

# LUXURY CRUISING ON NCL

Norwegian Cruise Line shines the spotlight on The Haven.

by

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Norwegian Cruise Line ("NCL") is well-known for its mass market cruise ship offerings. However, at least since the entry of Norwegian Jewel into service in 2005, NCL has been quietly developing its own brand of luxury cruising within its mass market ships. Recently, in connection with the planning for NCL's next class of ships, NCL not only turned the spotlight on its luxury operation but gave it a name -- The Haven by Norwegian.

Essentially, NCL's approach to luxury cruising is built around having a section of the ship dedicated to its top-of-the-line guests. Such sections are not merely a corridor of suites with a concierge lounge. Rather, they are separate areas that include not only the accommodations but also dedicated indoor and outdoor facilities. As the ships have gotten bigger, the size of these areas has expanded as well as the scope of the dedicated facilities.

In addition to the physical assets, NCL has staffed its luxury sections with very capable and hard working concierges, butlers and staff. Seemingly, anything that a guest wants to do, they will work to accommodate that request.

It should be noted that not all of the suites on NCL ships are encompassed within The Haven. The line also offers a range of suites that are comparable to the suites typically offered on mass market cruise ships.

The Haven is designed to compete with luxury cruise ship accommodations.

Why would a mass market cruise line want to have a luxury operation? Hugo Vanosmael, Hotel Director on Norwegian Jewel explains: "We sail out of big cities and this is a reflection of that. We have a broad range of staterooms. We have something for everybody. There are all kinds of people and you need all kinds of people to fill up the ship. You have people who want to go the high end and you have people who are cruising the first time and go with an inside cabin."

"There are some very high quality upscale cruises out there but for the most part, they are designed for older, more-affluent couples rather than younger affluent couples and families," elaborates Andy Stuart, NCL's Executive Vice President Global Sales and Passenger Services. "We think there is a massive segment of couples, with and without children, who are younger, who are looking for a younger crowd to hang out with but nevertheless like the good things in life. They do enjoy having their own space, having their own restaurant. They enjoy having a little more privacy than is typical on a large ship. We think that is the segment which The Haven by Norwegian fills most appropriately in the entire cruise industry."

When people think of luxury cruising, they usually think of small ships. However, as Denis Prguda,

Hotel Director on Norwegian Epic, points out, large ships can offer more than a small ship can. "It is all here. I call it Silver Seas within a 4,000 guest ship. You can go downtown [to the public rooms and dining venues on] decks 5, 6 and 7. But if you want luxury, you come up to decks 16 and 17." Thus, a guest traveling in the top accommodations can utilize all of a large ship's dining and entertainment facilities but when he or she so desires, the guest can retreat into the exclusive luxury enclave.

"There are a lot of people that come that have sailed on five-star ships with other lines and they say 'we like the suites and the service here. We like it better because [NCL has] more perks than some of the five-star lines," adds Mr. Vanosmael.

While The Haven is a luxury offering, it does not depart from the Freestyle philosophy that lies at the heart of NCL's approach to cruising. The guest decides when and where to dine and what shows to see. Moreover, it is upscale, not formal. "We don't want anyone to dress up who does not want to dress up. There are many people who like to dress up [but] there are many people who [do not]. It is all about Freestyle and choice," says Mr. Stuart.

#### *Luxury on the Jewel Class*

The luxury enclave on each of NCL's four Jewel class ships (Norwegian Jewel, Norwegian Jade, Norwegian Pearl and Norwegian Gem) is centered around a private courtyard on Deck 14. Flanked by one and two bedroom Villa suites, the courtyard is open to the sky and indeed, on a sunny day, this serene area has the ambiance of an ancient Roman villa. In its center is a flow pool for exercise and a sheltered hot tub for just relaxing. There is also a small exercise room at the aft end of the courtyard. Chairs and tables nestled amongst a small palm and other fauna provide a place to read or have a drink.

The courtyard is not all there is to The Haven on the Jewel class ships. There is also a private sun deck on the port side of Deck 15 just above the courtyard.

Up to 18 suites are part of The Haven on the



*The centerpiece of the Haven on Norwegian Gem (above), as well as on NCL's other ships, is a courtyard..*

Jewel-class ships. These include two 5,000 square foot Garden Villas, which according to NCL are the largest suites at sea. These are multi-room ultra-luxury accommodations, each with its own whirlpool, sun deck and steam room that is separate from the rest of The Haven. The other Haven accommodations are only somewhat less opulent.

