

Cruise Industry News

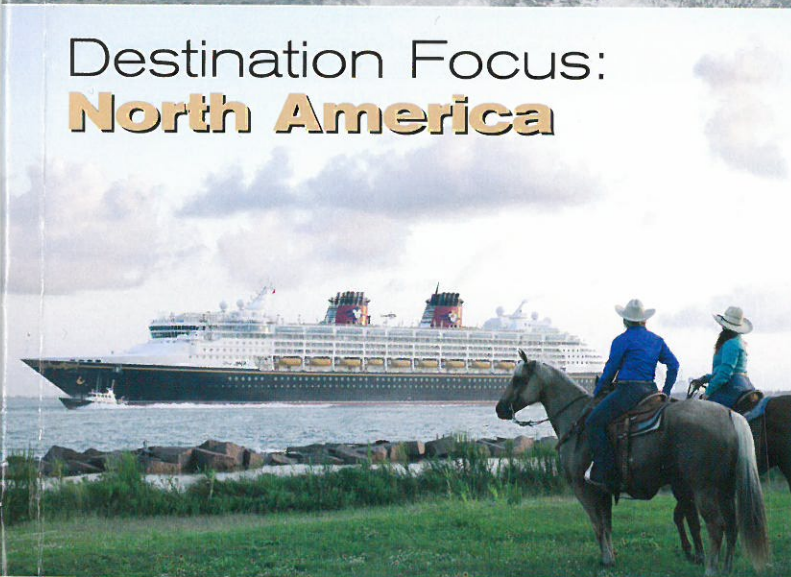
Q U A R T E R L Y

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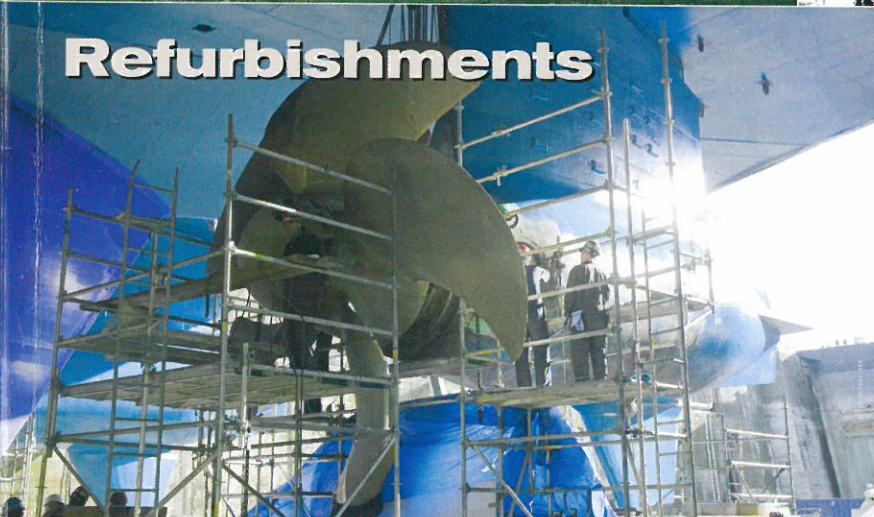
**Royal
Caribbean
International**



Destination Focus:
North America



Refurbishments



Food & Beverage

Marine + Hotel Operations

Mexico

Working at Sea

New Culinary Programs



Josef Jungwirth, corporate executive chef and director of culinary operations

Royal Caribbean International has redefined its onboard culinary program with an extensive multi-million dollar investment to its main dining rooms across the fleet. “We have been re-engineering and developing new dining room menus,” said Josef Jungwirth, corporate executive chef and director of culinary operations. The new menu will be rolled out fleetwide by mid-year.

Jungwirth has also been busy introducing new gluten-free and lactose-free options.

In addition, the culinary operations team is working on the planning and follow-through of all ship revitalizations, planning for the repositioning of ships and for those entering new markets, as well the continuous work on the company’s newbuilds.

Allergy-Free Choices

To address the increased demand for gluten- and lactose-free foods, Royal Caribbean has created what it calls standard “allergy free” daily menus, avoiding the eight foods that account for the majority of food allergy reactions, according to Jungwirth.

A so-called “Allergen Reference Card” is being prepared for wait staff, serving as a reminder of what allergens, if any, are present in a particular meal.

A series of video training materials will also be produced.

“It is important that the food and beverage staff acquires a comprehensive level of understanding about food aller-

gies and are able to handle an order placed by a guest who has a food allergy,” he noted.

Driving the Changes

“The dining room menu changes came about following guests’ comment cards, along with focus groups conducted in different markets, combined with guest demographics,” Jungwirth explained. This has led to new classic menu options available daily, including Royal Shrimp Cocktail, Escargot Bourguignonne, Aged Handcut Manhattan Strip Steak, Premium Angus Beef Sliders on a tomato brioche, daily selection of cheeses with fig and date compote, artisan dried fruit bread, and signature dishes, such as Chocolate Sensation and Crème Brulee.

“Furthermore,” he continued, “we feature daily entrée salads, and we have upgraded our appetizer program, main entrees and main protein offerings, as well as our dessert and vegetarian dishes.

‘Now we are not only in Europe, but Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, China, Australia and even India, which all require regional enhancements to our menus!’

“These upgrades are complimented by selected Chinese items to ensure we achieve the expected presentation.”

Jungwirth said that 10 years ago, the company catered to a mainly American clientele. “Now we are not only in Europe, but Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, China, Australia, Asia and even India, which all require regional enhancements to our menus.”

South America and Asia

“The Brazilian and Asian markets have required the most re-engineering of menus to suit these regional deployments,” Jungwirth continued. The objective was not only to make a more “comfort-oriented” menu, but also to create a menu around product availability. He said that sourcing can be challenging as regional menus can differ by as much as 30 percent to 70 percent from the cruise line’s core dining product.

Preparations for the Mariner and Voyager of the Seas for their Southeast Asia and China deployment required the implementation of new Chinese menus. Jungwirth said this equated to having 70 percent of the dishes Asian-based for both the dining room and Windjammer, while continuing to offer an untouched specialty experience such as Giovanni’s Table, Chops Grille, Johnny Rockets and Portofino.

“The new menus were developed through experience gained from the Legend of the Seas’ deployment. We also employed a Chinese chef to assist in the development and authenticity to assure we satisfied the Asian palate.”

Global Dining Habits

Global passenger sourcing also means different dining times, for instance, 5 p.m. for the first seating in Alaska, but 7:30 p.m. for Latin guests. Another way to accommodate different

preferences is open seating, which Royal Caribbean offers through its My Time Dining option. According to Jungwirth, most of the ships have by now a whole dining room deck allocated to My Time Dining.

Satisfying an increasingly international clientele also requires more training. Explained Jungwirth: “In addition to our ongoing training program and American Culinary Federation certification, we continue to enhance these programs with fresh new materials and new menu items, ingredients, cooking processes and a special focus on food allergies.

“We have incorporated valuable information, making it accessible in a team atmosphere. We have chefs who specialize in culinary training, bakery and pastry operations who travel from ship to ship ensuring that our brand standards are maintained.” ■