



**A LITERARY ODYSSEY**

Bookworms craving an intellectual escape can embark on Cunard’s Literature Festival at Sea, where they’ll meet esteemed authors, historians, poets and journalists on a transatlantic voyage to New York aboard the classy *Queen Mary II*. The programme of guest speakers is curated by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* Cheltenham Literature Festival, and this year’s line-up includes crime writer Mark Billingham and acclaimed TV writer (and *Gavin & Stacey* star) Ruth Jones MBE. Passengers can engage in thought-provoking conversations at Q&A sessions and meet their favourite writers at book signings. **Book it:** The seven-night Literature Festival at Sea starts at £1,780 per person, departing from Southampton on November 13. The price, which is based on two people sharing a Britannia Oceanview cabin, includes full-board accommodation, transfers and flights back to London. [cunard.com](http://cunard.com)

PICTURE: Still Moving Media LLP

**QUIRKY SAILINGS**

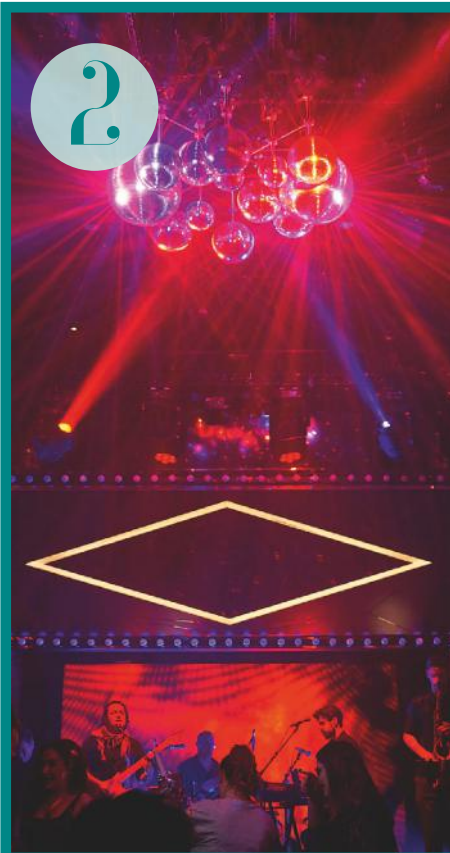
Tailor-made for an array of interests and hobbies, these eclectic cruises can offer a unique twist on sea adventures, writes **Lina Molloholli**

**d**emand for novel experiences is soaring. So, lines are stepping up their game and pulling out all the stops to catch passenger attention, promising experiences that truly transcend the ordinary.

Some operators, such as A-Rosa River Cruises, have noted that matching a customer’s interests to a cruise can persuade the cruise-curious to take their first sailing.

At the Clia 2024 Riverview Conference, A-Rosa’s UK and Ireland managing director Lucia Rowe said, “People are interested in so much more than collapsing on the beach – they love spending their time in a meaningful way.”

From pyjama parties to stepping into Hercule Poirot’s shoes on a murder mystery cruise, there’s a sailing to match every passion.



**PYJAMA PARTY**

For clients seeking a departure (pardon the pun) from traditional sailings, suggest a Virgin Voyages itinerary. Its four ships – *Brilliant Lady*, *Scarlet Lady*, *Valiant Lady* and *Resilient Lady* – offer a range of unusual entertainment, from gravity-defying bungee classes to VHS-themed parties.

As they step on board, guests are invited to slip into their favourite pyjamas pyjamas – be it fleecy PJs, sexy sleepwear or a onesie – and head to the nightclub to embrace the line’s laid-back atmosphere and dance their first night at sea away.

For those after a permanent souvenir, each ship has a branch of Squid Ink – the only tattoo parlour at sea. But they are in high demand, so clients will need to book their appointments well in advance.

**Book it:** A seven-night Irresistible Med & Rome sailing starts at £1,720 per person, based on two sharing an ocean view cabin, departing Barcelona on September 8. The price covers full board, Wi-Fi and tips. [virginvoyages.com](http://virginvoyages.com)

## DESTINATIONS

### CRUISE | QUIRKY SAILINGS

# 3

#### MURDER MYSTERY

Cruise Croatia has teamed up with Wilfred Webster, a contestant on the first series of *The Traitors*, for a murder mystery sailing.

Passengers onboard *MS Adris* will engage in a week-long Croatian caper, guided by the charismatic Wilf. The ultimate survivor will win an all-expenses-paid luxury cruise to Greece in 2025.