On the Jewel class ships, the Haven does not have a dedicated restaurant. However, for breakfast and lunch, the Cagney's Steakhouse specialty restaurant located on Deck 13 just below The Haven is open to Haven guests on a complimentary basis. The menu is exclusive to Cagney's (i.e., it is offered nowhere else onboard) and guests have the option of just a light meal or a multi-course feast.

Along the same lines, the Star Bar just across the way is a concierge lounge during the day.

Most guests traveling on the Jewel-class ships probably do not even know that The Haven exists. NCL is discreet about its location. This is because privacy is important to a true luxury experience.

As noted earlier, personalized service is another key part of the NCL luxury experience. Starting in the Fall of 2011, NCL will be enhancing this aspect by making butler service 24 hours and by having its butlers trained and certified by the International Institute of Modern Butlers. In-suite dining is being enhanced

to white tablecloth service.

Then there are the little things. The Haven's exclusive benefits include priority embarkation and disembarkation; a personal escort to the guest's suite; distinctive platinum keycard; priority boarding of tenders to shore; in-suite espresso/cappuccino machines; gourmet treats delivered each evening; Bliss Collection by Norwegian pillow-top mattress; fine linens, feather duvet and pillow menu; along with plush bathrobes, slippers, oversized towels and a cocktail party with the ship's officers. "Just ways to treat people special, make their life easier," comments Steven Jacobsen, Hotel Director on Norwegian Gem.



*An artist's impression of the courtyard on the Project Breakaway ships.*

### *Luxury on Norwegian Epic*

With The Haven on Norwegian Epic, NCL greatly expanded the concept developed on the Jewel-class ships both in size and scope. It is that two-deck high structure at the top of the forward end of Epic's superstructure. 60 suites located in that area as well as 15 suites located elsewhere in the ship are considered part of The Haven.

Within that structure is a much larger courtyard. The pool is a cruise ship-size pool. There are two whirlpools, a gym, saunas, and premium outdoor seating. In addition, The Haven has its own private sundeck located on the top of the structure.

On The Epic, The Haven has its own restaurant, the elegant Epic Club, as well as the adjoining Epic Club Lounge cocktail bar. For outdoor dining, it has the Courtyard Grill, which opens out into the main courtyard area. There is also a Concierge Lounge.

The Haven on Epic is more self-contained than its counterparts on The Jewel-class ships. It would be perfectly possible to spend one's entire cruise in this area and have a luxurious time. Of course, Haven guests are also entitled to preferred seating at shows taking place elsewhere on the ship. Thus, there is an incentive to go out and explore.

### *Luxury on Project Breakaway*

Project Breakaway is NCL's working name for two new ships that it has ordered and which are due to enter service in April 2013 and April 2014. At 144,000 gross tons, the two ships will be slightly smaller than Epic (155,873 gross tons) but they will be built

by the Meyer Werft shipyard, which is known for its high quality ships including NCL's Jewel-class and Celebrity Cruises' Solstice-class.

Similar to Epic, The Haven will be located at the top of the forward part of the superstructure. 42 suites will be located within The Haven. The largest of these will be two Deluxe Owner's Suites, which will have a living room and a dining area as well as a separate bedroom. Each Deluxe Owner's Suite will be capable of being combined with the neighboring Owner's Suite to make one massive suite capable of sleeping eight.

At the center of The Haven will be a two-deck high courtyard. Its centerpiece will be a large pool, with both a deep end and a shallow end. There will also be two whirlpools. Other features will include massage rooms, a sauna, and a sundeck. Haven guests will also have direct access to the ship's spa.

The Haven on each ship will also have a private restaurant, a cocktail bar and a concierge desk.

NCL's CEO Kevin Sheehan sums up NCL's luxury offering as follows: "Norwegian was the first cruise line to introduce the ship within a ship complex with the introduction of Norwegian Jewel in 2005. With The Haven by Norwegian, we truly have our own private boutique hotel on Norwegian Epic, Gem, Pearl, Jade, and Jewel, along with our new Project Breakaway ships, offering the ultimate in luxury and service at sea."