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The Association of Mediterranean Cruise Ports

Set up in Rome in 1996, MedCruise stands as the largest Cruise Port association, representing ports across the Mediterranean and its adjoining seas, spanning from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, and fostering cooperation and excellence.

The mission of MedCruise is to promote the cruise industry around the Mediterranean region. The Association assists its members in benefiting from the growth of the cruise industry by providing networking, as well as promotional and professional development opportunities. It also advances their interests in international forums and relevant cruise policy discussions.

MedCruise counts with more than 159 Port Members representing 22 countries (11 EU and 11 non-EU), across three continents, and 50 Associate Members representing vital stakeholders in the cruise industry such as tourism boards, port agents, tourism agents and cruise industry-related associations or companies.

Among the objectives of MedCruise are to promote the Mediterranean region as a cruise destination; increase the efficiency of cruise port members by exchanging information on industry developments and best practices; formulate common positions on questions of common interest; develop good relations among all the cruise industry and provide its members with marketing, networking, professional development tools and forums.

The Association serves ports of different sizes from diverse regions, countries and cultures in one of the most dynamic cruise regions in the world - a region that offers multiple opportunities for cruising.

01. ABOUT MEDCRUISE

02. MEDCRUISE WELCOME

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Bienvenidos a Cartagena, destino y puerto cultural del Mediterráneo, miembro de MedCruise, que nos abre sus puertas en esta asamblea para adentrarnos en un viaje en el que poder compartir, aprender y construir juntos.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 66th MedCruise General Assembly in the vibrant city of Cartagena — a destination steeped in history, culture, and maritime legacy, proudly representing the richness of the Mediterranean.

As we open a new chapter with the start of a new mandate, I feel both honoured and inspired to serve as President of MedCruise. Our Association stands stronger than ever, thanks to the foundation laid over the past years and the remarkable efforts of each and every member.

This General Assembly is a testament to that strength, bringing together 26 representatives from 20 cruise companies, along with 8 distinguished media representatives, and over 110 port and associate members. During the Asembly, we will engage in insightful sessions and over 630 B2B meetings, reinforcing our commitment to cooperation, innovation, and shared growth.

Our continued focus on the cruise industry's evolving priorities including sustainability, digital transformation and inclusive cooperation — remains at the heart of our vision. These are not simply trends but essential principles shaping the future of our industry. Cartagena offers an ideal setting for these discussions. The port has experienced significant growth, with 144 cruise calls and 219,911 passengers in 2024 — an increase of more than 17% in cruise traffic compared to the previous year. This is a clear reflection of its rising prominence as a Mediterranean cruise destination.

Beyond the conference hall, Cartagena invites us to immerse ourselves in unique experiences. From a serene catamaran tour of its historic natural harbour — passing by ancient fortresses and a modern port infrastructure — to a captivating walk through its Roman Theatre and archaeological wonders, the city offers a perfect blend of legacy and vision. These moments of cultural discovery enrich not only our stay but our appreciation of the destinations we serve.

We are proud to host such an exceptional gathering. Let us take this opportunity to strengthen our bonds, exchange knowledge and work together to build a unified and prosperous future for cruise tourism in the Mediterranean and its adjoining seas.

I look forward to sharing this exciting journey with all of you during the 66th General Assembly.



Theodora Riga President of MedCruise

Dear MedCruise Colleagues and Friends,

¡Bienvenidos a Cartagena! It is a true pleasure to welcome you in this ancient and vibrant Mediterranean city, where history, innovation and hospitality meet, for our 66th MedCruise General Assembly.

Cartagena, with more than 3,000 years of history, has been a strategic port since ancient times, a city shaped by Carthaginians, Romans and countless maritime civilizations. Today, Cartagena opens its doors to MedCruise with the same spirit of connection, exchange and vision of the future.

This General Assembly promises to be a meaningful and dynamic gathering, offering a unique opportunity to strengthen our network, enjoy inspiring insights from top leaders, discuss the latest developments and future challenges of the cruise sector but also experience all the potentialities of this remarkable destination.

Beyond the unique assets only a MedCruise General Assembly can offer, the knowledge, innovation and commitment that each of you always brings are also what make all our events so meaningful.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to the Port Authority of Cartagena for their outstanding work and cooperation with the MedCruise Secretariat in organising what will surely be an inspiring and memorable event.

I look forward to sharing these special days with all of you, sharing, learning and celebrating together.

See you in Cartagena!

Anne-Marie Spinosi Director of Events of MedCruise



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03. PORT AND DESTINATION WELCOME

Welcome to the Port of Cartagena!

When an event repeats, it's because it has left its mark. And if it returns to Cartagena, it's because it has found a welcoming, safe port full of possibilities. That's why it is truly an honor for me to address you on the occasion of the 66th edition of the MedCruise General Assembly, a landmark event that brings together, year after year, the leading players in the cruise sector in the Mediterranean and the adjoining seas. It is a key meeting point for continuing to build a shared future around maritime tourism.

Cartagena is hosting this prestigious Assembly for the second time, after first doing so in 2009. The fact that it returns here sixteen years later—with twice the number of attendees compared to the previous edition—is no coincidence. It reflects ongoing dedication, a shared vision, and the commitment of an entire city to the present and future of cruise tourism.

From the Port of Cartagena, we wish to extend our sincerest congratulations to the organizers and participants and take this opportunity to share with all of you the evolution of our port and our city's firm commitment to this strategic sector.

Cartagena is a city with 3,000 years of history, written from the Mediterranean and for the Mediterranean. Our geostrategic position, cultural and historical heritage, and our adaptability have

been key in shaping what we are today: a modern, efficient port, increasingly established as a high-quality cruise destination.

Although our journey in the cruise industry is relatively recent, it has been deliberate and steady. In 1998, we received the first cruise ship of the modern era, and since then, we have followed a path of continuous growth, based on investment, institutional collaboration, and a clear commitment to a sustainable, high-value tourism model.

Thanks to a joint strategy with the City Council of Cartagena, the Port Authority, regional and national administrations, and local tourism and business stakeholders, we have developed specific infrastructure such as the Cruise Berth, now known as Juan Sebastián Elcano, located in a privileged spot just steps from the historic center, the Roman Theatre, museums, shops, and a rich cultural and culinary offering.

In recent years, we have strengthened our operational capacity, extending the berthing line, improving access, and designing spaces intended for a comfortable, efficient, and welcoming reception. At the same time, we have promoted environmental initiatives such as the Onshore Power Supply (OPS) system, aimed at reducing emissions and improving the environmental quality of both the port and the city—this project is already in the tendering phase.

Growth has been significant. From just a few thousand passengers, we have now welcomed over 200,000 cruise visitors in the last season, positioning ourselves as a boutique destination, highly

valued for its authenticity, cultural richness, and personalized service.

But beyond the numbers, what truly matters is the model. In Cartagena, cruise tourism is a shared project. Citizens, shop owners, tour guides, taxi drivers, hospitality workers, and public institutions—all play a role in shaping the experience. That's why, from the start, we launched initiatives like the "Cruise Friend Shop" consortium, designed to guarantee the best service and information for cruise passengers. Because a cruise guest doesn't just remember the place—they remember how it made them feel. Today, Cartagena is a vibrant city, open to the sea, striking a balance between history and modernity, and fully committed to quality, hospitality, and sustainability. A destination that looks to the future without forgetting its roots.

