

EMPOWERED SHIPS, GREAT RATINGS



Peter Tobler, director of marine hotel operations

Cuadro 44 by Anthony Sasso
aboard the Star Breeze

Set to have its full six-ship fleet sailing this summer, Windstar Cruises had to wait to realize the full potential of its trio of stretched Star-class ships, which will operate alongside the company's three sail-assisted ships, overseen by new company offices in Miami.

"We were just about to launch our stretched ships in 2020 and then all of this happened," said Peter Tobler, director of marine hotel operations for the company.

"We did get back into business in June of 2021 and numbers are picking up tremendously. The second and third quarter are looking quite promising with occupancy at least 75 to 80 percent across the fleet," continued Tobler, speaking at the Marine Hotel Association's conference and trade show in Orlando.

The Star-class ships were lengthened at Fincantieri and all received a new 25.6-meter midsection, adding 50 cabins and two new restaurants to each vessel.

For the new restaurants, Windstar partnered with two celebrity chefs.

Cuadro 44 by Anthony Sasso offers guests the best of Spanish cuisine, while another partnership sees guests dine at the Star Grill by Steven Raichlen, offering a modern, casual, alfresco restaurant that serves barbeque items and more.

The new restaurants and updated ships have been a positive addition, Tobler said.

"That has had a tremendous impact ... the ratings are through the roof. We are averaging 93 to 94 out of 100 points," he said.

"Revenue is up. We're seeing a 20 to 30 percent increase in onboard revenue

across the board on each and every ship. The willingness to spend is obviously there."

Among the challenges, Tobler pointed to staffing and getting crew to the ships.

"The ships are much more empowered today compared to what they used to be," he said, pointing to the current supply chain issues. "The prime example is the menu cycle – no matter what region – they were dictated by the office and corporate culinary team. The same applied to cocktail menus and promotions and wine lists and all of that.

"Today the ships have much more freedom to make changes that are appropriate. We have set up a process so that everyone understands what changes are appropriate." ■