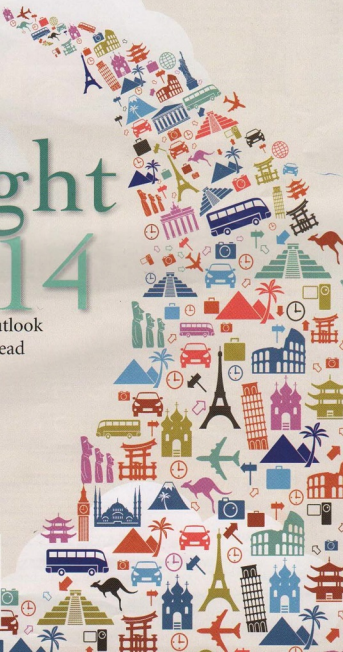


SPECIAL ISSUE

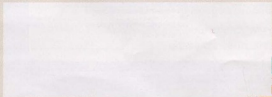
TRAVELAGE WEST

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Spotlight 2014

An Industry Outlook
For the Year Ahead



Royal Princess' deck offers multiple pools and dining options.



Charting **New** Territory

Innovation is the name of the cruise game in 2014

BY ANA FIGUEROA

CRUISING EMBARKS IN EXCITING NEW DIRECTIONS in 2014. There's an impressive roster of newbuilds in the works, designed to impress even the most frequent travelers. New destinations opening (or re-opening) around the world present great opportunities to engage first-time cruisers.

If there's a predominant cruise industry theme for 2014, it's innovation. Royal Caribbean International's new 4,180-passenger *Quantum of the Seas* will feature bumper cars, a sky diving simulator, modular, connecting staterooms and the first "virtual balconies" at sea. Passengers can also tower above the water if they wish — the ship's imposing North Star glass capsule will gently lift a dozen passengers at a time 300 feet over the ocean to enjoy panoramic views.

The views are also noteworthy on Princess Cruises' new 3,560-passenger *Royal Princess*. The sister ship to the *Royal Princess* will feature *SeaWalk*, a cantilevered path with a see-through floor for strolling 128 feet above the sea.

Norwegian Cruise Line will also introduce a new vessel in 2014. The 4,028-passenger *Norwegian Getaway* is a sister to *Norwegian Breakaway*. It will include venues devoted to magic acts as well as Grammy-themed music performances. Costa Cruises will introduce *Costa Diadema* in 2014 as well. The 3,700-passenger *Dream*-class ship will be the largest at sea to fly the Italian flag.

High-profile debuts on the high seas aren't the only headline grabbers for 2014. River cruising will continue its recent frenzied growth with at least 28 new vessels set to debut in Europe alone. Viking Cruises will augment its fleet of Viking Longships by a record-breaking 14 ships.

Avalon Waterways will christen three additional *Panorama Class* suite ships; *AmaWaterways* introduces two new vessels; and *Uniwold Boutique River Cruise Collection* will add one ship to its fleet.

Additionally, Tauck River Cruises is introducing two vessels in its new *Inspira-*

tion Class in 2014. Scenic Cruises will not only launch two new ships in Europe, but an entirely new river cruise line, *Emerald Waterways*. The line will target a younger, more price-sensitive demographic and its first two vessels will debut in 2014.

Agents should also note another important river cruise development. Lines heretofore marketed only in Europe are setting their sights on North America. They include *Lueftner Cruises' Amadeus* fleet, *A-Rosa Cruises* and the river, barge and coastal operator *CroisiEurope*.

Like their ocean counterparts, river cruise ships continue to introduce innovative design features and amenities. Trends for 2014 include onboard casual dining in "coffeehouse-style" venues, lower-level lofts with windows that open and hand-held GPS systems for individual shore excursions.

Destinations continue to distinguish the river cruise market, however. In Europe, the Danube and Rhine remain the mainstays, with the Rhone, Douro and Seine still popular as well. In 2014, Viking and Uniwold will also expand into the Bordeaux's Garonne, Gironde and Dordogne rivers.

Increasingly exotic locales will appear on river cruise itineraries in 2014. In recent years, Southeast Asia has become practically a river cruise staple. *Avalon Waterways* and *Aqua Expeditions* will join *AmaWaterways*, *Viking Cruises* and *Uniwold* on the Mekong River in Vietnam and Cambodia in 2014.

Interest in Myanmar is also on the upswing, thanks to recent political changes. *AmaWaterways* and *Viking Cruises* will be setting up on the legendary *Irrawaddy River* in 2014. *Avalon Waterways* is also venturing into a new, exotic locale, offering excursions on the *Peruvian Amazon* in 2014, via *Aqua Expeditions' MV Aria*.

After a long dry spell, river cruising is finally thriving closer to home. For the first time since hurricane Katrina, two paddlewheelers are plying the Mississippi River and its tributaries. They are the 150-passenger *Queen of the Mississippi* and the 436-passenger *American Queen*.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Columbia River in Washington and Oregon is also experiencing a resurgence of interest. *Un-Cruise Adventures*, formerly *InnerSea Discoveries/American Safari Cruises*, will operate new *Heritage Adventures* on its 88-passenger replica coastal steamer, the *S.S. Legacy*. And *American Queen Steamboat Company* will introduce the refurbished 223-passenger *American Empress* to the Columbia River in 2014. ■