From the Port of Cartagena, we reaffirm our commitment to continue actively collaborating within MedCruise, sharing best practices, innovations, and projects that enable us to grow—as destinations, as ports, and as regions connected by the same sea.

If you haven't already, we invite you to experience Cartagena. Stroll through its streets, admire its heritage, savor its cuisine, and discover why more and more cruises and cruise guests choose our port.

With the hope that this 66th Assembly is as fruitful as it is inspiring, please receive a warm and cordial greeting from the Port of Cartagena—a port with 3,000 years ahead.



Pedro Pablo Hernández President Port Authority of Cartagena Greetings from the Mayoress of Cartagena

Dear friends,

I am honored to welcome you on behalf of the people in Cartagena, who are grateful to you for choosing our open city as the place to meet in general assembly. Hosting you all gives us the opportunity to demonstrate to the main cruise professionals, operators and specialized media that our city offers what travelers are looking for when arriving at the port on their vacation.

Our natural bay has attracted the civilizations that have sailed the Mediterranean and left their traces in the shape of monuments, impressive public buildings and archaeological sites, which can be discovered by strolling through our pedestrian old town, along with historical treasures displayed in a rich network of museums.

And that experience begins at the foot of the port of call. Travelers enter Cartagena as soon as they get off the ship at an urban pier, allowing them to visit a Roman theatre, admire the walls that General Hannibal crossed ahead of his elephants, enter the Civil War air-raid shelters and reach the top of the medieval castle overlooking the port, in a step-free city with pedestrian and adapted routes.

The port has left a mark on our history and defined the character of a welcoming city, grown as a destination to offer our visitors a quality service. I hope that you, like all our visitors, will take a good impression of the best gastronomy, the professional one, the professionalism of the tourism sector and the richness and depth of a modern city with a long history.

Noelia Arroyo

Mayoress of Cartagena



04. PORT FACTS – CARTAGENA CRUISE PORT

Cartagena, nestled on the Mediterranean's Costa Cálida, is a welcoming city where history, modern infrastructure, and premier

tourist services come together. With a cruise terminal located just steps from the city center, passengers can disembark directly into the heart of the action. A sunny climate, walkable streets, and a rich cultural offering make Cartagena a leading destination in the Mediterranean.

Strategically located in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, Cartagena is close to the main Spanish, French and Italian ports, making it an ideal port of call on Mediterranean routes. This is confirmed by the many cruise lines that have included this sunny destination in their itineraries for years.

Port Facilities

Location: Southeastern Iberian Peninsula - ideal for Mediterranean itineraries

Operating hours: 24/7

Berth Lengths:

- Cruise Terminal: 709 m
- Santa Lucía Quay: 385 m
- San Pedro Quay: 405 m

Technical Specifications

- **Draught:** up to 12 m at three berths
- Anchorage: Available (not compulsory)
- Ship tenders allowed: Yes
- Pilotage: Compulsory
- Tugs: Available
- Tidal range: 65 cm

Maximum ship dimensions:

- Length: no limit
- Width: no limit
- Draught: 12 m

Services:

- Passenger Terminal
- Ship Repair
- Bunkering
- Waste and Garbage Disposal
- Sewage disposal
- Water supply
- Provisions
- Free WiFi
- Tourist Office
- Banks and currency exchange at city centre

Distances:

- City centre: 200 m
- Airport: 30 km
- Railway Station: 1 km

05. DISCOVER CARTAGENA & COSTA CALIDA



ONE PORT, ALL OF SPAIN

One Day, Enjoy It Your Way

The coastal destinations of the Region of Murcia offer more than just scenic beauty—they offer a complete Mediterranean experience. With breathtaking natural landscapes, a rich tapestry of historical influences, and an abundance of leisure opportunities, the Costa Cálida invites travelers to create unforgettable moments in just one day or over an extended stay.

Whether it's scuba diving, sailing, or kite surfing in and around Cartagena, or teeing off at one of the twenty golf courses spread throughout the region, there's truly something for everyone. For those with a spirit of adventure, trekking, cycling, climbing, and horseback riding across the natural parks of the region provide an ideal escape. And for culture enthusiasts, festivals like Holy Week, the Carthaginians and Romans Festival, and the International Music Festival offer an immersion into the soul of Murcia.





CARTAGENA: A CITY WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE SEA

Cartagena is a city where ancient civilizations meet modern charm. Once a key port for the Carthaginians, Romans, and later empires, it now serves as a gateway to Spain's historical and maritime heritage.

Visitors can walk through time at sites like the Roman Theatre and Museum, the Naval Museum, and the Punic Wall, which reveal the city's layered past. The National Museum of Underwater Archaeology (ARQVA) and the Alfonso XII Promenade enrich the cultural offering with contemporary elegance. Nature lovers can venture into the protected areas of Cabo Tiñoso and La Muela, where diverse flora and fauna flourish in untouched surroundings. Gastronomy is a sensory journey, with regional specialties such as Caldero (fish stew), salted fish, and the emblematic Café Asiático. With 300 days of sunshine annually, Cartagena is a vibrant year-round destination. Signature events include Semana Santa (Holy Week), the Carthaginians and Romans Festival in September, and the International Jazz Festival in November.





INLAND TREASURES: CULTURE, NATURE, AND AUTHENTICITY

Beyond the coast, the inland cities of the Region of Murcia offer travelers a rich tapestry of heritage, nature, and wellness.

Murcia

The capital city, Murcia, shines with Baroque splendor, most notably in the Cathedral and Plaza Cardenal Belluga. The Salzillo Museum and the streets of Trapería and Platería showcase the city's historic soul, deeply rooted in its guild traditions. The nearby Ricote Valley features palm groves and Moorish architecture, while the Sierra Espuña mountain range is ideal for outdoor enthusiasts.

The local cuisine—featuring dishes like Zarangollo, Paparajote, and wines from Bullas, Jumilla, and Yecla—is a true celebration of regional flavors. Major events include the Spring Festivals, Bullfighting Festival, and Semana Santa.

Caravaca de la Cruz

Recognized as one of the world's five holy cities, Caravaca de la Cruz is a significant pilgrimage site. Its Basilica-Santuario de la Santísima y Vera Cruz attracts thousands of visitors annually. The Ethnographic Museum in Miniature and the Nature Interpretation Centre offer insight into local traditions and natural beauty. Explore the Fuentes del Marqués, ancient Templar towers, and protected parks. Don't miss the Wine Horses Festival (Caballos del Vino) in May—a spectacle of devotion, color, and celebration. The town is also known for the thermal waters of the Spa of Leana.





Lorca

Lorca, known as the "City of the Sun", is steeped in history. Its Fortress of the Sun (Castillo de Lorca) offers immersive historical exhibits. The Baroque Guevara Palace and Collegiate Church of San Patricio reflect its rich architectural legacy. Beyond its museums and landmarks, Lorca is a haven for trekking and mountain climbing in nearby Sierra Espuña. The Lorca Resort Golf Club and vibrant Semana Santa celebrations make it a multifaceted destination.

La Unión

This town's legacy is deeply linked to mining history. The Mining Park, Las Matildes Interpretation Centre, and abandoned 19th-century washhouses provide a compelling look at the region's industrial past. The Old Market becomes the epicenter of passion and culture each August during the Cante de las Minas International Flamenco Festival, one of the world's most prestigious flamenco events.





COASTAL HIGHLIGHTS: WHERE SEA, SUN, AND CULTURE UNITE

Strategically located on the Costa Cálida, Cartagena's port is more than a docking point—it's a symbolic gateway to "One Port, All of Spain." Alongside Cartagena, towns like Águilas, Mazarrón, La Manga del Mar Menor, and Cabo de Palos offer cruise visitors an authentic blend of tradition, nature, and world-class leisure.

