



Explora
JOURNEYS

PRESS KIT



JANUARY 2023

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COMPANY BACKGROUNDER

OVERVIEW

Explora Journeys is a new luxury lifestyle travel brand with a unique proposition, connecting travellers with the ocean, themselves and their environments.

Explora Journeys stems from the long-held vision of the Aponte Vago family to redefine the ocean experience and create a category of its own.

The brand's vision is to offer guests a chance to experience an **"Ocean State of Mind"** – the way we refer to the mindset that can be achieved when we escape to the ocean, relax, create memories, and reconnect with what matters most in our lives.

A fleet of six ships, two of which are already under construction, will be created under the Explora Journeys brand from 2023 to 2028.



OWNERSHIP

Explora Journeys is privately owned by the MSC Group and run by the Executive Chairman of MSC Group's Cruise Division Mr Pierfrancesco Vago, his wife Alexa Aponte Vago and the Aponte family.

The MSC Group was founded in 1970 by Gianluigi Aponte who started his career as a Captain operating passenger ferries in the Mediterranean.

MSC Cruises, one of two brands that sit within the Cruises Division of MSC Group, is the world's third-largest cruise brand and the fastest-growing global cruise brand.

The MSC Group is the world's largest privately held Swiss-based shipping and logistic conglomerate with over 300 years of maritime heritage, headquartered in Geneva. A global company, driven by passion, dedication, and an unwavering entrepreneurial spirit.

MSC FOUNDATION

The MSC Foundation, a private non-profit foundation, was established by the Aponte family to direct and advance the MSC Group's environmental, humanitarian and sustainable development commitments worldwide.

The Foundation works to restore the critical balance between people and the environment.

The Foundation's ethics are inspired by the family-owned MSC Group's values and above all, a sense of responsibility for the planet, its oceans and people.

Their mission is to utilise MSC's global reach and unique knowledge of the sea to take immediate action that contributes to protecting and nurturing the blue planet and all its people.

The Foundation encourages the sustainable management and protection of ecosystems, empowers vulnerable communities around the world to realise their full potential, promotes quality, equitable and inclusive education to enhance durable individual and collective development and helps disaster-struck populations towards recovery.

SUSTAINABILITY

Explora Journeys' deep respect for the ocean is the central component of the journey, never forceful nor intrusive upon the destinations and local communities, and conscientious of the environment and sustainability.

Environmental supporting technologies and emission control systems will be employed throughout including:

- Provision for battery storage to allow future hybrid power generation
- Ballast Water Treatment System USCD Approved
- Smart heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC)
- Trim optimisation software
- LED lighting, high-efficiency appliances
- RINA Dolphin Certificate reduced underwater noise
- Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology enabling a reduction in nitrogen emissions by 90 per cent.

Destination experiences will be designed to leave a positive impression and footprint on the places and people visited by placing a spotlight on local talents, craftsmanship, culture, gastronomy, and traditions.

The MSC Group pledge to reach net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in its cruise marine operation by 2050.

Explora Journeys will support and give back to noble environmental causes through the MSC Foundation.

Onboard initiatives include:

- Water fountains throughout the ship to offer refillable water stations and avoid the usage and wastage of plastic
- Waste-management and energy-saving solutions
- No single-plastic used on-board and ashore

LNG is currently the cleanest marine fuel currently available at scale. In terms of emissions with a global impact, LNG plays a significant role in climate change mitigation with the engines having the potential to reduce CO² emissions by up to 25 per cent compared to standard marine fuels. decarbonised operations.

Explora Journeys are Members of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and seek to ensure that all Tour Operators, partners and suppliers have awareness and compliance of the programme.



RECRUITMENT & SERVICE CULTURE

Explora Journeys offers respectful, intuitive hospitality.

Explora Journeys’ culture of authentic, warm and intuitive service is delivered by a passionate, multicultural and diverse team.

