The New York Times are organizing an exclusive option for eastbound trips aboard the Queen Mary 2 during 2016.

"The New York Times Insights Cruise" will feature speeches from top journalists where guests will be able to engage in conversation and discussion about specific topics. The intellectual package will intrigue those sailing across the Atlantic in the iconic ship with an historical and educational purpose and interest ([see story](#)).

"Cunard, the epitome of true luxury on a grand scale, is a company that is British at heart and which strives with its special events to offer an experience for guests that are authentic and distinctive," Ms. Chase said. "These values can be seen throughout the company's Insights Programme, partnerships with Blue Note Records and The New York Times, and with features such as afternoon tea, formal balls, and performances by The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts."

"In light of how much time is spent at sea, developing events and programs that can engage returning and new guests is one of the main goals of the brand," she added.

#### Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*