

Next-generation design

Christian Klein and Johannes Jensen tell Jacqui Griffiths how Ocean Architects is bringing unique, innovative concepts to cruise ship design

Set in the idyllic lakeside location of Waren-Müritz in Germany, Ocean Architects has been delivering innovative cruise ship concepts for 10 years. The company creates interior and exterior concepts for cruise ships, hotels, yachts and industrial environments – and its fresh thinking is gaining it a reputation for next-generation cruise ship design.

Christian Klein, the company's principal and master architect, and Johannes Jensen, its master designer, bring together a spectrum of skills and a shared passion for sailing. As an industrial design graduate,



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The Ocean Architects team works closely with its design partners and clients to create high quality interiors

Jensen does a lot of exterior, as well as interior, cruise ship design. Klein, who turned his focus to all things seaborne while studying architecture and interior design in Berlin, honed his cruise ship design skills at Germany shipyard Meyer Werft before starting his own company. The pair met when they worked together in 2004, and when Klein founded Ocean Architects in 2008, it wasn't long before he asked Jensen to join him.

Ocean Architects combines these skills with an innovative spirit, using the latest technology such as 3D printing and virtual reality to help clients visualise its design concepts. “We thoroughly analyse the client's needs and create unique designs that will generate revenue early on,” says Jensen. “For example, in one case we removed the balconies, enlarged the cabins and created a panoramic window. This created a beautiful interior feature and enlarged the ship, enabling the customer to generate more revenue. The ship travels mostly in cold water areas so it doesn't need a balcony, and the panoramic windows enable passengers to view the icebergs in comfort.”

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' expedition cruise vessels have been the firm's focus for much of the past three years. Innovations include a sliding balcony that can swivel out to enable better observation, and a lighting concept that creates a mood to match the ship's surroundings.

“We work very closely with light specialists to create a new lighting concept for cabins, public and outside areas, with cost-saving and ecologically friendly design that complements the area where the ship will travel,” says Klein. “For the observation lounge we created lighting that doesn't reflect on the windows. Outside we make sure all the light points down to the deck rather than up in the air and we use as few as possible. People have enough light to see where they're going, but there is much less light pollution so they can see what's happening around them.”

As the Hapag-Lloyd expedition cruise ships head out to sea, Ocean Architects is ready for new challenges. “We are opening a second office, in Hamburg, in 2018,” says Klein. “We have great capacity and we're looking forward to working with a growing number of ship companies to bring fresh design thinking to cruise shipping.” **C&F**