

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

UK cruise line Cunard, hobbled by restrictions across ports and borders, delays resumption of sailing

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Queen Mary 2 in her home port of Southampton, England. Image credit: Neil Sackley, Cunard

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

While retail and other sectors are slowly reopening after debilitating COVID-19 lockdowns worldwide, the cruise industry is a reminder that some businesses are hit harder than others.

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Luxury cruise line Cunard, owner of the Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria passenger liners, has said it will extend its "pause in operations."

"With many differing restrictions across countries, people's ability to move freely and safely across borders remains seemingly some way in the distance," said Simon Palethorpe, president of Southampton, England-based Cunard, in a statement.

"For Cunard, where we celebrate having a truly international mix of guests and sail all over the world, this becomes particularly impactful," he said.

"We also need to better understand the implications COVID-19 will have on board our ships. We are therefore working, at the highest level possible, with government bodies, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the CDC and Public Health England, as well as the industry collective body CLIA [Cruise Lines International Association] and other expert medical professionals to review every aspect of a holiday with us."

Trimmed sails

Cunard is cancelling all sailings for Queen Mary 2 and Queen Victoria that were due to depart up to and including Nov. 1, and for Queen Elizabeth, departures up to and including Nov. 23.

The three ships currently serve destinations in Europe, Caribbean, Far East and Australia. A fourth ship, yet unnamed, will join the lineup in 2022, making it the first time in Cunard's history that it will have four liners in service at the same time.

Meanwhile, Cunard will inform all guests and their travel agents that stand affected by the cancellations.

As Cunard has done previously during this pause period, guests who are booked on cancelled voyages will automatically be given a 125 percent Future Cruise Credit, the company said. This credit can be redeemed against any new booking made by the end of December 2021 on any voyage that is on sale at the time of booking.

Cunard is part of Miami-FL-based Carnival Corp.'s portfolio of cruise lines. The parent's other sea travel brands have also been grounded over the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak.

"Whilst we have always taken pride in having the highest levels of health and safety, we are looking at enhanced protocols across all aspects of ship life and experiences on shore," Mr. Palethorpe said.

"We will only return to service when we have a comprehensive restart protocol with the stamps of approval and accreditation from the most trusted and informed sources," he said.

Cunard President Simon Palethorpe shares an update to our extended pause in operations:

<https://t.co/7zcDi4FK9r>

cunardline (@cunardline) June 9, 2020

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