

INSIDE INTERVIEW

P&O CRUISES' NEW JEWEL

**P&O Cruises Managing Director Carol Marlow
talks about the Adonia**

by

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Adonia is the newest ship to join the fleet of P&O Cruises. Significantly different than the last two ships to join P&O Cruises - - the mega-cruise ships Ventura and Azura - - Adonia is a relatively small cruise ship that features a country club atmosphere and exotic itineraries. I asked Carol Marlow, Managing Director of P&O Cruises, to give us some thoughts about her new ship.

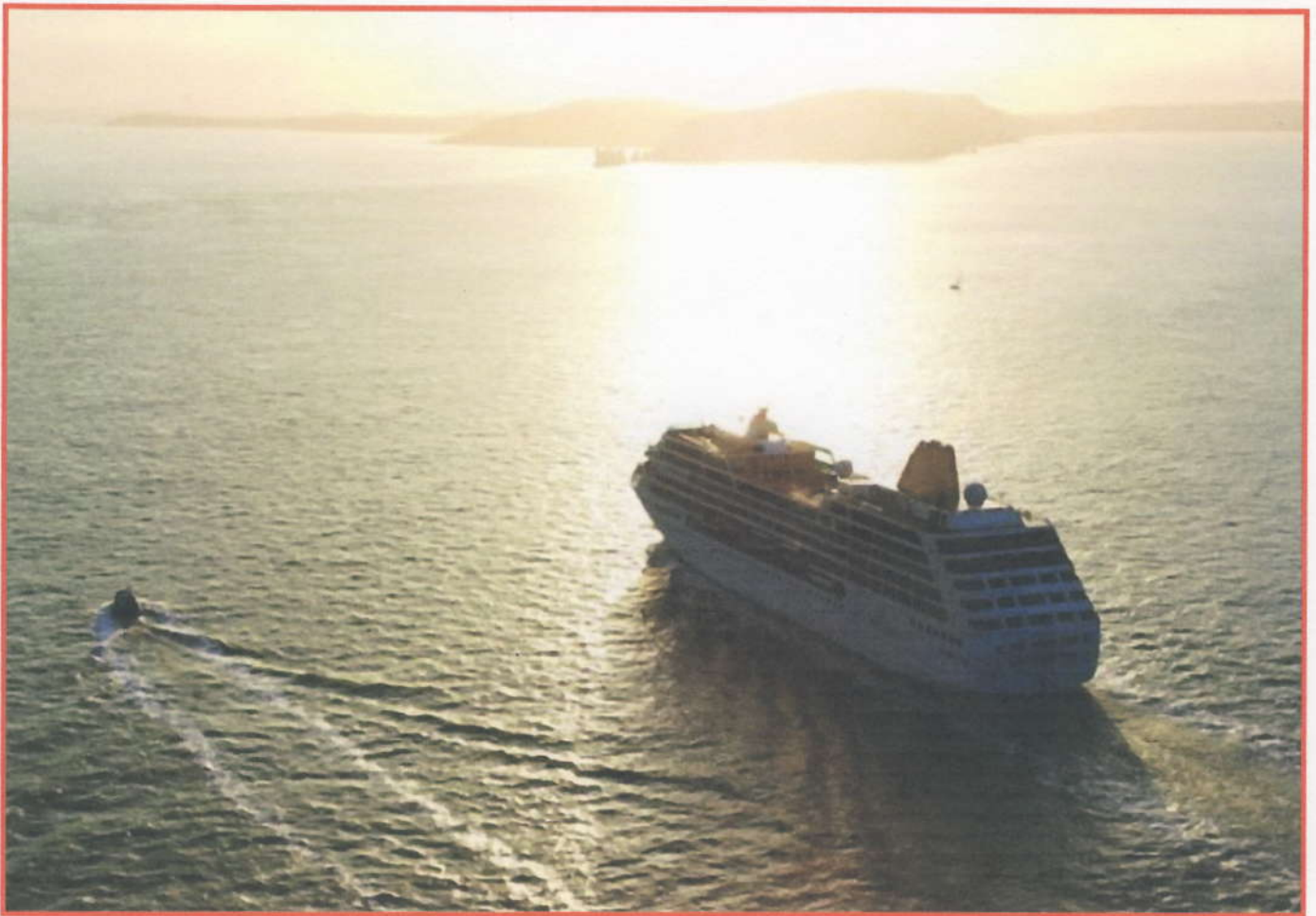
"Adonia caters for our adult passengers, old and new, who are interested in traveling on a smaller, more traditional style 'pathfinder' ship and exploring new and different ports of call."

The story of Adonia dovetails with the story of another recent P&O Cruises ship, Artemis. Artemis was built at the Wartsila shipyard in Finland for P&O's then-subsidary Princess Cruises and entered service in 1984. At the time, she was considered quite innovative with no inside cabins and good sea-keeping properties. Indeed, the importance of this ship was underscored when Diana, Princess of Wales, named her "Royal Princess."

Royal Princess sailed for Princess Cruises until 2005 when she was transferred to P&O Cruises. (Although P&O Cruises was by then no longer the parent of Princess, the two lines were, and are, still affiliated under the Carnival Corporation umbrella). Following a 10.5 million pound re-fit, the ship emerged as Artemis.

