



First recruits from China training deal head for sea

Seven students and four lecturers from the Wuhan Marine College in China are to work on the Thomson Cruises vessel *Topaz* after completing the first hotel training course held under a licensing agreement with Austria's Maritime Hotel Academy.

They are joining the ship's hotel department - managed by the Academy's parent company the Maritime Leisure Group - on nine-month contracts from December in positions including service and cabin stewards, assistant bar waiters and galley utilities.

More placements are planned following a progress report on the first intake.

The students were among 44 on the debut "introduction to working on cruise ships" course run by visiting Academy tutor David Ritchie, who commented: "This was a pioneering course in one of the relatively untapped markets where we see licensing agreements as the way to meet demand for trained staff."

The Wuhan college has invested US \$1.5 million on construction and equipment in the build-up to offering the Maritime Hotel Academy programme. The Chinese lecturers will be assessed on their ability to run the courses on completion of their sea-time.

Meanwhile the Academy is preparing for a second course to be held in early 2002.