

# Condo Cruise Ships: *Whatever Floats Your Boat*

by Robert Seidenberg

Sheela and James Havas have already picked out the luxury condo unit in which they plan to spend part of their retirement years. Now it's just a matter of waiting for it to start floating.

In a retirement purchase most of us can only dream about, the two bought a unit on "The Magellan," an 860-foot by 106-foot cruise ship scheduled for launch in two years.

The \$750 million ship has 210 units, a tennis court, retractable marina, putting green and golf simulator, Aqua Spa, casino, micro-brewery, swimming pools, upscale restaurants and a 430-seat theater.

The 15-deck ship is scheduled to travel around the world every two years, stopping at ports including Alexandria, Barcelona, Honolulu, Istanbul, Monte Carlo, New York, Miami, Stockholm and Rio.

Residence-at-sea brings an immediate benefit — no property taxes or sales tax. (Though if you need to worry about such things, you probably don't belong in the condo cruise ship market. Ownership on "The Magellan" starts at 3.6 million for a two-bedroom unit.

Randall Jackson, a former Navy pilot, Arizona-based real estate developer and CEO of Residential Cruise Line, Ltd., who developed "The Magellan," says he structured the financial plan so cruises are available to people from different economic levels. Fractional ownership is offered.

Fractional possession means you actually own your residence for the month or months purchased — you cannot be moved to a different unit. Under the fractional ownership plan, folks can thus take two-week vacations in their own two-bedroom "Magellan" unit every year for 50 years with a fractional ownership cost of \$150,000. Compared to 50 years of luxury cruises or land-based resort vaca-



(Photo courtesy ResidenSea)

The spacious living room of a condo on "The World."

tions, it's a bargain.

## 'The World'

"The World, operated by ResidenSea Management, Ltd., of Miramar, Fla., took to the high seas in 2002. "We have a mix of full-time professionals, semi-retired and retired owners," says spokeswoman Marla McLaughlin.

Since some owners don't stay in residences year-round, they rent their units to others. A minimum of six nights ranges from \$1,300 to \$4,800 per night for two. Included are meals, beverages, port charges and gratuities.

Rentals are especially attractive to tourists, and "The World" schedules several "theme voyages," such as its golf voyage, combining on-board golf activities with rounds at famous courses. Amenities include: Surgery center, infirmary, library and produce market selling local specialties for those who want to prepare meals in their quarters.

A mid-size cruise ship would usually carry 2,000 passengers, says McLaughlin, but "The World" averages about 285 — creating an experience more like private

yachting and less like sailing on a mass-market cruise ship.

"The World" and "The Magellan" are classified as "leasehold properties."

"That means the owner has the exclusive right to use and occupy the residence for the life of the property," says McLaughlin.

Critics of the cruise ship condo concept point out buyers are paying land-based real-estate prices for a depreciating asset with a limited life span.

Buyers who can afford the condos obviously don't care — no doubt most feel they are purchasing a unique lifestyle, much like membership in an expensive private club.

McLaughlin says "The World" is sold out. "Occasionally there are units up for re-sale. A studio would run you about \$825,000; a three-bedroom, \$7 million."

## Other Ships

The success of "The World" has sparked a flotilla of new entrants into the condo cruise ship market. For instance, Miami-based Ocean Development Group has teamed up with Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts to create residences re-

portedly costing up to \$25 million for a three-story penthouse.

The group envisions catering to 40- to 60-year olds — the self made millionaires, heirs to fortunes and yacht owners who don't want the bother of maintaining their own vessels, says founding partner Leif-Erik Hvide in one report.

Lorraine Cramer of San Clemente, Calif., not far from the late Richard M. Nixon's estate, signed up for two-month fractional ownership on "The Magellan," reserving September and October each year. Her unit totals 1,200 square feet, compared to the cramped 200-square-foot compartments on some cruise liners.

"Basically what drew me to 'The Magellan' was the fact that it offered a two-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, living area and balcony," she says, "which gives you the comfort of your own home away from home."

Moreover, "It's probably going to be a stay of two or three nights in each port, which gives me a longer time frame than a regular cruise, and I think it affords more of an opportunity than regular cruises to see (many different) countries."

## The Market

"The World," "The Magellan" and the Four Seasons vessels are only the tip of the iceberg. Orphalse Global Strategies, Inc., is gearing up to launch a condo ship that will schedule its ports of call to take advantage of high-profile world events like the Cannes Film Festival, the Olympics and the Running of the Bulls.

