

News release

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easyJet founder to air budget cruise plans at Maritime Hotel Conference

easyGroup founder Stelios Haji-Ioannou - best known for launching leading European low-fares airline easyJet - is making a special appearance at next month's Maritime Hotel Conference in London to outline his plans for flexible budget cruising from £29 per night.

A search for ships is now under way and the first easyCruise passengers could be at sea by Easter 2004. The formula echoes low-cost airline innovations with on-line reservations, early booking discounts and berth-only prices - meals and beverages being charged as consumed.

In a further break from package culture, the cruise-as-you-choose concept will not define cruise length, allowing passengers to join and leave the ship as they wish subject to availability. Itineraries will cover the Mediterranean in summer and the Caribbean in winter.

easyGroup's self-confessed 'serial entrepreneur' is already active in shipping through Stelmar Tankers, which he founded in 1992 some three years before the airline's debut.

His presentation is scheduled as part of the exhibition and conference programme at Cruise + Ferry 2003, the 10th biennial staging of the passenger shipping sector's premier international trade gathering, which takes place in London's Grand Hall, Olympia, from May 13-15.

The Maritime Hotel Conference - and a dedicated maritime hotel pavilion at the trade fair - have been arranged by Austria's award-winning hospitality experts the Maritime Leisure Group in a repeat of the 2001 debut partnership with Cruise + Ferry organiser Lloyd's List Events. Other hotel conference topics include health, safety, security, training, IT and entertainment, with Island Cruises managing director Michael Bayley, P&O Ferries on-board commercial director Patrick Hollis and Moulin Rouge managing director Pierre-Antoine Gailly among more than 20 speakers.

The delegate fee is £399 + VAT @ 17.5%.
Full details are on the website www.maritimeleisure.com

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Issued on behalf of Maritime Leisure Group by:

Paul Ellis, Direct Public Relations, London

Press enquiries: Tel +44 (0)20 8868 7648/pauelllis.dpr@btopenworld.com

Member of the Maritime Leisure Group