When they're not solving gruesome crimes, passengers can disembark at Hvar, Korcula, Vis, Slano and Split to enjoy activities such as visits to national parks, wine tastings, oyster harvesting and daily swims. Onboard amenities include an outdoor lounge area, a splash pool and complimentary access to paddle boards, sea kayaks and snorkelling equipment.

**Book it:** The seven-night Croatia Murder Mystery Cruise starts at £1,000 per person on a half-board basis, departing on August 10. The price includes private transfers, Wi-Fi, a wine-tasting experience, entrance to Mljet national park and guided city tours. Flights cost extra.  
[cruisecroatia.com](http://cruisecroatia.com)



# 4

#### SURPRISE SAILING

For clients who love a surprise – or simply can't decide which glorious Greek island to visit – this cruise offers an itinerary unlike any other.

Departing from Piraeus, Windstar Cruises' first President's Mystery Cruise promises a week-long exploration of hidden gems and secret treasures.

The twist? Each day, the captain will announce the next port of call just 24 hours before arrival. Clients who like to make the most of their cruises should have no fear, as a wealth of shore excursions will showcase the best of each destination. On board this souped-up sailing ship are 44 outside double cabins, a whirlpool bath, a fitness centre and kayaking and paddleboarding equipment.

**Book it:** The seven-night all-inclusive cruise starts at £1,900 per person, departing April 19, 2025. The price includes select alcoholic beverages, Wi-Fi, shore excursions, watersports and more.  
[windstarcruises.com](http://windstarcruises.com)



# 5



#### DISNEY IN ALASKA

The icy Alaskan wonderland is spectacular – and now, it comes sprinkled with a little Disney magic. This new sailing from Disney Cruise Lines sets off from Vancouver and will transport guests to a world of wonder, from character meet-and-greets with snow-capped mountains as a backdrop to Broadway-style shows inspired by Disney classics.

Passengers will glimpse the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Alaskan wilderness while enjoying the world-class entertainment for which the Disney brand is renowned. The itinerary includes visits to sleepy ports of call such as Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and Stikine Icecap, where passengers can marvel at glaciers, as well as brown bears and whales in their natural habitat.

**Book it:** The eight-night Alaskan Cruise onboard *Disney Wonder* starts at £1,673 per person, based on two sharing an ocean-view cabin on a full-board basis, departing on September 15, 2025. The price excludes flights and transfers.  
[disneytravelagents.com](http://disneytravelagents.com)



**BEST OF THE REST**

**Halloween on the High Seas, Disney Cruise Line:**

This spook-tacular adventure is filled with family-friendly frights, from haunted parties and costume contests to pumpkin carving and trick-or-treating with beloved Disney characters. There's also themed deck parties and eerie entertainment, including (slightly) scary shows and mysterious storytelling sessions. Starting from various ports, rates from £696 per person.  
[disneytravelagents.com](http://disneytravelagents.com)

**Greatest Hits Radio Escape, Ambassador Cruise Lines:**

Clients can embark on a voyage filled with nostalgia and timeless tunes, as curated by radio legends at Greatest Hits Radio. With entertainment lined up by Greatest Hits DJs Ken Bruce, Martin Kemp, Jenny Powell and Kate Thornton, the voyage journeys from London Tilbury to two lively cities, Hamburg and Amsterdam. Rates from £669 per person.  
[ambassadorcruiseline.com](http://ambassadorcruiseline.com)