Our Perfect Hosts deliver an intuitive service style that epitomises a sense of effortless luxury, where guests can truly relax and be themselves.

We look to hire differently for varying mindsets and staff thinking differently.

Diversity and talent density is key for our staff.

We have a **50:50** male / female ratio on the front line and leadership roles spanning:

over **150**
Employees

36
Nationalities

43%
have experience
in Cruise Industry

25%
are transferred
within the MSC Family

43%
within the luxury
market including
hospitality

DESTINATIONS EXPERIENCES

Explora Journeys offers the perfect blend of celebrated destinations and lesser-known off the beaten path locations, focusing on a slower pace, spending more time in each destination, to ensure guests can feel fully exhilarated and get under the skin of the local culture and environment, whilst not leaving their mark on the destination.

The on-and off-the-beaten-path itineraries are seen from an original point of view with authentic experiences and deeper immersion into the local culture.



Boundless Discoveries
Boutique in nature and bolder in adventure. Must do experiences with hidden wonders and VIP access.

Enchanting Experiences
Intimate and small groups. Tailor-made adventures. Explorers with expertise in their field of study to enhance the experience, meticulously designed to usher in the next level of exclusivity.

Itineraries include overland expeditions which capture the essence of the location with surprise elements for a truly memorable experience.

Beyond Boundaries
Once-in-a-lifetime experiences for thrill seekers and adrenalin junkies.

In Country Immersions
Designed as a three or more-day overland excursions, all-inclusive experiences for intimately sized groups starting before or after the sailing, takes you deeper into the culture of the visiting countries.

Tailored Experiences
The travel equivalent of haute couture, our private experiences are tailor-made for those who value rarity in its most authentic form.



6 LUXURY CRUISE SHIPS
BUILT BY FINCANTIERI IN ITALY



2023
EXPLORA I

2024
EXPLORA II

2026
EXPLORA III

2027
EXPLORA IV
EXPLORA V

2028
EXPLORA VI



DESIGN

The European family roots and sense of style informs an intuitive appreciation of design and luxury, which Explora Journeys embodies through its modern, cosmopolitan, boutique hotel vibe – vibrant, yet intimate.

Explora Journeys engaged **Martin Francis**, the accomplished British designer and architect with decades of experience working on some of the most iconic yachts on the water as part of the design team, to ensure the exterior profile of the Explora Journeys’ ships are more aligned to a superyacht than a traditional cruise ship.

Other designers include **SMC Design**, **AD Associates** and **De Jorio Luxury and Yacht Projects**, who have worked with the Aponte Vago family for a number of years.



LOBBY BAR

OVERVIEW
EXPLORA I & EXPLORA II

461 OCEAN FRONT SUITES

- 1 Owner’s Residence
- 22 Ocean Residences
- 67 Ocean Penthouses
- 301 Ocean Terrace Suites
- 70 Ocean Grand Terrace Suites
- Including 82 multi-gen-friendly connecting suites

Featuring

- Private terraces that are amongst the largest in the category
- Large floor-to-ceiling windows with elegant interiors
- Spacious walk-in wardrobe with a seated vanity area

18 DISTINCT FOOD AND BEVERAGES VENUES

- 11 culinary experiences (9 inclusive) including 6 vibrant restaurants, in-suite dining, 12 bars and lounges (8 indoor and 4 outdoor) and Chef’s Kitchen
- Focused on healthy, delicious food from local, sustainable sources

ENTERTAINMENT AND ENRICHMENT

- Several indoor and outdoor bar and lounge experiences bringing the best talents from destinations that inspire, linked to each journey

GENEROUS OUTDOOR DECKS

- Four heated swimming pools, including three outdoor (1 adult only) and one indoor with retractable glass roof
- 64 private cabanas
- Several indoor and outdoor whirlpools
- Poolside dining and lounging

OCEAN WELLNESS AND FITNESS

- Over 700 sqm (7,500 sq ft) of indoor and outdoor wellness facilities
- Spacious thermal area
- Nine treatment rooms
- Beauty salon with barber services
- Over 270 sqm (2,900 sq ft) of fitness facilities with latest equipment
- Fitness studio for group or personal training
- Panoramic running track
- Sports Court for touch tennis and basketball



HOMES AT SEA / SUITES

Accommodation on EXPLORA I comprises suites, penthouses and residences.

