CHANGE LEADER
ARNOLD DONALD
And the dynamos driving Carnival into the future
Man of the moment

Dr Zinan Liu has built up Royal Caribbean’s China business from scratch inside eight years as Jacintha Stephens reports.

‘People say the China cruise market is over capacitated. I don’t believe that is the case. The market potential is unlimited!’

So says Dr Zinan Liu, the man tasked by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd in 2009 to build a team and develop its business in China from ground zero.

Since mid-2015 he has steered the ship as president of China and North Asia Pacific region, Royal Caribbean International (RCI).

Any opinion of China’s cruise market guru is taken seriously, as navigating the competitive, complex and challenging China and North Asia market can be quite tricky, given the high stakes.

Michael Bayley, president & ceo, RCI clearly remembers interviewing Dr. Liu.
‘It was with Rama Rebbapragada – who is no longer with us and was instrumental in creating our Asia Pacific business – while in Dubai, before announcing the Royal Caribbean office in China.’

‘At the onset, RCI was sourcing about 2,000 Chinese guests a year. This year, the brand will sail with more than 800,000 Chinese guests. In 10 years we have become the largest single cruise line in China,’ he remarks.

‘The emerging Chinese cruise market grew rapidly in the last ten years, with an average annual capacity growth of 40%. Most Chinese are new to cruise but cruising has fast become a popular vacation choice in cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai and Beijing.’

China’s major cities constitute the largest city groups in the world, with large highly-educated, working populations.

Costa was already in China in 2006 when RCI tested the waters in 2008 and 2009. RCCL began to formally deploy ships in 2010 and has been doubling capacity year-on-year over the past seven years.

‘As our capacity grew faster than the average industry growth, within four years we became market leaders in terms of mean capacity, trade partners and influence,’ Liu says.

After eight years with Royal Caribbean, Liu calls the senior leadership ‘visionary and very committed to investment in China.

‘They have a good sensitivity to culture and trust plus they respect and support the local insights given them,’ says Liu.

Within the company, China has become one of the largest markets outside the US which led to the decision to deploy Voyager and Quantum class ships in China.
RCC currently homeports in Shanghai, Tianjin, Shenzhen and Hong Kong seasonally.

Quantum of the Seas is year round in Shanghai. Ovation of the Seas, started cruising from Tianjin in late April and will be there for almost six months, before repositioning to Hong Kong in early November.

Voyager of the Seas deployed from late June to mid-September before homeporting in Shenzhen for about six weeks. Mariner of the Seas is sailing out of Shanghai early April to early October, 2017.

The market is moving fast: ‘Consumers now know cruise – not just as an alternative vacation option, but also as a lifestyle option. The preference for cruises in this market is driven not only by it being a hassle free and high satisfaction vacation experience but also by the desire to pursue a new and trendy life style. To see the world, to experience the world!’ Liu exclaims.

Cruise penetration is also growing in the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta area and inland cities like Wuhan, Changsha, Chengdu and Chongqing following trend setters in tier one cities.

‘This is despite GDP growth being reduced to single digit in recent years,’ he remarks.

China is after all the second largest economy in the world, the economist reminds.

‘Consumers’ disposable income and confidence level has been rising and strong. The market potential is unlimited. But as everywhere there are also obstacles to sustainable growth,’ warns Liu.

He analyses the situation: As over 85% of guests are new to cruise, the itinerary is mainly 4-5 night short cruises to Japan and Korea from Shanghai or Tianjin. The choice of itinerary offering has been partly influenced by wholesalers as short cruise destinations offer shopping commission which is part of the wholesalers’ revenue stream. Competition is intensified as destinations are homogenous.

Liu continues with the number crunching: ‘Another key challenge is that the distribution structure has been one of the bottlenecks. There are over 30,000 travel agencies, of which only 500 are selling cruises.’

He believes, ‘travel agencies also need to work at shortening the distance been the consumer and logistics. This means reducing the long wholesale chain and reducing information loss. The ultimate aim is to make the cruise experience good for consumers. Otherwise development will be hampered.’

He explains that cruise lines typically use wholesalers in Shanghai and Beijing to distribute the inventory through a relatively small number of subagents and retailers compared to mature markets.

‘The wholesaler model was effective in the initial stage of market development enabling cruise lines to penetrate cost efficiently and rapidly in a market where the conception of cruise vacation was new. However, the model has not been able to cope effectively with further capacity growth of the cruise industry.’

