

# interview

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**interview**

International Cruise Ship Industry

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In the latest Q&A undertaken by International Cruise Ship Industry (ICSI), we talked with Lisa McCabe, Vice President of Hotel Refurbishment at Carnival Cruise Line.

She has just returned from overseeing the hotel side of the \$200 mill transition of the 'Carnival Triumph' into the 'Carnival Sunrise' at Navantia's Cadiz shipyard.

**Q:** How far in advance do you start planning a refurbishment and are the drydocks reserved several months in advance? I guess this does depend on the size of the refit and what is involved.

**A:** It really all depends on the complexity of the refit and the new and/or renovated spaces that will be added.

We start planning a year or even several years prior to the scheduled renovation date with dozens of team members responsible design development, engineering feasibility studies, logistical analysis and other duties in advance of the dry dock.

**Q:** Are there enough ship repairers with expertise in the cruise ship market today, especially as the fleet in general becomes larger both in ship terms and in numbers?

**A:** Qualified shipyards and outfitters are an important part of the success of any ship refurbishment. Thankfully there are a growing numbers of outfitters who specialise in types of cruise ship refurbishment.

**Q:** I understand you head up various project teams. Are these split between the ship types or what the refit entails in terms of scale?

**A:** Yes, there are different teams that handle projects based on their scale. My team oversees the hotel

refurbishment department and is responsible for large-scale projects, which include new culinary, beverage and entertainment venues designed to enhance the guest experience.

These range installing food and beverage outlets to new outdoor deck features such as water parks and ropes courses.

**Q:** How many teams do you head up at present?

**A:** My role at Carnival is vice president of hotel refurbishment and I lead a group of highly talented analysts, planners, and project managers with diversified backgrounds who oversee large-scale refurbishment projects.

Most recently, we completed an extensive \$200 mill transformation of 'Carnival Triumph' into 'Carnival Sunrise' during a two-month-long drydock in Cadiz, Spain. It was a complete bow-to-stern makeover and the results were simply amazing thanks to everyone's hard work!

**Q:** Are you handling purely Carnival Cruise Line or do you become involved in the other diverse Carnival Corp brands as well?

**A:** Previously, I worked for Carnival Corporation where I received exposure to many of the brands within the company's diverse cruise ship portfolio. Currently I



The 'Carnival Sunrise'

work only with Carnival Cruise Line fleet of 26 ships.

**Q:** For a refurbishment project, do you also select an independent interior designer or might you use several depending on the scale of the refurbishment and which part of the ship is to be modified?

**A:** We have a talented in-house design team that plans, develops and implements our extensive refurbishment projects. Depending on the size of the refurbishment, we will partner with outside design/architect firms.

**Q:** You obviously liaise with the shipyard and the ship's technical management team (superintendents) who will probably be busy with interior and exterior equipment replacements and repairs while the vessel is in dock. How does this work - team meeting way in advance of a drydocking project?

**A:** My team collaborates closely with many internal departments here at Carnival to identify the work which will take place throughout the vessel.

This helps identify any interferences or conflicts that may arise during the refurbishment process.

**Q:** How do you decide on what needs replacing or refurbishing on the hotel/leisure side of the refit? There are so many different brands on today's cruise ships, does this depend on the intended area of operation to a large extent and customer feedback?

**A:** Many departments at Carnival work closely together to determine the feasibility of renovating a certain vessel as well as which new and enhanced spaces would work for that particular ship both from an aesthetics and business perspective.

Once that decision is made, my team takes the ideas and makes them into reality.

**Q:** With Carnival now operating virtually worldwide, there must be so many different cultures to cater for, ie US, European, Asian, etc. Is each vessel redesigned or refurbished to attract different country groups, if she is destined for a certain region? For example, the Japanese tend to be totally different from the Chinese and as for the Brits and Germans, French, all of this must be taken into account in the interior design and the offerings on board. Australasia has also become a popular cruising region over the last few years.

**A:** Carnival Cruise Line ships are based exclusively in North America and Australia and our ships are designed to cater to their respective markets.

**Q:** I noted that you were quoted as saying recently that it was still worth spending money on the older ships in the fleet. Is this mainly for the US market short cruises and are these vessels' dockings mainly handled in the US and the Bahamas?

**A:** Considering the cost of a new ship can be more than a \$1 bill, renovating existing ships provides us an opportunity to enhance our vessels and provide our guests with exciting new choices at a cost that is a fraction of building a brand new ship.

Thus far, we have invested \$2 bill in ship enhancements and the feedback we've received from our guests is nothing short of sensational.

**Q:** Some of the older vessels have quite a following today. As more and more people go to sea for their vacation, are you noticing that this scenario is increasing as cruisers become more discerning?

**A:** Carnival Cruise Line carries 5.2 mill guests annually – the most in cruising – so suffice to say that we host millions of repeat cruisers each year, some of them sailing on the same ship over and over again.

In fact there is a couple who has sailed on board 'Carnival Sensation' when it was based out of Port Canaveral more than 200 times!

**Q:** Is the 'Carnival Triumph' revamp into the 'Carnival Sunshine' one the largest your department has undertaken? Was this total rebuild decided upon due to her new cruising area out of Norfolk (Va)? I read that a team was already on board the ship before she arrived in Cadiz. Is this normal practice, as there has been criticisms in the past of work still underway during cruise ships first voyages having completed a drydocking?

**A:** At a cost of \$200 mill and a two-month drydock, 'Carnival Sunrise' is the largest refurbishment in terms of days and dollars in the history of Carnival Cruise Line.

The totally transformed ship will sail out of Norfolk for a few cruises before shifting to New York for a summer schedule of Bermuda and Caribbean cruises beginning 23rd May. She will then transfer to Fort Lauderdale later in the year.

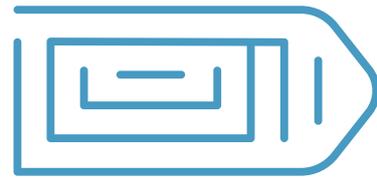
The renovation of 'Carnival Triumph' began after her last cruise from New Orleans, as we had contractors on board the vessel as it sailed to Cadiz for the scheduled drydock.

We are very selective of the work that occurs in service in order to not impact our guests' vacation experience.

**Q:** Safety is obviously paramount during a refit, highlighted by the fire reported on board in Cadiz. This does happen quite often, although thankfully this was extinguished quickly as most are. Did this hold the vessel's refit up?

**A:** At Carnival, we take an immense sense of pride in making safety a priority both while sailing and in drydock.

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