

Celebrity plans major makeovers for four older cruise ships



Celebrity Cruises is following in the footsteps of Carnival and Holland America in spending big money to revitalize its older ships.

The line announced late Thursday at an event in New York that it plans major makeovers for all four of its Millennium Class vessels, starting with the eight-year-old Celebrity Constellation.

Celebrity CEO Dan Hanrahan told cruise writers the line planned to incorporate some of the most popular features on its newer, larger Solstice class ships into the 1,950-passenger Millennium Class vessels, which debuted between 2000 and 2002.

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Celebrity began rolling out the new Solstice Class in late 2008 with the debut of the 2,850-passenger Celebrity Solstice. An almost identical twin, the 2,850-passenger Celebrity Equinox, debuted in 2009, and the line is building three more Solstice Class ships. The class has been a huge hit, with many industry watchers saying it is a clear step up from the Millennium series.

Celebrity says it will spend nearly \$200 million on enhancement to the Millennium Class ships and other improvements across the fleet.

Among Solstice Class features coming to the Millennium Class ships:

-- The **Tuscan Grille**, the Napa Valley-meets-Italian-steakhouse venue found on Celebrity Solstice and Celebrity Equinox.

-- **Bistro on Five**, a popular creperie also found on both Solstice Class ships.

-- A Solstice Class-inspired, ice-topped **Martini Bar**.

-- The **Café al Bacio and Gelateria**, which will replace the former Cova Café.

-- An **Enomatic wine bar** (a bar with a state-of-the-art, Italian designed wine serving system allowing passengers to select and serve, at the touch of a button, the wines of their choice by the glass).

-- **More sumptuous suites**, which the line says will be on par with those in the most modern hotels in Europe. They'll have all new furniture, flat-screen TVs, upholstery, bedding and carpeting.

-- **Restyled standard cabins**, with entirely new carpeting, flat-screen TVs, upholstery and bedding.

-- **New color schemes**, carpeting and upholstery that echoes what is found on the Solstice Class ships in every public venue.

The Celebrity Constellation will enter dry dock to undergo the changes in April. The Celebrity Summit and Celebrity Infinity will get the upgrades in 2011, and the Celebrity Millennium is scheduled for the overhaul in 2012.