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Ocean's elevenses 美饌巡航

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This page: Dream Cruises new ship boasts 35 bars and restaurants that cater to all tastes

本頁：Dream Cruises的新郵輪上，有35間酒吧及餐廳，供應多款美酒佳餚

Hutton: Ocean's elevenenses ????

Catering to discerning passengers on cruise ships is a major undertaking, but it offers wonderful and bountiful rewards. 在郵輪上為高品味的旅客提供高質素的餐飲服務，是一項龐大而重要的任務，然而對廚師而言，這是個難得而又豐盛的經驗。By Mercedes Hutton

Ocean's 美饌巡航 elevenenses

Mankind enjoys a fruitful relationship with the sea, and the world's oceans have long been essential to the movement of goods, people and knowledge, while also providing the means for extraordinary adventures. Few experiences afford the latter quite like a voyage on a cruise ship.

Considering our traditional ties with water, pleasure cruises are a relatively recent development. Until the early 19th century, shipping was primarily concerned with mail and cargo, but that changed in 1818, when a group of New York-based merchants founded Black Ball Line, a passenger service sailing trans-Atlantic routes. The early years of the 20th century, before the outbreak of World War I, formed the golden age of cruising, with huge ocean-going ships becoming the floating equivalent of opulent hotels, and elegant passengers dressing for dinner in gilded dining rooms.

Formal feasts at sea have largely disappeared since then, of course, and today's liners offer passengers a variety of informal epicurean options. Food, in fact, is one of the most important factors that travellers consider when booking cruises, and many lines have entered into partnerships with high-profile chefs.

Carnival Cruise Line spearheaded the trend in 2005, aligning with acclaimed French Chef Georges Blanc. In 2014, boutique operation Aqua Expeditions appointed award-winning Australian David Thompson as consulting chef for its Aqua Mekong river cruises. Thompson, who otherwise heads up Thai restaurant Nahm in Bangkok, which has appeared in the World's 50 Best Restaurants list every year since 2012, jumped on board after being invited to check out the vessel by Aqua Expeditions' Italian-American founder Francesco Galli Zugaro. "As soon as I cruised on the boat," the chef says, "I became an Aqua convert."

And then there's three-Michelin-starred French Chef Arnaud Lallement, who has an advisory role at Disney Cruise Line's French-inspired Remy restaurants, while celebrity Chef Guy Fieri has put his name to Guy's Burger Joint outlets on Carnival Cruise Line's ships, and much-lauded Cornelius Gallagher is associate vice president of food and beverage operations with Celebrity Cruises.

自古以來，海洋一直是客運、貨運甚至是文化知識交流的重要渠道，許多非比尋常的歷險故事也是從海洋展開；人類都很享受跟大海的連繫。直至現在，甚少運輸工具能夠提供如郵輪般的旅程。

人與大海的關係自古有之，但是郵輪旅遊卻是始於上個世紀。19世紀初，航運主要用於運載郵件和貨物，到了1818年，一群紐約商人成立了Black Ball Line，提供橫渡大西洋的客運服務。20世紀初，在第一次世界大戰爆發前，是郵輪旅遊的黃金時代，遠洋大郵輪上的設施猶如富麗堂皇的酒店，旅客在晚上都會盛裝打扮，來到金碧輝煌的餐廳中進餐。

不過，現今在郵輪上舉行正式盛宴已經不多見，船上提供的多是休閒享樂的選擇。然而，餐飲仍是旅客考慮選乘哪一家郵輪的重要因素之一，於是不少郵輪公司都與著名廚師合作。

箇中例子多不勝數，比如Carnival Cruise Line在2005年與法國名廚Georges Blanc合作，為這類計劃開創先河。2014年，提供豪華河輪旅遊的Aqua Expeditions，則委任澳洲得獎名廚David Thompson擔任旗下Aqua Mekong湄公河輪的顧問廚師。Thompson接受Aqua Expeditions創辦人Francesco Galli Zugaro的邀請到河輪上視察後說：「當我在船上時，立刻被Aqua的優質服務所吸引。」他主理的曼谷Nahm餐廳，從2012年開始每年都成為「世界50間最佳餐廳」之一。

