

# STOWAWAY

Luxury and boutique small ship news for discerning travellers Jan 2018 Issue 12

## 2018 - a year of change for small ship cruise travellers?

For sure there's much happening within the usually more placid small ship luxury and boutique sector, with more newbuilds announced, upgrades of already excellent ships, new itineraries travelling to lesser known and lesser visited destinations, where small ships mean smaller groups of visitors leaving the natural environment undisturbed, and even operators with a new 'take' on ship design to meet today's guest expectations.

### Let's look at Silversea for instance.

Silversea Cruises has completed a forty million US dollar transformation of Silver Cloud to an ice class expedition ship, the fourth ship in Silversea's expedition fleet. Alterations include reinforcing the bow for polar waters and adding sonars for enhanced navigation, as well as major interior refurbishments. The ship now carries 16 zodiac inflatables for shore landings accompanied by teams of experts knowledgeable in all expedition areas.

On board, there's lectures by professionals and masterclasses in a studio wherein guests can print their own images taken on expeditions.

Silver Cloud carries 254 guests, although in polar waters that figure is reduced to 200 as part of an environmental protection programme, and leaves the Antarctic at the end of February 2018, travelling to the West Coast of Africa, Europe, the Arctic and Greenland, the Atlantic Canada coastline and down to Central and South America before returning to the Antarctic in November.

[www.silversea.com](http://www.silversea.com)

### ...and that's not all!

In two months time Silversea's Silver Spirit will be lengthened, with the insertion of a pre-built midsection featuring thirty two new suites PLUS the line has announced their intention to build Silver Moon, incorporating innovations in the recently introduced 596 guest Silver Muse.



*Silver Cloud has been transformed into an ice class expedition ship.*



*Sixteen zodiac inflatables on deck, ready for shore landings.*

### Things are hardly quiet at Crystal Cruises either!

With a fleet now of five ultra luxury river boats for 2018, Crystal Cruises has announced a programme of curated river cruise experiences – opportunities for guests to explore both in small groups and individually, the local culture, history and gastronomy of port towns and localities on the Danube, Rhine and Main rivers, sometimes hosted by local residents, artisans and local experts.

These can include private music performances in unique settings, and hands-on cooking experiences. There's also a concierge service to custom design shoreside experiences for individual guests.

### Crystal Symphony transformed

Crystal Symphony's refurbishment has now been completed, with a comprehensive transformation of suites, public areas and dining options, plus an increase in the number of butlers serviced suites and the addition of new Seabreeze Penthouse suites.

State of the art technology upgrades have been installed to enhance guest connectivity and access to entertainment and news on demand.

The new Silk Kitchen & Bar, presenting Chinese dishes in a contemporary way, is open for breakfast lunch and dinner – a confident move as on many ships, specialist dining venues are open only in the evenings. The Marketplace casual daytime café is transformed into Churrascaria at

night, serving Brazilian inspired dishes and grilled meats presented on sword-like skewers! The open seating Waterside, Crystal Symphony's renamed main restaurant open for all meals through the day, has been redesigned with additional two and four seating tables.

Crystal Symphony is currently sailing a 114 day world cruise, thereafter transiting the Panama Canal to the Hawaiian Islands and then north to Alaska. Sister ship Crystal Serenity is due to receive the same upgrades in accommodations, dining and on board guest services this coming autumn. [www.crystalcruises.com](http://www.crystalcruises.com)

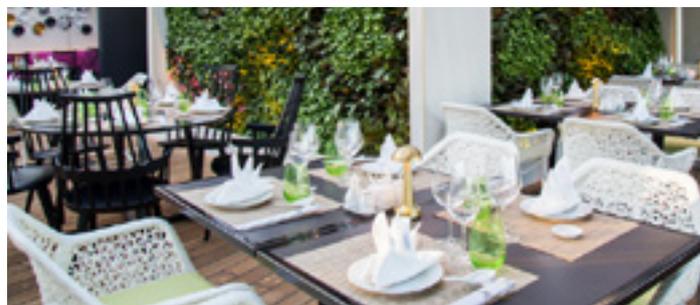


Photo by Paragon Pixels

*Crystal Symphony (top), The Silk Kitchen & Bar (above).*

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### Lots going on at Regent Seven Seas too!

Following the successful introduction of Seven Seas Explorer in 2016, a second Explorer class newbuild, Seven Seas Splendor, has been



*Regent Seven Seas Explorer.*

announced, with a launch planned for Spring 2020. As with Seven Seas Explorer, the new 750 guest ultra luxury ship will offer a comprehensive and complimentary all inclusive programme including flights, shore excursions, wifi, premium wines, beers and spirits.

