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Interview with Carolyn Szekeres from Princess Cruises



Summer is Alaska cruise season and we feel Princess offers many outstanding Alaska itineraries. We recently talked with Carolyn Szekeres from Princess about Alaska and Princess Cruises in general.

FamilyTravelGurus: We've been to Alaska two times in recent years with Princess and we were very pleased! Tell us about your 2009/2010 Alaska cruise offerings and what makes Princess a good choice for an Alaska cruise compared your competitors.

I am so glad to hear that you enjoyed your Princess Alaska cruises! It is such a pleasure to represent Princess because we do have so many happy customers like you, that love our Princess product.

At Princess, we consider ourselves to be the Alaska leaders. We have invested so much in our Alaska product that we think we really offer the very best Alaska experience. First: on board the ship you will be able to Escape Completely with the Consummate Host! We offer warm, welcoming service, personal choice dining, a variety of quality entertainment options, a fabulous on board spa, affordable balconies, wonderful food with an emphasis on fresh local ingredients, a top notch casino, our popular art auctions, and fabulous shopping on board. We have added some Princess exclusives to our on board product: The Sanctuary, our adults only pool area in a pampering spa setting; Movies under The

Stars - the giant screen entertainment center that offers a variety of movies, music and sports day and night; In Alaska our guests will have the added benefits of an on board naturalist.

We have been named Best Cruise Line in Alaska 4 of the past 5 years by Travel Weekly. In 2010 the Golden Princess and the Sapphire Princess will sail the 7 day round trip Seattle Inside Passage itinerary. The Sea Princess will sail the Inside Passage 10 days round trip San Francisco for the season. The Diamond, Coral and Island Princesses will sail the Voyage of the Glaciers- 7 days between Anchorage and Vancouver alternating northbound and southbound. These are the cruises that link with the 4 - 7 days on land to form our spectacular cruisetour offerings. We also have our Small Ship Cruising experience (700 passengers) on the Royal Princess 14 days round trip Seattle on the Alaska Connoisseur Voyage. Our Full Alaska 2010 brochure will be out in July.

FamilyTravelGurus: We've stayed in some of your beautiful lodges in Alaska. Why is it a good idea to plan a Princess "cruisetour" (Alaska land tour in addition to a cruise) when visiting Alaska?

A cruisetour is the only way to see all the best of Alaska: Glaciers with Glacier Bay are included on every cruisetour, Mountains with at least 2 nights at one or both Princess lodges in the Denali area, and Wildlife. We offer our exclusive Direct to the Wilderness rail program that takes our passengers on the domed rail car directly from the ship to Denali on the same day.

Our Princess lodges are unsurpassed. We have five: the Fairbanks Princess Lodge (where you can arrange for a wake up call if the northern lights come out!),the Denali Princess Lodge (we include a tour into Denali National Park on every cruisetour, and you can select the tour length that you prefer), The McKinley Princess Lodge, The Kenai Princess Wilderness Lodge and the Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge.

We offer 10 - 13 day Direct to the Wilderness Alaska cruisetours, 13 -14 day Explorer cruisetours, and 13 - 15 day Deluxe Escorted cruisetours.

FamilyTravelGurus: We specialize in family travel - what about a Princess cruise makes it a good choice for families?

We have an excellent kid's program on our Princess ships with 3 separate age specific areas: Princess Pelicans age 3 - 7, Shockwaves ages 8 - 12 and Remix ages 13 - 17. We offer lots of fun and educational opportunities for kids and a welcome opportunity for parents to enjoy some alone time too!

FamilyTravelGurus: We've also had some excellent meals on our past Princess cruises (we especially liked Sabatinis, your Italian speciality restaurant!). What types of dining do you offer on your ships?

We offer Personal Choice Dining. Guests can choose traditional dining (assigned times and tables for dining) or Anytime Dining from 5 - 10 PM in our designated Anytime Dining restaurants which feature the same great menu and service as the traditional dining venue. We continue to offer Sabatini's, your favorite Italian restaurant; The Crown Grill or Sterling Steakhouse for fabulous steaks and seafood; Vines featuring wine and seafood; the Horizon Court 24 hour buffet; the Cafe Caribe informal dining, the 24 hour bistro style International cafe; our Pizzeria (pizza delivery to staterooms is now available), and hamburgers and hot dogs on the pool deck. We also now offer a pub lunch and we always have an afternoon tea experience. Our menus have changed a bit recently to reflect an emphasis on fresh local ingredients and recipes.

We also offer the Chef's Table - exclusive dining with the executive chef available by reservation only on board and Ultimate Balcony Dining - available both for breakfast and dinner. In Alaska we offer Glacier Bay Balcony Dining, and a Grand Alaskan Seafood Buffet.

FamilyTravelGurus: Tell us about the onboard activities and entertainment on a typical Princess cruise - any chance a passenger will have nothing to do?

We offer MANY choices on a Princess cruise and we like to think that guests will be able to make their cruise an individual and personal experience by choosing the activities they like. From dance classes, spa treatments, Scholarship at Sea, Art Auctions, Movies Under the Stars, musical productions, intimate

lounges, the Lotus Spa, exercise classes, wine tasting and the casino - the chances of being bored are slim to none! Of course, relaxation is important too - our guests are free to choose their own perfect escape.

FamilyTravelGurus: Princess offers cruises all over the World. Besides Alaska, what are some of your favorite Princess cruises that you can recommend to our readers?

We offer a variety of destinations around the world. We have many varied offerings in the Caribbean including a 7 day round trip Ft Lauderdale ship all summer in 2010, South America, Asia, Australia/ New Zealand, the Amazon, Canada, New England, Panama Canal and lots of Europe itineraries. We are very destination focused and our cruises bring out the best in a region and allow guests to explore in depth with a range of itinerary choices of both cruises and cruisetours. Some of my personal favorites (and also among our most popular destinations) are the Mediterranean and Greek Isles itineraries featured on the Crown, Ruby, and Star Princesses in 2010. These itineraries are so well thought out to make the cruise enjoyable for our guests as well as show them the maximum amount of places possible on their cruise vacation.

FamilyTravelGurus: Thanks Carolyn. We are always amazed at the number of destinations Princess sails to. We've enjoyed our four Princess cruises and we look forward to sailing with Princess again!

Interested in a Princess Cruise? We can help! Contact us at info@familytravelgurus.com

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