

Food + Beverage



Mark Lockwood, vice president of cruise hotel operations, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection



Christine Fortier, director of supply chain, The World



Nick Burger, vice president of hotel operations, Alaskan Dream Cruises

“We are still building our procurement infrastructure,” said Lockwood, “but will be tying into the Marriott global procurement system where it makes sense. There are certain areas where we will be adding additional infrastructure. The key is consistency.

“Our first yacht will do Europe and the Caribbean, the second will do something similar and third will be in Asia/Pacific year-round,” he continued. “You’ve got to make sure you have reliable suppliers in those ports of call, and adding to the challenge are luxury, affluent travelers who want to get involved in the community. Everyone wants to go to the market with the chef and pick their own lobsters, and it’s about how you strike that balance.”

Sourcing

Nick Burger, vice president of hotel operations at Alaskan Dream Cruises, has a unique challenge: limited space on the company’s fleet of vessels, which are all small. He’s also provisioning in Alaska, with almost all supplies brought in through Sitka, where Burger has set up a series of 40-foot containers for storage.

Burger said the company serves fresh seafood from Alaska, but meats are brought in from the continental United States.

“Our product focuses on a true Alaska experience, including food and using local suppliers,” Burger said. “Alaska offers a limited amount of sourcing other than what comes out of the sea. Our food and beverage menu is based on that. We can’t do this alone, and one of the issues we have is logistics, and getting product into Alaska.”

Under the umbrella of Allen Marine Tours, a major shore excursion operator in Alaska, Burger can also send boats to provision his ships in the middle of itineraries should they run out of a certain item.

“Our ships are small, and everything we put on the vessel, we really focus on where it’s coming from, why we have it there and how it impacts the experience of our guests.

With a remote-destination heavy deployment, Lindblad Expeditions is operating under a broad set of supply chain challenges.

“One of the things we find is that we find a great product, but the logistics and the challenge to get it to us in a consistent manner become a larger challenge,” said Bruce Tschampel, vice president of hotel operations at Lindblad Expeditions.

“Our ships are small, and everything we put on the vessel, we really focus on where it’s coming from, why we have it there and how it impacts the experience of our guests,” Tschampel continued. “We’re always looking at what products work on the big ships and how it can work for us in our crazy wilderness destinations.”

Long Term

Silversea’s Leistner said the challenge may actually start when a supplier wins the contract.

“When the supplier is selected, the challenge starts. We need a consistent quality and reliability,” she noted. Getting the company’s attention requires consistent quality and volume at competitive pricing.

High-end guests also have specific

“All our items are selected together with the chefs.

needs, Leistner continued, and Silversea will often bring in specific food and beverage items for certain passengers.

For Ritz-Carlton, it will not all be about price, said Lockwood.

“Quality is obviously key. We won’t have a honeymoon period. The expectations are high. When we come out for our first revenue sailing we have to hit it out of the park and deliver what our luxury guests want. We are looking for a supplier that understands our brand and what we are trying to deliver,” he explained.

Viking’s Mauboussin said cruise operators shouldn’t expect a great product if they don’t want to pay for it.

“Do what you can afford, but don’t do what you can’t,” he noted.

Apollo’s Faucher explained lead time to a contract or delivery of product may be up to a year.

“It’s not a one-week or one-month window, we’re talking a year ahead, it’s going to take some time,” Faucher said. “It’s crucial to understand the market. We’re not a hotel, we’re extremely demanding and driven by compliance and standards.” – *Monty Mathisen*