

'Turf's Up!' The Grass Really Is Greener on Celebrity Solstice

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There is a new job opening at Celebrity Cruises: groundskeeper.

The perfect candidate must be willing to perform his or her duties while traveling the world aboard a beautifully appointed ocean liner. The successful candidate also must be a dedicated horticulturist who possesses an unmistakable enthusiasm for the unexpected, as the greens will be miles out at sea.

When Celebrity Solstice launches in December, vacationers will find that the grass really is greener on a Celebrity Cruises vacation. The ship will present an industry first on the top deck of the ship: real, growing grass, set in an innovative new country club environment known as "The Lawn Club."

The half-acre Lawn Club on Celebrity Solstice will invite guests to enjoy bocce ball and croquet, practice their putting, picnic with a basket of wine and cheese, or simply feel the grass between their toes, while sailing the oceans of the world. The area also will feature the Hot Glass Show, another first in the industry, developed in collaboration with The Corning Museum of Glass, the Patio on the Lawn, the Lawn Club Shop, and the Sunset Bar.

"We want our guests to experience the unexpected, like the thrill of sinking a putt on a freshly manicured lawn in the middle of the ocean," said Dan Hanrahan, President and CEO of Celebrity Cruises. "The experiences on and around the lawn exemplify what we aim to achieve: to recognize, celebrate and indulge our guests in style."

"Everything about the Celebrity Cruises brand is authentic," said Richard D. Fain, Chairman of Celebrity Cruises. "Our vision for a completely genuine experience demanded nothing less than real grass, and we sought out the right innovation to make that vision a reality."

Achieving that reality was no easy task. Celebrity worked with design firm Wilson Butler Architects to design the entire club area, then engaged a team of landscape architects and irrigation specialists along with turf and soil scientists at the University of Florida. Together, they conducted extensive research and tested a variety of grasses to determine which can withstand the winds, sun, shade and temperature variations that will affect the grass and soil as the ship sails in the Caribbean this winter. Other considerations included the ability of the grass to tolerate foot traffic, irrigation and day-to-day care and maintenance of the grass. Even the weight of the grass and soil had to be considered, as well as the water they absorb from the atmosphere and from irrigation.

Metric Facts about The Lawn Club on Celebrity Solstice

At 2,130 square meters (22,927 square feet), The Lawn Club is just over a half-acre in size.

The Lawn Club is:

Over three times larger than New York's Rockefeller Center ice skating rink (668 sq. meters)

1.7 times larger than an Olympic-size swimming pool, which is 1,250 sq. meters

The equivalent of 8.2 tennis courts (these are 260 sq. meters each)

2.4 times the size of Centre Court at England's Wimbledon Lawn & Tennis Club, which is 902 sq. meters

One-third the size of a regulation soccer field, which is 6,500 sq. meters

The Lawn Club is the central element of the top-deck experiences on Celebrity Solstice. The Patio on the Lawn offers elegant yet relaxed sitting areas where luxury meets casual country club charm. Guests can read the morning paper, lose themselves in a good novel, or enjoy a cup of gourmet coffee with friends, courtesy of the patio's coffee cart service.

The Hot Glass Show, presented in collaboration with The Corning Museum of Glass, is the patio's main feature. In its own, dedicated glassblowing studio, the Hot Glass Show will present the history and craft of glassblowing, from its ancient origins to its current countless uses. Three resident "gaffers" -- highly skilled glassblowing artists -- will educate and entertain cruisers with live glassmaking shows, lectures and workshops.

The area also features the Sunset Bar -- the ideal sailaway setting on any ship, enhanced on Celebrity Solstice by the natural grass in The Lawn Club. Located at Celebrity Solstice's highest point aft, the Sunset Bar provides breathtaking views in a relaxed atmosphere.

"We're confident our guests will be thrilled with The Lawn Club and the many new entertainment and sports options it offers," Hanrahan said.

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