There is the issue of limited destination choice which was ‘further hampered’ earlier this year when geopolitics forced cruise lines to drop calls to Korean ports, he says.

Liu, who watches geopolitical developments with an eagle eye, does see some good news on the horizon. ‘There is a clear sign of relations improving between China and its neighbouring countries,’ he notes in late June.

Port costs in China are high by global standards. On the other hand port infrastructure development of China is ahead of other Asian countries, he says.

‘RCCL for its part needs sufficient infrastructure for our Quantum-sized vessels. We are working on that and pushing,’ he adds.

And with his CLIA hat on Liu says, ‘we have dialogue with government at forums and seize opportunities to evangelise the economic benefits of cruise – in terms of its multiplier effect and job creation. They will grow and benefit larger proportions of the population and the local economy.’

Other key agenda items are issues related to simplifying immigration processes and push for more port infrastructure development. Japan is currently lagging behind China and Korea, he notes. ‘We need to be able to stop using cargo terminals there.’

Liu believes that in China’s intensified competitive market environment it is even more important to deliver value to customers. ‘I don’t believe localisation of the cruise product is the correct solution. Rather product optimization with reference to local consumers’ preference while maintaining international essence and ambiance is the right thing to do.’

He continues, ‘what is crucial for the China market is sustained growth for the next 10, 20 years.

‘The market potential is there and it can absorb more capacity. But for this, growth has to be sustainable and healthy, we need to really engage customers.’
Solid foundations

By Mary Bond

North Europe is one of three global markets expected to grow in 2018. The others are Australia and Alaska, according to research undertaken by Wells Fargo Securities and announced in June.

Wells Fargo analyst Tim Conder noted, ‘Europe, excluding the Mediterranean, should see an 8% to 10% capacity spike, considering newbuilds AIDAnova, Seabourn Ovation and Mein Schiff 1, along with the Sapphire Princess redeployment.’

Royal Caribbean is increasing its pan-European presence next year and in northern Europe, Brilliance of the Seas will sail new 12-night itineraries from Amsterdam visiting countries throughout the Baltic, Norway and the British Isles. Destinations returning to itineraries in 2018 include Flåm, Molde and Skjolden in Norway and Isafjordur, Iceland.

Independence of the Seas returns to Southampton, offering three- to 14-night voyages to the Mediterranean and a 14-night adventure to the Canary Islands. Navigator of the Seas will join Independence in Southampton and sail five- to 14-night cruises.

Serenade of the Seas will offer seven-night cruises to the Norwegian Fjords, plus a Scandinavia/Russia adventure with departures from Copenhagen and Stockholm.

MSC Cruises is beefing up its presence in the UK and German markets in 2018 deploying four ships for the first time out of German ports with MSC Meraviglia joining Magnifica out of Hamburg, Orchestra in Warnemunde and Preziosa in Kiel.

In Southampton, MSC Magnifica is set for ex-UK sailings to Northern Europe and the Med.

Next autumn sees the arrival of the much larger MSC Preziosa for a handful of cruises from the southern UK port.

Antonio Paradiso, md of MSC Cruises for the UK & Ireland, who helped design the new itineraries for MSC Magnifica said, ‘From March to October 2018, MSC Magnifica will offer five new itineraries of seven or 14 nights including a 14-day sailing calling at Le Havre, La Coruna, Leixoes, Lisbon, Malaga then Amsterdam and Hamburg.

A North Sea sailing will travel to Stavanger, Bergen, Olden and Alesund in Norway plus a round-UK sailing calling at Southampton, Newcastle, South Queensferry in Edinburgh and Invergordon.

In the ex-UK scene Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines’ four smaller ships will be visiting 228 destinations in 73 countries around the globe, from departure ports of Southampton, Dover, Liverpool, Newcastle and Edinburgh (Rosyth) during 2018/19.

Despite halving the number of ex-UK departure ports (from 10 in 2017/18), the five chosen, only ‘slightly reduces’ the number...
“Windstar Cruises announced eight new itineraries in Northern Europe in 2018 including ‘small ship only’ experiences”

of people throughout the UK within a
90 minute drive of reaching the ships,
according to Clare Ward, director of
product and customer services.

New areas of scenic cruising in 2018/19
include Norway’s Erjorden, Hjorundfjord,
and Jøsensfjord.