Mar Menor & La Manga

La Manga is a 22 km-long strip of land, separating the Mediterranean Sea from the Mar Menor, Europe's largest saltwater lagoon. This unique ecosystem is renowned for its therapeutic muds and warm waters. It's a hotspot for golf, sailing, and wellness tourism. The nearby Islas Hormigas Marine Reserve is one of the top diving spots in the Mediterranean. Enjoy Caldero rice, king prawns, and a calendar full of nautical competitions and cultural festivals.

Cabo de Palos

A striking coastal landmark, Cabo de Palos is home to one of Spain's most iconic lighthouses, perched 81 meters above sea level. This historic structure not only guides ships, but also offers breathtaking panoramic views of the Mediterranean. Cabo de Palos is considered one of the best diving spots in the Mediterranean, thanks to the Marine Reserve of Islas Hormigas, teeming with marine biodiversity, shipwrecks, and underwater caves. The town's seafront is perfect for enjoying fresh seafood, quiet coves, and relaxed coastal charm.





Águilas

A coastal gem known for the Castle of San Juan de las Águilas, Roman Baths, and unspoiled beaches. Natural wonders like Cabo Cope and Puntas de Calnegre offer stunning views. Visitors can explore underwater caves, hike scenic trails, or simply relax at local spas. Fresh seafood, colorful festivals, and a laid-back atmosphere make Águilas a standout stop.

Mazarrón

Steeped in history and natural beauty, Mazarrón offers the Roman Salt Preserving Factory Museum, Port of Mazarrón, and the dramatic Erosions of Bolnuevo. Pristine beaches and a range of activities—sailing, scuba diving, fishing, and golf—make this a top leisure destination. Local specialties like fish baked in salt and regional wines showcase Mazarrón's culinary richness.





A DESTINATION FOR EVERY TRAVELER

From coastal havens to inland gems, the Region of Murcia—with Cartagena as its crown jewel—offers a complete destination for cruise passengers. Whether you're here for a single day or an extended stay, you'll discover a region rich in sunshine, culture, nature, wellness, and authentic Mediterranean hospitality.



06. CRUISE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES



Sandra Neffgen ~ Director Shore Excursions

Sandra is Shore Excursion Executive for AIDA Cruises and is responsible for the Shore Excursion Program – Procurement, Planning, Operations and Product Development worldwide for the AIDA brand.

She has worked on-board several AIDA vessels as Shore Operations Manager and cruised throughout the Caribbean, Canary Islands, the Baltic and Western Mediterranean before joining the shoreside organization 14 years ago.

After studying tourism and working overseas Sandra made first experience in cruise business in booking future cruises at the beginning of her journey with AIDA Cruises. Additionally, Sandra took on responsibility for all onboard activities, such as Virtual Reality, High Rope Course, Mystery Cabin, and Minigolf and is well in lead of the Future Cruise Consultants onboard the AIDA ships.



MBASSADOR

Giovanna Dipasquale, Head of Itinerary Management

Giovanna Dipasquale has almost 20 years of combined expertise in port operations and shore excursions. Prior to joining the business, she worked at BSM in its Cruise Services organisation, where has had supported Ambassador Cruise Line since it first launched. Giovanna is very well-travelled and speaks several languages fluently. She started her career with Costa Crociere in the shore excursions department before managing turnarounds and shore excursions in Scandinavia with Borealis Destination Management in Copenhagen and Baltic & Nordic Gateway in Sweden and Norway. Subsequent roles included port operations at Sartori and Berger in Germany. At Ambassador, Giovanna is responsible for creating new season itineraries and ensuring that both the ships and guests are delighted and inspired when they arrive at a port.



CARNIVAL CORPORATION&PLC

Abigail Faraday, Senior Manager, Global Strategic Sourcing, Shore Excursions, Carnival Corporation.

Abby has over two decades of experience in destination management and strategic sourcing within the cruise industry. Currently serving as Senior Manager of Global Strategic Sourcing, Shore Excursions at Carnival Corporation, overseeing the procurement of shore experiences, overland activities, and pre/post services across the Carnival brands. Her role is central to ensuring operational excellence and enhancing the guest experience through innovative and cost-effective solutions. Prior to her current role, Abby spent over 23 years with Carnival UK, starting onboard P&O Cruises as a Shore Experiences Manager, exploring the world. Returning to dry land, Abby was instrumental in leading product development for shore experiences at P&O Cruises and Cunard Line.





Ugo Savino, Senior Director, Deployment and Itinerary Planning – Carnival Cruise Line

Born in Naples, Italy, Ugo joined Carnival Cruise Line in 2007 and has expanded his responsibilities ever since. Currently, he holds the position of Senior Director, Deployment and Itinerary Planning and manages the strategy and optimization of itineraries to generate demand, drive guest satisfaction, and improve profitability. The scope of his responsibilities includes as well capacity management and asset marketability in each market to improve financial performance, to promote new itineraries, ports of call, and deployments across the organization in order to ensure their successful launch. Also, he is the Itinerary Planning key contact point with industry associations and worldwide port and destination representatives. With the support of his team, Ugo has identified and developed key metrics that are now the foundation of Carnival's deployment and itinerary planning strategies. Communication, curiosity, lateral-thinking, and balancing quantitative and qualitative data are Ugo's distinctive traits shaping his management style and, ultimately, his professional career and experience.

Ugo earned a Bachelor's Degree in Advanced Economics and Marketing from Università degli Studi "Federico II" in Naples, Italy; a Post-Bachelor's Degree Specialization Marketing of Travel Services from S.D.A. Bocconi in Milan, Italy; and earned a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Strategic Marketing from Florida International University in Miami, Florida.



CARNIVAL UK

Odette McFarlane

Director, Port & Shore Operations, Carnival UK

Within her role, Odette holds global accountability for home port operations, port services, and destination management for Carnival UK brands P&O Cruises and Cunard. She is instrumental in optimising port logistics, ensuring efficient port processes, and delivering seamless and positive guest journeys both on and off the ship. Odette is committed to fostering collaborative partnerships with destinations and driving innovation in the ports and destination landscape.



CARNIVAL UK

Stephanie Male – Carnival UK

Stephanie Male is the Senior Itinerary Planner for P&O Cruises and Cunard. She ensures the itineraries are optimised and fuel-efficient, as well as making berth bookings and resolving any berth conflicts within ports.

Stephanie started her career as a Deck Cadet with Holland America Line in 2012 and sailed as a 3rd Officer with the company. In 2019 Stephanie transitioned to a shoreside role with Carnival UK in the Port Services department, moving to the Itinerary Planning Team post-Covid.



ClubMed华

Philippe Mercet

Philippe has been with Club Méditerranée since 1994, holding various positions in the fields of excursions and international tour design. For the past ten years, he has served as the Product Manager of the Club Med 2 sailing yacht. In this role, he is responsible for itinerary development, product marketing, and all commercial activities.



Club Med ¹?

Saida Dridi

Destination Product Manager – Club Med 2 | Expert in Excursions & Luxury Travel

With over 15 years of experience at Club Med, I have developed a deep expertise in excursion management and international tourism circuits. Since 2008, I've held multiple strategic roles, and for the past 5 years, I've proudly served as the Destination Product Manager for the iconic Club Med 2 sailing yacht.

