



Seven Seas Explorer

Onboard opulence.

STORY: Shannon Melnyk



Monte Carlo was the scene of a splashy affair befitting Princess Charlene of Monaco. She added Godmother of Regent Seven Seas Cruises’s new Seven Seas Explorer to her title as she cut a red velvet ribbon, sending a Primat bottle of Veuve Clicquot ceremoniously breaking against the hull of the ship. The christening gala, which included a performance by Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, was a royal send-off for what Regent has called “the most luxurious ship ever built.” It’s a bold claim.

What constitutes the ultimate in luxury within the competitive cruise industry? Is it the \$450-million USD price tag? The 5,000 chandeliers? The custom finishings with the finest Italian Carrara marble, mahogany, crystal, cashmere, and Murano glass that money can buy? The Versace place settings? The all-inclusive, all-suite approach with spacious staterooms and balconies for every guest? The presence of Picassos and Chagalls? One of the highest staff-to-guest ratios ever to exist on a cruise ship? Frank J. Del Rio, the CEO of Regent’s parent company Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd., answers by offering up another question: “What doesn’t it have?”

Del Rio explains that the rarity they’ve accomplished over existing luxury ships is space: “It’s one of the most expensive and difficult elements of luxury to deliver.”

Indeed, you’ll have an idea of how grand this ship is the moment you’re greeted in the foyer by two colossal etched-glass staircases and a cascading crystal chandelier, or pad around in your spacious marble bathroom. Del Rio commissioned three design firms and challenged them to create an unparalleled experience for the mere 750 passengers the Explorer can accommodate—the kind of luxury otherwise impossible for the larger ships at sea. The opulence he wanted was an opportunity for the designers to spread their creative wings. And so, attention to detail bordered on what the teams called “obsessive”.

An example of that obsession would be the dramatic handcrafted art installation, inspired by Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheels, that serves as the entrance to the Explorer’s Pan-Asian restaurant, Pacific Rim. Ninety cast bronze, intricately embossed discs can be spun to reveal insightful quotes. The piece weighs in at over three tons—no small feat, considering it required the construction of a reinforced deck to hold it.



Also no small feat was choosing 2,200 one-of-a-kind pieces of art: a job Del Rio personally took on leading up to the inaugural sail. In addition to the more obvious cache of aforementioned Picassos, and abstract paintings by contemporary Spanish artist Eduardo Arranz-Bravo, the CEO sought out unique pieces—some of which he admits to not even liking—that would appeal to a discerning cross-section of art lovers and spark conversation amongst the guests.

The restaurants were a particular focus. Del Rio poignantly notes that it is not the captain of the Seven Seas Explorer, but rather the chefs who are the highest-paid staff on the ship. And guests wishing to channel their inner cook have access to a culinary arts kitchen with 18 individual stations for classes—perhaps getting the chance to handle some of the 2,000 pounds of lobster on board.

But the pinnacle of luxury for this floating extravaganza is the ship’s 4,443-square-foot Regent Suite. Sweeping floor-to-ceiling views at the bow of the ship are paired with every comfort imaginable, including a media centre and a Savoir No 1 bed with a horse tail hair mattress in the master bedroom. And nowhere else in the world will you see the sparkling Steinway Arabesque piano by designer Dakota Jackson, nor the private master bath. No need to head to the onboard Canyon Ranch SpaClub—this suite is complete with two heated ceramic loungers, full massage area, and sauna, boasting unlimited Canyon Ranch treatments.

So, is this the most luxurious ship ever? That’s a question you should experience for yourself to answer.

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