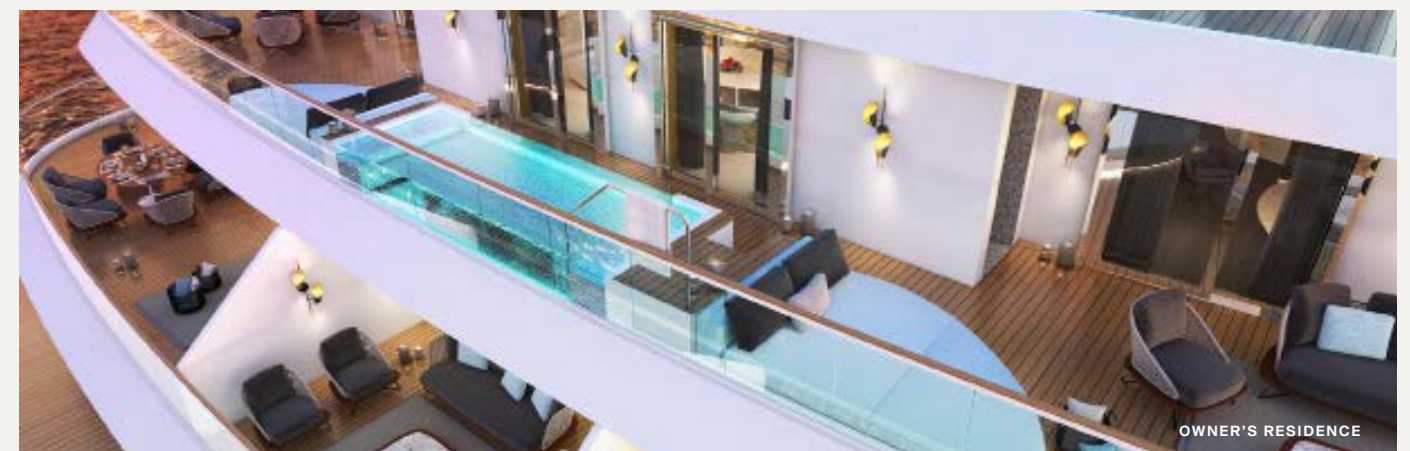
All are ocean front and feature private terrace and large floor-to-ceiling windows, as well as comfortable daybeds and an alfresco dining area, to present a luxurious, spacious and private home at sea whilst onboard.

The **Ocean Terrace Suites** and **Ocean Grand Terrace Suites** are amongst the largest in the category starting at 35 sqm (377 sq ft) and 39 sqm (420 sq ft). Suites include lounge areas, private refrigerated mini-bar, replenished according to the guests' preferences; espresso machine, kettle and tea pot with a complimentary selection of coffee and teas; complimentary personal refillable water bottle for each guest; Dyson Supersonic TM hairdryer, and pair of binoculars for guests' use during their ocean journey.

The **Ocean Penthouses** will offer over 43 sqm (463 sq ft), floor-to-ceiling windows and expansive terraces, separate dining tables for four guests, spacious work desk areas, and additional services including complimentary dry cleaning.

The **Ocean Residences** start from 70 sqm (754 sq ft) and offer a true sense of being at home at sea with sweeping deck and terrace spaces which include a private outdoor whirlpool, living and dining rooms, luxurious marble bathroom with heated floors, oversized walk-in wardrobe and dedicated private butler services.

The **Owner's Residence**, with a total suite area of 280 sqm (3,014 sq ft), features a signature lounge and dining area, features a signature lounge and dining area with afireplace, a private steam room, a panoramic ocean-front terrace covering the full ship's width with a private outdoor spacious whirlpool, and dedicated butler services. A panoramic ocean-front outdoor area with a private infinity whirlpool and dedicated butler services.