Meanwhile Seven Seas Explorer sails Western Med itineraries in Spring 2018 with turnarounds in Monaco, Barcelona, Lisbon and Civitavecchia (port of Rome), moving on to Northern Europe, with turnarounds in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Reykjavik for a summer season before returning to the Western Med for the autumn and then across the Pond to Miami and a Caribbean programme for the winter 2018/2019. [www.rssc.com](http://www.rssc.com)

### ... and a new ship for Azamara Club Cruises.

Azamara Pursuit will join sister ships Azamara Journey and Azamara Quest with a christening this coming August in Southampton. Azamara Pursuit, like her two sisters features three decks of balcony suites, an innovative design for smaller boutique style cruise ships. Dining choices include the main dining room, two speciality dining options, all yet to be named and a relaxed informal dining area opening out onto an aft sun deck.

The 656 passenger Pursuit's 2018/2019 itineraries include calls to Brazil, Chile and Peru, the Mediterranean, the UK and Iceland,



*Azamara Pursuit joins the fleet in August.*

following a no-fly round trip cruise from Southampton immediately after the August launch. [azamaraclubcruises.com](http://azamaraclubcruises.com)

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### The French have a word for it

.. the word being LNG, as applied to French line Ponant's new expedition ship Ponant Icebreaker, due for delivery in 2021, adding to Ponant's expedition programme for Arctic and Antarctic waters. LNG is liquified natural gas, a clean fuel being adopted by many cruise lines now and ideally suited for environmentally sensitive waters. LNG forms part of a dual drive system with the ship's engines providing electricity to power rotating Azipod units, mounted externally on the hull to provide

improved stability and manoeuvrability, at the same time freeing up space inside the ship.

[Ponant Icebreaker video](#)

Ponant have also introduced a further innovation in ship design, with the Blue Eye Lounges, below the waterline with viewing panels in the hull to observe sealife closely. Le Laperouse and Le Champlain launching in 2018, with Le Kerguelen and Le Bougainville following in 2019, will all feature the new facility. View this innovation at

[Ponant Blue Eye video](#)

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### Variety is the spice of life, they say

Hats off to Variety Cruises, a family owned company with a fleet of highly contrasting small motor and sail ships. In 2018 they will be travelling to Cuba, Iceland, The Seychelles, the Canaries and Cape Verde islands as well as their home ground of the Mediterranean, with itineraries covering Greece, Spain and Portugal.

In April 2018 their 44 passenger Harmony G ventures to West Africa, exploring the Gambia River, the one week cruise allowing passengers to engage with local communities and observe varied wildlife including crocodiles, baboons, hippos, bushbabies and chimps. Prices start at £1,636 per person excluding flights.

Harmony G returns to the Mediterranean after,



*The Harmony G goes to the Gambia River in April*

sailing between Malaga and Portimao in Portugal, with days out in Seville and Granada. There's sherry tasting too in Jerez. The eight day cruise starts at £2,164 per person, excluding flights, bookable through Variety's UK representative Seafarer Cruises. [www.seafarerholidays.com](http://www.seafarerholidays.com)

### Is bigger better?

#### Celebrity Cruises has The Edge.

Stowaway focuses on small ships which appeal to travellers seeking a more relaxed experience with discreet, personalised service. But that's not to say that today's big resort style ships don't deliver a stunning product and Celebrity Cruises is determined to stay in the forefront with the new Edge Class Series.

The 2,918 passenger Celebrity Edge, with a quoted build price of one billion US dollars, was, the line claims, the first ship to be totally designed in 3-D and will be christened in Fort Lauderdale in December 2018, to be followed by Celebrity Beyond in 2020. A further two more as yet unnamed Edge Class ships will follow.

Celebrity says that the design objective was to create greater connectivity to the ocean for passengers, with such features as 918 Infinite Veranda suites with bi-fold doors which hide away at the touch of a button to create one open living space leading onto the verandas. The Magic Carpet, a platform on the outside of the ship, travels vertically up sixteen decks, from low level access embarkation and tendering points to leisure and restaurant decks above.

There's more, much more, including innovative pool and garden leisure areas and an on board communication system provides passengers with a facility to pre-book excursions and restaurants - not to mention ordering that cocktail before arriving !

Celebrity Edge will be homeported in Fort Lauderdale, offering an inaugural 7 night Caribbean cruise programme. [www.celebritycruises.co.uk](http://www.celebritycruises.co.uk)



*The Pool Bar*



*The Edge Villa.*



*The Magic Carpet also provides a dining experience.*

### Too far in the future for you?

If Spring just around the corner has you itching to get away soon, there's opportunities to sail over the next eight to ten weeks with cruiselines featured in this Stowaway in our late getaway listing, [www.cruiselates.com](http://www.cruiselates.com)

The next Stowaway issue will include ship profiles for sailing ship line Star Clippers and river cruise line APT Touring, written by leading UK cruise journalist Jane Archer as well as more news.

Our best wishes for a peaceful and successful 2018.

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