In the 20 years since Artemis had entered service, the size of cruise ships had grown exponentially. Thus, while not originally conceived of as a small ship, the 45,000 gross-ton Artemis was now a relatively small ship. P&O Cruises recognized this as an advantage and targeted the ship to that segment of the cruise market that prefers a more intimate cruise experience. In addition, Artemis' size combined with her seakeeping abilities made her well-suited to visiting smaller ports and ranging far-off seas. As P&O Cruises' pathfinder ship, Artemis had a dedicated following.

By 2009, however, Artemis was a quarter century old and no longer cutting edge. Thus, when



Adonia (Photo courtesy of P&O Cruises)

German cruise line Phoenix Reisen expressed an interest in acquiring the ship, P&O Cruises decided to part with her.

"Whilst it had not been our intention to sell Artemis at that time, she was a much older ship than the rest of the fleet and we received interest in her. As the P&O Cruises fleet was to grow in capacity in 2010 through the introduction of the new Azura, we decided to sell Artemis."

Although P&O Cruises would still have several large and medium-sized ships, the decision to sell Artemis would leave P&O Cruises without a small ship. "Larger ships have their own appeal, with the spectrum of bars, dining and entertainment choices they can offer. [However, other travelers] really enjoy a smaller ship, with its more intimate ambience. It was important for us to replace Artemis with another small ship. No other cruise line offers this breadth of choice specifically for the British cruiser."

Attention naturally turned to the source of P&O Cruises' last small ship. At the time, Princess Cruises

had three small 30,000 gross-ton ships, which did itineraries not unlike those done by Artemis. All three had been built by the French shipyard Chantiers de l'Atlantique for Renaissance Cruises and were essentially identical. Conceived of as small ships, they had achieved a reputation amongst cruise connoisseurs as jewels of the sea, intimate yet with all the modern luxuries. Indeed, the five other Renaissance sister ships not owned by Princess were (and are) marketed as luxury ships. Fortunately, to advance the interests of the overall corporate family, Princess was willing to make the youngest of its three small ships available to P&O Cruises.

"[I]t was clear we needed a replacement small ship. Princess Cruises [had] more than one small ship within its fleet and will also increase capacity with the launch of the new Royal Princess in May 2013. As P&O Cruises sought a small ship to replace Artemis it made sense to transfer the ship from one brand to the other."

Indeed, the ship in question even bore the same name that Artemis had borne when she was with

Princess Cruises - - Royal Princess. Accordingly, the notion of building a new ship to replace Artemis "did not arise as the Princess Cruises ship was perfect for us and available."

"She is an elegant and welcoming ship with real small ship charm. She offers a truly intimate and classic cruise experience, yet with all the comforts you would expect from a modern vessel. With this size of ship our passengers can get to know their fellow cruisers and crew easily as they travel to some of the most intriguing destinations on the map, which are inaccessible to larger ships."

Therefore, it was decided that the Princess ship would enter service for P&O Cruises as Adonia in May 2011 shortly after Artemis left the fleet. Before joining P&O Cruises, the ship would undergo a makeover in The Bahamas. However, this Royal Princess would not require a transformation of the same scale as was done when the last Royal Princess came to P&O Cruises. While Princess had targeted the ship to the American market, it was to that segment of the American market that appreciates British style. Thus, with its wood paneling and country house furnishings, the ship already had a British atmosphere.

"All P&O Cruises ships are designed to appeal to those who have British tastes and many aspects of the interior on Royal Princess were preserved as they suited our needs"

"We made changes to the ship to bring it in line with our positioning and added some signature public spaces. These changes included adding: celebrity chef Marco Pierre White's restaurant, The Ocean Grill; P&O Cruises' signature Crow's Nest lounge; and the Sorrento Italian restaurant. We also decided to remove the casino so passengers could enjoy an Anderson's bar/lounge, another P&O Cruises signature room."

Guests traveling on Adonia would also experience P&O Cruises' signature service. "The standard of service offered across our fleet does not differ."

Although P&O Cruises seeks to serve the British cruise market, it realizes that that market is made up of individuals with differing styles and holiday preferences. Accordingly, it was decided that it would be consistent with the style and preference of the type of passenger who would be interested in a small, sophisticated ship that travels on longer-than-average cruises if the ship were adults-only.

"All the P&O Cruises ships cater to the needs of our passengers. There are large modern, contemporary designed ships such as Ventura, to the more classic mid-sized ship, Aurora. As we recently introduced two large family friendly ships: Azura and Ventura, we made the

decision to make Adonia exclusively for adults and offer a more intimate and refined experience for our adult passengers."

During her maiden season with P&O Cruises, Adonia is embarking on three types of itinerary: cruises from Southampton to Europe and the Mediterranean; a lengthy voyage around South America; and fly-cruises in which guests fly to embarkation ports in the Mediterranean thus giving them more time in the Med than if they sailed from Southampton. While reminiscent of the itineraries done by Artemis, Adonia is also going her own way.

"Adonia's smaller size allows intrepid travelers to explore off-the-beaten-track destinations. As our pathfinder ship it can travel to intriguing ports and destinations that see few if any other cruise ships. These destinations include Zadar in Croatia, Koper in Slovenia and Savona in Italy. We are also offering fly/cruises in the Mediterranean in the late autumn as we are keen to try a new type of itinerary and her size enables her to visit these off-the-beaten-track destinations."