And a visionary group called Freedom Ship has plans to launch a 4,500-foot-long vessel — that's four times the length of the "Queen Mary." It would be taller than the 100-yard length of a football field and wider than two football fields together. This condo city will have a

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## Cruise Ships

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barge-like base nearly a mile long.

Freedom Ship will be capable of housing 40,000 people, plus a crew of 20,000 and 30,000 daily visitors. The vessel will sport an aircraft deck, schools and light manufacturing and assembly areas. While the managers are billing this ship as “a friendly, safe and secure community,” critics call it a tax shelter.

Sheela and James Havas, meanwhile, will be married 37 years this summer. Both retired, they normally travel the last part of July to escape the heat out west. “It’s going to be neat to own a month on a boat,” Mrs. Havas says.

An acknowledged “workout fiend,” she looks forward to taking advantage of the many fitness activities offered on board “The Magellan.” Her husband “is stoked up” that the ship has its own observatory with a telescope to view night skies over the ocean.

Indeed, for the Havas’s, the sky’s the limit. ♦

## Lung Cancer

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respiratory function or other serious health problems.

The study was conducted at the Institut Gustave Roussy in Villejuif, France, with patients whose tumors were four centimeters in diameter or smaller.

Of the 244 patients studied, 195 suffered from lung metastases and 49 from primary non-small cell lung cancer. Seventy percent were still alive after two years, including 72 percent with lung metastases and 64 percent with primary lung cancer. Of the primary-tumor patients, 77 percent had no viable lung tumors after two years, which is considered a cure. ♦



## Experts Agree: New CPR Saves Many More Lives

A new form of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is at least three times more effective than previous methods for reviving a person who suddenly collapses from cardiac arrest, reports the American Heart Association.

The new life-saving method is called “Hands-Only CPR” or “minimally interrupted cardiac resuscitation.” It eliminates mouth-to-mouth breathing.

Hands-Only CPR has only two steps. In the first, you call 911 or instruct a by-stander to do so. There is usually enough oxygen in the lungs and blood of a sudden collapse victim (about two minutes’ worth) that a quick call can be made without further endangering the victim’s life, says the AHA.

In step two, the rescuer uses both hands to push hard and fast on the middle of the victim’s chest, with a barely perceptible pause to let the chest recoil. The rapid, hard compressions maintain blood flow to the brain and other vital organs.

To ensure maximum power goes into each downward thrust, the heel of one hand should be in the center of the victim’s chest between the nipples, the second hand on top of

the first. The compressions should be hard enough to move the chest downward by 1 ½ to 2 inches.

Continue chest compressions until emergency medical services arrive, says the association. Even if you omit a few compressions, the new method is far more effective than traditional CPR.

And don’t worry about hurting the victim, says the AHA. Even medical professionals often fail to push hard enough, and any harm done will be negligible.

Ideally, compressions should be performed at the rate of about 100 per minute. What if you tire before other help arrives?

“If someone else is nearby,” advises the AHA, “ask that person to take over chest compressions after

about two minutes, or about 200 compressions. If you are alone, then just do the best you can.”

### When To Use

Sudden cardiac arrest claims hundreds of thousands of lives each year, largely because no one at the scene does anything to help. Consequently, only 5 percent or so survive.

“Many times, people nearby don’t help because they’re afraid they will hurt the victim and aren’t confident in what they’re doing,” says Michael Sayre, M.D., chair of the CPR statement-writing committee of the AHA’s Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee.

“We want people to know they can help many victims just by calling 911 and doing chest compressions,” says Dr. Sayre. “Don’t be afraid to try it. We are sure many lives will be saved if the public does hands-only CPR for adult victims of sudden cardiac arrest.”

You should use Hands-Only CPR on adults who suddenly collapse but are breathing on their own. However, it should not be used on every unconscious person. In cases of drug overdose, near-drowning, or breathing difficulties from any cause, you should use traditional mouth-to-mouth CPR. Likewise, you should still use traditional CPR on infants and children.

The recommendation for change is based on results of three large 2007 studies, each documenting the outcomes of instances of bystanders using various CPR methods. ♦

## Binge Drinking

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365 days per year had about a 20 percent lower cardiovascular mortality rate than men who drank just one to 36 days per year.

Alcohol quantity was also associated with increased mortal-

ity from cancer among both men and women.

“These findings underscore the importance of looking at drinking patterns when investigating alcohol-related health outcomes,” says Ting-Kai Li, M.D., director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, part of the NIH. ♦