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# cruise

TRADE NEWS

## Game changer

New beginnings for P&O Cruises

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Iona features 95 flexible Conservatory mini-suites



Cruise ships are now regularly referred to as floating hotels, as they become more than just vessels in which to transport passengers from A to B. At the forefront of this evolution is design, as **Gary Peters** discovers

# A blueprint for the

**T**he name Adam D Tihany may not be instantly recognisable to everyone, but among those in the design world, he is a global brand – a brand that is now making waves in the cruise industry, as Tihany has been named creative director of Cunard's yet-to-be-named new ship, launching in 2022.

Tihany – who made his name designing spaces at luxurious and iconic hotels, restaurants and resorts across the globe, including The Beverly Hills Hotel, Belmond Hotel Cipriani and The Oberoi New Delhi – will be bringing his own sense of design to Cunard's distinctly British heritage.

The challenge – as Cunard's brand director, Lee Powell, admits – "is to design a ship that is distinctly Cunard and that will remain relevant for luxury consumers in 2022".

He adds: "The tension between old and new is a healthy one, and one that the brand has managed successfully over its 178-year history. We're confident that the fourth ship will become the perfect exemplar of Cunard for 2022."

## A NEW APPROACH

In today's competitive landscape, more and more cruise lines are attempting to highlight the uniqueness of their design and brand, as they seek to attract more of the lucrative new-to-cruise market.

Take, for example, Virgin Voyages, which is launching its debut vessel – *Scarlet Lady* – in 2020. Much has been made of its arrival in the cruise industry and there is plenty of anticipation as the countdown to *Scarlet Lady's* inaugural sailing begins.

The firm is working with a number of designers as part of the Virgin Voyages Creative Collective, including some who have never before been involved with cruise ship design. British designer Tom Dixon, the brains behind *Scarlet Lady's* Mexican restaurant and Richard's Rooftop – a private lounge – said last year: "It seems risky to use designers who have never been on a cruise before, but it makes complete sense. The obvious thing to do would be to go to experts in cruise design. I like that Virgin didn't do that."

There's also been plenty of talk about *Celebrity Edge*, Celebrity Cruises' newest

addition to its fleet, launched late last year. Renowned interior designer Kelly Hoppen was brought on board – pardon the pun – to design the suites and staterooms, as well as The Retreat, a private sanctuary for suite-class guests. And, of course, there is the Magic Carpet, the cantilevered floating platform that has caused such a stir in the industry.

The company's director of sales, Claire Stirrup, explains: "Kelly Hoppen had never cruised before taking on this challenge. Her style and aesthetic are a perfect fit for our brand and our collaboration will forever change what our guests expect from a Celebrity ship.

"The Magic Carpet began as a practical design-led solution to an important part of the guest experience – transferring to a launch when in a port where the ship cannot berth. We designed an amazing space that can be used throughout the day and our design teams – who love a challenge – thought, 'why not have it move'. It is an architectural marvel and a feature that's really caught people's imagination."

P&O Cruises is also taking things that one step further with new ship *Iona*,





Celebrity Edge has some truly revolutionary features

# future



Scarlet Lady's decks, above, and Mexican restaurant, below, show Tom Dixon's influence



launching next year. The cruise line intends to instal 4,600 works of art.

P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow explained last year: "*Iona* will offer holidays to a whole new contemporary generation who appreciate the intricacies of great design and extraordinary spaces for eating, drinking, dancing and relaxing."

## CREATING EXPERIENCES

Among those involved in the design of the ship is Terry McGillicuddy, director at hotel design specialist Richmond International. For *Iona*, McGillicuddy and his colleagues have designed the Conservatory Mini-suites, of which there will be 95 on the ship.

"The brief was to create British contemporary luxury with a 'seaside' feel, which embraces the sea as the star," says McGillicuddy. "The result is a contemporary design enriched with a subtle and sophisticated nautical style."

Aside from the necessity of creating something different, why are cruise lines turning to expert design firms with such gusto? "Guests are now expecting more state-of-the-art vessels, exclusive destinations and memorable experiences; interior design must respond to and support these demands," adds McGillicuddy.

"This may result in cruise ships becoming more 'resort' like and design becoming more focused on the deployment markets [destinations] or passenger origins, which may bring in local and cultural design requirements."

This is something that Powell wholeheartedly agrees with: "Design is becoming more agile and in step with land-based trends. The sector is brimming with innovations and is enlisting talent from outside the traditional maritime design sector."

As for the future, "technology will be a key factor to enhance the passenger experience and service expectations", says McGillicuddy, while at Celebrity there is a multi-million-pound project underway – The Celebrity Revolution – to transform all of the line's existing ships.

Powell, meanwhile, believes "societal trends" will "no doubt be reflected through design over the coming years – from material choices in relation to environmental impacts and the subtle integration of relevant technology". The design evolution in cruise shows no signs of abating. ⚓