

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Silversea sets sights on bespoke travel experiences

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A culinary revamp supports Silversea's quest to conjure up authentic and localized tastes that are tailored to its itineraries. Image courtesy of Silversea

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Luxury cruise line Silversea is answering the call from affluent travelers for immersive excursions.

The company's Silver Nova ship, which debuted this summer and arrived in the Americas for the first time this month, is now home to an expanded "S.A.L.T.," or "Sea and Land Taste" culinary program. Including an all-new, interactive Chef's Table meal experience, the revamp supports Silversea's quest to conjure up authentic and localized tastes that are tailored to its itineraries.

"The beauty of S.A.L.T. aboard Silver Nova is we have more ways than ever to connect with guests who we know truly value immersive and enriching experiences," said Adam Sachs, director of S.A.L.T. at [Silversea](#), New York.

"With the greatly expanded S.A.L.T. Lab we have a spectacular new space for our ever-evolving culinary programming," Mr. Sachs said. "And with our new Chef's Table concept we have a new way of utilizing that space and deepening the guest experience, with unique and intimate eleven-course dinners, inspired by the region we're traveling through, for a maximum of 18 guests a night.

"By engaging with local chefs, producers and experts, we not only support and their businesses and help spread the word about their unique cultural heritage and cuisine, we deepen our understanding and appreciation of the world around us and the places we sail to."

S.A.L.T. and sea

Silver Nova is preparing for a Grand Voyage along South America's coasts at the start of 2024.

For now, the company is lending tours of the vessel's enhanced venues. A new digital release launches into specifics.

Food expert Nilou Motamed and S.A.L.T. director Adam Sachs tour the ship's venues in a new video

Able to entertain up to 728 guests, Silver Nova's asymmetrical design allows for 270-degree views, enabling all to take in the wonders of the lower hemisphere. As luxury travelers circumnavigate the continent during the upcoming 72-day trip, they can enjoy enhanced culinary options from rooms that boast sea-to-sky vistas.

"We saw a need in the industry for a truly immersive culinary program, through which guests can explore different cultures and

cuisines as a means to the heart of the destination,” said Mr. Sachs.

“Our S.A.L.T. program (currently features on three ships and soon to expand to a fourth) is constantly evolving,” he said. “It’s shaped and reshaped by new itineraries, ports, and new flavors we encounter on our travels.

“We bring local experts on board for deeper learning experiences and the most authentic approaches possible, and it’s up to the guests as to how deep they want to dive into the culture.”



While enjoying views of new corners of the world, guests can feast on authentic dishes from the region. Image courtesy of Silversea

Silversea’s S.A.L.T. update gets at the heart of regional food traditions at a time when high-net-worth adventurers are in search of trips that grant exclusive and mindful insights into new locales ([see story](#)).

“Luxury travel has rebounded and is thriving as travelers’ appetites for ultra-premium, authentic and immersive or interactive experiences have continued to increase,” said Melanie Klausner, executive vice president at [Havas Red](#), New York.

“Firstly because social media has influenced consumer preferences, magnifying the demand to be one of few who can experience the rare or exotic,” Ms. Klausner said. “Second, luxury travelers are in search of hyper-personalization, seeking tailor-made experiences that align with the things they value most, and they want these experiences to be transformative and memorable.



Luxury travelers are increasingly showing a preference for trips that boost their understanding of international cultures. Image courtesy of Silversea

“Third, luxury travelers want more value out of their experiences, meaning they’ve always been willing to pay for exclusive experiences but what they consider unique has evolved.”

Ms. Klausner is not affiliated with Silversea, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

This upcoming trip includes calls at 38 ports in 18 nations around South America. Those onboard will get to see treasured natural landscapes such as the Amazon River and also partake in Carnival, among other global festivals.

Thanks to S.A.L.T., their experiences do not end there. The cultures of these regions and events play heavily into the ingredients and menus onboard.



During the day, passengers can get hands-on experience making dishes inspired by the locals who call the cruise's destinations home. Image courtesy of Silversea

Guests will see local dishes pop up on the menus and learn about indigenous produce at Chef's Table, an interactive experience that can host up to 18 diners.

The newly launched offering revolves completely around the exploration of authentic flavors, granting participants not only a sampling of their destination but also expert commentary from seasoned chefs.

During the day, the space is a lab for hands-on instruction, and in the evening, transforms so that the cooks can concoct seasonal small plates while diners watch and listen.

"This offering hits on several luxury travel trends happening right now such as the desire for immersive and hyper-personalized experiences, sustainable and eco-conscious travel, and deeper, more meaningful experiences," said Ms. Klausner.

As the ship itself is already sustainable in its build ([see story](#)), this addition only bolsters Silversea's play into ecotourism.



In the evening, the S.A.L.T. venue turns into an intimate dining space, with overhead and surrounding views of the sea and sky. Image courtesy of Silversea

Additionally, the company is growing its plant-based options with what it calls “green cuisine,” which will be available at all nine dining venues onboard Silver Nova. This includes S.A.L.T. Kitchen, the “first large-scale regional restaurant at sea,” according to Silversea.

The planet-friendly array was curated in collaboration with two-Michelin-starred chef Jean-Luc Rabanel.

“With an ecosystem of venues and activities on and off the ship, we have something for everyone from hands-on classes that address not just a recipe but the culture and context around it, to curated cocktails based on the ports we’re visiting, menus that change constantly, lectures from visiting authors and ships, to amazing shoreside experiences,” said Mr. Sachs.

“Authenticity and engaging with the culture of the places we visit are central to the S.A.L.T. mission,” he said. “We’re always looking for ways to celebrate and sustain local customs, ingredients and cultures, and support local communities.”

Enhancing the experiential

In 2022, experiential mergers and acquisitions accounted for 41.5 percent of the luxury’s total deals for the year ([see story](#)).



Near the lab and kitchen is the S.A.L.T. Bar which, like its food-focused counterparts, serves regionally-inspired creations. Image courtesy of Silversea

As investors continue to get behind industries that fall into the category, such as tourism, many that are already in the business are finding ways to further engage with consumers. Food seems to be the route that many in the prestige cruise world are opting for.

British cruise line Cunard recently revamped its onboard dining with the help of a Michelin chef ([see story](#)). Creating new menus, the company also opened fresh restaurants that, like Silver Nova's spots, highlight local flavors.

Another industry peer, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, joins Silversea in turning to dining to promote its experiences, earlier this year focusing on the cuisine of its home port, Miami ([see story](#)).

As luxury travel reaches record levels of spending ([see story](#)), the challenge of keeping riders engaged is sure to soar with it.



Food has long been an effective way to secure customers, especially in the luxury tourism industry. Image courtesy of Silversea

"Luxury cruise lines have always placed great emphasis on their food and beverage programs and are continuously trying to

break the mold," said Ms. Klausner.

"Silversea's S.A.L.T. program is tapping into the latest trends of locally sourced and sustainable ingredients, global culinary offerings and custom-designed experiences," she said. "The notion of traveling deeper might be what elevates this program a bit from other luxury culinary offerings.

"Travelers accompanied by food experts, experiencing the local markets and on-shore culinary excursions to destination-inspired dinners seems to take the next step and create new meaning in farm-to-fork dining."

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