OCEAN WELLNESS

The Ocean State of Mind hones in on pampering, improving, maintaining and rejuvenating.

Spread over 970 sqm (10,440 sq ft), the ship will offer both indoor and outdoor wellness, spa and fitness facilities.

Facilities include:

- Spacious thermal area
- Nine treatment rooms
- Two VIP Double Spa suites with private facilities, including outdoor deck with private steam shower
- Beauty Salon with hair and barber services
- Fitness Area with latest Technogym equipment including a panoramic, outdoor running track and fitness studio for group or personal trainings
- Wellness experiences in destinations ensure that relaxation and rejuvenation is enjoyable both onboard and ashore.

The wellbeing experience is based on programs combining fitness, nutrition, sleep and recovery, body and mind, thereby ensuring that you will be connecting to yourself, to others and to nature. Guests can also opt for a la carte services.

From specialised treatment rooms to state-of-the-art fitness equipment, group workout classes to personal training appointments, expertly created tailor-made programmes ensure that relaxation and rejuvenation is enjoyable both onboard and ashore.



LEISURE

Generous outdoor decks – offering more than 2,500 sqm (26,909 sq ft) of spectacular sea views – combined with numerous indoor and outdoor whirlpools on the ship's promenade deck.

3

heated outdoor pools,
including 1 adults - only

1

indoor heated pool with retractable glass roof,
largest and only in category
at 1,200 sqm (12,917 sq ft)

64

private cabanas



ENTERTAINMENT AND ENRICHMENT

Lobby bar

A central gathering, social bar and lounge. Refreshments served throughout the day and night

Sky Bar on 14

Set on the ship’s highest point, a panoramic, outdoor lounge setting with infinite views

Malt

Whiskey Bar offering some of the rarest whiskies, complete with walk-in humidor and cigar expert. Dedicated cigar smoking terrace.

Journeys Lounge

Entertainment and enrichment evolving throughout the day

Astern Lounge

The social hub of the journey hosting live music DJ sessions and enrichment programmes

Art and Photography Gallery

Astern Pool & Bar

All-day poolside lounge offering chilled beach club vibes

Atoll Pool & Bar

An intimate pool at the aft of the ship on deck 10 with a laid-back ambiance throughout the day

Helios Pool & Bar

A panoramic “adults only” pool for the ultimate “chill-out” lounge experience

The Conservatory Pool & Bar

A weather protected all-day poolside lounge by day and cinema experience under the stars by night

CULINARY EXPERIENCES

A selection of eleven distinctive, culinary experiences, celebrating global talents and cultures, whilst always focusing on healthy eating and locally sourced

Anthology

exquisite cuisine, celebrating the talents and masterpiece specialities of guest Chefs from around the world*

Med Yacht Club

A relaxed celebration of flavours, ambiances and “Dolce vita” of the Mediterranean

Marble & Co. Grill

European steakhouse experience, inspired by the marbling found only in the finest beef

Emporium Marketplace

All-day dining, bringing global culinary talents and produce to the fore to offer diverse cuisines inspired by local destinations. Featuring 18 separate cooking stations

Gelateria & Creperie at The Conservatory

Authentic French and Italian indulgencies in a relaxed, weather-protected poolside environment

Chef’s kitchen

Immersive experience in an ocean-front private kitchen setting*

Sakura

Immersive, authentic dining experience offering the finest Pan-Asian cuisine and Asian influenced beverages

Fil Rouge

An intimate restaurant offering a global tasting tour of French-inspired, international cuisine

Crema Café

A bustling, all-day European style café. A showcase of pastries, cakes and desserts

Explora Lounge

A luminous, informal lounge with 270° ocean views, offering light meals, snacks and traditional afternoon tea