In this role, I design, and curate immersive shore excursions tailored to our luxury guests, aiming to offer not just visits, but emotional and unforgettable experiences that truly showcase each destination. My mission is to ensure that every journey is seamless, enriching, and aligned with Club Med's premium standards of excellence.

I also lead the training and support of onboard teams, focusing on guest satisfaction, service quality, and business performance. My approach blends creativity, cultural insight, and operational precision to continually enhance our guests' discovery and enjoyment.





Davide Truscello

Pricing, Itinerary & Revenue Planning Director

Davide Truscello is a seasoned manager with over 20 years of professional experience in multinational companies and management consulting. He possesses proven analytical skills, a results-oriented mindset, and an entrepreneurial attitude.

Davide graduated in Business Economics from Genoa in 2003 and began his career in Milan as a management consultant. Over seven years, he led projects for multinational companies, honing his analytical and project management skills.

After his consulting tenure, Davide joined Zurich Insurance plc as a Business Development Manager, where he focused on expanding the direct portfolio and partnership business. In 2012, Davide moved to Costa Crociere Spa, taking on the role of Manager in the Revenue Management Department. He was responsible for strategic pricing and revenue optimization. During his time at Costa, he spent two years as a Business Intelligence Manager for the company's main market (Italy), further enhancing his commercial skills. He later returned to revenue management as Director of Itinerary, Pricing, and Revenue Planning.





Simone Frontini

I am Simone Frontini, 32 years old from Milan, Italy, working for Costa Cruises.

I joined Costa in 2017, starting as an intern and now being the senior analyst, after a short interruption in 2018 for OTA sector.

I am in charge of deployment long term planning decision making support and product innovation, with the aim of defining the best asset allocation in time and space, as well as itinerary design.

Graduated in Economy of Tourism; fond of travelling, I found my natural dimension in the cruise industry.



FOUR SEASONS

James Cabello

Is the Head of Port, Marina, and Shoreside Operations at Four Seasons Yachts, bringing 32 years of extensive experience in both executive shoreside roles and senior officer positions on board luxury vessels. In his current role, James oversees all aspects of Port Operations, Shoreside Services, Pre/Post Packages, Deployment and Concierge Services, ensuring a seamless and exceptional guest experience.

Previously, James played a pivotal role at Mystic Cruises, where he crafted unique ocean and experiential itineraries and was responsible for Port Operations, Shore Excursions, and co-developing the expedition program, including onboard activities and entertainment. Prior to Mystic, James was a founding member of SeaDream Yacht Club, where he ascended to Vice President of Deployment, Destinations, Land Programs, and Charter Operations. During his tenure, he expanded the destination portfolio by 82%, introducing over 200 new destinations and expeditions. James's career began with a global journey as a Cruise Director and Entertainer with renowned lines such as Seabourn, Sea Goddess,

Holland America, Costa, Sun Line/Royal Olympic (Stella Solaris), and American Hawaii Cruises. His passion for fostering strong relationships with destination partners, associations, and the global cruise community has led to his deep connections across more than 700 destinations worldwide.Born and raised in Western New York, near the mouth of the Lower Niagara River and Lake Ontario, James is now based in Italy with his family. He continues to travel frequently, maintaining close ties with corporate offices and destinations globally.





Melanie Lewis Carsjens

Director of Shore Excursion Operations & Product Development

From the enchanting tales of explorers to the lure of distant shores, a childhood fascination with travel ignited a lifelong journey of exploration. With over 25 dedicated years of experience in the cruise industry, I've ventured across continents, bridging cultures, and crafting unforgettable experiences.

Today, I lead a global team of highly skilled individuals, driving success across two international cruise brands through innovation, dedication, and the agility to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of travel and hospitality. Passionate about creating exceptional journeys for travellers worldwide, I am committed to pushing boundaries and setting new standards in the cruise industry.

My extensive voyages have endowed me with an intimate understanding of the world's most sought-after destinations, enabling me to curate premium programs that captivate and inspire. Drawing from firsthand experiences, I collaborate closely with onboard teams, imparting insights and fostering excellence in operational delivery.

Fueling my insatiable curiosity, I am perpetually immersed in a quest for knowledge and understanding. Whether devouring literature, delving into history, or tuning into captivating podcasts, I cherish every opportunity to broaden my horizons. Additionally, I've discovered solace in the rhythmic cadence of running.



MARELLA CRUISES

Fiona Noone

Originally from London with Irish parents. I left home at 18 and travelled far and wide. I found a passion for all things water related and began my career teaching water sports, specialising in sailing. I progressed to bigger boats, working on yachts doing deliveries and the odd bit of racing before finally undertaking a Cadetship at Warsash Maritime Academy in Southampton where I qualified as a Merchant Navy Officer working on really big boats – ships. I won the John Milner award for Navigation 2012 which sits proudly on my mantel piece.

I have worked for Marella Cruises since 2018; however, I started my deep-sea career with them when they were called Thomson, back in 2009. I have worked on cruise ships with Thompson and Disney worldwide, deep sea dredgers in the North Sea, and car ferries and hi-speed passenger jets in the UK. I have had the pleasure to visit many beautiful ports and some not-so beautiful but the gateway to amazing destinations. I miss being sea-going and the joy of waking up in a new location each morning, but I very much enjoy having a stable home-life these days. My other full-time job is as mum of 2 young boys, who have let 'Mummy' escape to enjoy this great event and catch up with my industry peers.



MARELLA CRUISES

Jacqui Nobile

Jacqui Nobile is the Senior Destination Services Operations Manager for Marella Cruises. Jacqui started her career with TUI (previously Thomson Holidays) over 30 years ago, after graduating from the University of Bournemouth with a degree in Tourism Studies. Following a number of years working overseas, she boarded her first cruise ship in 1997 and fell in love with the sea! Having spent a few years working onboard, she returned to the UK and moved into the TUI head office. Since 2004, she's been an integral part of the Marella Cruises team investigating and setting up new homeports in addition to the end to end delivery of the shore excursion programme. Now labelled Destination Services her main focus remains on the contracting, product, promotion and operational delivery of this department, in addition to itinerary planning and port selection for the Marella Cruises fleet in all deployment areas.





with organisations such as Cruise Norway and CLIA, further enhancing his impact in the industry. He holds a degree in Travel and Tourism Management from the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Jon Olav Stedje

Manager, Sustainability & Community Engagement, MSC

With over 15 years of dedicated experience in sustainability within the cruise and travel industry, Jon Olav has accomplished many significant professional achievements through his strong community engagement, extensive network, and commitment to sustainable development.

Originally from the fjords of Norway, Jon Olav has developed his sustainability and maritime expertise throughout his career. Before joining MSC Cruises, Jon Olav served as Manager of Port Operations at the Port of Flam in Norway for nine years. During his tenure, he engaged in several industry related environmental and sustainable initiatives, including being member of the Sustainable Committee at Cruise Europe. His role in Flam involved navigating various governmental and political processes, achieving favourable outcomes for sustainable practices. He has also collaborated closely




Madalina Serra

Madalina is an experienced professional currently working as a Land Programs Planning & Operations Specialist at Mystic Cruises, a renowned company specializing in luxury cruises and part of Mystic Invest Holding, which has over 25 years of expertise in the travel and tourism sector.

With a strong background in hospitality management and 10 years of experience working onboard Norwegian Cruise Line, she has gained a deep understanding of guest expectations and the intricacies of cruise operations.

