



SWAN HELLENIC PRESS-RELEASE (11 January 2021)

## **Swan Hellenic opens North America office for close customer support across the US, Canada and Mexico**

### **Cultural expedition cruise leader now nearing global direct customer service**

Cyprus, Monday 11 January 2021, Swan Hellenic announced the opening of its North America office based in Fort Lauderdale to offer the close personal service to which it is committed across the United States, Canada and Mexico, including through a dedicated call centre.

Headquartered in Cyprus with offices in London, Dusseldorf and Monaco, together with a branch office in Hong Kong (serving mainland China, Taiwan and South-East Asia), as well as partnerships serving India, Japan and Australia-New Zealand, Swan Hellenic's new North America office takes the cultural expedition cruise leader impressively close to offering global direct customer support less than year after it relaunched.

The dynamic North America team of highly-respected cruise industry veterans is headed by GM Tom Russell, previously President of Cruise & Travel Executives, COO of Global Voyages Group and COO & Managing Director North America of Silversea. Joining with him are Mitchell Schlesinger as Sales Director North America (previous extensive experience leading the sales activities of Norwegian Cruise Line, Orient Line and Voyages to Antiquity), Andrea Corman as Customer Relations Director (extensive guest-service

experience with Voyages to Antiquity, Uniworld River Cruises and Oceania Cruises) and Nick Giersdorf as Marketing & Digital Director (ex-Chief Marketing Technology Officer at Global Voyages Group).

With such a high-calibre team dedicated to its North America customers, it's clear that Swan Hellenic is totally confident and committed to bringing its unique cultural expedition cruises and renowned personal service to adventurous-minded and creative explorers around the world.

So, seventy years on from its pioneering English origins, Swan Hellenic is now back stronger than ever, ready to take sophisticated cruise-lovers to "see what others don't", discovering incredible destinations up-close, exploring fascinating cultures, and connecting with nature and locals in the company of like-minded individuals from around the world.

Three state-of-the-art expedition ships are being built at Helsinki Shipyard, Finland, the first two providing 152 guests with an elegant, intimate and personal five-star onboard experience delivered warmly by 120 highly-trained and knowledgeable staff, including expert expedition guides, lecturers and creatives. The first ship, SH Minerva, will set sail for Antarctica in November 2021, while the second will embark on its maiden voyage in April 2022.

Alfredo Spadon, Swan Hellenic's Senior Vice President Global Sales and Marketing, commented: "Historically, North America was always one of Swan Hellenic's most enthusiastic markets, so we're delighted to welcome such an accomplished team to once again support it with the high standards of service our heritage demands."

Tom Russell, GM Swan Hellenic North America, observed: "It's a privilege for me and my amazing new team to bring the iconic Swan Hellenic to North America. We can't wait to introduce sophisticated cruise-goers across the States, Canada and Mexico to the unique exploration, cultural and creative possibilities of cultural expedition cruising."

## About Swan Hellenic

Swan Hellenic was relaunched in September 2020 to proudly continue the spirit of cultural expedition cruising the company had pioneered in the 1950s. Building on its British roots, the new company has a global cultural cruising outlook dedicated to providing guests with the opportunity to 'see what others don't'.

Two new 5-star polar PC5 ice-class expedition cruise ships arriving in November 2021 and April 2022 will each accommodate 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and suites, the majority with large balconies. A larger P6 ice-class vessel accommodating 192 guests in 96 staterooms and suites in the same distinctive comfort and style as its sister ships will be arriving year-end 2022.

Dedicated to guests with a passion for adventure and cultural exploration, the company's meticulously planned itineraries explore the wild landscapes, wildlife, peoples and unique cultures of the world's less travelled regions.

Its ships feature elegant Scandi-design interiors, extensive outdoor spaces and dedicated expedition facilities. The crew includes an expedition team comprising expert guides, speakers and lecturers, and numbering 120 and 140 respectively almost equals the number of guests, reflecting the high levels of attentive personal service provided.