The brochure also features more
‘experience-led’ cruises than ever before –
a total of 117 in 2018/19 – specifically
‘built’ around a key global event, such as the
Edinburgh Tattoo and the Northern Lights.

Another ex-UK cruise operator, Cruise
& Maritime Voyages, has added another
ocean-going ship to its fleet having launched
Columbus (most recently ex-Pacific Pearl)
in June.

The addition of Columbus brings the
CMV fleet to five ocean ships alongside
Magellan (1,300pax), Marco Polo (800pax),
Astor (600pax) and Astoria (550pax).

Predicting a 10% share of the ex-UK
cruise market this year and rising to 12%
in 2018, the company is Britain’s leading
independently owned cruise line, says
commercial director, Chris Coates.

He projects CMV Group will carry
130,000 passengers in 2018 and accrue a
turnover in excess of £200m.

In 2017, the fleet will sail from 14 UK
and Ireland departure ports on 87 cruises
accounting for over one million bed nights.
In 2018, this jumps to 92 cruises from 13
ports and over 1.2m bed nights.

Northern Europe is continuing to remain
CMV’s number one global destination
with all five ships deployed in the region
throughout the summer season.

Staying in the small to medium-size
vessel range, Windstar Cruises announced
eight new itineraries in Northern Europe
in 2018 including ‘small ship only’
experiences like cruising the narrow
Trollfjord in the Lofoten Islands and
sailing under Tower Bridge to dock near
the Tower of London.

Windstar’s three all-suite power yachts
have opened new places for the company to
explore, including more ports in Northern
Europe as they are well-suited to sailing into
smaller harbours and fjords, scenic coastal
cruising and traversing larger distances at
higher speeds.

Among the newly added routes is ‘Secrets
of the Faroe, Shetland & Orkney Islands.’
Most ships stop briefly on their way to
Iceland, but Windstar offers a seven-day
journey round-trip from Edinburgh to these
wild landscapes, with access to Shetland
ponies, Atlantic puffins and the opportunity
to meet the laird of a castle.

‘Norway’s Famous Fjords’ is an eight-
day, round-trip journey from Copenhagen
taking in highlights like Geirangerfjord and
Sognefjord. Passengers will have access to
the region’s hiking, kayaking and fishing
opportunities, and be immersed in the
traditional mountain lifestyle with visits to
local sheep farms.

Source markets

A record number of Europeans took
cruises in 2016 despite it being ‘a
particularly difficult year for the
industry’ noted CLIA Europe chairman
Kerry Anastassiadis. The market grew
by 3.4%, a larger increase than in 2015.

Europe’s largest source market
Germany topped 2m for the first
time but the UK still has the highest
penetration (2.7%) with Germany next.

‘The third most penetrated market is
Norway followed by Switzerland so,
while we always talk about the five
largest European markets (Germany,
UK, Italy, France, Spain), a tremendous
amount of work is also being done to
establish cruising in other European
markets,’ the CLIA chair said.

‘But among half of Europe’s 700m-plus
population cruise penetration is
just 1% and it is the potential to
increase this to 2%, 3% or even 4%
that is driving the industry to make
tremendous investments in newbuilds
with a record number of ships
currently on order,’ he added.

The convenience of UK departures as
well as fly-cruises to the Med drove
a record number of 1.9m UK & Ireland
holidaymakers to take an ocean cruise
in 2016.

According to CLIA, the number of
passengers starting their cruise holiday
at home grew strongly in 2016 with UK
cruise departures now accounting for
48% of the market.

The 2016 comparison reflects a 9% rise in the number of passengers
departing from the UK (912,000
passengers) which can be attributed
to the convenience of travelling to
the port and the wide range of ships now
sailing from the UK.

In the river cruising sector the numbers
grew by 11% to
166,900 passengers,
driven by the new
ships launched in 2016
and the all-inclusive
nature of river cruising

Overt took value for money as the most
important reason for respondents
choosing their sailing.

Europe remains the most popular
region accounting for 87% of river
cruises taken by UK passengers.

In Germany, where some 2.02m
ocean cruises were sold last year, the
northern part of Europe is gaining more
importance for cruisers with the Baltic,
northwest Europe and the British Isles
accounting for 36% of the market, up
from 33.6% in 2015.

