

INTERIOR VIEW

Aurora Botnia

Wasaline has set high expectations for its new ferry, billing it as the world's most environmentally friendly vessel. Jon Ingleton asks Peter Ståhlberg for an insider's perspective



The interior design scheme in spaces like the à la carte restaurant have been inspired by the natural landscapes found in the Gulf of Bothnia

Wasaline's Aurora Botnia has been designed to set a new environmental and technical standard when she starts service on the Gulf of Bothnia between Vaasa, Finland and Umeå, Sweden in January 2021. Although she will initially operate using a dual-fuel and battery-powered solution, the ship will be also be primed for running on both LNG and biogas.

However, she does not just have an environmentally friendly technical profile; the company has taken a green approach with her interiors too.

"Eco-friendliness has been taken into account everywhere – both in the design and the use of the spaces," says Peter Ståhlberg, CEO of Wasaline. "For example, when passenger numbers decrease in the low season, we'll be able to save energy by turning off lights and heating in empty spaces. We will also display our energy use and show our environmental fingerprint during the voyage."

According to Ståhlberg, the primary characteristic of Aurora Botnia's interiors will be their affinity with the natural environment. "From the very beginning, it was obvious to Wasaline that the design



Kudos Design has combined soft colours with natural materials to create a contemporary Scandinavian-style interior in the buffet

INTERIOR VIEW

should be honest and simple, just like the Bothnian region in which she will be sailing,” he explains.

Indeed, the plentiful creative stimuli in the Bothnian Gulf have provided rich pickings for the interior design team. “The designers were inspired by the windswept islands of the Bothnian archipelago, the wide-open fields, the majestic landscape of Västerbotten, the traditional craftsmanship skills and modern greenhouse farming,” says Ståhlberg. “The design is modern, fresh and makes use of natural colours – it’s very down to earth.”

Aurora Botnia will have a generous passenger space ratio and offer an attractive mix of facilities to suit a broad demographic. “We want to provide cruise experiences that are bigger than the size of our company,” explains Ståhlberg. “This means that we will provide different kinds of onboard places that our passengers can enjoy, from conference rooms and various restaurants, to a dance bar and a playroom for children.”

Wasa Express, the ship currently servicing the Vasa-Umeå route, is very popular with passengers and Ståhlberg hopes these onboard offerings will make Aurora Botnia similarly blessed.

“We want passengers to feel welcome and close to our new vessel,” he explains. “We want to be the most sympathetic shipping company and, of course, we also want to be the pride of the Gulf of Bothnia.”

Ståhlberg is conscious that such pride must be earned over time, but he believes the vessel’s sustainability stories will give her a winning head start and take her straight into the hearts of the communities she will serve. “The ferry is incredibly environmentally friendly and there are plenty of stories for us to share about her interiors,” he remarks. “She was planned with an environmental conscience, using recycled or otherwise very eco-friendly materials. For example, the carpets in the cabins are made from old fishing nets and there are tables made from recycled materials.”

With so many engaging stories behind so many of the onboard spaces, Ståhlberg finds it hard to discern which will be his personal favourite. “I think all of her interior spaces will become much-loved places,” he says. “However, the business lounge with big panoramic windows will take me close to nature. The great views and the opportunity to work in comfort will surely make it my favourite office.” **CFI**



What’s onboard?

Peter Ståhlberg gives an insight into the interior spaces that will delight guests of all ages on Aurora Botnia

Dance bar and pub: this will be a space for guests to relax and have a drink, listen to local troubadours, dance and enjoy a full entertainment programme.

A la carte restaurant: the dining venue will offer menus that change each season, allowing passengers and their loved ones to enjoy delicious meals made with mainly local produce.

Buffet restaurant: we want everyone from families with small children to business guests to feel welcome in this space – there will be good local food, a selection of quality wines and a relaxed atmosphere. Guests will be able to choose the delicacies they want to eat from the buffet and there will always be a story linked to the local products used in the dishes.

Cafe: as shown in the picture above, we will draw inspiration from the colours of Finland’s open Ostrobothnia fields with their greenhouse farms to offer simple dishes, hamburgers or just a cup of coffee.

Business lounge: this will be a space for people who want to work productively – or relax between emails – in a quiet environment with a picturesque view. The fast internet service will facilitate virtual meetings and media streaming services.

Conference room: the modular configuration of the conference room will enable us to arrange high-quality meetings for between two and 150 people.

Children’s playroom: our architect, Kudos Dsign, has developed a new concept to ensure our youngest passengers enjoy the voyage.

Sun deck: many people want to be outdoors, especially during the summer, so our sun deck will be the perfect place for them to relax with a good drink and enjoy the beautiful archipelago.

Pet’s lounge: we always take great care of dogs, cats and other pets, so they will have their own lounge on the ship. Passengers will be able to leave them in a cage or stay with them throughout the voyage.

INTERVIEW

Collaboration is key

Pia Litokorpi from Kudos Dsign outlines the process of designing Wasaline’s Aurora Botnia for Elly Yates-Roberts



The design of the Pub reflects the honest simplicity of life in the Bothnia region



“It’s important to get to know the customer and its business before you begin drawing”

For Kudos Dsign CEO and founder Pia Litokorpi, delivering an impressive interior design involves incorporating elements of the environment in which a ship will be sailing and close customer collaboration.

The company’s Nordic touch is visible in most of the spaces onboard Wasaline’s Aurora Botnia, from the passenger cabins and corridors, to the main public areas such as the restaurants and retail outlets. The interiors were inspired by the natural simplicity of the Bothnia region.

