

## Seabourn Moments

An Interview with Josh Leibowitz, President, Seabourn

**EDITORS' NOTE** *An analytically driven leader with a passion for running and advising consumer-oriented companies and serving on board roles, Josh Leibowitz is the President of Seabourn. He was previously the Managing Partner of McKinsey & Company's Miami office and a leader in the firm's work in advanced analytics and profit transformations. Leibowitz worked extensively for leading luxury travel, retail, and media companies on demand generation,*



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*customer experience, and growth strategies. His work included due diligence and deal support for private equity and investment companies. Leibowitz was previously a Managing Director at Idealab, an innovation incubator that creates and operates pioneering technology companies, where he successfully led several e-commerce startups. Prior to that, he started and operated a wholesale and retail shoe business in Los Angeles. He is a frequent blogger and speaker on the topic of being an avid vacation defender including at TEDx Coconut Grove. Leibowitz received an AB in economics from the University of Chicago, Phi Beta Kappa, and holds an MBA from Harvard Business School, with High Distinction, Baker Scholar.*

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Seabourn (seabourn.com) currently operates a fleet of six ultra-luxury modern ships with one under construction and is a proud member of the World's Leading Cruise Lines, an exclusive alliance that includes Carnival Cruise Lines, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises, Cunard Line, Costa Cruises, AIDA, P&O Cruises UK, and P&O Cruises Australia. Seabourn is a brand of Carnival Corporation plc. The company considers that its highest responsibilities and top priorities are compliance, environmental protection, and the health, safety and well-being of its guests, team members, and the people and communities its ships visit.*

**Will you highlight the history of Seabourn and how you define the Seabourn difference?**

Seabourn is a pioneer of small ship, ultra-luxury cruising that has earned unanimous accolades from travel guidebooks, travel critics and traveler polls since its launch in 1987. Sailing on Seabourn is unlike any other form

of travel. The experience is luxurious, yet relaxed; elegant, yet casual. We take guests to the world's best destinations including Antarctica and the Arctic on our new expedition ships, and the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Alaska, Iceland, Australia, and South America on our luxury ocean ships.

We deliver transformational travel moments, meaningful connections and life-expanding experiences that move guests and help them see the world in new ways. We combine the most luxurious accommodations, highest

quality dining, personalized service, intimate ships, and active lifestyle into ocean and expedition voyages that cover all seven continents and more than 400 destinations on the youngest and most beautifully designed fleet. Our intimate ships visit the most desirable destinations worldwide, sailing to the heart of landmark cities, as well as to hidden gems where larger vessels cannot follow.

**Will you provide an overview of Seabourn's fleet?**

We have six beautiful ships in our fleet, with the youngest and most luxurious fleet and one of the highest space per guest ratio in the industry. Our guests want smaller and more intimate accommodations that are all suites and rival the most luxurious land-based options with more space, all-oceanfront suites, and all included in-room amenities. They want every suite to be impeccable with options to expand into the highest and most coveted upgrades.

Carrying just 458 guests each, *Seabourn Odyssey*, *Seabourn Sojourn*, and *Seabourn Quest* offer a wealth of onboard touches and luxuries to assure smooth sailing whatever the destination. Guests can look forward to spacious accommodations ranging in size from 295 to 1,182 square feet of indoor space. Verandas add an additional 65 to 558 square feet of outdoor living area, spacious enough for private alfresco dining. All suites on board feature a comfortable living area, walk-in closet, a fully stocked bar and refrigerator filled with seaside favorites and have expansive ocean views framed by either a picture window or the glass doors of the veranda.

Between 2016 and 2018, the line introduced two new ships – *Seabourn Encore* in December 2016 and *Seabourn Ovation* in May 2018. The

ultra-luxury vessels have been designed in partnership with design icon, Adam D. Tihany, as an evolution of its Odyssey-class fleet. The new ships offer oceanfront suites with private verandas, for just 600 guests, based on double occupancy, configured with one additional deck and an enhanced and central common living space with a reimagined Seabourn Square.

In July 2022, Seabourn launched its first new ultra-luxury purpose-built expedition ship, *Seabourn Venture*. The ship, designed by Tihany Design, was planned from conception for expedition travel blended with ultra-luxury and personalized service by leading travel experts and seasoned professionals with great depth of experience in expedition, hospitality, and luxury cruising. The second ship, *Seabourn Pursuit*, is expected for delivery in September 2023.

**Will you elaborate on Seabourn's newest ship, *Seabourn Venture*, and how will this ship mark Seabourn's entrance into expedition cruising?**

Expedition travel has been increasingly in demand by luxury travelers over the past several years, and we saw this firsthand when we launched our voyages to Antarctica in 2013. It was the success of those itineraries that led us to return every year since and eventually to the development of our Ventures by Seabourn programming of expedition-style shore experiences aboard Zodiacs and kayaks. This programming has since expanded to operating in global destinations such as Alaska/British Columbia, Northern Europe, and Australia/New Zealand. In addition, this laid the foundation for us to confidently order and build our two new purpose-built expedition ships – *Seabourn Venture* and *Seabourn Pursuit* – which will give our guests even more opportunities to deepen their connectivity to some of the world's most remote destinations.