According to figures announced by
CLIA Germany and the German Travel
Association (DRV) three out of four
Germans took a cruise in European
waters last year.
Some 1.36m passengers cruised on Europe’s rivers in 2016, up 2.7% from the previous year. The North American source market provided the greatest share of guests, corresponding to 38.7%, followed by Germany with 28.4%.

The 435,586 German river cruise passengers in 2016 represented a 2.8% year-on-year increase, according to statistics compiled by IG RiverCruise and the German Travel Association (DRV).

The German market generated a turnover of €448.7m, up 3.1% from 2015.

Most popular destinations for German river cruisers are the Rhine with a 35.5% share and the Danube with 34.5%.

New concepts arriving on Europe’s rivers this year include, Crystal River Cruises’ Crystal Bach scheduled to debut in August and sailing routes on the Rhine, Danube and Main.

Her sister, Crystal Mahler, also built by MV Werften, is expected for delivery in September.

European delicacies feature on the vessel’s expansive menus, including sturgeon caviar from Eindhoven and river crawfish from the Rhine. A new selection of vegetarian dishes will also be offered, prepared with the same fresh and authentic approach as the overall menu.

Crystal River Cruises will become the first river operator whose captains complete their training and assessments using a simulator.

The training will take place starting in November at the Simwave simulator centre in the Netherlands as part of an agreement between the Netherlands-based company and Crystal’s parent Genting Hong Kong.

The simulator’s 3D mathematical model is designed by Simwave using actual specs from the Crystal vessels to accurately implement handling characteristics for real-world situation training.

The bridge layout and design are also based on Crystal’s river ships, ensuring that captains are fully familiar with the components of the vessels before they come aboard.

After adding three new river ships this year, bringing its fleet total to seven, Emerald Waterways is also adding three new itineraries on the Rhine in Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium to its 2018 lineup.

New in 2018, the ‘Classic Rhine’ itinerary will sail from Amsterdam to Frankfurt and explores new ports, including the German towns of Xanten, known for its Roman Archaeological Park; Cochem, for a visit to the Imperial Reichsburg Castle, and Bernkastel, with its sloping vineyards where passengers can participate in a tasting at a local winery.

‘The Majestic Rhine,’ sailing from Frankfurt to Basel, affords a visit to the picturesque spa town of Baden-Baden in the Black Forest.

Looking further ahead, AmaWaterways is launching a new dimension of river cruising in 2019: AmaMagna will not only set new standards in terms of size, she also takes river cruising into a greener future with her innovative hybrid propulsion plant.

Specifically designed for operation on the Danube, the ship has a width of 22mtr and is thus twice as wide as a ‘conventional’ Danube rivership, but still able to pass all relevant locks (see also separate feature on AmaWaterways).

AmaMagna’s innovative hybrid propulsion plant comprising ten small engines will combine diesel and electric propulsion.

Under normal operation, only four engines are required for propulsion. According to Vahali Shipyard, the new concept will cut fuel consumption by 20-25% and it will significantly reduce air and noise emissions.

Danube ports will be able to handle the large rivership, provided two-deep berthing is available in the desired port of call.

Germany’s largest river cruise operator Phoenix Reisen introduced the 135mtr Asara in April, which will be joined next year by another 190-passenger river vessel, Alena.

Asara is deployed on various itineraries along the Rhine, Main and Danube this year.

Asara’s design and bright, open on-board arrangement aims to attract new and younger passengers to river cruising. Cabin sizes range up to 17sq mtr.

Both Asara and next year’s Alena are managed by Rivertech, with the catering supplied by Sea Chefs.

Phoenix Reisen’s river fleet numbers more than 40 vessels.
Bold vision

The Canada/New England region unveiled an ambitious new strategy at its annual symposium. Anne Kalosh reports.

Aiming high, Canada/New England by 2026 wants to be a premier, year-round cruise destination that welcomes dozens of international lines, hundreds of ship calls and more than 1m cruisers annually.

‘We want to be open for cruise business year-round,’ Michael Vanderbeek (now with Bermello Ajamil & Partners) said at the Cruise Canada/New England Symposium held in Montréal. He spoke on behalf of the Cruise Canada/New England Alliance, whose partners are Cruise the Saint Lawrence, Cruise Atlantic Canada, CruiseMaineUSA, Flynn Cruiseport Boston and NYCruise, collectively representing more than 100 ports, large, medium and small.

