

Q&A

JUAN CARLOS, SHORE EXCURSIONS MANAGER, CELESTYAL

INTERVIEW BY Clare Vooght

Q. How did you become a shore excursions manager?

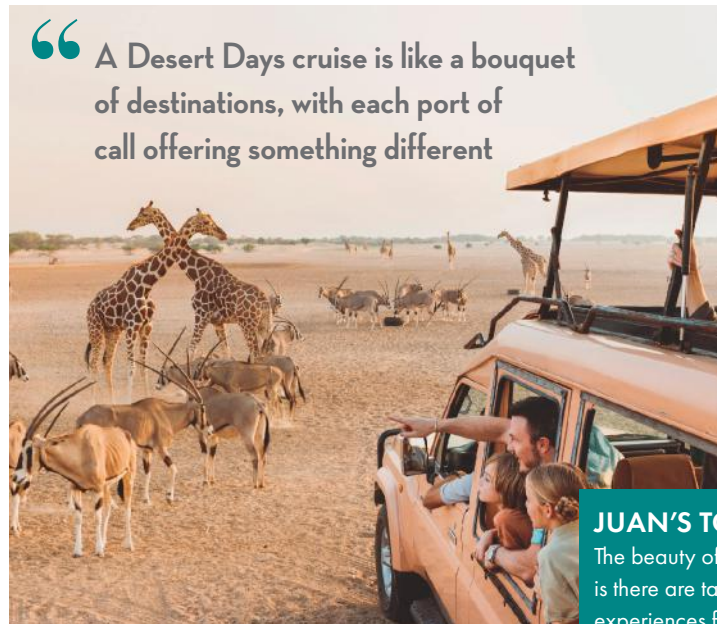
A. I became shorex manager when I was working onboard the former *Celestyal Crystal* while sailing around Cuba. I've also worked in different departments at Celestyal, including housekeeping and in the entertainment team as international host. I've been with Celestyal since it started, and have been lucky enough to sail to a wide range of destinations, including England, Italy, Finland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Egypt, Israel, Mexico, Jamaica, Barbados, Croatia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece.

Q. What does your role involve?

A. I'm responsible for guests from the moment they buy an excursion until they return from the tour. It's a broad role that includes promoting and selling shore excursions, maintaining knowledge of all our policies and security practices, identifying any potential issues and ensuring solutions are found if necessary. I also analyse feedback from guests and work with all departments on board and ashore to develop our excursion programme. I am the primary liaison between our local shore excursion providers and the ship, to arrange transport, guides and other guest services.

Q. What does an average day look like for you?

A. On embarkation day, I wake up early and prepare myself for the guest shore excursion presentation in the main lounge, where I tell our



passengers what's on offer, how to book, how to use the whispers (individual audio headsets) and earphones, and where to find the shorex desk on board. I check participation for all the ports and send the details to our local agent partners so they can make the relevant logistical arrangements. My last task, after closing our shorex desk, is to send the final guest list to the next port of call, which is the next day, and prepare the bus signs, whispers and extra tickets accordingly.

Q. What's your favourite part of the job?

A. When our guests approach the shorex desk before leaving the cruise to say they had a wonderful time on our fabulous tours.



PICTURES: Celestyal, Rachel Pauliney

JUAN'S TOP TIP

The beauty of this sailing is there are tailored experiences for every age – for families, solo travellers and different interest groups. This is a cruise both for those who want to relax and those who want to explore.

Q. What's your favourite shore excursion on the new itinerary?

A. There are so many, it's hard to choose just one. Guests can take panoramic tours through modern cities, a dhow cruise in the Khasab Fjords, visit the most beautiful mosques and experience high tea at stunning six-star hotels. Then there are more adventurous experiences such as ziplining, Formula One track visits and theme parks such as Ferrari World. But if I had to choose just one excursion, it would be the Desert Safari visiting the desert camps. It's a sailing that introduces clients to the Arabian Gulf's fascinating destinations and cultures, offering a wealth of experiences all from the comfort of our beautiful ships. **TW**

Q. Can you tell us about Celestyal's new itineraries in the Arabian Gulf?

A. The new Desert Days cruise is like a bouquet of destinations, as one of our local shore excursion agents likes to put it, with each destination offering something different and unique. The seven-night round-trip sails from Doha, calling at Bahrain, Dubai, Kasab, Sir Bani Yas Island and Abu Dhabi. We have sailings that take in the Qatar and Abu Dhabi Grand Prix races in November and December and some shorter cruise options too. The itinerary debuts in late November and runs through to March 2025 on Celestyal Journey, the most recent addition to our fleet.