

CMI Leisure: Running the Hotel Operation

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“Everything. Full turn-key hotel operation,” said Dietmar Wertanzl, president and CEO, describing the scope of CMI Leisure’s services.

The Miami-based company manages hotel operations on six expedition ships, the World Odyssey for Semester at Sea, and both niche Victory Cruise Line ships.

“It’s all customized to the client and their needs,” Wertanzl said, in the [2019 Expedition Market Report](#) by *Cruise Industry News*. “Our clients are very international.”

Managing hotel operations including catering, food and beverage, spas, gift shops, crew and more areas, clients include Canada-based Quark, Poseidon

Expeditions, IcelandPro's Ocean Diamond and the Ocean Endeavor for Atlantic Canada, as well as the Denmark-based Albatros Expeditions fleet.

Later this year, CMI will manage the startup of the Greg Mortimer for Australia-based Aurora Expeditions, including the entire initial hotel purchasing from flatware to linens.

The 160-guest expedition ship is being built for SunStone Ships in China and will be on long-term charter to Aurora, year-round.

"Generally speaking, everyone is looking at an increase in quality, upgrading the product, or having an additional food outlet or multiple dining concepts," continued Wertanzl, who said the company had 16 employees in Miami and was poised to grow with an expanding expedition fleet.

Most quality improvements come in the culinary arena, with more regional cuisine and fresh fish, which are not areas where there are much cost savings. Some clients have also opted for sustainable seafood programs.

For Iceland ProCruises, a regional food plan was put together earlier this year and fully in place by April prior to the company's May start. New regional cuisine will rely on a local supplier in Iceland.

"That also includes a fresh fish supplier in certain ports," Wertanzl said. "We want a certain reliability with the partners and suppliers."

Also new is Green Program 2.0, focusing on eliminating waste, single-use plastics and conserving hotel energy.

While the onboard product can be tailored from three stars to five-star plus, the general offering is four-star plus. Some clients are hands on, involved in every decision, while others focus more on sales and marketing.

Economies of scale are found in purchasing and knowledge.

"We are really experts in this segment," Wertanzl said. "We provide synergies, consistent delivery, and the more ships we have under us the more buying power we have."

Running ships all over the world in the expedition market, it also means CMI is used to ports no one has ever heard of and the logistical challenge to supply a fleet.

"We have a pretty good database of suppliers," noted Wertanzl.

The company also has all the systems in place across its ships: point of sale, procurement, hotel management and more.

Challenges are simple: finding crew.

That is compounded by the quickly expanding Mandarin-speaking market.

With regular Chinese groups and more full-ship charters, front-of-house, bar and restaurant staff that can speak both Mandarin and English is becoming a normal requirement. In addition is a need for Chinese and Asian chefs.