

**INSIDE VIEW:**

# COMMANDING ALLURE WITH PASSION

A conversation with Captain Herman Zini,  
Master of Allure of the Seas

by

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**C**aptain Herman Zini approaches his assignment as master of Royal Caribbean's Allure of the Seas with undisguised enthusiasm. "This is not a job for somebody who does not feel passionate about it. If you don't feel it, you won't transmit it and your crew does not pick it up. It is very difficult to lead without that. You really have to walk the talk. The day that I do not feel that, I will move on to something else "

*A Source of Pride*

**P**assion is evident when Captain Zini speaks about Allure and her sister ship Oasis of the Seas. "These sister ships are very unique ships and I think they will remain unique for years to come. There is nothing else on the market or in design that would

rival these two ships. They are two of a kind and I think for years they will really set the standard for the cruise industry."

The two ships are the largest passenger ships ever built. However, "being the biggest for [the sake of] being the biggest is not what counts. Wanting to offer so many things to the guests and putting them together so that you become the biggest is definitely what we are all about. I don't think we could have all these offerings on a smaller ship. You could have some of the concepts but not all of them. Size matters in that it allowed us to do everything that we wanted to do. That is the reason why we have the size. It is as simple as that."

In addition to being proud of his ship for what she offers to passengers, Zini is very pleased with the ship from a nautical point of view. Having been

with Royal Caribbean for 20 years and before that an officer in the Argentinean Navy, Captain Zini has sailed on and commanded many different ships. Still, he is impressed with Allure's abilities.

"The ship handles incredibly well. It is very maneuverable." This is largely due to the ship's azipod propulsion system. Suspended below the hull are three independently controlled pods each housing a large electric motor that turns a propeller mounted on the front of the pod. "When you replace the conventional propeller shafts and rudder with azipods, you can turn each propeller 360 degrees and that gives you tremendous power in the back of the ship to move the back of the ship in any direction. At the front of the ship we have four side thrusters. [The ship] can handle up to 40 knots of wind on the side. That really is very important to us. Our older ships with the conventional propellers can handle 27 knots of wind on the side and [above that] you need [assistance from] tug boats. Of course, this ship being bigger means that our margins have decreased quite a bit. . . But we have the power to be more precise."

"The size makes the ship extremely stable. The ship does not roll much. The wider the ship of equal length, the stability increases proportionally. So this ship being much wider makes it more stable than other ships. We have just been doing 21 knots and I remember in other ships when you do some turns at that speed, you have to be careful. If you turned at more than 3 or 4 degrees rate of turn, you would feel 1 degree roll. Here you can turn 10 degrees rate of turn and you hardly feel it. So the ship is extremely stable that way and that has to do with the size. That does not mean that the ship does not move at all. It is a ship after all and not completely immune to the elements."

The ship has also been designed to be more energy efficient than even relatively recent cruise ships. "With all the new technologies that we have - - the air conditioning, the hull design, the hull paint, the LED lights and lighting - - we have a ship that uses a tremendous amount of fuel less than the previous ships in terms of fuel per passenger. We can complete a 7 day cruise with about 1,200 tons of fuel. For a Freedom-class ship, it could be 1,000 tons. But we are carrying a lot more people so that makes a big difference [in the fuel per passenger]."



*Captain Herman Zini*

#### *Creating A Sense of Pride*

Allure is the second ship in the Oasis class. When Oasis of the Seas entered service in late 2009, she received worldwide publicity. Unless Allure had her own strong identity from the start, there was a danger that she would be dismissed as just more of the same. Thus, part of Captain Zini's task was to ensure that Allure was not overshadowed by her older sister but rather emerged from the shipyard vital and interesting.

"To me this is not just another one, it is my opportunity now. I participated [in the launch of] the Oasis with Captain Bill [Wright] I was helping him out in the background but he was clearly the captain in charge. That gave me the opportunity to familiarize myself [with this class of ship]. Already my mind was thinking: 'Allure - - what can we do different, what can



*Allure of the Seas*

we learn from this experience, what can we do better?"

"I think as a company, we have done a very good job - - probably the best that I have seen on all the start-ups - - to differentiate the second in the class. We have a lot to talk about. We have a lot to talk about with our new dining venues, with Starbucks and with Guess Accessories. We have a lot to talk about with Britto. We have a lot to talk about with all the new technologies onboard. We have introduced the Dreamworks experience - - the entertainment, it is mind blowing. So I think we have enough new things to get everyone excited. I think it has been very successful."

Still, new passenger offerings and innovative facilities by themselves would not be enough to make Allure a success - - there was the human factor as well. "We have worked very hard with the crew to make them very proud of the ship."

