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Managing multiple refits

Precetti president Paolo Passalacqua explains to Rebecca Gibson how the company plans to successfully manage and execute five major refit projects in the first half of 2015

Between April and October 2015, Miami-based turnkey contractor Precetti will carry out extensive renovation projects onboard four Princess Cruises ships and one P&O Cruises vessel in various locations across the world. Worth a total of US\$18 million, the five refit contracts will involve around 700 of the company's highly experienced employees.

The largest refurbishment will take place on Island Princess between 7 April and 22 May in Trieste, Italy, and this will overlap with an overhaul of Golden Princess in San Francisco, US, from 16-30 April. Precetti's team will then head to Singapore to upgrade Dawn Princess between 11 and 24 May and remain in the country to revamp P&O Cruises' Pacific Jewel from 24 May to 5 June. Four months later, the team will board the final Princess ship – Sea Princess – to complete a 14-day refurbishment.

"It will be a very busy few months, but P&O and Princess chose Precetti because they wanted an experienced turnkey



contractor that they could trust to deliver high-quality product in a short timeframe and within budget," says Passalacqua. "Since we opened in 1962, we have gained various skills and industry expertise by successfully refurbishing numerous ships for some of the industry's biggest operators. This has enabled us to become one of the few companies in the world that can offer in-house integrated design, manufacturing, prefabrication, and turnkey installation services."

Passalacqua adds that not only can Precetti's in-house team design public, catering and accommodation areas, it can also manufacture and install the various stainless steel elements, catering units, wet units and other electrical or piping components needed to complete these areas onboard the ship.

Although working on five almost concurrent refits in different parts of the world in such a short timeframe may faze some contractors, Passalacqua is confident that Precetti is well equipped to meet the demands ahead.

"While each refit has its own challenges, we try to use the same individual foremen,

contractors, manufacturers and technical engineers to ensure that they are able to continue honing their skills with each successive project," he says. "Using this approach has helped us to reduce both the amount of time we need to prepare prefabricated elements before we start the outfitting phase, and the time it takes to complete tasks while onboard the ship."

According to Passalacqua, transporting so many components, materials and people to various sites around the world will be one of the biggest challenges for each project. Around 400 containers will be shipped in total and all will need to be loaded and shipped according to a very tight schedule.

"Not only do we need to procure the raw materials and manufacture many of the components at our factory prior to boarding the ships, we also have to ensure that all of these products are loaded into the correct container and transported to the right place according to a predefined schedule," he explains. "To ensure this process runs smoothly, we will need to collaborate



Precetti has installed buffet areas to many cruise ships

“It’s a joy to have the opportunity to complete such major and varied refits on so many ships”

closely with the shipowners and the other contractors working on the ships.”

Once onboard the ships, the team will have a very limited timeframe to complete a lot of work – from unloading materials, to installing various piping and electrical systems, to building, outfitting and decorating various areas. “There aren’t many companies that would be able to successfully complete this type of task on time and within budget, without outsourcing some of the work,” says Passalacqua. “By partnering with us, shipowners have access to a one-stop shop for all of their needs, which means they don’t need to deal with multiple contractors.”

In addition to upgrading the refrigeration systems on Sea Princess and Dawn Princess, the company will design, build, install and outfit the Horizon Court and Lido Restaurant onboard all four Princess ships. Similar upgrade work will also be carried out in the Lido and buffet restaurant onboard P&O’s Pacific Jewel.

“Horizon Court and the Lido Restaurant has always been one of the most popular areas onboard the Princess ships because

it offers a spectacular panoramic view and an easy-access, self-service buffet,” says Passalacqua. “To meet the evolving demands of its customers, Princess has commissioned us to carry out repair work and cosmetic upgrades. We will also install new food display units and an open kitchen located next to the tables, so that diners can see their meal being prepared in front of them.”

Precetti will also modify Island Princess’s Casino Lounge and design, build, install and outfit 34 guest suites and 13 outside cabins.

“We will need to fit the various piping, lighting, HVAC and electrical systems, and then install the individual cabins,” he says. “Completing this type of complex reconfiguration and installation project in such a short space of time will be demanding, but we certainly have the technical expertise to achieve it.”

To reduce time pressures and keep the team’s workload in check, Precetti will prefabricate many of the cabins before the outfitting phase begins in April.

“The cabins will be assembled with wet units in our factory long before we travel to Italy and then installed on the ship as a complete module, rather than in parts,” says Passalacqua, explaining that this will help to minimise the team’s workload while on the ship. “We will be showcasing a real-scale example of one of these cabin modules at Cruise Shipping Miami (CSM) in the US this March to enable both potential and existing customers to see the products we offer.”

CSM delegates will also be able to see a real-scale example of a public space with an integrated catering unit and a new type of machinery that allows catering staff to sanitise glasses at low temperatures.

With such an impressively full order book for the first half of 2015, Passalacqua is optimistic that Precetti will secure more contracts before the end of the year.

“It’s a joy to have the opportunity to complete such major and varied refits on so many ships and as always, we will strive to complete the work to the best of our ability and provide high quality products and a reliable service to our valued customers,” says Passalacqua. “When we have completed these refurbishments, we will be in an ideal position to deliver similar services and products to other passenger shipping operators in the second half of the year.” **C&F**