**Experience fee applies*



FACTS & FIGURES – EXPLORA I

6
Fleet of
LUXURY SHIPS

Built by
FINCANTIERI

RINA DOLPHIN
certified

2023
FIRST SHIP
Scheduled to set sail
Remaining
three ships
to sail in
2024 / 2026
2027 / 2028

248
METRES LONG
813 ft
32
METRES WIDE
105 ft

56_m
HEIGHT ABOVE
WATER LINE
184 ft

63,900
TONNAGE

1.25 : 1
Guests per hosts
ratio

640
Team members

7
Inaugural Journeys
Northern Europe
United Kingdom
Iceland
& Greenland
U.S. East Coast
& Canada
Caribbean
South America
Hawaii

6
NIGHTS
Journeys starting in
2023 / 2024
Bookings are open



1
Owner's Residence

22
Ocean Residences

67
Ocean Penthouses

371
Ocean Suites

82
multi-gen-friendly
connecting suites

461
**OCEAN FRONT
SUITES**
All with floor to
ceiling windows
and private terrace

16,600_{sqm}
**TOTAL
PUBLIC SPACE**
178,680 sq ft

10,240_{sqm}
**TOTAL INDOOR
PUBLIC SPACE**
112,160 sq ft

6,250_{sqm}
**TOTAL OUTDOOR
PUBLIC SPACE**
67,275 sq ft

700_{sqm} +
**INDOOR /
OUTDOOR SPA**
and wellness area
7,535+ sq ft

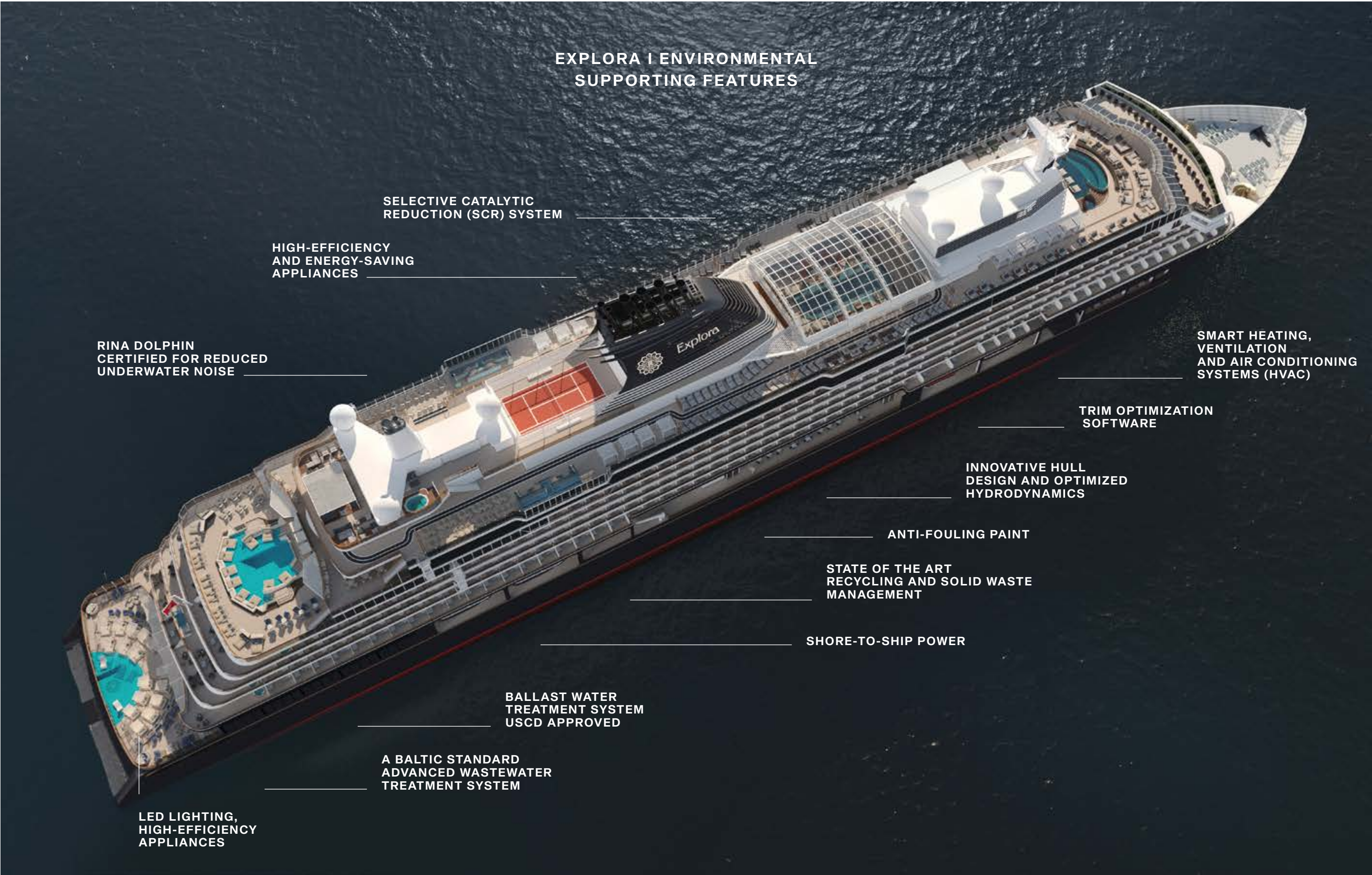
3
OUTDOOR POOLS

1
INDOOR POOL
With a retractable
glass roof

64
**PRIVATE
CABANAS**

9
**DISTINCT
CULINARY
EXPERIENCES**

0
**SINGLE USE
PLASTICS**
Onboard or ashore



**EXPLORA | ENVIRONMENTAL
SUPPORTING FEATURES**

**SELECTIVE CATALYTIC
REDUCTION (SCR) SYSTEM**

**HIGH-EFFICIENCY
AND ENERGY-SAVING
APPLIANCES**

**RINA DOLPHIN
CERTIFIED FOR REDUCED
UNDERWATER NOISE**

**SMART HEATING,
VENTILATION
AND AIR CONDITIONING
SYSTEMS (HVAC)**

**TRIM OPTIMIZATION
SOFTWARE**

**INNOVATIVE HULL
DESIGN AND OPTIMIZED
HYDRODYNAMICS**

ANTI-FOULING PAINT

**STATE OF THE ART
RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT**

SHORE-TO-SHIP POWER

**BALLAST WATER
TREATMENT SYSTEM
USCD APPROVED**

**A BALTIC STANDARD
ADVANCED WASTEWATER
TREATMENT SYSTEM**

**LED LIGHTING,
HIGH-EFFICIENCY
