

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Seabourn ships out innovation, wellness for milestone year

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The Seabourn Ovation will set seas on May 5. Image credit: Seabourn

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Carnival's luxury cruise line Seabourn is marking its three-decades-long career on the seas with a plan to revolutionize high-end cruising again, as it once did before.

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Seabourn entered its first ship into service in 1988, and to celebrate its 30-year anniversary, the cruise line will be introducing a new vessel and a series of programs it believes will change the cruising game. The cruise line was known in the late 1990s as an innovator in luxury cruising, but with so many changes happening in this segment of the travel and hospitality industry today, Seabourn is continuing to up its strategies in hopes to preserve its pioneering image.

"Our 30th anniversary is a wonderful occasion to celebrate the reputation we've earned as the world's finest ultra-luxury cruise line by providing guests with opportunities to experience the most intriguing destinations around the globe on the most desirable ships at sea," said Richard Meadows, president of **Seabourn**, Seattle.

Cruising today

In the past, cruising was originally thought of as a luxury experience on ocean liners that were only for the affluent. But around the 1980s, the idea of cruising started to appeal to middle class vacationers in the United States, thus changing the overall cruise line industry.

The notion of taking a cruise from then on became mainstream. Cruise liners today continue to look for more flashy experiences to add to their boats as a method to appeal to everyday consumers. However, luxury cruising is making a comeback with trips that vastly differ from the overcrowded mass-market vessels.

Seabourn's strategy for its anniversary celebrates those differences. For instance, Seabourn's new vessel will continue its focus on striving for exclusivity by keeping passenger numbers down to decrease overcrowding.

Hitting the seas later on this year, Seabourn Ovation focuses on more space per guest with an additional deck. Its maiden voyage will begin on May 5, sailing from Venice, Italy to Barcelona in 11 days.

The ship will also introduce a new wellness program, which is more popular on luxury cruise lines. Seabourn is

partnering with alternative medicine guru Dr. Andrew Weil and award-winning chef Thoms Keller to create special wellness and dining experiences.

Seabourn focuses on wellness

Anniversary celebrations began on Dec. 31, 2017 to kick off Seabourn's 30th year in operation.

Starting on New Year's Eve, Seabourn's fleet introduced a special cocktail for the occasion named Passion Pearls. Mixologist Brian van Flandern created the libation mixing passion fruit puree, Champagne and Hennessy VSOP Cognac.



Seabourn's Passion Pearls cocktail. Image credit: Seabourn

Mr. Van Flandern claims he was inspired by the iconic actress Audrey Hepburn when creating the cocktail.

There will also be a series of special decor throughout Seabourn cruises dedicated to the anniversary as well as complimentary wine packages and special merchandise for sale. Guests can also purchase a special collection of pearls and other 30th anniversary products from onboard gift shops.

Luxury on the sea

High-end cruise lines have been changing their strategies to appeal to the new affluent traveler of today, with experiential itineraries and wellness in mind.

For instance, Dream Cruises created a VIP experience for travelers in Asia with a Dream Palace concept.

Guests who stay in the newly opened Dream Palace Suite and Garden Penthouses are offered a first-class experience in an exclusive environment that includes a pool, spa, gym and dining options separate from the rest of the ship. Now available on the Genting Dream vessel, this luxury ship within a ship option has also rolled out on the recently launched World Dream ([see more](#)).

Small ship luxury cruise line Windstar Cruises appealed to travelers' adventurous sides with a campaign that emphasizes its cruises as far from ordinary.

The cruise line shared brochures that detailed 49 new itineraries designed to stand out from the norm. Members of

Windstar's loyalty program were be the first to receive the brochures in the mail ([see more](#)).

"As we continue to grow, those opportunities will grow as well," Mr. Meadows said. "For now, though, we invite guests to sit back and soak up the ultra-luxury innovations we've pioneered and special touches we've created in celebration of our third decade at sea."

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