

The Power of Technology

– A ‘Virtual’ Crewbar by Stewart Mandy

The CrewBar is a website for people who used to work on, are working on, would like to work on or just simply interested in cruise ships



When the crew of any ship want to get together, there is really no question where they go – the crewbar, long the most popular gathering place for the hardworking crew to relax and unwind at the end of the day.

But how to provide a place for the larger worldwide community of crew to gather? This was the question that Attila Czinke asked himself several years ago,

when reminiscing about his days at sea. He was keen to find a way to stay in touch with his former shipmates, while also providing a meeting place for crew and former crew around the globe. Attila used his web design skills to answer the question, and crewbar.net was born.

The website started out small, the main feature being the CrewBook, where crew and former crew can leave their contact information, to allow their friends to get in touch. Initially, Attila himself manually updated this; in due course the volume became such that he switched to a more automated system!

On a warm summer day in London, I met with Attila to learn what motivated him to produce what has become by far the most popular online site dedicated to ships' crew. Attila, originally from Hungary, worked on the Costa Allegra as a waiter, and then on various Carnival and Costa ships in the gift shops. He left the sea in 1997, and moved to London, where he became a photographer for model agencies, before studying web design and opening his own 'Internet solutions' company, Koollook Design.

I asked him to explain exactly what is crewbar.net: "The CrewBar is a website for people who used to work on, are working on, would like to work on or just simply interested in cruise ships. For those who used to work on ships they can keep up to date with the happenings in the cruise world. They can sign the CrewBook so that long lost friends or shipmates can find them and they can also perform their own search. They can check out the web cams to see where their old ship is cruising right now, or just read through the CrewBook messages to reminisce a little. For anyone working on a ship right

now, there are links to all major newspapers from around the world to help stay in touch with home, and other useful things like country dialing codes and all the different time zones. For someone thinking about working on ships we have all the info needed to get started and point them in the right direction. By reading through the CrewBook messages they can get an idea of what life is like on board and the variety of jobs there are. So, whatever you are looking for on this site, we think you will find it!"

Newly added features on crewbar.net include job-finding services through Rolling Pin Jobs, and a link to a travel agency specializing in marine travel. Attila's brand new addition, about which he is very enthusiastic, is the CrewBar shop, which debuted on November 1, and features a selection of products carrying the CrewBar logo.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the website is that all of this information and interactivity is available to crew free of charge. I asked Attila about this, and he stated clearly that it was a major intention of his to provide the website at no charge, as a service and benefit to ships' crew.

As a source of information, useful services, and ways to keep in touch with friends, crewbar.net is unmatched in cyberspace. As a publication dedicated to the crew, we are delighted to see Attila succeeding in his intention to provide a high quality online portal for crew everywhere, and we invite anyone unfamiliar with his site to visit at www.crewbar.net

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