APPLIANCES**

TIMELINE

2	1940	GIANLUIGI APONTE IS BORN IN SORRENTO, ITALY Years later, he started his career as a captain operating passenger ferries in the Mediterranean for his family’s business after graduating from the Italian Maritime Academy.	6	1988	MSC ENTERS THE CRUISE BUSINESS MSC announces its entry into the cruise business, purchasing the iconic liner, Monterey.	10	2020	MSC MSC Cruises is the second-largest container shipping line in the world and third targets cruise brand in the world.	14	2024	MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA II
3	1970	MEDITERRANEAN SHIPPING COMPANY IS FOUNDED Captain Aponte founded the Mediterranean Shipping Company in Brussels, Belgium in 1970, beginning with one small conventional ship, the MV Patricia.	7	2013	PIERFRANCESCO VAGO Pierfrancesco Vago is named Executive Chairman of MSC Group’s cruise business and broader passenger division.	11	2021	SUMMER MSC launches Explora Journeys, and celebrates the steel cutting of EXPLORA I. Bookings for the Inaugural Collection open, as well as the steel cutting of EXPLORA II.	15	2026	MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA III
4	1971	CAPTAIN APONTE ACQUIRES THE COMPANY’S SECOND SHIP A bigger vessel which he named after his wife, Rafaeja.	8	2018	ENTERING THE ULTRA-LUXURY MARKET The MSC Group announces its intentions to enter the ultra-luxury market.	12	2022	MSC Keel Laying EXPLORA I.	16	2027	MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA IV MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA V
5	1973	CAPTAIN APONTE ACQUIRES THE COMPANY’S THIRD SHIP A carrier named Isle.	9	2019	MICHAEL UNGERER - CEO Michael Ungerer joins the MSC Group as the CEO of the company’s newly created luxury division.	13	2023	MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA I	17	2028	MAIDEN JOURNEY EXPLORA VI

