

Hotel management course teaches value of teamwork

Cruise ship vice captain Atle Knutsen and chief engineer Geir Lund have earned a top hotel management award in a ground-breaking link between the California-based Marine Hotel Association and the Maritime Hotel Academy of Salzburg.

The Norwegian duo from *Crystal Symphony* were the first non-hotel officers to attend the Association's annual management diploma course which the Academy - part of the Maritime Leisure Group - runs on its behalf.

The 2001 course attracted 18 Association-sponsored personnel, five from non-member operators and three independents from a wide range of companies and professional disciplines. Assessed on a written exam and project work, all but three achieved the 80% pass mark.

"It's a great thing to send deck and engine officers," said Lund. "I've been in companies where it's almost war between departments but the days of segregation have gone. It's a joint effort." Knutsen added: "It's very important to do this. You look at yourself from a different perspective. It's a real eye-opener."

Other participants - from Carnival, Seabourn, Radisson and Cunard's QE2 - included F&B, bar and housekeeping managers, chefs de cuisine and cellar masters. Delegates also included the chief purser, cruise director and stock controller employed on Thomson's *Topaz* under the Maritime Leisure Group's hotel and entertainment management contract.

The syllabus ranged from team building and time management to conflict control and corrective coaching. Crisis management exercises simulated a vessel running aground, a food poisoning outbreak, a medical evacuation and a sprinkler system emergency.

In the main practical assignment, four groups were tasked with designing and presenting plans for a ship capable of cruising worldwide with 2,200 passengers and 680 crew. Beyond specified cabin, restaurant and leisure facilities, each group was asked to devise unique selling points, technical innovations and measures to cut costs and enhance revenue.

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-2-

"The task seemed terrifying," said one group in the debrief, "but we proved that by pulling together you can achieve anything."



'After two weeks of hard work and long hours at the Maritime Hotel Academy Salzburg, the above group of officers from Crystal, Carnival, Seabourn, Radisson & Cunard celebrate receiving their Top Hotel Management Awards'

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