此外，法國米芝蓮三星廚師Arnaud Lallement為Disney Cruise Line的法國餐廳Remy擔任顧問，而Carnival郵輪公司與星級廚師Guy Fieri合作在船上開設Guy's Burger Joint餐廳，備受推崇的Cornelius Gallagher是Celebrity Cruises餐飲部的助理副總裁。

In 2016, Princess Cruises announced that its newest ship, Majestic Princess, will benefit from the culinary expertise of Emmanuel Renaut, from three-Michelin-starred restaurant Flocons de Sel that nestles in the French Alps, as well as Richard Chen, former executive chef at Wing Lei in Las Vegas – the first Chinese restaurant in the United States to be awarded a Michelin star. Tailored specifically to the Chinese market and set to make its maiden voyage in April, Majestic Princess will be the only cruise ship in China to offer two speciality restaurants with menus designed by Michelin-starred chefs. Neither Renaut nor Chen, of course, will be permanently on board to oversee day-to-day operations, that role will fall to Princess Cruises' Executive Chef Nilo Palma.

The difference between running a traditional restaurant kitchen, which might serve a few hundred people a day, and catering for thousands across numerous outlets on a leviathan cruise ship is substantial, and the challenge is not limited to heading up a large team working around the clock (the ship Diamond Princess, for example, employs 198 kitchen staff in its galley). "It's not like working on land, where you can buy produce any time and anywhere you want," says Palma. "On a ship it's a different story; providing 10,000 meals on average a day is quite a job."

Calculating quantities of produce required can be particularly demanding. "One of the biggest challenges is when you start to run out of provisions," Palma says. "Fortunately, we are logistically very well organised, so this does not happen very often. We have specific ports approved by the head office from which we can buy produce according to quality, safety and quarantine purposes."

Thompson agrees that maintaining correct quotas is critical. "One of the initial challenges was to ensure we had enough ingredients on the boat at all times to satisfy unexpected requests," he says, adding, however, that the fact that Aqua Mekong sails along a river makes fresh produce readily accessible. "We are able to use the freshest ingredients that we source locally from the river markets. With such a wide array available, we are able to find the best local, organic produce. In particular, the fruit the chefs take aboard will change with the seasons; rambutans, jackfruit, santols and lychees will find themselves in the dining rooms when in season."

Given the size of Princess Cruises' ships, food storage must be approached with military precision. "We employ the first in, first out [FIFO] system," explains Palma, detailing the straightforward but effective food-rotation method that prevents foodborne illness and keeps kitchen costs down. Fridge and freezer temperatures, Palma adds, are monitored continuously. And though the responsibilities associated with cruise catering are immense, Palma remains passionate about his role. "Creating a dish takes a lot of time, passion and skill, but the ultimate reward at the end of the day is an empty plate," he says. "I am very proud to say that Princess Cruises offers classic cooking in the tradition of the prestigious group the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs."

Clockwise from left: preparing dishes on the galley of the Disney Dream; the restaurant on board the Costa Fortuna illustrates the industrial size of the

job at hand; Aromatic Curry of Chicken and Pumpkin, just one of the Asian-inspired dishes created by David Thompson for the Aqua Mekong

左上圖起順時針：廚師正在迪士尼夢想郵輪的廚房內為乘客準備餐膳；歌詩達郵輪幸運號上設有偌大的餐廳，可想而知，廚師們的工作十分繁重；David Thompson為Aqua Mekong設計的香濃南瓜咖喱雞，靈感來自亞洲的美食

“On a ship it's a different story; providing 10,000 meals on average a day is quite a job 但是在船上是一回事；而我們每天平均需要提供10,000份餐膳，工作十分繁重”