KEY SPOKESPEOPLE



MICHAEL UNGERER
Chief Executive Officer
Explora Journeys

As Chief Executive Officer, Michael Ungerer is charged with leading all aspects of the creation, development and execution of Explora Journeys. With the first of six luxury superyacht-style ships scheduled to set sail in 2023, Mr. Ungerer recruits and leads a multicultural team of highly talented individuals who bring together a breadth of luxury hospitality experience. Employing a customer-centric mindset, he also brings his extensive knowledge of the travel industry to his role, spanning marine operations, sustainability efforts, new buildings, hotel operations, shoreside activities, and more.

Prior to joining Explora Journeys, Mr. Ungerer held various leadership positions with Carnival Corporation across different geographies and brands. Most recently, he was COO of Carnival Asia where he coordinated the company's efforts to gain market entry in the region. Prior to that, he served as President of AIDA Cruises, Carnival's most profitable cruise line. Before working for Carnival, Mr. Ungerer held a variety of management roles with brands such as Norwegian Cruise Line, Sonesta Resorts, and The Ritz-Carlton. From 2013 to 2015, Mr. Ungerer served as the founding Chairman of CLIA Germany, the industry association that represents the interests of the German cruise industry.

Mr. Ungerer studied Economics at Leopold Franzens University in Innsbruck, Austria and at London Business School. He graduated from the Institute of Hospitality Management in Salzburg, and holds a Global Executive MBA from INSEAD. He has also completed INSEAD's Independent Directors Programme. Originally hailing from the mountains of Austria, he has lived in six countries on three continents, and currently calls Geneva, Switzerland home.



CHRIS AUSTIN
Chief Sales Officer
Explora Journeys

Chris Austin is Chief Sales Officer for the new Luxury Division of the MSC Group, Explora Journeys. In this position, he is responsible for the line's overall global go to market strategy across all sales channels and leads the Global Sales Organisation and all B2B partner trade marketing initiatives.

Chris joined Explora Journeys in November 2020. Prior to that, he spent 4 years as SVP Global Marketing & Sales at Seabourn and formerly 25 years with Starwood Hotels & Resorts, with his final position as Vice President Global Luxury & Leisure Sales.

He has received numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, including Virtuoso Cruise Ambassador of the Year 2019, "Top Luxury Sales Executive Worldwide – 2019 & 2016" by readers of Luxury Travel Advisor; "Most Innovative Hotel Executive" by U.S. Travel Professionals in the Travvy Awards; and "ASTA Allied Member of the Year" by the world's largest association of travel professionals.

Chris is passionate about people and results and works tirelessly to uncover innovative sales and marketing strategies that reflect the current global business environment. Known by colleagues and industry partners as a unique and remarkable leader of integrity, he builds trust and credibility with leadership, colleagues and customers. In addition, he empowers and advocates his team to make a positive impact with partners and on the organisation. He is one of the industry's leading advocates for the global travel advisor community and has worked tirelessly to support the future health and longevity of the industry.

Discover the
Ocean State of Mind playlist on



APPLE MUSIC



SPOTIFY



DEEZER

To learn more about Explora Journeys,
visit ExploraJourneys.com
or follow along on
Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

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