



Celebrity Apex

Celebrity Cruises

OVERVIEW: *Celebrity Apex* started sailing in July 2021, more than 14 months later than planned as its April 2020 christening and maiden season had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. It is now due to be christened in Fort Lauderdale in November by godmother Reshma Saujani, founder and chief executive of Girls Who Code. The ship holds 2,910 passengers.

CABINS: There are various categories of Retreat-class suites, including Iconic Suites that sit above the bridge and beautiful two-storey villas. All feature British designer Kelly Hoppen's creative touch and come with butlers and unlimited free speciality dining. The bulk of the accommodation has sunroom-like verandas instead of balconies, allowing residents to enjoy fresh air even on wet or windy days, though a number of cabins are either inside without a view, or look out to sea but with a window that doesn't open. All look stylish in greys and creams, with a flash of Celebrity's trademark blue.

FOOD AND DRINK: Instead of the traditional main dining room, four themed restaurants serve the same menu but also their own specialities – something Italian in Tuscan, Mediterranean in Cyprus and so on. So that's four places to eat before you even start on the paid-for steaks in Fine Cut and seafood in Raw on Five. Le Grand Bistro is the home of Le Petit Chef, where diners watch an animated version of their meal being prepared before the real thing turns up, which is a fabulous fun-and-food combo. Throw in healthy Blu for

AquaClass passengers and Luminae for those in suites and you need at least 10 nights to do the rounds.

DESIGN: The ship looks a million dollars, which is a pretty conservative estimate of how much was spent on the decor. Kelly Hoppen has stamped her signature greys, blacks, creams and reds on areas reserved for suite passengers. Pull yourself away from these stylish spots and you find a mirrored walkway, swirling chandeliers, dazzling sculptures and eye-catching paintings. It might not be the Louvre, but you could spend hours admiring each piece.

USP: In case the gorgeous outdoor Retreat and lounge for suite passengers, or the spectacular Roof Top Garden where passengers can hide away behind shrubs or take a perch with views out to sea, are not enough, how about a platform the size of a tennis court? The Magic Carpet travels up and down the side of the ship changing function from tender platform to restaurant as it moves.

BOOK IT: *Celebrity Apex* is spending summer 2022 in northern Europe and the Mediterranean. Prices lead in at £1,345 per person cruise-only for an inside cabin for seven nights in the Norwegian fjords round-trip from Amsterdam departing August 13, 2022. A Sky Suite with Retreat access costs from £3,495 per person. All prices include drinks, tips and Wi-Fi. celebritycruises.com

Reviewed by Jane Archer