With the launch of *Seabourn Venture*, we're offering a true ultra-luxury expedition product that's unlike any others on the market. It also allows us to put a stake in the ground in a new type of expedition cruising that we've dubbed "active luxury." Active luxury combines Seabourn's renowned service and ultra-luxury amenities with an innovative, active experience that brings travelers to the far reaches of the globe that can only be accessed by ship to enjoy the same types of thrills they may have come to expect from a safari or other land-based adventures.



*Josh Leibowitz in front of Seabourn Venture*

There are only 264 guests on board in 132 suites, and we have 26 expedition team members to serve those guests, nearly one for every 10 guests. These team members will not only offer their expertise and guidance about the natural world, but also offer the exemplary service for which Seabourn is renowned. There are countless amenities and innovations we are offering on board that are redefining the future of travel, not just cruise. Not only is the ship designed to go anywhere in the world, it also boasts submarines that allow guests to jump in and see life below the surface. The real measurement of luxury service is the ship's capability to offer something for everyone. There are 24 Zodiacs on the ships so every guest can experience landings wherever we sail plus kayaks, snorkeling, and scuba gear. There are eight different dining options and state-of-the-art facilities such as the Bow Lounge, where close-up live feeds of wildlife up to four nautical miles away can be projected on the big screen for the ultimate wildlife experience.

**How is Seabourn taking a lead in defining a new category of travel for guests seeking a convergence between learning, exploring and ultra-luxury pampering?**

We've designed our new expedition ships in partnership with some of the best and brightest in the worlds of travel, expedition, fine dining, and luxury cruising who came together with the same objective: to create an environment that evokes a social and inquisitive vibe,

but follows the traditions of expedition travel. We want guests to share in these experiences of a lifetime with not only one another, but also our onboard teams.

Our intention is to also welcome travelers who may have never considered cruise travel and expose them to the quality, decadence, and convenience of a voyage with Seabourn, whether that is land-based adventurers who typically choose epic climbs, treks or adventure campaign experiences, or a younger generation of expedition-seeking travelers. We feel like our new ships blend expedition and luxury elements in a new way that will evoke a positive response from a wider range of travelers than ever before.

**You assumed the role of president of Seabourn during the global pandemic in the middle of 2020. How did Seabourn adapt its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the resilience of the Seabourn workforce during this unprecedented time?**

The past two years have been incredibly challenging to say the least. During this unprecedented time, it was important to be flexible and listen – to the experts, our team members, the science, and our guests. I am so proud to see how the entire Seabourn family came together and supported each other – both professionally and personally. We learned to adapt and worked harder than ever to prepare our ships to return to service,

and now our entire fleet is back in operations and our team is delivering special Seabourn moments to guests every day. I am proud to lead a team who overcame these extraordinary circumstances.

**How is Seabourn adapting to meet the ever-evolving needs in a post-Covid world?**

At Seabourn, our highest responsibility and top priorities are compliance, environmental protection and the health, safety and well-being of our guests, team members, and the people and communities our ships visit. The focus on health and safety was emphasized even more during the pandemic and even after the pandemic. Guests are seeking environments where they can feel confident, comfortable, and safe, and we strive to provide this every day. We have required vaccination, testing, and onboard medical to support guest needs. We work closely with health officials from all over the world to ensure that we are meeting and complying with health regulations and protocols.

**Luxury is a word that is used often today. How do you define the meaning of a true luxury cruise experience?**

True luxury cruise today is so much more than just about the amenities – of course you need to offer incredible accommodation and impeccable service, all things we excel at, but it's also about the emotional connection that we have with our guests.

I think what sets Seabourn apart in this respect is how far we go as a brand to connect and provide those special Seabourn moments. We really want to care for, inspire and surprise those who travel with us, and I believe we do that throughout the whole journey, and through the incredible experiences we offer both on and offshore – we really aim to exceed guest expectations – that is luxury. The personal connection we can provide guests due to our generous staff ratios means that everything from a personalized kayak tour in Antarctica to al fresco dining on your private veranda is all possible. It's all about these Seabourn moments that enable our guests to live their largest possible life.

**What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?**

Every day we start with a team huddle. The agenda and format are highly focused on decision-making and aligned on the priorities that drive our business. We are all focused and aligned on three priorities: to operate safely and professionally; to deliver Seabourn moments; and to support each other in achieving our individual and professional goals.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in hospitality?**

The goal of hospitality is to exceed guest expectations. Seabourn does this every day. If you are interested in hospitality, immerse yourself in the brands and destinations that have the highest guest demand. Seek a mentor in the space. Take on an internship. Have a point of view. Go for it. Come join the industry. ●