Her passion for travel and tourism, combined with her expertise, allows her to effectively plan and execute land programs—ensuring guests enjoy top-tier service, enriching experiences, and memorable moments at every destination.



ORIENT EXPRESS

Sacha Rougier

Vice President Itinerary Planning & Destination Experience Orient Express SILENSEAS

As VP Itinerary Planning and Destination Experiences, Sacha Rougier is responsible for defining worldwide routing for the ships of the ultra luxury lifestyle brand Orient Express. Commencing with Orient Express Corinthian in 2026 followed by the second ship in 2027.

In her role, which she assumes since april 2024, Sacha's remit includes working fleet management and port operations, sales and marketing to create enriching and respectful destination experiences and events in each port as well as pre and post experiences.

Before holding this position, Sacha was most recently Head of Itinerary Planning & Destination Experiences for Explora Journeys, part of the MSC Group. In this role, which she held from July 2020 to March 2024, Sacha was responsible for creating itineraries and destination experiences, as well as managing ground handling. Previously, Sacha was Managing Director of Cruise Gate Hamburg GmbH (CGH), a subsidiary of the Hamburg Port Authority. As operator of the three cruise terminals, CGH oversaw terminal operations, berth allocation, international cruise development and EU lobbying, as well as terminal planning.



Sacha played an active role in Hamburg's cruise development as former member of the Board of trustees of the "Hamburg Cruise Net." She furthermore held various positions in Board at Cruise Europe, Chair of the Cruise Committee IAPH and co-lecturer on Port Economics & Business Programme at the University for Maritime & Air Transport Antwerp (C-MAT). Passionate about classical music, Sacha was member of the advisory board of the Elbphilharmonie and Laeiszhalle (ELBG) and supervisory board of Hamburg Musik GmbH.

Before joining CGH, Sacha worked for the Port of Marseille, where she held various positions in marketing and cruise development.

Sacha holds a Masters in Change Management and a bachelor's degree in European Studies (Economics, German and Spanish)

About Orient Express

In June 2026, the Orient Express legend will take to the seas aboard the world's largest sailing ship. A revolution in maritime history, born of the know-how and talents of French industries and craftsmen.

Built by Chantiers de l'Atlantique, the world's leading cruise ship builder, and designed by Maxime d'Angeac, architect and Artistic Director of Orient Express, the Orient Express Corinthian will set sail from June 2026. A second ship will follow a year later.

Orient Express invites travelers to take the time to explore and consider the world around them. Part of the DNA of the brand, rediscover the art of slow travel.

Orient Express proposes a collection of ultra-luxury travel experiences linking trains, hotels and sailing yachts around the world for travelers driven by curiosity.

Orient Express is a myth which goes back to 1883 – since then, the internationally renowned name has always been synonymous with luxury travel and refinement. Today, the brand is offering a resolutely modern interpretation of this Myth.

DONANT

Sylviane de Tracy

Sylviane has been working in the cruise industry for over 30 years. In her current role as Director Cruise Research & Development, she works on developing new destinations, optimizing existing itineraries and scouting new places. Always on the lookout for quaint ports and authentic destinations providing a more intimate guest's experience which reflect PONANT's philosophy "Explore to Inspire".





Debbie Holbrook

Debbie Holbrook serves as the Director of Deployment & Itinerary Planning at Princess Cruises. She is responsible for the worldwide strategic deployment and itinerary planning of the Princess fleet of 17 ships, including their newest Sphere LNG class, with Star Princess setting sail this Fall. This includes launching over 650 voyages carrying over 1.8 million passengers annually. Debbie began her career in Hollywood, working in International Marketing at Universal Pictures on campaigns for motion pictures released around the world. She embarked on her cruise journey with Princess almost two decades ago. At Princess, she started on the Strategic Planning and Yield Management teams and later moved to the Deployment team, where she fell in love with the itinerary planning world. She holds a degree in Agricultural Economics from UC Davis and was raised on a California farm, raising a variety of animals. Debbie is a dedicated community leader, serving on the Princess Cruises Community Foundation. She finds joy in supporting local charitable events and serving on nonprofit boards. She of course loves cruising and embarks next month on her 45th cruise, this time to Norway.





Michele Bosco

Michele was born in Lecco (North Italy) and 'raised' on ships.

He started his career in the cruise industry as Junior Assistant Purser onboard Princess ships (including the original 'Love Boat') in 1997. He covered various position in the Purser's Department before joining the Destinations Team in 2001, and never looked back since.

He moved permanently to land at the end of 2018 where he joined the Shore Operations Department, serving Princess Cruises, Holland America and Seabourn Lines. During this time he has also supported the Pre-Post Cruise Hotel Program and Pre-Post Land Journeys.

He currently manages the shore excursions product and operations for Princess Cruises in the Mediterranean, Africa, Middle East, Mexican Riviera and Black Sea. He has degrees in Business Administration and Foreign Languages. Michele loves to travel and has visited more than 330 ports in his seagoing career.





passion for destinations is only surpassed by her love for her two dogs – all of whom live in Los Angeles, California.

Crystal Morgan

Senior Director, Deployment & Itinerary Planning

Seabourn

As a seasoned leader in the cruise industry, Crystal brings over 30 years of destination experience into planning deployments and itineraries for Seabourn's fleet of luxury cruise and expedition vessels. Crystal joined Seabourn in 2023 to gain experience in the growing luxury and expedition segment and now leads an enthusiastic and skilled team in hand-crafting itineraries and formulating the strategic deployments for Seabourn. Before Seabourn, Crystal's career at Princess Cruises spanned from travelling the world onboard the Princess fleet as Shore Excursion Manager for almost a decade, to trading in her sea legs for a corporate position, from which she grew her career and the deployment and itinerary planning team at Princess Cruises. Crystal's



\$SILVERSEA

Andrea Ferla

Manager, Destination Product Development - SILVERSEA

With a passion for luxury travel and gastronomic experiences, Andrea Ferla currently serves as the Manager of Destination Product Development at Silversea, where he specializes in crafting bespoke, upscale experiences, S.A.L.T. (Sea and Land Taste) Experiences.

His role involves also designing S.A.L.T. multi-day land programs, and immersive experiences into local festivals, that captivate discerning travelers seeking the epitome of luxury and authenticity. Andrea brings 2 decades of expertise in the luxury hospitality and travel industries. Prior to his current role, he spent six years managing Destination Experiences at Silversea. His background also includes extensive experience in the luxury hospitality sector across Paris and Monte Carlo, where he developed a keen eye for detail and a deep appreciation for refined service and culinary excellence, and few years of on board Costa Cruises as Shorex Manager. A true enthusiast of luxury travel and cuisine, Andrea's work is driven by a genuine passion to deliver unforgettable experiences that celebrate local culture, gastronomy, and elegance.



\$SILVERSEA

Antoine Zoppi, Itinerary Designer

As Itinerary Designer at Silversea, a global leader in luxury cruising, I specialize in creating exceptional voyage experiences across the globe mostly in Europe, Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Indian Ocean, and Africa for our classic fleet. With over 10 years' experience in the maritime industry, I am passionate about discovering new destinations and translating that knowledge into immersive itineraries and unforgettable journeys that connect guests with the world's most captivating destinations.

I am responsible for optimizing itineraries by balancing guest satisfaction, operational efficiency, compliance with international regulations, innovation and cost management-including fuel and port expenses. My role involves comprehensive evaluation and analysis of destinations, ensuring each port meets Silversea's high standards and aligns with our guests' expectations.

