

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Crystal leverages virtual reality for pre-booking immersion

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*Promotional image for Crystal Preview*

By STAFF REPORTS

Hospitality service provider Crystal is helping prospective travelers imagine themselves on one of its cruises with the addition of virtual reality technology.

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Crystal Preview allows travelers to view Crystal's Serenity and Mozart ships and select shore destinations in 360 degrees, transporting consumers to the Arctic or locations along the Danube River. Most travelers consult digital channels before booking, making virtual reality another way to help them make decisions about their itineraries.

### Browse before booking

Crystal Preview can be accessed through mobile applications for Android and Apple devices and Crystal's Web site. A dedicated microsite houses the 360-degree content developed using EXP360 technology, or consumers can find the images on the main Crystal site by looking for an icon.

When using the app, consumers are instructed to scan QR codes found on the Web site to view videos. While viewing via mobile, consumers can choose to use Google Cardboard or simply move their device to change their perspective.

On desktop, consumers can browse 360-degree footage of the Crystal Serenity and Crystal Mozart ships by clicking and dragging. These films can then be added to a playlist so travelers can easily revisit them.



*Still from Crystal Cruises' advertisement*

Crystal plans to extend its virtual reality experience to its Espirit and Symphony vessels this fall, with more destination films also to come.

"The new virtual reality videos are a valuable planning tool for new guests who want to know what to expect aboard their Crystal vacation, providing a sense of the luxurious spaces aboard our gorgeous vessels, as well as a taste of the culture and beauty of the locales we visit," said Edie Rodriguez, CEO/president of Crystal, in a statement.

For travel marketers, virtual reality offers the ability to digitally place consumers at a scene, allowing them to know what they can expect. When dealing with an intangible product, this allows guests to make more confident travel plans.

Hotel chain Shangri-La recently rolled out virtual reality headsets to transport potential guests to properties across its global portfolio.

Shangri-La's Samsung Gear virtual reality headsets, along with 360-degree view YouTube videos, will bring the hotel chain's properties to life to allow guests to travel to far reaching destinations. According to Shangri-La, it was the first luxury hotel chain to implement fully integrated virtual reality technology into its sales process, a tactic often used by automakers ([see story](#)).

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