

Urban chic

Overseeing onboard elements agreed with both Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd and TUI Cruises, cm-Design partner Ralf Claussen outlines key design style aspects of the company's first newbuild cruise project

Brainstorming ideas early on for the line's third ship and first newbuild *Mein Schiff 3*, the 'at-home' ambience adopted during refits on sister ships *Mein Schiff 1* and *2* was one of the first aspects agreed on by TUI Cruises and cm-Design. Inspired by its land-based projects, the Germany based design firm then presented its vision for all onboard venues to both TUI and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd — the outcome a contemporary style using fresh materials and ideas in the manner of urban chic.

Alongside Boston-based Wilson Butler Architects in the US — contracted to oversee the general architecture — Hamburg's cm-Design was tasked with supervising the design details of the agreed concepts. "As the interface between the client, project management, the shipyard and five different designers, cm-Design was part of all design-related presentations, ensuring that brand consistency and style were to German taste," says Claussen.

Adhering to these themes, the company created the 54sqm Captain's Suite, as well as the Himmel & Meer and Junior suites, while beyond bedtime spaces its flair flourishes shipwide, Claussen explains. "We designed the bars and restaurants including the TUI Bar, which unlike the white of her sister ships is platinum with accents of turquoise



The Himmel & Meer suites are dominated by high ceilings, glass, white marble and private roof terraces

and pink," he says. "Deck 3 reception features wave forms in different shades such as deep sea and corals, while the Spa space exudes a modern, Asian style finished with gold accents, and the Himmel & Meer observation lounge offsets its vast ocean views with a casual-yet-contemporary brown, off-white, violet and chrome palette."

The firm also took design control of many other public spaces including the medical centre and restrooms, as well as all crew areas, from cabins to corridors. "Throughout the vessel, we worked with one theme and a main tone for each area, adding accent colours, fabrics, or patterns," Claussen says. "To ensure the contemporary style was convincing, we would add an old-fashioned piece of furniture, fabric or light fixture to

contrast the more modern style with a piece from an earlier period."

From the array of special spaces, Claussen selects Assenalster bar — aft on Deck 14 — as one of his favourites. "This area gives a real and pure ship feeling, with a nice outdoor ambience," he says. "And the Blue Balcony with its glass flooring 30m above the sea is an incredible spot that creates butterflies in the stomach."

When asked about challenges encountered during the project, Claussen is both philosophical and unfazed. "One was integrating a heavy 6m by 4.5m living green wall as a key feature at the Spa entrance due to the technical requirements and its weight," he says. "The steel structure came from the shipyard, while all plant boxes with water pipes and pump technology were installed by Ambius."

Sidestepping a quiet wobble when it came to completion, Claussen is overjoyed at the final outcome.

"As cm-Design's first newbuild cruise ship project there seemed to be so much unfinished work three weeks before delivery, but as areas were cleaned and finished suddenly it was done and delivered to the shipyard on time," he says. "Looking at the vessel now and hearing the positive comments from the industry and press, we are delighted at how well the job was completed." **C&FI**



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