

The hottest new cruise ships for 2008

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On-board grass, surf simulators, 4-D cinema and more!

Because mega cruise ships are homogenous in so many areas—from their multiple mall-like restaurants to the pre-fab cabins, giant playrooms and sprawling spas—cruise lines strive to differentiate themselves in any way they can. But what makes a new cruise ship ink-worthy? It's not enough to be adrenaline-pumping and ear-splitting, they need a weird factor to turn our heads. These days, many cruise lines aim to make waves—and grab market share—with outlandish gimmicks.

But who says gimmicks can't be fun?

Celebrity's upcoming Solstice, for instance, has a patch of grass on an upper deck for picnicking, golf putting and croquet. If that's too snoresville for you, experts lead glass-blowing demos nearby. Fluted goblets anyone? Royal Caribbean's Independence of the Seas has a surfing simulator that shoots out 20-mile-an-hour waves. You can also work up a sweat on the ship's ice skating rink.

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