

INSIDE VIEW:

MORE THAN BIG

A CONVERSATION WITH CAPTAIN THORE THOROLVSEN OF OASIS OF THE SEAS

by

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Captain Thore Thorolvsen has been with Royal Caribbean since the company started. Appropriately for a Norwegian mariner, his first ship for the company was the Song of Norway. More recently, he has been the master of the elegant and technologically sophisticated Jewel of the Seas. He sees his latest command, the 225,000 gross-ton Oasis of the Seas, as part of a pattern of innovation that has marked RCI's evolution.

"Royal Caribbean has always been innovating - - new things from the very beginning, since the first ship, the Song of Norway. She was a very innovative ship back in 1970."

"Twenty years after, they came out with the Sovereign class [i.e., Sovereign of the Seas, Monarch of the Seas and Majesty of the Seas], which was as unique as this ship for their time."

"Then 10 years after that, we had the Voyager class, which was a brand new concept.

Voyager of the Seas was as talked about within the industry and the cruise world in 1999 as Oasis of the Seas has been [now]."

"Royal Caribbean has always been known for the new concept - - that makes Royal Caribbean special."

"Comparing this ship to the first ship this company had - - it is a totally different world. The idea still is to give people a vacation - - that is the same - - but the product we are offering is totally different than what we had in 1970."

Still, "we can build the most sophisticated ship in the world but if we don't have the human service behind it, we will not be providing what we are supposed to provide. The other things are important but the personal service that the guests receive that is still unchanged and you need to keep that."

Over the years, this pattern of innovation has involved building larger and larger ships.

However, big ships were a by-product, not the object of RCI's efforts. "I don't think the company has participated in that competition to build the biggest cruise ship. I don't think that was the reason for those ships. I think it was to build ships with all the features. You need size to do that."

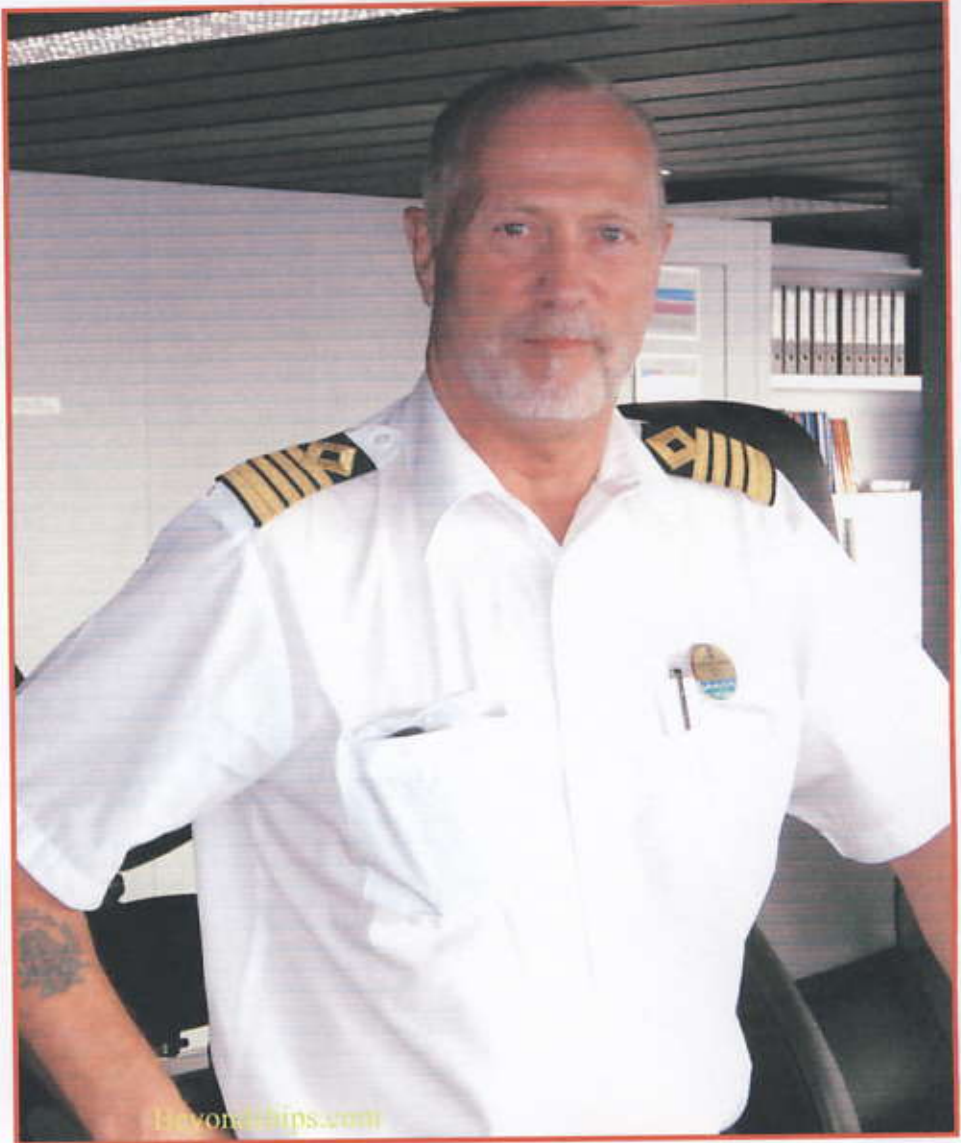
Thus, while Oasis of the Seas is by far the world's largest passenger ship, size is not what she is all about. "I don't think you should come on this ship just because she is big. I think what is unique about the ship is not the size but what she contains - - the options and things to do. I don't think you could ever be bored on this ship because there is always something to do. One week is not enough to really discover what she has; there are so many things and so many options."

"The neighborhood concept - - the Royal Promenade and the Central Part - - makes her so different than other cruise ships. All the entertainment - - for example, the Aqua Show - is unique. As far as I know, we are the only company that has ice rinks on ships. These are things that I think will attract people."

A cruise on Oasis is not a traditional cruise ship experience. "The ship concept itself is less important here than it is on a lot of ships. When you go on a lot of ships, you are still onboard a ship whereas here it is more a floating resort."

"I think the philosophy of the company in building the ship was to make the ship the cruise target." Indeed, evidence that guests view the ship as the destination can be seen when the ship makes a port call. "There is a relatively small percentage of people going on the [shore] excursions on the ship here. Of course, there are many people going off the ship but I know, I talk to people, people are just staying aboard."

Building a ship that is significantly different from existing ships creates a risk that all the other ships in the market will be seen as obsolete if the new ship succeeds with the public. The risk is there not only for the competitors of the cruise line that built the new ship but for that line as well if it



Captain Thore Thorolvson

owns some of the existing ships. Royal Caribbean has 18 other ships in its fleet that are to varying degrees more traditional cruise ships. Despite the fact that Oasis has been well-received by the public, Captain Thorolvson believes RCI's other ships are still quite viable.

"A lot of people have asked me: 'Where does [a guest] go after Oasis of the Seas?' Of course, it depends upon what you are looking for. But if this is the first ship you have been on, I think you have [missed] something because I think on our other cruise ships, their concept is as charming and as nice as the ship here. It is just a different way of seeing it. You can be as relaxed on a cruise ship sailing in the Baltic than you can here. I think this is a philosophy from the company. They have something for everybody, all needs."