



## CRUISEONE HOSTS TOP CRUISE LINE EXECUTIVES AND NEARLY 400 FRANCHISE OWNERS FOR 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

*Eight-Night Alaska Itinerary Aboard Celebrity Mercury Includes Keynote Address by CruiseOne CEO Brad Tolkin, Educational Sessions, Awards Gala & More*

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. – September 26, 2008 — From September 14 to September 21, nearly 400 franchise owners and cruise professionals, representatives from virtually every major cruise line, and a delegation of industry executives joined the CruiseOne executive team for its 15<sup>th</sup> annual national conference. As part of World Travel Holdings, CruiseOne (a leading U.S. franchise operation of more than 550 independent owned cruise-only locations) is the nation's largest independent retailer of cruise travel.

### **Ship Sets Sail from Vancouver with Top Travel Experts On Board**

The day before the national conference kicked off aboard *Celebrity Mercury*, Dwain Wall, senior vice president of CruiseOne, addressed attendees in Vancouver with a series of opening guest speakers. Joining Wall to address the group about Alaska, the travel industry and cruising, were Stefanie Gorder from Premier Alaska (who poked fun at her notable resemblance to Governor Sarah Palin) and Dave Stockert, vice president of training for Holland America Line. Gorder spoke about Alaska as one of the world's most dynamic destinations, showcasing the areas not reached by the *Mercury* sail. Stockert shed light on the many new developments taking place at Holland America, including an extensive new green program and the second phase of the company's renovation initiative.

Once on board, the CruiseOne conference kicked into full gear with a motivational opening session. Brad Tolkin, CEO of CruiseOne and co-chairman of World Travel Holdings, addressed the group with his thoughts on the challenges and opportunities facing the travel industry in 2009. "There is no time like the present, being together in celebration of our accomplishments from the past year, to band together in unity and commitment," said Tolkin. "Now is not the time to rest. We must all dedicate 2009 to realizing our full potential, unlocking new doors, maintaining our enthusiastic spirit, and finding ways to wow our customers every step of the way. That is what sets us apart today and what will make our journey toward tomorrow a memorable, successful one."

One of the most rousing parts of the conference was an emotional keynote address by Dondra Ritzenthaler, senior vice president of sales for Celebrity Cruises. Ritzenthaler kept the crowd enthused with stories from her experiences in the travel industry and messages about how a positive spirit and attitude can translate into success. Following Ritzenthaler was Vicki Freed, senior vice president of sales for Royal Caribbean. Freed shared information on upcoming developments at Royal Caribbean and commended CruiseOne for the company's commitment to Royal Caribbean and promoting cruise travel.

In addition to Ritzenthaler and Freed, a "Who's Who" of industry players joined the attendees from CruiseOne for the 2008 conference, including representatives from Celebrity, Cunard, MSC, Uniworld, Azamara, Carnival, Crystal, Silversea, Oceania, Regent, Princess, Viking River, Amadeus Waterways and more.

## **Educational Opportunities Abound**

A variety of general sessions, workshops and educational sessions took place throughout the 2008 conference, keeping CruiseOne agents abreast of the latest industry trends and providing tools for continued success in 2009. Steven Hattem, vice president of marketing and sales for CruiseOne, served as the master of ceremonies for the event. Some sessions included:

- “Maximizing Group Leads” by Stuart Cohen, vice president of group sales for World Travel Holdings
- “Tailor-Made Alaska” and “Selling Alaska” by All Alaska Tours, Premier Alaska and Alaska Heritage Tours
- “Selling Luxury Panel” by Crystal, Celebrity, Azamara, Cunard, Silversea, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas
- “NCL Freestyle Bowl” by Norwegian Cruise Line
- “River Cruising” by Amadeus Waterways, Uniworld and Viking River
- “E-commerce in Travel and Tourism” by CruiseOne
- “Marketing 2009 and Marketing Panel” by CruiseOne
- “Hug Your Customers” by Celebrity Cruises

## **Charitable Corporate Donations and Awards Gala Inspire Agents & Partners**

*Celebrity Mercury* set sail from Vancouver and included stops in Ketchikan, Alaska, Juneau, Alaska, Sitka, Alaska, Victoria, British Columbia and Seattle, Washington. During the stop in Sitka, CruiseOne made a donation valued at more than \$6,000, including \$3,000 raised by CruiseOne Franchise Owners and headquarters team, as well as the donation of a seven-night cruise from Celebrity Cruises. The Celebrity cruise will be auctioned off during the Alaska Raptor Center’s annual fundraising gala.

On the last evening of the conference, CruiseOne hosted an awards gala honoring the company’s cruise line and agent partners of the year.

## **2009 and Beyond – Emerging as the Nation’s Dominant Cruise Retailer**

Closing the 2008 conference was Wall, who touched upon highlights from the event and unveiled preliminary plans for growing the company in 2009.

“Despite the current economic climate, 2008 has been a positive year for CruiseOne, showing great promise for what’s to come,” he said. “Our plans for new, innovative technologies and unique, industry-first marketing programs will combine in 2009 to propel our agents forward and solidify our place as *the* leading cruise retail powerhouse.”

The overall 2009 plan for CruiseOne is expected to be publicly announced, in conjunction with World Travel Holdings, by the end of the year.

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