Prior to joining Silversea, I gained extensive experience in port operations, where I coordinated critical services such as, fuel supply, offloading, cost control, port's technical assessment and any support to shipboard management. This background provides a strong operational foundation for my current work, allowing me to approach itinerary planning with a holistic and detail-oriented perspective.





Alessandro Bracelante

Alessandro has been working in the cruise industry for over 16 years, specializing in shore excursions. From 2009 to 2014, he gained onboard experience by directly managing and coordinating shore excursion operations. Since then, he has continued his career ashore, working with cruise-focused tour operators providing excursions and ground services. In these roles, he has been actively involved in the selection and planning of shore excursions for cruise ships.

In 2022, Alessandro joined Star Clippers, where he oversees all destination services—including excursions, transfers, hotels, and land programs—for all Star Clippers itineraries. His background gives him a comprehensive perspective on destination development and guest experience, combining operational insights from both ship and shore.





Stefano Torresi – Director of Port Operations, Viking Cruises

Born in 1986 in Italy, Stefano has been working in the cruise industry since 2007. He spent nearly a decade at Medov Srl (Port Agency), overseeing port operations in Italy, France, and Spain for several major cruise lines. From mid-2012 to the end of 2014, he was involved in the complex "Costa Concordia removal project" on Giglio Island, Italy where he was responsible for operation and logistic of project's the fleet. In 2016, he joined the new born CostaMed, a Port Agency owned equally by Costa Cruises and Medov Srl, where he oversaw the company's startup phase and later its consolidation, focusing on shipping agency business and Marine HR. As of January 2025, he serves as Director of Port Operations at Viking Cruises, bringing with him nearly two decades of experience in the cruise business.





Ricky Trautwein

Product Manager, Windstar Cruises

Ricky Trautwein leads shore excursion, land program, and itinerary development at Windstar Cruises, with a special focus on Spain and Portugal. He was instrumental in launching the brand's new Winter Mediterranean itineraries through Spain and the Canary Islands, helping position Spain as a year-round destination for Windstar.

With over 15 years in luxury travel and cruise operations, Ricky has shaped guest experiences for brands including Silversea, TripAdvisor/Viator, and Royal Caribbean's GoBe. His work spans Europe and the Americas, with standout projects including the launch of a high-speed train land extension from Barcelona to Madrid and the development of new multi-port itineraries across Spain, Northern Europe, and Peru.



07. SPECIAL GUESTS

Eric Benedict – Chief Administrative Officer, Access Cruise Inc. Speaker | AI Consultant | Cruise Industry Strategist

Eric Benedict is a 30-year veteran of the cruise industry and a recognized leader in the evolution of destination services. As Chief Administrative Officer at Access Cruise Inc., Eric oversees the company's Training & Development division and leads its AI consulting practice, helping ports, tour operators, and cruise brands prepare for the future through innovation and technology integration.

Prior to joining Access Cruise, Eric served as Head of Shore Excursion Operations for Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, where he led global strategies for Regent Seven Seas, Oceania Cruises, and Norwegian Cruise Line. His work spanned port development, partnership cultivation, and guest experience design across dozens of destinations worldwide.

Today, Eric specializes in helping businesses bridge the gap between traditional tourism and next-generation technology. His insights into artificial intelligence, operational efficiency, and human-centered innovation have positioned him as a pioneering figure guiding the transformation of destination services in the cruise sector.

At the 66th MedCruise General Assembly, Eric will explore how AI is reshaping the future of destination services—unlocking new levels of personalization and efficiency, while empowering teams to work

smarter, not harder. He'll highlight how AI can streamline operations without replacing the human connection at the heart of great travel experiences.



Gerardo Vangioni

Gerardo Vangioni holds a law degree from the University of Alcalá de Henares.

With proven experience in commerce, marketing, and logistics, in recent years he has focused his activities on increasing awareness about Mercy Ships.

He is currently the CEO of Mercy Ships Spain, an international NGO that operates hospital ships to provide top-tier free healthcare services, training, and sustainable development to people with limited access in developing countries, aiming to contribute to the achievement of the UN's SDGs.

His main activities are: raising public awareness about the healthcare situation in sub-Saharan Africa, promoting the work of Mercy Ships through hospital ships, encouraging volunteering in medical, maritime, and general areas, and raising both financial and service support to bring hope and healing to those most in need.



As many as 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable, and timely surgical and anaesthesia care worldwide. Mercy Ships deploys hospital ships to provide free direct medical care to patients with unmet surgical needs and works with host nations to strengthen existing healthcare systems and improve access to surgical care for all.

Since 1978, more than 2.86 million people have benefited from the services provided. These services make a solid contribution to two of the UN Sustainable Development Goal's six building blocks of health systems. As many as 1,550 volunteers from 60 nations serve onboard our fleet each year, including maritime and technical professionals.

We invite you to partner with us! As a member of the maritime community your support is especially needed. Together we can change lives for the better.







Giora Israel

Giora Israel is the President of Giora Israel LLC, a Florida-based advisory firm providing strategic expertise to governments, financial institutions, civic organisations, and global companies in the cruise tourism sector. Renowned for his visionary leadership and deep industry knowledge, Giora has been a driving force behind some of the most significant developments in port infrastructure and destination planning worldwide.His professional journey began in the hotel industry, where he held key leadership roles at the Tel Aviv Hilton and in resort management across Israel and the Caribbean. Transitioning into shore excursion.

In 1992, Giora joined Carnival Corporation & plc, where over a 30year tenure he held various executive positions. In his first decade with Carnival, Giora was engaged with Carnival's European expansion, including living two years in Greece as the VP of Marketing and Hotel Operations of the largest cruise line in the Med, Epirotiki. Whereas this venture did not pan out, he was later involved in the first acquisition of Carnival in Europe: the Costa Group. Giora led and entered the first cruise line concessions in the Mediterranean in 1998—twice in Barcelona and once in Santa Cruz de Tenerife including serving as Senior Vice President of Global Port & Destination Development. His contributions ranged from pioneering strategic partnerships—such as onboard retail, spa, and entertainment services—to overseeing the creation and operation of ports serving over five million passengers annually. His work enabled the expansion of new cruise itineraries and opened previously inaccessible markets for Carnival's growing fleet. After retiring from Carnival in 2023, Giora continues to lend his expertise through his consultancy, helping to shape the future of cruise tourism with a strong commitment to sustainable and innovative destination development.



Dr. José Manuel Pagés Sánchez

Dr. José Manuel Pagés Sánchez is the Director of the Agenda 2030 by AIVP, Projects and Content in AIVP (International Association Cities and Ports). José Sánchez has been working in AIVP since 2016 in different positions to improve the relations between cities and ports by promoting dialogue and cooperation. He studied architecture at Lisbon's Technical University (Bachelor+Master), and his passion for port and urban development led later him to pursue a PhD in Hamburg's Hafencity University, completed in 2019, focused on sustainable port-city relationships. In his research career, he received different grants to pursue his investigation as well as academic awards. Previously, Jose Sánchez has worked as an architect in renowned practices, and as an independent consultant, lecturer and researcher.



08. INTERNATIONAL PRESS REPRESENTATIVES

Eva Miquel Subías

Graduated in Contemporary History from the University of Barcelona. After a period directing a Private Foundation and working in various media outlets, mainly radio and television, she was involved in the General State Administration.