"It starts in the recruitment process. We have selected the crew from a list of volunteers. I was quite adamant that I did not want to have anybody here that had been sent to the Allure. Everybody here had to have raised their hands and said 'I want to be there and I want to be part of the team.' That put the people in the right mind to come."

"To let them know about all the good things on the ship, we started communicating with the crew even before they arrived onboard. We sent them books about the ship, on what is new. We have a web page for Allure of the Seas where the crew members can log in and see

messages from us and pictures of how the ship [was progressing in the shipyard]. From the time they raised their hands to be selected there was an element of excitement to come and join the team and that was very important for us to build on that energy."

Meanwhile, the ship's managers were assembling at the shipyard in Finland where Allure was under construction. "We had a lot of social events in Finland. We had for instance our Wednesdays chicken wings nights. As the team was growing, we started with 10, next time there was 30 and before we knew it there were 60 or 70 going. By having that first management team together when the crew arrived it was easier to put them all together. I think a part of what we do is to make sure we work hard but also we have time to enjoy and celebrate each other."

"We have been very careful with the management to make sure that the communications between the crew and the management are always very professional. They are very welcoming but it is still business. Business is business and we have to get the job done but do it with a sense of pride and passion and humor. I think humor is quite important - - to laugh a little at what you do and not take yourself too serious. There are times when you have to be serious but for most of it we prefer to keep it a relaxed atmosphere. That seems to put everyone at ease and make everybody more relaxed and that leads to less mistakes and everyone is a bit more motivated. That to me is important."

"The crew is proud of the ship, that is my sense, and we have managed to build on that energy."

### *A Friendly Rivalry*

One tool the Captain Zini has used to build pride and generate interest in the new ship has been a tongue-in-cheek rivalry between Allure and her older sister centering on which ship is the largest passenger ship in the world. As any Allure crew member will tell you, the answer is Allure and as proof Captain Zini points to the measurement certificates that were issued by the shipyard where both ships were built.

"This is a thing the yard does for every ship and they do it with laser measurements. We have certificates for both ships and [Allure is] 50 millimeters longer. The width is the same the height is the same - - I think there is one millimeter difference in the height - -but the measurement with the most difference was the 50 millimeters on the length."

"Probably we have made those five centimeters much bigger than what it is. But people love to talk about it. Of course, we like to tease the Oasis about it. I think it has helped to make a little bit of a healthy rivalry between the two."

"Five centimeters in 362 meters is not a percentage that is huge and it is part of the tolerance of building a ship this size. Building blocks and putting blocks together, you could easily have a few differences here and there. It could be the welding of the blocks was like one millimeter different each time for whatever reason. The measurement instruments have a margin of error and part of [the difference] could be the tolerance for error in the measurement instruments. But on the certificates, we are 50 millimeters longer than the Oasis."

"The ships will never be measured again. It is something that is irrelevant for purposes of operation. It does not add any value to re-measure. This means that for the history of the ships we will be left with these certificates from the yard where you have a difference between the two ships."

Another difference is that Allure is lighter than Oasis. "One of the things the yard learned was that they could build the same ship with the same strength using less material so they saved about 200 tons of weight on the Allure. It is not much in terms of the whole ship, it is a very small percentage. It sounds like a lot but the numbers are huge. But that actually makes the Oasis heavier than us."

This difference tends to cause confusion because the gross tonnage of the two ships is listed as the same. Seemingly, if Allure is 200 tons lighter, she

should not have the same tonnage.

"The [gross] tonnage of the ship is not weight, it is volume measurement. When we talk about the tonnage of a ship we are talking about the volume of the ship inside. The tonnage of this ship is exactly the same, 225,282 tons, as Oasis. The weight, which is called displacement, is about 200 tons lighter at about 130,000 tons."

While the differences in length and weight are not apparent to the naked eye, ship enthusiasts will be interested to know that one can tell the two ships apart just by looking. "We learned through experience on Oasis' transatlantic crossing that the forward part of the ship was not fully protected from what we call sea spray. When a wave hits the flare of the bow, the wave splashes, that splash shoots up and it has quite a bit of force. So to protect the lifeboats on the bow, the Oasis had to put up a big wave break - - a piece of steel that actually protects the bow from these waves. Here, instead of doing that we managed to shift the forward lifeboats further back. So our first boat is Oasis' second boat." Thus, one can tell one ship from the other by looking at the arrangement of the lifeboats.

Having successfully launched two such impressive ships as Oasis and Allure, many people are wondering what Royal Caribbean will do next. However, the line has no more new ships on order and even if it placed an order today, Captain Zini estimates that it would be a minimum of two years before another ship could enter service. Still, Captain Zini is sure that the future will not be dull "I love working for Royal Caribbean because it is not a company that bores you. We are always reinventing ourselves, always trying to do the next, next, next. That constant pushing the line and pushing your capabilities is exciting. I do not see myself living any other way."