

Q&A

ANDY HARMER, DIRECTOR
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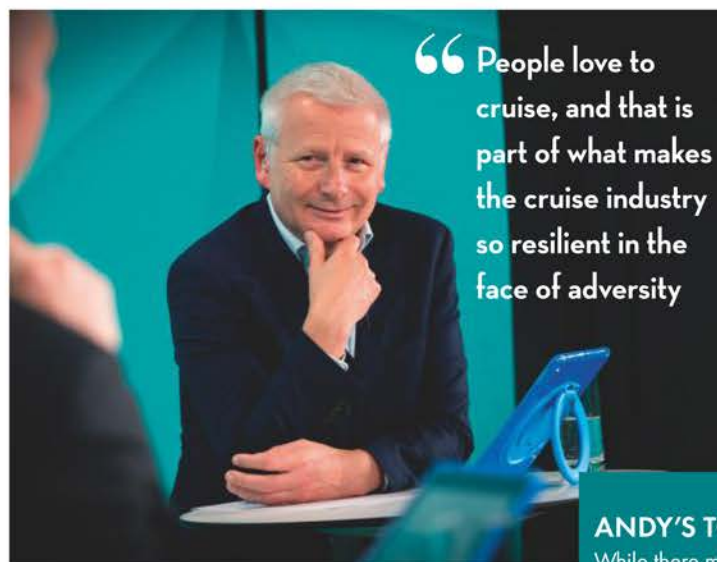
INTERVIEW BY Katie McGonagle

Q. Can you update us on the latest news about the restart of cruising?

A. The government's Global Travel Taskforce report has concluded that a phased approach to the restart of cruise should be implemented 'as soon as it is safe to do so'. While we welcome this report and the government's broad commitment to restarting the cruise sector, there is still no certainty about when the industry – which employs 88,000 people and is worth £10 billion a year to the economy – can restart. We are now calling on the government to set a timeline to safely start domestic cruises in early 2021, and international cruises to destinations where travel corridors are open from spring 2021.

Q. What industry standards have you put in place for your members, and how have cruise lines responded?

A. In October, the industry came together to develop a new Covid-19 framework for cruise operators, providing clear guidelines for enhanced public health protection. Globally, Clia's ocean-going cruise line members have agreed to 100% testing of passengers and crew. This is mandatory for all ocean-going cruise line members for the initial restart of passenger services and applies to vessels carrying 250 or more passengers. Other protocols include expanded cleaning and sanitation for ships and terminals; comprehensive prevention, surveillance, and response



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ANDY'S TOP TIP

While there may be new health and safety protocols, what will not change is the fantastic service and the unique experiences that only a cruise holiday can provide.

measures; social distancing where possible; and the use of face coverings where social distancing cannot be observed.

Q. What lessons can be learned from the cruise lines that have restarted sailings so far?

A. Clia members have adopted a set of enhanced protocols informed by the recommendations of experts in public health and science, as well as the experiences of members who have resumed sailing successfully in Europe and other parts of the world. With limited resumption now underway, these sailings give us confidence that we are on the right course. What we have learned is that when procedures are in place, rigorously followed and there is transparent communication, the protocols are working as designed – to mitigate the risk of Covid-19.

Q. How long do you think it will take until we get back to 2019 passenger levels?

A. Like the rest of the world, and other travel and tourism sectors in particular, the cruise community is facing a challenge that is unprecedented in scale. Still, people love to cruise, and that is part of what makes the cruise industry so resilient in the face of adversity. We are confident that people will return to the seas, just as they will return to restaurants, bars, cinemas and the like.

Q. What have Clia and its members been doing to support cruise agents this year?

A. Clia has been amplifying the voice of the cruise community and



engaging with travel agent members through various virtual initiatives. Our agents have heard from industry

experts via Clia Cruise podcasts and webcasts, and kept up to date with changes through Clia webinars and live Q&A debates. As always, Clia continues to offer a host of exclusive online resources, providing agents with current industry insights, trends and statistics. We have just held our final event for 2020, the Virtual Cruise Showcase, where we were joined by cruise experts who shared industry updates alongside training and virtual networking sessions. We look forward to being back together next year and will be announcing details of our 2021 virtual and in-person events soon. **TW**