Furthermore, Canada/New England wants to consistently rank among the world’s top cruise destinations for visitor satisfaction. ‘We’re making guest satisfaction the core of our mission,’ Vanderbeek said. ‘Our focus is superior hospitality, unique activities, diverse destinations and authentic local experiences.’

It’s a bold vision for a region that’s currently known in the cruise world mainly for fall foliage and represents just a single-digit sliver of cruise capacity. But over years the Alliance members have worked hard to stretch the season and attract new lines.

Their efforts, including a hefty $656m in infrastructure investments, are paying off.

Increasingly, ships are visiting during summer and spring. And the variety of cruise companies represented at the symposium shows Canada/New England’s widening appeal. Among them: Carnival Corp., Carnival UK, Holland America Group, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, MSC Cruises, AIDA Cruises, TUI Cruises, Disney Cruise Line, Crystal Cruises, Seabourn, Saga, Viking Ocean Cruises, Noble Caledonia, Victory Cruise Line and Croisières M/S Jacques-Cartier.

To achieve its 10-year strategic vision, the Cruise Canada/New England Alliance will target audiences and markets including cruise lines, travel agents, media and consumers. Its primary markets will be the US, Canada and Europe/UK, with China and Australia as secondary markets over a longer timeframe.

Strategic action areas are research and asset development, brand identity, marketing and communication, destination development, partnerships and funding. The region is now using a lighthouse logo but probably won’t develop a tagline after the majority of symposium attendees indicated a tagline isn’t necessary.

The symposium was fully interactive, with moderators engaging the nearly 200 attendees by actively seeking their opinions. The speakers were the audience members – representatives of cruise lines, ports, tourism boards, tour operators, port agencies, government officials and more – all sharing their views and expertise in a fresh format crafted by symposium organizers Cruise the Saint Lawrence.

Infrastructure investments

The $656m invested regionally is going into larger berths, new or improved terminals, better access, tourism training and a host of other services and upgrades.

Symposium attendees got a look at the $78m modernisation of Montréal’s cruise terminal at Alexandra Pier. Donna Silvera Barnett, manager, port operations, Holland America Group, praised the design as flexible and highly functional, allowing for a smooth passenger flow.

‘The fact they’re able to do a consecutive embarkation/debarkation is a huge plus for any terminal,’ she said. Another plus is the left luggage facility. Passengers arriving early for embarkation can leave their bags and explore the city, strolling along the scenic riverfront and into the heart of Old Montréal.

Other Canada/New England investments include $156m across the Saint Lawrence, $89.5m in Québec City specifically, $103.8m in New York, $94m at Maine’s ports, $40m in Saint John, New Brunswick, $32m in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, $22.9m in Boston, $20m in Sydney, Nova Scotia, where a second berth is planned, $10m in Halifax and $10m in Saint Pierre et Miquelon.

The ‘Best Bienvenue’

From blueberry pies to balloons, costumed dancers to drummers, and even stevedores in bilingual welcome vests, ports along the Saint Lawrence River pull out all the stops.
for cruise visits. It’s part of the region’s ‘Best Bienvenue’ initiative.

This plays a role in the larger Canada/New England region’s new cruise strategy, which includes the aim of consistently ranking among the world’s top destinations for guest satisfaction. How welcoming destinations are, and the quality of their excursions, are critical to that.

People who buy tours rate the port and the cruise higher and are more likely to recommend it to their friends, according to Bruce Krumrine, vp shore excursions, Holland America Group. Research shows travellers seek an authentic, meaningful, personal and exclusive experience – and these points are pillars for his company’s tours.

Destination partnerships have involved rethinking the experience, creating exclusivity, crafting video stories and developing destination guides. Princess Cruises’ ‘Local Connections’ program taps into the suggestions and creativity of the line’s partners. Local experts star in destination videos, sharing their insights and passion for the places they call home.

When passengers book a Princess cruise, they receive these videos, followed by destination guides. For the Saint Lawrence region, experts featured in the videos include Nancy Houley, director, cruise development, Port of Québec, and René Trépanier, executive director, Cruise the Saint Lawrence.

Houley told the Montréal symposium it’s important to welcome everybody – crew and passengers.

In launching their ‘Best Bienvenue’ initiative, the nine member ports of Cruise the Saint Lawrence underwent an evaluation of 125 criteria. The goal is to achieve at least 80% in each area, and no place did that at first, Houley said.

By establishing standards, educating guides, evaluating and adjusting, all the ports improved 16% in three years. Training is key, and the guest experience is the focus. ‘People first,’ as Houley put it. ‘The welcome is critical.