“We’ve chosen materials that reflect the area and also fit with our mutual sustainable values,” she explains. “For example, some of the carpets onboard are made from discarded fishing nets. These environmentally friendly materials and displays of a local photographer’s work have enabled us to bring the nature of the Bothnia archipelago onboard.”

To ensure that these spaces are both functional and beautiful, Kudos Dsign worked closely with Wasaline from the very early stages of the project – something that Litokorpi believes was essential to the project’s successful completion.

“Before any project, it’s important to get to know the customer and its business before you begin drawing,” she says. “We travelled with Wasaline on one of its other ships to identify areas that needed improving and those that we could use again on Aurora Botnia. We also held regular meetings together to implement all practical considerations in our drawings, which will ultimately ensure a long-lasting design and improve functionality and the customer experience.

“Our ability to listen to the customer and its trust in our expertise has made this project an example of good customer collaboration.” **CFI**



Aurora Botnia is set to become the world’s most environmentally friendly ferry when she begins service January 2021

Crystal Endeavor

Crystal Cruises' second expedition yacht will raise the bar in the industry by striking the perfect balance of adventure and luxury

Currently under construction at MV Werften Shipyard in Stralsund, Germany, Crystal Cruises' Crystal Endeavor will provide guests with the perfect combination of luxury yachting and adventure when she sails her maiden voyage around Tasmania and New Zealand later this year.

The polar-class expedition vessel is expected to sail the Northeast Passage in her inaugural season in 2021, taking guests through the Pacific Ocean to view sights along the Arctic coastlines of Norway and Russia. Some of the trip's highlights will include visits to the Unesco World Heritage Site of Wrangel Island and the New Siberian Islands where passengers can see prehistoric relics such as fossils of

woolly mammoths and sabre-tooth tigers, and Palaeolithic human tools.

"The Northeast Passage is precisely the type of bold expedition for which Crystal Endeavor is designed, with offshore dynamic positioning, zodiacs and virtually all other gear necessary for such intrepid exploration," said Tom Wolber, president and CEO of Crystal Cruises, when the route was first announced. "In addition to these technical amenities, she'll accommodate guests in the highest standard of comfort and luxury, even as they travel to the most remote destinations."

Adventure is a theme reflected throughout the ship, with expedition-specific spaces created by British firm AD Associates, including the Expedition Studio and Captain's

Design note:

GOING WITH THE FLOW
AD Associates' longstanding relationship with Crystal Cruises enabled it to develop the ship's general arrangement plan and optimise the flow throughout public areas.



The Penthouse Suite will feature a heated storage closet for expedition gear and an en suite bathroom



Lounge, the fold-out marina, designated Mud Rooms and the Helicopter Lounge. However, the comfortable interiors will provide a complete contrast from the rugged outdoors.

Unlike polar explorer Nils Nordenskiöld who would have stayed in less pleasant conditions when he made the first transit of the Northeast Passage in 1878, Crystal Endeavor's cruisers will benefit from the comfort and intimacy of a luxury hotel.

Able to host up to 200 guests, the ship's accommodation – designed by Finnish firm Kudos Dsign – will comprise five different types of all-suite, all-veranda, butler-serviced rooms with light-coloured decor, marble surfaces and king-sized beds. The largest of these – the Expedition Suite – will also feature an expansive living and dining area, two separate spa-like bathrooms with full jacuzzis and anti-fog mirrors, and heated storage for expedition gear.

Guests will also be able to make use of the shared spaces onboard, which include six open-seating dining areas, multiple entertainment options and a spa and fitness centre, much of which

AD Associates played a major role in designing. The dining options will range from casual, self-service venues such as The Pantry to the fine-dining experiences offered by the Michelin-inspired Waterside.

AD Associates also created the Japanese-Peruvian Umi Uma & Sushi Bar – one of restaurateur Nobu Matsuhisa's only sea-going restaurants – in collaboration with Matsuhisa's own designer. Guests will be able to satisfy their taste for fusion cuisine amongst island-style seating and moody red and dark-toned colour scheme which will hark back to Japan's traditional earthenware and samurai-style designs.

Italian dishes will be on the menu at Prego, which will serve rustic delicacies with a contemporary twist. The Mediterranean atmosphere will be echoed with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the ocean, and its proximity to The Vintage Room – a unique culinary experience offering some of the rarest wines in the world.

Downtime is built in at Crystal Cruises, and Crystal Endeavor's vast

array of leisure options makes this clear. Palm Court will provide a chic and contemporary space to enjoy afternoon tea and enrichment presentations and lectures by day, as well as cocktails and dancing by night. Crystal Cove, which will lie at the ship's heart, will host guest speakers and late-night entertainment, while the Resorts World at Sea Casino will give guests a flavour of Las Vegas.

Warm mahogany and burgundy and emerald velvets that are reminiscent of an explorer's study will adorn the Connoisseur Club, where guests will be able to enjoy cognacs, cigars and conversation. Decadence will continue at Facets & Apropos – the ship's designer fashion and jewellery boutique. Also onboard will be The Solarium, a two-storey, glass-enclosed social space which will offer panoramic views of the ship's surroundings, as well as an indoor retreat featuring the Crystal Seahorse Pool and Jacuzzi.

"We know that the most adventurous luxury travellers are eagerly awaiting the unforgettable experiences that lie ahead, just as we are," said Wolber. **CFI**