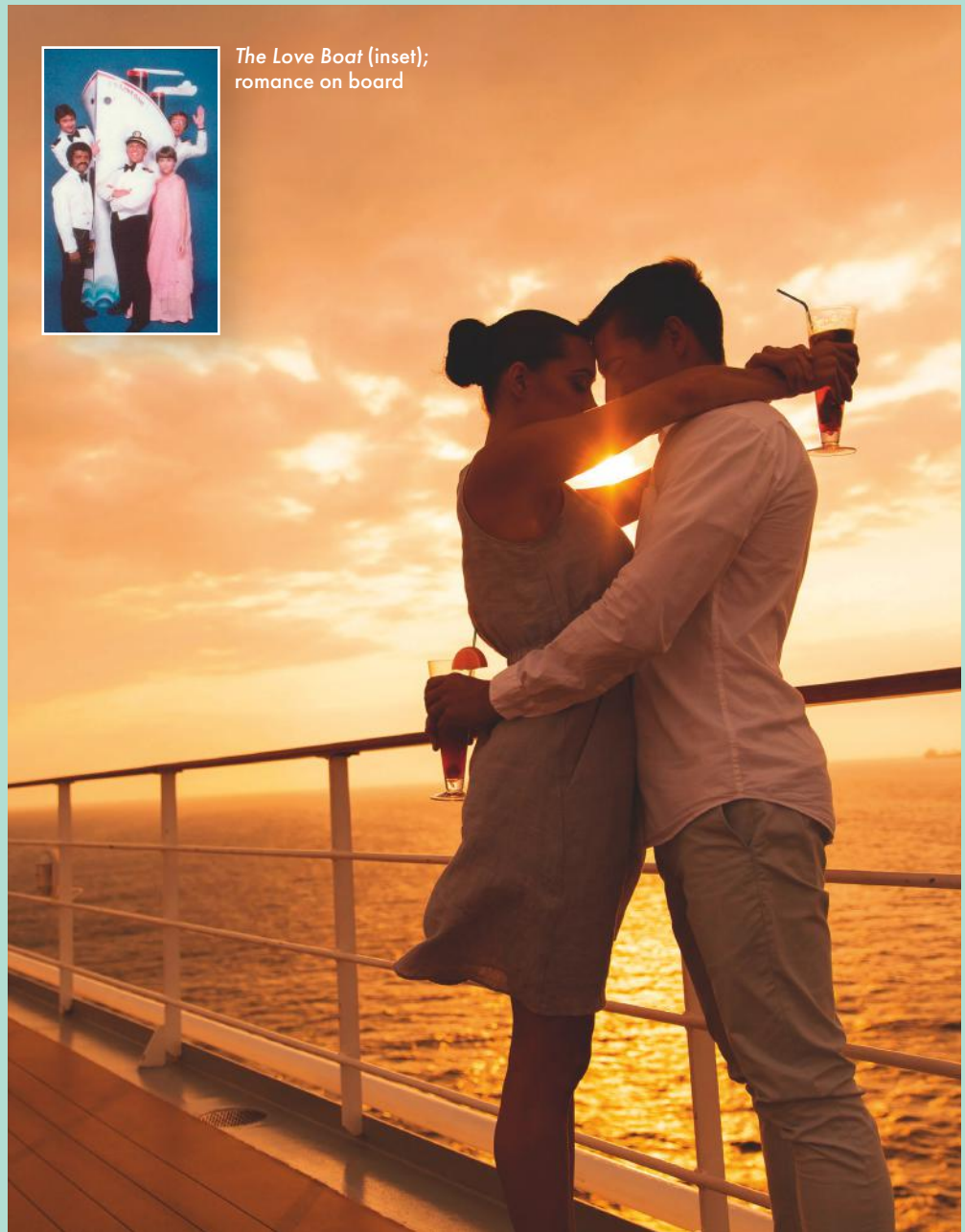


**Eurovision Song Contest at Sea, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line:**

Whether your clients are die-hard Eurovision enthusiasts or simply seeking some Europop fun, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line has joined forces with the annual music competition to bring Eurovision's party atmosphere to four sailings in Europe this May. Guests will be treated to the ultimate Eurovision Song Contest viewing experience, with curated menus, themed cocktails and – naturally – singing competitions. Rates from £329 per person.  
[royalcaribbean.com](http://royalcaribbean.com)



*The Love Boat (inset); romance on board*



**6**

**THE LOVE BOAT**

A Princess Cruises ship served as the filming location for US hit series *The Love Boat* back in the 1970s. Then, in 2022, an inaugural Love Boat-themed voyage brought the cast back together on board a Princess ship – and this year will see the return of this popular sailing.

Princess Cruises' celebrations ambassador, *The Love Boat* actor Jill Whelan will join fellow original cast members on a cheerful cruise sailing from New York and stopping at Newport, Boston, Rockland, Saint John and Halifax.

*The Love Boat*-related activities will include meet-and-greet photo and signing opportunities at the sailaway party, cocktail masterclasses hosted by *The Love Boat's* bartender Ted Lange, a cast Q&A, special screenings and themed menus.

**Book it:** The seven-night cruise onboard *Enchanted Princess*, which departs on August 31, starts at £999 per person including meals, entertainment, Wi-Fi, two fitness classes and a beverage package.  
[princess.com](http://princess.com)

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Michael Jung; clownbusiness