From March 2012-July 2018, Eva Miquel Subias was the Corporate, Communications and PR Director of Puertos del Estado, in charge of the foreign promotion of the public organism and the Spanish Ports, coordinating the stand of Ports of Spain in the main International and national Trade Fairs, just like the design of the strategic lines of communication, branding and PR tasks with all kind of public and private institutions. She was, also, representing the State Ports at CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association), member of the board at Autoridad Portuaria de Tarragona and member of Patronato del Museo Marítimo de Barcelona.

After her period at Puertos del Estado, she became the business partner of aWp Services, achieving an old dream. To come back to the private sector, where she is in charge of several clients of the Ports and Logistics sector, Cruise lines companies, leisure nautical and companies of others fields, mainly maritime and touristic, although her link with the ports sector is still being one of her core business.

She is a maritime consultant and she loves the communication strategies.

In addition, she decided to return to the media. She is now responsible for the cruise and nautical section of the radio program "Gente Viajera" on Onda Cero, the most important tourism radio program in Spain.

She is also a regular contributor to "Espejo Público," a daily current affairs program on Antena 3. Eva also collaborates with a premium and luxury lifestyle digital magazine, The Luxonomist.

In addition, she coordinates the two special cruise magazines of "Viajar" per year and she is in charge of the Prensa Ibérica project, "Puertos: Green and Blue." Just for now. Because the adventure has just started and she is launching actually her new personal project with her own brand. Stay tuned...



Rebecca Gibson, Associate Editor of Cruise & Ferry

Rebecca is head of editorial at Tudor Rose, a UK-based publishing and marketing services company that publishes three of its own periodical magazines – *Cruise & Ferry Review, Technology Record* and *Golf Course Architecture*. In addition to managing the team of inhouse and freelance writers, Rebecca creates and collates content for the suite of Cruise & Ferry products, which include *Cruise & Ferry Review, Cruise & Ferry Interiors* and *Cruise & Ferry Itinerary Planning*. She predominantly interviews key industry stakeholders, including C-suite executives of international cruise and ferry brands. In addition, Rebecca represents the Cruise & Ferry brand at industry events. Please visit www.cruiseandferry.net and www.tudor-rose.co.uk for more information



Frances Gannon

Frances Gannon is editor and co-founder of *CruiseTimes*, an international trade magazine which was launched in 2016 and is published three times a year. Frances has worked in the cruise industry for the over fourteen years, and previously worked in finance, retail marketing, and commercial business. She is passionate about travel and is always excited to visit new places and learn about different cultures.

CruiseTimes' main focus is to provide essential reading and reports to key decision-makers in the global cruise and maritime trade, through our analysis of developments in the cruise industry worldwide. In addition to the printed magazine, each issue is available in digital format on our website www.cruisetimes.net.



Virginia López Valiente

CEO Cruises News Media Group

Virginia López Valiente is the owner and CEO of Cruises News Media Group, a Spanish company in the publishing, communication, marketing and consultancy fields focussed on the cruise industry.

She is also the owner and organiser of leading events such as the International Cruise Summit and the Cruise Excellence Awards. Virginia as a communicator and expert in the cruise industry is called on to moderate and participate in panels, events and training sessions in the cruise tourism. She is also the Chief Editor and Director of the CruisesNews magazine, www.cruisesnews.es and advisor for organisations with interests in the cruise industry.

Virginia has spent most of her 30 year career leading commercial, marketing and operations departments of international companies in the transport, hospitality and consultancy fields.

Before founding the Cruises News Media Group, she held various managerial posts in companies such as DHL, Panalpina Global Transport, Air Express International, Thomas International and IPS Consultants. Virginia was also Director of Operations for Spain and Portugal at Hospitality Marketing Concepts, an American multinational specialising in marketing and loyalty programs for luxury hotels and chains. She has a degree in Business Administration, International Trade and Marketing and Tourism, and completed her executive program (PGD) in Marketing Management and Strategic Management.

https://www.cruisesnewsmediagroup.com/english.html



Keith Ellis

Keith Ellis is owner of the leading independent cruise trade and industry publishing company Cruiseworthy and has worked in the cruise industry for over 20 years, maintaining regular contact with leading cruise ports and tourism authorities within the Mediterranean and globally as well as USA and European cruise line operators.

Cruise Destinations works in partnership with the UK division of CLIA and is the only cruise industry magazine that CLIA distributes on line to its over 4,000 cruise travel agent members. In addition, copies are also sent to international cruise line management responsible for deployment, itinerary planning and shore programme planning.

The company is also developing a unique consumer cruise magazine Stowaway, available only and exclusively to UK CLIA travel agents, to forward to their cruise clients. Distribution of Stowaway is now approaching 30,000 copies, all going into the hands of the UK's most active cruise customer base.



Scott Eddie

After 10 years in investment banking, I moved overseas and lived in Europe and Asia for 17 years. While living in Bangkok, I started the first digital agency in Asia, we were the 'go-to' agency when the region was really establishing itself as a destination, and it remained the biggest one in the region for 5 years. Then I sold the agency and built up my personal brand. Now I travel full-time while teaching brands how to turn storytelling into ROI for the hospitality industry.



Holly Payne

Editor Video Production/Deputy Editor, Seatrade Cruise News & Seatrade Cruise Review

Holly Payne is Deputy Editor of Seatrade Cruise News and Seatrade Cruise Review, the official magazine of Seatrade cruise events worldwide, and Editor of Video Production. An accomplished editor, author, and video journalist, Holly brings extensive experience in both publishing and the cruise industry. She holds an MA in Multimedia Journalism with NCTJ accreditation and a BA (Hons) in Classical and Archaeological Studies with English and American Literature.

With intermediate-advanced oral and written Arabic language skills, Holly has worked extensively overseas documenting diverse cultures. Her notable work includes research on Sudan's cultural heritage, which forms part of a collaborative ethnographic volume now housed in museums and academic institutions worldwide. She has a proven track record in managing highly successful international business and consumer publications.

In her current role at Informa, Holly reports on the cruise industry, produces video content, and moderates events globally, combining her multimedia expertise with deep industry knowledge to deliver comprehensive coverage of the cruise sector.



Andrea Baigorria

With over 15 years of experience in the fields of communications, corporate reputation, marketing and sales, Andrea has explored different areas of the industry working for companies like Azamara Cruises, Spirit Airlines and Diageo, developing compelling strategies to elevate brand awareness, build company reputation, and create synergies between companies, ports and destinations in support of tourism.

Andrea Baigorria founded The Tourism Lab with the purpose of bridging the gap between industry players and developing tourism through impactful PR, long lasting business collaborations and innovative marketing strategies.