Saguenay, an outstanding example, continues its amazing welcome by scores of volunteer actors from ‘La Fabuleuse,’ a long-running theatrical production depicting regional history. They entertain with song and dance, and visitors are offered tastes of local products like blueberry pie and maple toffee.

Since Saguenay targeted the cruise business a decade ago, a special welcome has been provided for every call, rain or shine. Locals love the ships and sometimes turn out by the thousands to see them, according to Priscilla Nemeey, evp, Promotion Saguenay.

Phase 2 of the ‘Best Bienvenue’ initiative delves into preparing travelers for their visit, as Princess Cruises’ ‘Local Connections’ videos and destination guides do. ‘Our dream is to come on board and help you sell your shore excursions,’ Houley told the symposium attendees, who included representatives of nearly 20 cruise lines.

Phase 3 will educate travelers about the ‘Best Bienvenue’ and identify shops, restaurants and other service providers that have participated in the training with a logo – something like a seal of approval – that visitors can look for.

Betty MacMillan, manager of cruise development, Port Saint John, New Brunswick, pointed out that other places in Canada/New England also go above and beyond with their welcomes. She recounted how, 29 years ago, Saint John’s first cruise ship had been diverted from Bermuda.

Knowing the passengers would be disappointed by the change, Saint John rolled out a red carpet, gave a rose to each woman and had a piper play on the pier. Those practices continue.

Cruise executives at the symposium noted ports like Québec City rate highly, even at the top, of global destinations. Krumrine said Canada/New England consistently scores well.

Concerning the region, what keeps cruise executives up at night, he added, is wait-lists for tours. With ships getting bigger, destinations and lines need to think about the availability of motor coaches and guides, access to sites and related infrastructure, especially considering the level of quality and consistency the region seeks to deliver.

Carnival UK’s Steve Young, director of port services and government affairs, said the region stands out for the genuineness of its people, ‘that connection they make, that warmth. The welcome we get here is one of the best in the world.’

As the symposium closed, Tony Boemi, vp growth and development, Port of Montréal and president, Cruise the Saint Lawrence, summed it all up: ‘We used to welcome ships. Now we welcome guests.’
Time to reinvent

By David Glass

In the face of adversity emanating from the ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean the cruise lines are saying their passengers are wary about travelling to the region.

‘Guests tell us where to deploy our ships as we need to take our vessels where revenue opportunities make our business financially viable,’ Larry Pimentel, president and ceo of Azamara Club Cruises, bluntly pointed out addressing the 4th Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum.

Pimentel said the conflicts in Greece’s neighbouring markets of Turkey, the Levant and Egypt, are causing cruise passengers to stay away.

The message was repeated by some of the world’s leading decision makers in the sea tourism sector attending the May Forum in Athens.

Led by executives from Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises, Carnival Corp, Azamara, Celestyal Cruises and Virgin Voyages delegates were left in no doubt leaders of the East Med cruise scene see challenges ahead in the short term but they also believe if tackled through a united regional effort, the challenges will open opportunities to develop a unique cruising experience.

Pimentel, using Greece as an example, said thinking ‘outside the box is needed’ to try and promote ‘the authentic and the unconventional, look beyond the iconic, traditional destinations and create new, alternative products that offer fresh, innovative, deeper connections for cruise guests.’

Recognising Greece is the prime East Med attraction, Michel Nestour, vp, global port and destination development, Carnival Corp, said Greece needs to reinvent its cruise offering in order to take advantage of its current position. ‘It is the right time for Greece to promote the rest of the country beyond the famous destinations in order to tap into the vast potential of the cruise industry. ‘Santorini and Mykonos are not the only great Greek destinations and Greece needs to promote more destinations, especially through social media, which do not require an increased budget,’ he said.

Turkey’s political troubles offer Greece an advantage said Pullmantur’s president and ceo, Richard Vogel. ‘Greece has the advantage of political stability and if it works hard to reinvent its offering, invest in its infrastructure and diversify its product portfolio it has a great chance to grow its homeporting and guest volumes.’

Tom Fecke, secretary general, CLIA Europe said: ‘Greece needs to invest in enhancing its existing infrastructure to prepare it for the influx of new ships for over 4,000 passengers which will account for more than half of the estimated 230,000 guest additional capacity projected to enter in the period between 2020-2026.’

