

Marine Hotel Association Builds to 35th Annual Event

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Heading into the 35th Marine Hotel Association (MHA) annual Trade Show and Conference, the not-for-profit group continues to provide a unique value proposition to the cruise industry.

“What really differentiates us is it is run by industry people,” said John McGill, president of the MHA and chief operating officer at The World, Residences at Sea. “The people running the Trade Show and Conference and making decisions are your industry colleagues, looking at how it adds value to what we do every day.”

The annual event will move back to Orlando in 2020 and also introduce a new schedule, running Thursday through Saturday, March 26-28.

In its 35th year, the MHA is one of the few remaining cruise industry groups and major industry stakeholders that has not seen a major ownership change or takeover.

Its true not-for-profit status also means that revenue is put back into the organization, and into the famed MHA scholarship fund which has doled out over 8,000 scholarships over 35 years.

Trade show and conference fees are also kept low.



“We are a not-for profit made up of cruise industry people that started out trying to make the world a better place so that we could deliver a better product onboard and have better relationships with our vendor community and that has continued on,” McGill told *Cruise Industry News*.

A refreshed format in 2019 that included a **Culinary Showcase** with the leading chefs in the cruise business was a hit among members. That culinary theme will now extend and be expanded upon into 2020.

“The energy of that program we ran was very exciting, and something we are going to carry through ... we are putting together an exceptional experience which really gives the supplier and vendor community deep insights into how we think, operate, procure and innovate,” McGill said, also noting a focus on sustainability that will be added to 2020 conference agenda.

The Trade Show and Conference size is kept manageable, allowing new vendors and suppliers to get their foot in the door with the cruise industry and begin to have a conversation, McGill said, understanding what it takes to supply product to ships moving all over the world.

While MHA is set for its 35th annual event next March, the association is additionally hosting a **Conference at Sea** later this year aboard the MSC Divina.