

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Ritz-Carlton yachting vision comes to life as construction kicks off

January 11, 2018



Rendering of The Ritz-Carlton's first cruise ship. Image courtesy of Ritz-Carlton

By STAFF REPORTS

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is maintaining maritime tradition by celebrating the keel laying of its inaugural yacht at the Hijos De K. Barreras Shipyard in Vigo, Spain.

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In June, Ritz-Carlton announced that it would bring its brand of hospitality to destinations around the world via a custom-built yacht. Across the board, hospitality brands have rapidly expanded their hotel footprints in particularly every viable market, leaving only the world's oceans left ([see story](#)).

Maritime tradition

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will comprise three lavish cruising yachts. The first cruise line will debut at the end of 2019.

On Jan. 11, Ritz-Carlton officially began construction of its first yacht. The keel laying is historically used to mark the initial placement of a central beam, which will become the vessel's backbone.

Ships are built in modular components with the keel ceremony being part of the lowering of the first module into place at the building dock.

During the symbolic laying, senior executives from Ritz-Carlton, Marriott International, the shipyard and Sweden's Tillberg Design, the firm tasked with the yacht series' interiors, stood by as commemorative coins were unveiled and welded into the hull.

The coins are a part of the ceremony meant to bring good fortune during construction and throughout the ship's travels.



The Ritz-Carlton Yachting Collection will begin reservations in May 2018. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

“The keel laying is a significant moment in the ship building process and signals that we are well on our way to redefining luxury at sea with The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection,” said Douglas Prothero, managing director of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, in a statement. “The intimate size of our ships and compelling itineraries will give our guests the opportunity to explore unexpected destinations, all while enjoying the legendary Ritz-Carlton service.

“This is an exciting new venture and we look forward to celebrating the many more milestones to come,” he said. “The opportunity to design The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has been extremely exciting as we have been able to start from a blank piece of paper and create a whole new brand from scratch.

“Our guiding principles for all aspects of the yacht’s design have been spacious privacy and personal comfort. The keel laying celebrates how far we have already come in the design process, and in creating the most exclusive and serene experience possible at sea.”

Ritz-Carlton will open up reservations for the first of the three yachts in May. The inaugural ship will cruise to destinations depending on season, including the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America.

The small-capacity vessel will feature 149 suites and can accommodate up to 298 passengers. Ritz-Carlton will also offer its vessels in the yacht series for private charter.

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