Further, China’s vast feeder potential holds the key to Greece’s success in the sector, he added.

Greece’s Shipping and Island Policy minister, Panagiotis Kouroumplis, indicated the Athens government understood this and revealed its plans to adopt a public-private partnership model in order to improve critical port and air infrastructure required to help the country and region generally optimise its full potential as a cruise destination of choice.

‘This initiative would help encourage cruise lines to partner with the Greek government and expedite a raft of projects which would otherwise require much longer completion timeframes.

‘We want to unite the peoples of this region through initiatives that promote peaceful coexistence in order to jointly leverage our comparative advantages and the government is fully supportive of the concept of a public private partnership model that would be mutually beneficial to all involved parties.’

The Asia market provides East Med cruise operators with a great opportunity, and they must capitalise on 2018, the year earmarked as European Union – China tourism year, stressed Ukko Metsola, vp, Royal Caribbean Cruises, pointing out the absolute number of cruise travellers from Asia has nearly tripled since 2012.

Metsola said: ‘Asia is the world’s fastest growing market and China is the main driver of the continent’s outbound tourism market with an estimated annual 120m Chinese tourists flooding global destinations each year.

‘With 2018 earmarked as the European Union – China tourism year, the opportunity for Eastern Mediterranean to position itself as a key cruise destination for Chinese tourists is today more important than ever before.’
The heat is on

A review of innovations in onboard washware, cooking appliances and galley management, by Mary Bond.

Whether its newbuilds or refurbishments, designers, manufacturers and suppliers of galleys and kitchen equipment for cruise ships have to be at the forefront of innovation and provide solutions that are unique to marine.

The main focus in galley technology is the significant potential energy savings as they represent the third largest energy consumer on a vessel, notes ALMACO, provider of systems and solutions that address the concerns of both the cruise owner and the crew.

The most opportunity to save energy in the galley is by accurately using only the necessary amount of energy during operations, done by cutting off equipment that is not being actively used. Although it may seem like an evident solution, often equipment is left on even when not in use.

To accomplish this, ALMACO developed the GEM, or Galley Energy Management system that allows the owner to define the times when the equipment will be in use, shutting down all other equipment saving energy across the galley.

The biggest savings can be made on the vertical cooking equipment such as cooking ranges and deep fat fryers, as well as when ventilation control is added. Once the ventilation is synchronized with the equipment, the energy use is optimised as the ventilation only occurs for the equipment that is actively in use, reducing overall energy waste by up to 30%.

ALMACO recently supplied 2017-delivery Norwegian Joy, the first vessel with the second generation of the system, GEM 2.0, which is upgraded in user interface and experience.

It enables users to control and monitor the data even remotely and provides a very structured presentation of the huge amount of data collected from the galley. With every new GEM delivery, ALMACO learns more about the challenges within the galleys beyond simply galley energy management, including preventative maintenance.

GEM is an integral part of ICM. ICM, the Integrated Catering Management system, is the umbrella or top level system that encompasses the GEM and other systems.

Additional to GEM, ICM includes REM (Refrigeration Equipment Monitoring) as well as water and steam metering to create a holistic monitoring of the galley.

With this complete landscape of the galley operations, the owner and authorized crew can receive data to control and monitor all aspects of the consumption in the galley that is catered to the end user.

ALMACO is constantly thinking of ways to make galley design more efficient and it depends on the dining concept. With multi-use venues becoming popular instead of a large central main galley, the vessel has lots of types of galleys for different types of cuisine (show galleys, pantry galleys).

This galley setup also optimises the food logistics, that is, the distances from a smaller specialty galley to a specialty restaurant are smaller than the distance between the large main galley and the same specialty restaurants.

With more specialized Asian cuisine seen in the newest purpose-built ships, completely different cooking equipment is required plus the show galleys, so guests can see the cooks at work. Therefore, you need to consider the visual appearance of the galley so it looks good to the guest (not the case in close galleys), notes ALMACO.

From cruise ships to private yachts, Germany’s Maschinenfabrik Kurt Neubauer (MKN) professional cooking technology is often found onboard. Recent cruise ship
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<th>GT</th>
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<td>This section focuses on cruise ships of 1,000gt and above currently used for ocean cruising activities exceeding one day and does not include laid up ships, ships for sale, regular passenger traffic, coastal/river cruising or gambling vessels at July 1, 2017.</td>
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