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The Case for CroisiEurope



The company is on a mission to educate US Agents on its global fleet of 50 riverboat vessels.

VACATION AGENT | CRUISE LINE & CRUISE SHIP | CLAUDETTE COVEY



PHOTO: CroisiEurope's RV Indochine II. (photo courtesy of CroisiEurope)

CroisiEurope Cruises may not currently be top of mind with many U.S. travel agents, but that may not be the case much longer if Nicola Iannone has anything to do with it.

Iannone, the line's executive vice president of sales for the U.S. and Canada, has been traversing the country attending travel agent tradeshows in order to get the word out about CroisiEurope's considerable product offerings.

In fact, the line is one of the most venerable and largest riverboat operators in the world.

"We're not just a regional river cruise line. We're a family-owned global company that has been around for 41 years," said Iannone, who formerly served as director of national and key accounts at Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection.

The Strasbourg, France-based company, which operates a global fleet of 50 vessels, has been forging ties with a number of travel agent networks.

"We strongly support the trade, and we work with big partners," Iannone said.

The company is a preferred supplier for TravelSavers, NEST, The Affluent Traveler, Cruise Planners, CruiseOne, Cruises Inc. and Dream Vacations. And just this month, Croisi became a preferred supplier of OASIS Travel Network.

One of Iannone's key agent talking points is Croisi's value proposition: "We offer great value in all-inclusive pricing because we own, build and operator our ships - we're not a middleman, like a broker."

The vessels are configured with double-occupancy cabins but no suites, which also helps to cut down costs. Rates include port charges; beer, wine and spirits; and WiFi in onboard public areas.

Another one of the company's key selling points is its diverse portfolio of itineraries, which virtually blanket the globe by plying the waterways of Europe, Asia, Russia, South America and Africa.

“The strength in having 50 ships rather than 17 or 18 is that we have more choices in terms of itineraries and cruise lengths,” Iannone said, adding that CroisiEurope’s itineraries range anywhere from four to 19 days.

It should come as no surprise that CroisiEurope, due to its strong European roots, draws an international slate of passengers.

“The bulk of guests are French. If your clients want to go on a cruise with all Americans, we’re not the line for of them,” Iannone said.

In 2017, Croisi is furthering expanding its global reach with the introduction of five new ships. During early 2017, the 132-passenger MS Miguel Torga joined four CroisiEurope sister ships on itineraries that sail Portugal’s Douro River. The ship is operating on eight-day “Golden River” itineraries that depart from Porto and call at Regua, Vega de Terron, Ferradosa and Pinhão.

“We’re going to add another sister ship next year due to demand,” Iannone said.

The 110-passenger MS Symphonie II and France Douce II also debuted earlier this year, and are currently sailing on a series of Danube and Rhine River cruises.

Farther afield, the 60-passenger RV Indochine II is scheduled to join four sister ships on Mekong River cruises in August. The ship will operate on 11- and 14-day cruises between Siem Reap, Cambodia, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In December 2017, CroisiEurope will debut the 16-passenger African Dream, the company’s first vessel to ply Africa’s Chobe and Zambezi rivers. The nine-day program couples four days on board the vessel with five days in CroisiEurope’s first safari lodge.

While CroisiEurope vessels feature double cabins rather than suites, the African Dream will be the exception to that rule, with eight outside suites with balconies. It will also feature a restaurant with panoramic views, a lounge/bar and a rooftop terrace.