

Holland America Line Celebrates 135 Years in Business in April 2008

2008-04-15

World's leading premium cruise line Holland America Line celebrates its 135 year anniversary in April 2008, marking more than a century of evolution for the once cargo and passenger line to the full-fledged modern cruise company it is today.

Throughout its history, Holland America Line has carried more than 10 million passengers from Europe to the New World and to vacation destinations across the globe.

"Today's Holland America Line brings together the past and the present as a modern cruise company," said Stein Kruse, president and chief executive officer. "We carry forth the strong traditions of the past, especially those of hard work and putting our guests and their shipboard experience first and foremost in everyone's minds. This is emphasized through our mission statement of creating once-in-a-lifetime experiences every time.

"Our company boasts a proud heritage of seafaring and brave actions throughout our history," added Kruse. "This includes carrying cargo and immigrants across the Atlantic, service to the allies during two world wars at a cost of many lives and ships, and helping to rebuild Europe after those wars."

Holland America Line has been headquartered in Seattle, Wash., since 1983 and last year reopened a sales and marketing office in Rotterdam, Netherlands, the birthplace of the company on April 18, 1873, as the Netherlands-America Steamship Company (Nederlandsch-Amerikaansche Stoomvaart Maatschappij).

Through the years Holland America Line has changed much more than its name. It has been a cargo line shipping goods from Europe on vessels powered by steam and sail. It has transported thousands of immigrants to the United States and Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It has supported the allies cause during two world wars and suffered the loss of its ships.

Following the war, Holland America Line sailed through the golden age of cruising, transporting well-to-do travelers on ocean crossings of the Atlantic. With the advent jet airplanes, the company remade itself once again by offering cruise vacations to exciting worldwide destinations, yet it still carried cargo on some ships.

Through the early seventies, the company was the first to establish schools in Indonesia and the Philippines to train future employees thereby making its shipboard service renowned in the industry. Purchased by Carnival Corporation in 1989, the company grew to new heights, embarking upon a shipbuilding path that saw the introduction of 13 new vessels to the line's fleet so far.

In 2003 the company embarked upon its Signature of Excellence initiative to focus on product enhancements in accommodations, service, dining, itinerary development and enrichment programs and activities. Totalling more than \$425 million, Signature of Excellence enhancements added features such as the Culinary Arts Center presented by Food & Wine magazine -- a state-of-the-art onboard show kitchen where more than 60 celebrated guest chefs and culinary experts provide cooking demonstrations and classes -- Explorations Cafe powered by The New York Times, teens-only activity areas and all new stateroom amenities highlighted by flat-panel TVs and plush Euro-top Mariner's Dream Beds.

Holland America Line is recognized today as the leader in the cruise industry's premium segment. Holland America Line's fleet of 13 ships offers nearly 500 cruises to 314 ports of call in 97 countries, territories or dependencies. A 14th ship, the 2,104-guest ms Eurodam, will be delivered in June 2008. Two- to 108-day itineraries visit all seven continents, including Antarctica, South America, Australia/New Zealand and Asia voyages, a Grand World Voyage, and popular sailings to ports in the Caribbean, Alaska, Mexico, Canada/New England, Europe and Panama Canal.

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