Princess Cruises在2016年宣佈，旗下最新的盛世公主號定於2017年4月首航，並邀請了國際著名大廚Emmanuel Renaut和Richard Chen為船上的餐廳設計菜單。Renaut是法國阿爾卑斯山米芝蓮三星餐廳Flocons de Sel的行政總廚，而Richard Chen是拉斯維加斯永利酒店永利坊餐廳的前任行政總廚。永利坊是美國第一家獲得米芝蓮一星的中餐廳。盛世公主號將會是中國市場裡唯一同時擁有兩位米芝蓮廚師為餐飲掌舵的郵輪。Renaut和Chen當然不會經常在郵輪上，而負責日常運作的重任就落在郵輪行政總廚Nilo Palma的身上了。

管理一個每天款待數百人的傳統廚房，跟在遠洋郵輪上管理招待數以千計旅客的多家餐廳，實在是大相徑庭。然而在郵輪負責餐飲的挑戰，還不止於帶領一個一天24小時運作的龐大團隊（鑽石公主號就有198位廚房員工）。Palma說：「在陸地的話，你可以在任何地方、任何時間購買農產品，但是在船上是一回事；而我們每天平均需要提供10,000份餐膳，工作十分繁重。」

單是計算需要多少農產品就已經夠吃力了。Palma說：「當船上的食材短缺，會構成很大的挑戰；還好的是，我們的物流管理做得很好，這樣的情況很少發生。我們可以停泊在數個由總部批准的港口，按照質量、安全和檢疫的規定補充食材。」

Thompson 同樣認為，維持船上有足夠的食材很重要。「任何時候我們都需要確保食材充足，以應付客人突如其來的要求。」他又補充說，因為Aqua Mekong沿河航行，補充農產品會比較容易些。「當地河邊市場售賣的食物品種很多，不難找



到最新鮮、最好的有機農產品。廚師買回來的水果都會隨著季節而改變，時令蔬果如紅毛丹、波羅蜜、檳榔和荔枝都會在餐廳出現。」

不過，Princess Cruises旗下的都是大船，所以貯存食物的方式必須十分精準。Palma說：「我們採用『先進來、先使用』的系統（FIFO）。」這個直接但有效的方法，可以防止食物腐爛繁衍細菌，同時降低廚房的成本；此外，冰箱和冷凍櫃的溫度也要經常監察。雖然負責郵輪上的飲食責任重大，Palma對於他的工作充滿熱情。「創造一個菜式需要很多時間、精神和技巧，但是看到客人把碟上的食物吃個清光，就是最佳的獎賞。Princess Cruises是按照法國國際美食協會的傳統進行烹調，這點令我深感自豪。」

Palma又說，郵輪廚師除了要有扎實的廚房經驗、創造超凡美食的熱情，還需要在不同範疇接受訓練，包括健康衛生、食物成本分析以及市場學。對於有志投身郵輪工作的人士，香港國際廚藝學院開辦為期兩個月全日制的郵輪烹飪證書課程，除教授理論知識、廚藝技能、自助餐和地中海飲食知識，亦會為學生提供就業輔助。

在大海上工作，對於個人來說有甚麼得著？Palma表示首先吸引他的，就是能夠到處遊歷，結識來自不同文化、不同國家的人。他對準備揚帆展開海上旅程的人說：「工作的時候保持微笑，然後世界也會向你報以微笑。」

Palma adds that, as well as solid kitchen experience and a strong desire to create exceptional gastronomic experiences, a cruise-line chef needs training across various fields, including health and hygiene, food-cost analysis and marketing. Fortunately, for those wishing to gain employment on ships, the International Culinary Institute of Hong Kong offers a two-month Certificate in Cruise Cuisine. The full-time course enables students to gain theoretical knowledge, appropriate skills and an understanding of buffets and Mediterranean cuisine, and offers job-placement assistance.

And what personal benefits can be enjoyed by those taking to the high seas? Well, what first attracted Palma to cruise catering was the draw of travelling internationally, and mixing with people from many different countries and cultures. "Keep smiling while you're working," he advises those setting sail on a maritime adventure, "and the world will smile back at you."

IMAGE: BLAINE HARRINGTON III / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO