

Independent Maritime Advisors offers cruise ship companies a complete package of consultancy services to support them during the planning, construction and commissioning of new vessels. Report by David Porteous.



# CRUISING — TO THE FRONT —



The Seven Seas Explorer, heralded as the most luxurious ship ever to sail the seven seas, will make its maiden voyage in the summer of 2016. At 56,000 gross registered tons and carrying only 750 guests, the all-balcony, all-suite liner will boast one of the highest space ratios in the cruise industry and an exceptionally high staff-to-guest ratio.

Independent Maritime Advisors (IMA) has played a key role in its construction by acting as consultant for Regent Seven Seas Cruises, a market leader in the luxury segments of the cruise industry.

Founded in early 2010, IMA provides its clients with a wide range of services: cruise business development; new projects development; contract and technical specification

review and drafting; new build project management and supervision; condition surveys; and technical management.

## Tailor-Made Service

Managing Director Marco Pastorino, who is also the founder and owner of the firm, told Inside Marine: "Our aim is to protect our clients' investments by providing them with a tailor-made service.

"Our work starts from the moment the client has decided to build a new vessel. We help them to develop the project and prepare the outline specification that will be used during the tendering process.

"After the contract has been signed with the shipyard, we will act as the owner's representative throughout the project and

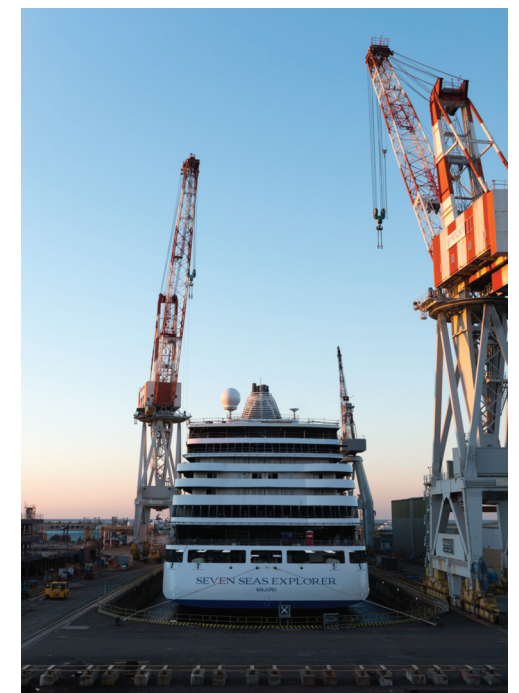
protect his interest at all times. We will advise on technical and design matters relating to the vessel's construction and co-ordinate the activities of architects, interior designers and several consultants.

"On top of this, we will make daily inspections and are responsible for quality control. We will supervise all aspects of the vessel's construction until it is delivered. But our work does not end there. As part of our complete package of services we can also monitor the vessel's performance during the term of its warranty, whether that is 12 or 24 months."

IMA's first client was Oceania Cruises, sister company to Regent Seven Seas Cruises and the world's largest upper premium cruise line. IMA acted as consultants during the construction and commissioning of its





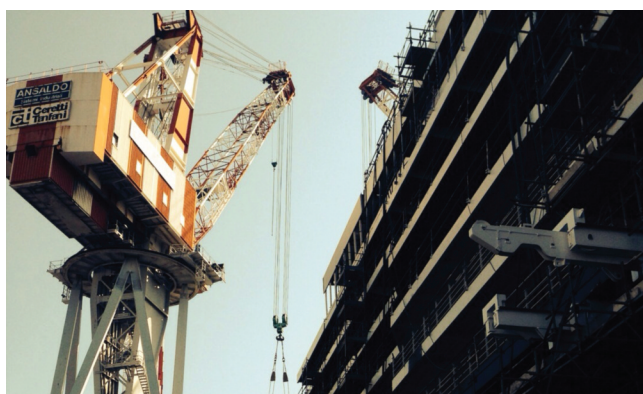


named the 'World's Leading Large Ship Cruise Line' by the World Travel Awards for the fourth consecutive year.

The company took delivery of its most innovative ship to date, the 4,200-passenger Norwegian Escape in October 2015 and has three further 4,200-passenger vessels on order with delivery in the spring of 2017, 2018 and autumn of 2019. IMA will now act as project manager for all new builds for Norwegian Cruise Line, which acquired Prestige Cruise Holdings, the parent company of Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Oceania Cruises in 2014.

"At the moment we are working on four cruise ship projects," added Mr Pastorino. "My goal is to grow the business and one way of doing this is to invest in the training and development of our people and giving them more responsibility at the right stage in their careers. This approach is already giving us results."

"We are not the only firm of maritime consultants in the world but what makes us different is that we focus purely on new build projects for the cruise market. While other firms offer general consultancy, we are a niche business with specialist knowledge."



two newest liners: the 1,250-guest Marina and her sister ship Riviera. Both ships feature magnificent grand staircases, stunning owners' suites (furnished in Ralph Lauren Home), and the finest residential design and furnishings from stem to stern.

Each ship offers guests multiple dining venues, six of which are open-seating gourmet restaurants (with no surcharge). The accommodation in every category is incredibly spacious and showcases luxurious designer touches and lavish bathrooms.

### Market Opportunity

"I decided to create Independent Maritime Advisors because I saw there was an oppor-

tunity for a consultancy that specialised in new ship building projects for the cruise market, from mass market to luxury," said Mr Pastorino, who has worked in the industry for more than 15 years.

"I founded the business in Genoa where I have connections and where many cruise vessels are constructed. At the beginning, we worked on different projects for Oceania Cruises, including the Marina and Riviera, which were built by Fincantieri in Genoa."

"As soon as these were delivered, we started work on the Seven Seas Explorer, developing together with the owner the first concept design of a vessel which will be the most luxurious vessel in the world."

"Even though Genoa is a well-known port of call for cruise liners and many of our clients' ships are built there, we have decided to relocate our headquarters to London because it is the financial centre of Europe, closer to our clients, and extremely well connected with the rest of the world. However, we will still have an office in Italy and also plan to open a branch in Germany in 2016."

### Client List

In December 2015, IMA added another name to its already impressive client list: Norwegian Cruise Line, pioneer of the very first Caribbean cruise and in 2015

