

INSIDE CARNIVAL DREAM:

TAKING GUESTS TO THEIR DREAM

A CONVERSATION WITH SHIP DESIGNER JOE FARCUS

by

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At 130,000 gross tons, Carnival Dream is the largest ship built for Carnival Cruise Lines thus far. However, the ship is more than merely a larger version of what has gone before. It adds new features and embodies all that the world's most popular cruise line knows about pleasing the cruising public. To design her interior, Carnival turned once again to Joseph Farcus who has worked on every Carnival ship now sailing for Carnival. I had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Farcus about the process of creating Carnival Dream, the concept behind her interior design and some of the features of the new ship.

The Process of Creating the Dream

In creating the Dream, Carnival employed a new approach to designing and building the ship. "The top management of Carnival changed about a year ago with the retirement of Bob Dickinson and the ascension of Gerry Cahill as the President and CEO. As a result of that the management style has changed. I would say that what they are doing today that is different is they are getting their top people within Carnival more involved in the design process and more involved in expressing ideas and feelings that they would

like to see onboard the ships. In other words, to make the whole marketing and design more coordinated."

"To that end, they have established a design committee and put one of their top executives in charge to be more involved in the design process. It is just a more hands-on approach that this management is taking and I am very happy with that."

"The design committee [has] what they call briefs describing the feelings that they want to achieve in the various rooms. Then, I go about trying to work with these ideas, giving architectural form and materials to that to produce the overall feelings for the ship that I am designing "

"I make drawings of the designs and [develop] specifications for the various materials and then we have renderings made, which give the people at Carnival a better idea of what we are building. When we get their approval, [we] move forward with the building process, which involves sending all of these concept drawings to [Fincantieri, the shipyard in Italy] along with specifications. Then we go through the design development process with the shipyard where they make their technical drawings and make mock-ups of the various designs. We go over the details and the materials and finishes and how they all go

together and finally approve that."

"And then the building process begins where they actually begin fabricating all the various materials and details for the ship and assembling them. We are constantly watching that process as well and taking care of issues as they come up. Periodically, we go through inspections of the ship to make sure that they are doing it correctly plus Carnival has people who are onsite all the time watching it on a daily basis. We go over there every six or seven weeks or so. That is the basic process."

Manifesting the Dream

The interior designs for each of the earlier Carnival ships that Mr. Farcus has designed have stemmed from a core central idea which serves as the inspiration for the designs of the public areas. For example, on Carnival Pride it was icons of beauty, on Carnival Victory, famous bodies of water, on Carnival Valor is heroes and heroic events. "With the Dream, I wanted to make the ship less high concept and create more an overall feeling. When I heard the name of the ship - - the Carnival Dream - - I immediately thought of the dream cruise for the guests. I [took] everything that I have known and learned about cruising, what the guests expect, what they would like to see and [what] they could not imagine themselves and use that as the inspiration, in an artistic way and in a free-association way, [to] come up with these designs."

Looking at the sketches and photos that have been released for the Dream, the interior décor appears to be more restrained than some earlier Carnival ships. "It was consciously done. I think a lot of customers have followed the ships, are loyal Carnival cruisers and have responded well to the designs of the past but we have created a lot of ships and we want to keep it fresh, keep it new and give [guests] something new to appreciate. It all comes from the same root idea of the type of environment that I am trying to create for the guests onboard. That hasn't changed at all. It is only the external expression of it has. That is design progress and sophistication as far as I am concerned."

"I enjoy the things that I have done in the past but I am enjoying what I am doing now. They all have to me their complete validity. They are not derived from fashion or what is happening now."

"I think when people see the Dream, I don't



Ship architect and designer Joe Farcus (All photos accompanying this article are courtesy of Carnival Cruise Lines).

think it will look like a radical departure from what we have been doing. But as a designer I try to grow. Even at the age I am today, I don't want to sit back on my laurels and say this worked 10 years ago, five years ago or even a year ago. I prefer to always think ahead, try to stay ahead of the game and create something that would be new, surprising and special."

"The basic thing that has changed over the years is that technology has allowed me to do different things with sound and with light that you couldn't have done 20 years ago, let's say or could not have been done easily like we can today and that is also reflected in the design. I see the Dream as the next logical step of the design process and expression of Joe Farcus."

This is not to say that the interior of the Dream will be Spartan. "It is rich. When I made this the shipyard didn't say to me 'Joe, you made this too cheap, you didn't use enough stuff.' They gave me the same problems that they have on every design. It is a little bit of a new approach for me



and I will evaluate it myself when I see it all finished. So far, I am very happy with what I have seen. I was onboard the ship at the very end of May or the beginning of June and I think it is shaping up really, really nicely and the feedback that I have gotten from Carnival's people from Jerry Cahill down has been very positive. It seems to work well with the whole new management and the way Carnival is doing things these days - - the advertising, the whole marketing approach, how they are massaging the product to make it the most responsive to the guests onboard. I am hoping that when Dream is finally inaugurated in September and people see it that it will be a very positive reaction. It will still be my style but it will be a different form of it."

