

Ship Ahoy!

Leading architectural firm, GEM specialises in cruise ship design and production management. Having recently been recognised as Best Cruise Ship Design Company 2023, the firm's Project Manager, Giacomo Erasmo Mortola tells us a little more about life within the naval industry.

GEM was established by its namesake, Giacomo Erasmo Mortola in 1985 and today it is still run by him alongside his son, Lorenzo, a naval architect and Chartered Engineer.

Over the last 40 years, GEM has played a major role in the cruise ship industry, both as the head architect and interior designer, and the firm can count among its clients some of the biggest leading names in the cruise market such as Silversea, Virgin Voyages, Princess Cruises, P&O, and Cunard for which company has designed a variety of award-winning vessels.

GEM works at every level of the design and construction of large premium cruise ships (over 140,000 GT), luxury (40,000 GT), and smaller expedition vessels, assisting the owner from the definition of general arrangement plans in the concept design phase, throughout the signature of the contract with the shipyard and the detailed interior design development.

The firm is able to assist its clients in every step of the journey, from architectural master planning to interior and lighting design. During the construction phase, GEM operates as liaison and coordinator between owner, yard, and the subcontractors involved in the production of the ship, and can also coordinate with any other firm involved in the project, assisting them in integrating their project into the overall ship design.

"We do everything, from the production of drawings to renderings," explains Lorenzo. "We also participate in the entire construction phase, with site inspections and participation in mock-ups.

Cruise ships are evolving fast and in every direction, from size and technology to passenger expectations meaning innovation is key to GEM in order to keep it at the forefront of the industry and continue to be the leading

Italian cruise ship designer and project coordinator. In addition, interior design trends are constantly transforming the way Lorenzo and the team at GEM think and feel about space, therefore combining these two evolving worlds is a challenge the firm faces on a daily basis, both from an architectural and production management point of view.

"Staying at the leading edge of cruise ship design is not simply about using up-to-date materials and following the latest colour and design trends," Lorenzo elaborates. "There's a tension between preserving a cruise line's identity and introducing elements of innovation that enhance the passenger experience. You can't do that with a production-line mentality. Each ship has to be tailor made for the owner and, in the end, for the guests who will experience the ship."

Currently, GEM is involved in several projects, including Silversea Cruises' two new ultra-luxury vessels: Silver Nova, to be delivered in August 2023, and her sister ship Silver Ray, to be delivered in 2024. For these projects, GEM is responsible for the design and co-ordination of the passenger suites, and most of the indoor public venues.

Additionally, it is involved with Virgin Voyages' ships, Scarlet Lady, Valiant Lady, Resilient Lady, and the latest, Brilliant Lady – to be delivered this year. The firm has worked on the initial master planning phase and has been in charge of the architectural coordination of the project.

Recently, for its dedication and hard work, GEM gained recognition in the Leading Designers Awards and was bestowed with the title of Best Cruise Ship Design Company 2023. Long may this impressive voyage continue for Giacomo, Lorenzo and the team!

GEM
DESIGN FOR CRUISE SHIPS

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