

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Ritz-Carlton's yacht debut begins with local immersion

June 12, 2018



Ritz-Carlton opens booking for its yachting service. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Hospitality brand The Ritz-Carlton is finalizing its foray into yachting as affluent consumers seek more cultural and unique means of travel.

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The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection is officially open for booking, hoping to attract luxury travelers with a new way of exploring while also heightening the competition for luxury boating. Bespoke and rare itineraries will take high-net-worth individuals to destinations such as the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Canada and New England in deep cultural dives.

"As a constantly evolving brand, The Ritz-Carlton is always looking for new ways to offer our guests engaging and memorable travel experiences," said Lisa Holladay, global brand leader for The Ritz-Carlton. "The opening of reservations marks a very exciting moment, and we are thrilled to be the first luxury hotel brand to enter the yachting industry, bringing our legendary service to sea.

"The launch of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will also mark an entirely new sector of hospitality for The Ritz-Carlton as we invite our guests to experience the brand in an entirely new way," she said. "With The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection we are also opening up a whole new world of opportunities for The Ritz-Carlton, such as pre-and post-voyage opportunities to link the sea with shore side properties and offer guests a new and complete brand experience."

Hospitality on the sea

Ritz-Carlton's jump into sea travel has been designed to reflect its high standards of service on land and is indicative of its hotel model.

The hotel brand has brought some of its iconic aspects of its hospitality on board each of its yachts, such as restaurants by chef Sven Elverfeld of Aqua, a restaurant in its Wolfsburg location. In addition to the restaurant, each boat will include a signature Ritz-Carlton spa, a Panorama Lounge and Champagne bar as well as on-board entertainment.

Families are welcomed aboard the yachting experience as well, with a variety of children's entertainment.



Ritz-Carlton's suites on its new yachts. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

As travelers seek more cultural experiences while traveling, Ritz-Carlton's yachting journey will help serve that need. The yachting journeys will offer a variety of cultural immersion activities such as local cooking classes, local musician performances and other activities that immerse visitors in their destinations.

While the experience slightly resembles a cruise, Ritz-Carlton emphasizes that the smaller size of its vessels not only provides a more personal and intimate experience, but can also take visitors where the larger cruise ships cannot venture.

Portofino, Capri, and Mykonos are a few of the destinations that the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection travels to that the larger cruise vessels cannot reach.

Each yacht is all-inclusive, with the exception of dining at the Aqua restaurant, services at the spa and added excursions.

Customers can book now, with pricing depending on the season and itinerary.



The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection focuses on amenities. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

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

Last summer, Ritz-Carlton first 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 practically every viable market, leaving only the world's oceans left ([see story](#)).

Brands and yachting

Ritz-Carlton is not the only brand from outside the yachting world to venture into the seas.

Toyota Corp's Lexus is bringing the luxury automotive world closer to the water with its yacht concept that goes a step further than other automakers' seaworthy designs.

Lexus is putting its Sport Yacht concept into actual production with real models going out to customers by the end of next year. The design was awarded by Japan's "Boat of the Year" committee at the Japan International Boat Show in Yokohama, as a flood of automakers look for their own yacht interpretations ([see story](#)).

"More people than ever are discovering cruising and this growing group is looking for more options and choice," said Doug Prothero, CEO of The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection. "The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection will introduce a more intimate, yacht-like experience, giving our guests the ability to customize and define their journey.

"Itineraries for The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection have been created to combine the lifestyle of The Ritz-Carlton resorts with the casual freedom of a yachting vacation and with a relaxed pace and the ability to sail right into city harbors, guests will have more flexibility and options when it comes to their time on land," he said. "With one of the highest guest to staff ratios in the industry, the legendary service of The Ritz-Carlton, and luxury amenities, we hope to engage a new market who would ordinarily not book a cruise, while also appealing to longstanding guests of The Ritz-Carlton and experienced cruisers."

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