

CMI Leisure: ‘More Quality Driven’

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Providing turn-key hotel services for a large portion of the global expedition ship market, Dietmar R. Wertanzl, president of CMI Leisure, sees the onboard product game being stepped up.

“With the new luxury players coming into the market, its going to raise the bar for everyone from food and beverage to the hotel side,” he said. “It’s going to be more quality driven.

“There are a lot of new ideas out there and a lot of new ships. This is definitely the most exciting time ever in the cruise industry ... the combination of a quality product with adventure creates a value proposition.”

Wertanzl said a maturing market was driving the expedition boom – passengers that had tried a cruise and now want to see something unique.

“Everyone wants to upgrade (the product) and the expedition market is our specialty,” he told Cruise Industry News. “It’s more challenging to operate in, with a small local sourcing market. You really have to plan it.”

For voyages to Antarctica, most product is sent from Miami to Argentina.

“We use container shipments or fly it in. You have to be precise. You can’t make any mistakes because you don’t recover,” Wertanzl continued. “Most of these cruises have one port, whether it’s for food, fuel or crew.”

CMI provides end-to-end services: human resources, crew, the expedition team, procurement, food and beverage and more.

Operational planning should start around six months ahead of, advised Wertanzl. He said the biggest challenge at the moment was finding qualified executive chefs.

“It’s a very diversified mix of guests now, and we need to learn how to please the Chinese guests. For example, they want western cuisine but with Chinese flair, and also want some Chinese dishes as well.”

Among the trends: “Everyone is trying to improve the onboard experience and food in general. Everyone is looking for a better quality of food product.”

Small and medium-sized cruise operators turn to CMI Leisure for their onboard product and its delivery.

“Our overhead is low and we take away any headaches,” Wertanzl added.