The basic design of the Dream can be traced back to the first mega-cruise ship Carnival Destiny. Since Destiny, Carnival has elaborated on this design some eight times adding more amenities and features. A challenge for Farcus, was to create a new interior design that is unique and distinct from Dream's predecessors. "Ships always have inevitably a certain similarity about them because of just the overall shape of a ship. It is long and stretched out and in that respect there are always similarities. I think that certain things are very, very important and in a way have nothing to do with style. The circulation on the ship - - how passengers or guests move through the ship. The sense of space - - to give guests a sense of awe and a sense of the size of the ship and above all to prevent any claustrophobic feelings. When we designed the Destiny years ago, we felt that we had a very good platform. It has proved out. It has been a hugely

popular success. It has worked from day one. There have been almost no glitches in terms of the physical layout of the ship. We have massaged that all the way through with the Dream being the culmination of that. So, it is similar in its basics but it has all sorts of new features."

"For example, we have a promenade that runs the length of the ship on Deck 4, which does not exist on any of the other semi-sisters to the Dream.. That makes circulation better."

"We have redesigned layout of the restaurants to introduce the open seating concept for those who want to enjoy that onboard the ship."

"We have created open decks on Deck 5 [called the Lanai]. These are open decks that sort of cantilever out on either side of the ship that provide a new venue for people who want to sit out in the sun during the day and be closer to the sea. I think these are going to be hugely successful decks and will take some of the pressure off of the main Lido up on Decks 10, 11, and 12 etc."

Linking the starboard side and port side open decks on Deck 5 will be a new public area called the Ocean Plaza. However, this area will be much more than a crosswalk. "I felt that we would need a room in the center of the ship that would connect these two spaces functionally as well as physically. I thought since these are going to be open decks that you need some sort of facility at Deck 5 that has food service, bar service and is [an entertainment] lounge. We created some cutouts into the side of the ship to make the open deck seating area for drinks and food in that location along with the [whirlpools]. I named it the generic name the 'piazza', which is like the town center, because

I felt that this was going to be a very important and necessary space on this ship with this new arrangement. In a way, the Carnival ships have always had a promenade. This room has morphed from the promenade into a promenade that crosses the ship and provides the public space and food and beverage service that is needed to service that."

"We have also introduced a new spa layout. A couple of ships ago we upgraded to the huge spa, I can't remember which Carnival ship we introduced it on, but the one on Dream will be even bigger and have more facilities in it. This has become a great feature on the ship particularly for day time use for those who want to do something else besides just sit out in the sun or sit in the casino."

"This ship will have the greatest children and teens facilities on any Carnival ship. That has become a much more important item onboard for family cruises. We have one area on Deck 4 that has the Circle C Club, the Club O2 and the video game room all in one area. They are all clustered together giving young people on a cruise a huge area which in a way is dedicated to them specifically. Young people who go on a cruise from pre-teens to teenagers really respond to that. The idea, of course, is to broaden the market to the maximum point to give something attractive to anyone who could come aboard on a cruise."

"The ship has a larger capacity. We added another deck of cabins to make the ship more economically attractive. But we had to upgrade facilities for that so we have more restaurant space, we have re-designed the theater to make it even bigger with better sight lines than it had before and also increased seating capacity. We have re-laid out the main public room circulation on Deck 5."

To make more efficient use of space, some of the functions that were performed on past ships in separate public rooms have been consolidated on Dream. "We found, for example, that it wasn't necessary to have a dedicated sports bar. So, what we have is the casino bar, which has [its own traditional] entertainment, but [which will also] have a series of five large plasma screen TVs. When there is a major sporting event on, then that bar within the casino becomes the sports bar, which seems quite natural."

Other areas, such as the large bar found on Deck 4 on earlier ships between the two main dining rooms, have been eliminated in favor of features the line feels will be more popular with guests. "When we were coming up with what we call the GAP - - the General Arrangement Plan - - for

Dream, we looked very hard at what is happening today and what do the customers want and use and what would be the most advantageous [use of the available space]. There is only a certain amount of space on the ship so if you have this, you don't have that. It is very important to make sure that that parsing of the space is done in the most effective manner that will appeal to the most people onboard. We are very conscious of that. We don't go in for gimmicks that only a handful of people will use. We try to concentrate on the basic things that almost everybody wants to use and make sure that those facilities are onboard for them. Again, you can't have it all. It is just like the money that you have to spend. The people who spend it the most wisely are the people that get the most enjoyment out of it. I think that we look at space onboard the ship in a very similar way."

Some other familiar features of Carnival ships have been enhanced such as the atrium that rises up through the center of the ship. "It will be similar to what we have done in the past. But because the ship is bigger, I re-designed the stairs, made the opening of the deck on Decks 4 and 5 larger so when you come onboard the ship, the atrium will feel even bigger than it has been.. I have taken the stage that was on the floor of Deck 3 and I put it on a platform that flies above the bar with the idea being that what we are trying to do is make that whole atrium one public room. The people will be able to sit at the bar, sit in the lobby, sit on sofas on Deck 4 and on Deck 5 and be entertained."

In sum, "I think it is very interesting that they named this ship the Dream because it really was created with that in mind - - to create the dream holiday for the guests who come onboard. What I am doing, what everybody onboard and the executives within Carnival is working and striving for is to deliver the kind of product that people are going to enjoy. You know, it is not *just* a money making venture. It is a money making venture for sure but the idea is that we are entertaining people, we are taking them to their dream - - that is the destination of the cruise. We take that very seriously and we really try our best to deliver that part of call to them."