

EVENTS/CAUSES

Cunard takes Marilyn Monroe collection across Atlantic prior to auction

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Cunard's Queen Mary 2

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Global cruise line Cunard is partnering with Julien's Auctions to prove that "There's No Business Like Show Business."

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The celebrity auction house will showcase highlights from David Gainsborough-Roberts' Marilyn Monroe collection aboard Queen Mary 2. Ms. Monroe remains one of the most beloved icons of 20th century Hollywood, and her glamorous profile both on and off-screen make the collection an enticing way for Cunard to widen its net.

"Throughout history, Cunard has hosted an array of celebrities and film icons such as Bob Hope, Elizabeth Taylor, Rita Hayworth and Cary Grant," said Jackie Chase, director of public relations at Cunard. "Having Marilyn Monroe's collection onboard fits perfectly into our 'Stars Aboard' collection which showcases celebrities who have sailed with Cunard.

"Even though we are not sure if Ms. Monroe ever sailed with us, the exhibition is still such a perfect offering, in keeping with this glamorous history," she said. "We continue this tradition today by hosting modern day celebrities such as Uma Thurman, Jane Seymour, Wes Anderson, Tilda Swinton and Jason Schwartzman."

A girl's best friend

Mr. Gainsborough-Roberts is a memorabilia collector who owns the largest private collection of Ms. Monroe's dresses, which he has been collecting for decades. The actress skyrocketed to fame in the 1950s with roles in films such as "Niagara," "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "The Seven Year Itch," becoming a sex and fashion symbol in the process.



Marilyn Monroe in "The Seven Year Itch"

Off-screen she was just as famous for her struggles with depression and addiction and her marriages to Yankees legend Joe DiMaggio and "Death of a Salesman" playwright Arthur Miller. Her death at only 36 has paradoxically immortalized her as one of popular culture's defining and most recognizable figures, giving birth to legions of collectors and impersonators.

"For as long as I can remember, Marilyn has been a part of my life and over many years I have built up my own private Marilyn collection," Mr. Gainsborough-Roberts said in a statement. "It is now time for me to share this with the world, which I am proud to dedicate to her name on this year of her 90th birthday anniversary."

The showing comes three months before the planned November general auction, where items including the actress' "Some Like It Hot" and "There's No Business Like Show Business" dresses are expected to contribute to a \$3 million haul.

The collection will show aboard Queen Mary 2's Transatlantic Crossing route Aug. 9-16. The route is the line's signature, beginning in New York and ending in Southampton, UK.



Marilyn Monroe in one of her most iconic outfits

The eight-night journey will exhibit memorabilia from the collection on a rotating basis. Guests will have an opportunity to bid on select items ahead of November's general election.

The cruise will also include a Q&A with Julien's Auctions founder/CEO Darren Julien and executive director Martin

Nolan, as well as Mr. Gainsborough-Roberts. Suzie Kennedy, a famed Marilyn Monroe impersonator, will also be onboard for photo opportunities.

Ms. Monroe's enduring fame, as well as her noted costumes, will bring fashion and movie lovers to Cunard, giving the brand an opportunity to make a connection with consumers it would not access otherwise. While cruises are experiential by nature, forging sector ties helps brands differentiate from competitors and position themselves alongside more recognizable brand names.

"During Queen Mary 2's signature 7-day transatlantic voyage guests have the luxury of time to enjoy a wide array of on board activities," Ms. Chase said. "The partnership with Julien's Auctions is just one of the many interesting experiences we bring our guests through our renowned 'Insight' program, which features luminaries from around the world, lecturing and participating in Q&As about their industry and craft.

"This kind of collaboration offers an opportunity for learning, exploration and cultural exchange among passengers, and is also a perfect complement to the line's reputation for elegant style and glamour on board."

All about Mary 2

In addition to the Monroe collection, Cunard is forging these sector ties through other event programs.

Later this year, "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 ([see story](#)).

The Transatlantic Crossing with the Marilyn Monroe Collection will begin less than a month after an ongoing Queen Mary 2 redesign.

Cruise liner Cunard is showing how its Queen Mary 2 was inspired by the original as the ship's interior is redesigned for the 80th anniversary of its predecessor's maiden voyage.

Cunard screened "Inspired by the Original" for the first time at the Seatrade press conference in Fort Lauderdale, FL, before sharing with its followers on social media March 16. The film pays tribute to the beloved Queen Mary and shows how the original ship was the basis of Cunard's current flagship, Queen Mary 2, as it heads to dry dock for an extensive refit ([see story](#)).

"Cunard's brand values are deeply steeped in history and tradition with an eye to the future," Ms. Chase said. "We believe the partnership with Julien's Auctions showcases that dichotomy perfectly.

"Our guests relish many elements from Cunard's rich past, and enjoy touching on things that are reminiscent of 'The Golden Age of Ocean Travel,'" she said. "Being able to bring highlights from the Marilyn Monroe collection on the ship provides our guests a nice portal to that experience."