09. PROGRAMME



08:30 - 19:00	Airport & Train Station Transfers Hotel Check-in	Programme for Cruise Companies
09:00 - 19:00	Delegate Registration Venue: Alfonso XIII Hotel & Carlos III Hotel	and Press Guests Only Cartagena Heritage & Flavours Experience 8:45 – 16:30
11:00 - 12:00	Press Conference Venue: <u>Museum of the Roman Theatre of Cartagena</u>	
12:00 - 13:00	Constitution Advice Study Committee Venue: Auditorio El Batel	

14:00 - 16:00 MedCruise Board of Directors Meeting Venue: Auditorio El Batel

20:00 Official Opening & Welcome Reception Venue: Historical Military Museum of Cartagena Dress code: Smart casual

08:00 - 19:00	Delegate Registration Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>	Programme for Cruise Companies and Press Guests Only
09:00 - 10:30	Discussion of Internal Matters (Exclusively for members of MedCruise) Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u> #PortsTogether session	Maritime & Naval
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>	Cartagena 8:45 – 12:00
11:00 - 13:00	Discussion of Internal Matters (Exclusively for members of MedCruise) Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u> #PortsTogether session	
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>	
14:00 - 14:10	Welcome and Introductory remarks by the Preside Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>	ent of MedCruise, Theodora Riga

	66 th MEDCRUISE General Assembly Cartagena 10-13 June 2025		
14:15 - 15:00	The Future of Mediterranean Cruise Itineraries (45 min)		
	This session will explore key trends shaping cruise itinerary planning in the Mediterranean, including changing passenger preferences, port capacity, sustainability and regional developments. Experts will discuss how the industry is adapting to create more resilient and appealing itineraries for the future. Moderated by Virginia López Valiente , CEO (Cruises News Media Group) Speakers: Giora Israel , President (Giora Israel LLC)		
	Crystal Morgan, Senior Director Deployment & Itinerary Planning (Seabourn)		
	Simone Frontini, Senior Analyst Itinerary & Planning (Costa Crociere) Mark Robinson, General Manager (BC Tours) Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>		
15:00 - 15:15	Coffee Break Venue: Auditorio El Batel		
15:15 – 15:45	The Future Of Destination Services & AI (30 min) Eric Benedict, CEO of Access Cruise Inc., is a 30-year cruise industry veteran leading AI consulting and training. A MedCruise, he'll share how AI is transforming destination services with smarter, more efficient, and personalized solutions for ports and tour operators. Presentation by Eric Benedict, VP & Chief Administration Officer (Access Cruise Inc) Venue: Auditorio El Batel		
16:45 - 18:15	Business to Business (B2B) Meetings (exclusively for members of MedCruise) Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>		
20:00	Transfer to Gala Dinner (Pick-up at <u>Alfonso XIII Hotel</u>)		
20:30	Gala Dinner		
	Venue: <u>Cuarentaytrés Restaurant</u> Dress code: Lounge suit – formal wear		
Thursday,	12 June 2025		
08:00 - 14:00	Delegate Registration Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>		
08:30 - 11:30	Business to Business (B2B) Meetings (exclusively for MedCruise members) Venue: <u>Auditorio El Batel</u>		
11:45 - 12:30	Cruise Passenger Experience & Community Engagement (45 min)		
	This discussion will explore the evolving expectations of cruise passengers and how destinations can enhance the visitor experience while fostering meaningful engagement with local communities. Speakers will discuss best practices for delivering authentic, seamless, and sustainable experiences, as well as strategies to ensure that cruise tourism brings mutual benefits to both travellers and residents. Moderated by Laura Cimaglia, VP of MedCruise & Manager of the Port of Taranto Speakers:		
	Jon Olav Stedje, Sustainability & Community Engagement Manager (MSC Cruises) Abigail Crossley, Senior Manager Global Sourcing Shore Excursions (Carnival Corporation) José Sánchez, Director of Agenda AIVP 2030, Projects and Content (AIVP)		
	Hortensia Sánchez, Head of Business Development (Port Authority of Cartagena)		

Ioannis Bras, CEO (Five Senses Consulting & Development) Venue: Auditorio El Batel

#Ports Together sessions are exclusive to MedCruise membership

Hortensia Sánchez, Head of Business Development (Port Authority of Cartagena)



12:30 - 14:05 Lunch "A Culinary Journey to the Sea" Venue: Auditorio El Batel

the Med (40 min) ility in Mediterranean cruising	
iscuss collaborative strategies	
of MedCruise & Marketing	
ces (Orient Express)	
cia)	
port infrastructure across the cilities, enhancing operational	
Moderated by Anne-Marie Spinosi, SVP of MedCruise & Cruise Manager of Corsica Ports Speakers:	
ises) r of the Board of Directors	
e, and Giora Israel, renowned	
embers)	
Transfers to Farewell Dinner (Pick-up at <u>Alfonso XIII Hotel)</u>	



Friday, 13 June 2025

From 9:30 Excursions

Please note that all excursions will start from the Alfonso XIII Hotel

Cartagena and Its Port – Catamaran Tour
9:30 – 11:00 | Port visit
11:00 – 13:00 | City tour
11:00 – 15:00 | City tour with lunch
*If you are joining Excursion 1. Cartagena and Its Port – Catamaran Tour without participating in the port visit, the meeting point is "<u>El Zulo</u>" statue (a large sculpture of a seated man resting his head on his knees) at 10:45.

2. Cabo de Palos and Boat Tour along the Coast of Murcia $8{:}45\,{-}\,16{:}45$

3. Murcia: Cathedral, Casino, City Walk, and Lunch 9:30 – 16:00

All day Hotel Check-out | Airport & Train Station Transfers

10.EXCURSIONS AT A GLANCE

Excursions Programme

1. Cartagena and its port – Catamaran Tour

This excursion begins with a catamaran tour of the **Port of Cartagena**, one of the most important natural harbors in the Mediterranean, with a history dating back to ancient times.

The tour offers a unique perspective of Cartagena's maritime importance, highlighting both its historical legacy and modern development. The gentle sea breeze and stunning vistas make this a relaxing yet informative experience.

Following the catamaran tour, guests will explore the city's main historical and cultural landmarks, shaped by **Phoenician**, **Roman**, **and modern influences**. The tour includes a visit to the **Roman Theatre**, one of Cartagena's most emblematic structures, an architectural masterpiece that has stood the test of time.



During the journey, participants will see key port infrastructures, ancient defensive fortifications such as the **Fort of Navidad**, and enjoy panoramic views of the city from the sea.



The itinerary also features a guided walk through the historic centre, where visitors can admire modernist buildings, lively plazas, and well-preserved archaeological remains that reflect the city's past as a strategic Mediterranean hub. Cartagena offers an immersive experience for culture and history enthusiasts.

Cabo de Palos and Boat Tour along the Coast of Murcia

It begins with a scenic boat trip along the Mediterranean coast of the Region of Murcia, offering stunning views of cliffs, coves, and extensive beaches. Participants can enjoy swimming and bathing in crystal-clear waters (optional).





The tour then explores the unique landscapes of the **Mediterranean Sea and La Manga del Mar Menor**. The pristine waters and breathtaking coastal views create a perfect backdrop for a relaxing boat trip. Enjoy the gentle sea breeze and the picturesque scenery. The journey concludes in **Cabo de Palos**, a charming fishing village with a vibrant fish market, waterfront restaurants, we will visit the interpretation center and iconic **Cabo de Palos Lighthouse**, providing stunning panoramic views of the Mediterranean. The meal will take place in a charming seaside restaurant of Cabo de Palos, where the lunchtime diners will have the delightful opportunity to taste the "Caldero", a local culinary treasure of rice and seafood.





3. Murcia: Cathedral, Casino and City Walk

WALKING TOUR

A guided tour of Murcia's historic centre, showcasing the city's architectural grandeur and vibrant atmosphere. The tour begins with a visit to the **Cathedral of Murcia**, a stunning masterpiece of Spanish Baroque architecture, featuring an intricate façade and an impressive bell tower.



Next, visitors will explore the **Real Casino de Murcia**, an iconic 19th century building renowned for its elaborate interior, including the spectacular Arabic-style Hall.



The

continues through bustling commercial streets and charming plazas, where visitors can soak in the city's lively energy and local traditions. The experience concludes with a tradition at a local restaurant.

walk

11. EVENT CONTACTS

Port of Cartagena

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