

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Crystal gives taste of onboard entertainment through storytelling

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Crystal is revamping its loyalty program. Image credit: Crystal Cruises

By SARAH JONES

Cruise line Crystal is giving consumers on dry land the chance to experience its on-ship lecture program through the launch of a new podcast series.

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The Crystal Storytellers series features experts from fields as diverse as adventure, politics and entertainment in conversation with cruise directors from the company's vessels. While other brands have used podcasts to reflect parts of their history or engage consumers through content, Crystal is using podcasting to offer a glimpse of the traveling experience onboard its ships.

"Crystal is known for its extensive onboard enrichment program and specifically hosting intriguing experts in their chosen careers or fields of interest on our global voyages," said Keith Cox, vice president of entertainment at [Crystal](#).

"This program provides our guests with engaging and thoughtful learning experiences as they travel the world," he said. "Crystal Storytellers was created to offer these experiences to audiences beyond our ships."

Lecture listening

Crystal's podcast features individuals who have spoken onboard the Crystal Serenity and the Crystal Symphony this year as part of the Crystal Visions Lecture Series. Along with sharing their experiences in their careers, these personalities will dive into anecdotes from their Crystal sailing.

The podcast kicked off Nov. 19 with an episode featuring novelist and television producer Kathy Reichs.

A forensic anthropologist, Ms. Reichs used her experience to write crime novels. The writer's books became the basis for the television show "Bones," which ran for 12 seasons on Fox.

In the 22-minute episode, Ms. Reichs talks with cruise director Russ Grieve about her work, including how she broke into writing and her shift into television. She weighs in on everything from the rise of true crime to how she arrived at her chosen career.



Crystal's podcast is designed to bring the on-ship experience to shore. Image credit: Crystal

The podcast was recorded during the journey as Crystal Symphony sailed through Polynesia and the South Pacific. Along with educating and entertaining consumers, the podcast also offers listeners to familiarize themselves with Crystal's cruise directors, as these employees turn into interviewers.

Future episodes will be released every Tuesday, featuring personalities including actor Bruce McGill, retired astronaut Scott Kelly and theater producer Kevin McCollum.

At launch, Crystal is broadcasting the podcast on its blog, Spotify, Stitcher and TuneIn. Eventually, the podcast is expanding to more platforms including Apple Podcasts, Google Podcast and iHeartRadio.

"Since this podcast is a natural extension of the Crystal Visions Lecture Series, Crystal Storytellers offers listeners the chance to enjoy fascinating conversations between Crystal Cruises' cruise directors and the expert guest speaker," Mr. Cox said. "As each episode features an expert guest speaker, audiences can tune in no matter where they are in the world and hear from an eclectic group of experts including astronauts, doctors, actors, politicians and more on thoughtful topics and engaging conversations that provide an expansive look at the world and our experts' achievements."

Experience producers

Cruise lines are increasingly putting a focus on the time onboard, creating experiences that rival offshore excursions.

For instance, Crystal is bringing talent from the Great White Way to the wide open seas to its 2020 voyage lineup.

Twenty sailings in 2020 will welcome Broadway stars as part of the cruise line's "Crystal on Broadway" programming. It is Crystal's latest effort to bring unique, world-class experiences to its cruises ([see story](#)).

In another initiative, Crystal led with food in a series that takes consumers around the world through local tastes.

The hospitality company has teamed up with celebrity chef Jon Ashton on a 12-part video series that ventures to destinations served by Crystal Serenity. This culinary exploration has inspired dishes served on-board the ship, but it also allows consumers to experience dining Crystal-style from any location ([see story](#)).

"Our guests love our Crystal Visions Lecture Series," Mr. Cox said. "We often hear that because of it our guests have found their next favorite book, learned something new, discovered new music they love and even shared a laugh with someone they idolized."

"A voyage with Crystal is a transformative journey, from the eye-opening cultural experiences our guests have ashore to the memories they make with their Crystal family onboard, our enrichment programming is designed to enhance that journey along with the many other cultural, epicurean and adventure experiences we offer," he said. "By including education and entertainment experiences on Crystal voyages, guests can feel as though they are making lifelong memories while also leaving with the feeling like they have learned something new."

"Crystal offers enrichment workshops featuring thought leaders, world-class experts and lecturers and allow guests to learn a new skill, attend a wine tasting, take dance lessons or simply read a book."

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