Headquartered in Cyprus with offices in London, Dusseldorf and Monaco, together with a branch office in Hong Kong (serving mainland China, Taiwan and South-East Asia), as well as partnerships serving India, Japan and Australia-New Zealand, Swan Hellenic supports its customers with close personal service worldwide.

## CV-Resume profiles

### Tom Russell, Swan Hellenic USA - Nord America General Manager

Russell is a recognized expert in new product development, product planning and itinerary development, marketing plan development, consumer marketing, strategic and tactical marketing promotions, successful retail trade distribution strategies and revenue management.

With more than 25 years of senior executive level travel management experience, he is one of the few North America travel executives with direct, hands-on management experience and success in every aspect and segment of the cruise industry.

From deep-water travels to adventure/expedition and river cruising (domestic and international), Russell has had a direct hand in the creation, re-creation and executive management of many successful cruise brands including Silversea Cruises, Silversea Expeditions, Windstar Cruises, Society Expeditions, Cruise West, Sitmar Cruises, Princess Cruises and Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

Russell attended California State University, where he earned an undergraduate degree in Marketing and an MBA focused on Operations and Finance.

#### **Mitchell J. Schlesinger, Swan Hellenic Usa – Sales Nord America Director**

Schlesinger has an extremely diverse career in the travel industry and is best known for his innovative and creative approaches in prominent roles as a senior sales & marketing executive at prominent cruise brands; Norwegian Cruise Line, Costa Cruises, Orient Lines, Voyages to Antiquity.

As one of a few select cruise executives with in-depth experience in both the small and medium ship worldwide immersive destination as well as mega-ship contemporary segments, brings unique perspectives to his analysis of industry trends and developments.

Schlesinger has co-authored the book; "Marketing and Sales Prescriptions for Today's Economy and Beyond, an RX for Travel Agents to More Effectively Use Their Dollars & Sense". He also provides ongoing sales and marketing education to the travel agency community through his articles focused on "Clients for Life".

#### **Andrea Corman, Swan Hellenic Usa – Customer Relations Director**

Having worked in all sectors of the cruise & travel industry, with a special focus on providing best-in-class service excellence, she will leverage her extensive background to support and grow Swan Hellenic's presence in North America.

Corman will manage the newly established contact centre for consumers and travel agencies, working closely with the global Marketing, Sales and Operations team to ensure top-notch service throughout the customers' journey ashore, during, and after a voyage.

Before joining Swan Hellenic, Corman was the North America Sales Manager with Res-company Services Ltd, a travel technology company, and Guest Services Director with Voyages to Antiquity of Oxford, UK, with operational offices in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Corman, who has visited all seven continents, has held senior Product Development and Customer relationship roles with both large, and entrepreneurial travel and cruise organizations. Such as Oceania Cruises, Uniworld River Cruises, Vantage Deluxe World Travel, Orient Lines, Silversea, and Frontier Expedition Cruises.

#### **Nick Giersdorf, Swan Hellenic Usa – Marketing and Digital Director**

Giersdorf has been a Digital Strategist for over 12 years, with progressive experience in direction, design and production of digital marketing. He has developed various strategic marketing programs that drive brand and product awareness, boosting profitability and optimizing conversion rates.

A strong thought leader; Giersdorf is able to identify digital marketing trends, new technologies, evolving best practices, competitor activity, and testing opportunities that help drive untapped revenue.

Having the distinction of working with top travel Industry clients (Hurtigruten, Uniworld, Scenic Cruises, Ponant, Trafalgar, Windstar, Paul Gauguin Cruises, Holland America, Seabourn, Insight Vacations, Contiki, Starwood Hotels, Vantage Deluxe Travel).

Prior to Swal Hellenic Giersdorf was the CMTO at Global Voyages Group, the Web Executive (NA) at Hurtigruten Pluss AS in Oslo, a producer at OnRequest Images and the Studio Manager at Peak Creative Media (Gold Magellan Award Winner – The Travel Weekly Magellan Awards).



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