

CRUISE

Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady balances indulgence, wellness

By Johanna Jainchill   | Sep 18, 2021



A giant workout apparatus called MyBeast is located next to the ship's wellness pool. Photo Credit: TW photo by Johanna Jainchill

ONBOARD THE SCARLET LADY – During a tour of Virgin Voyages' flagship vessel, the Scarlet Lady, in New York this month, the importance of balance to the Virgin experience became very apparent.

This is best exemplified by Gym & Tonic, a juice bar adjacent to the wellness pool and fitness center that also serves alcoholic drinks ("Reset Cocktails ... healthy in spirit, while putting the spirit in healthy").

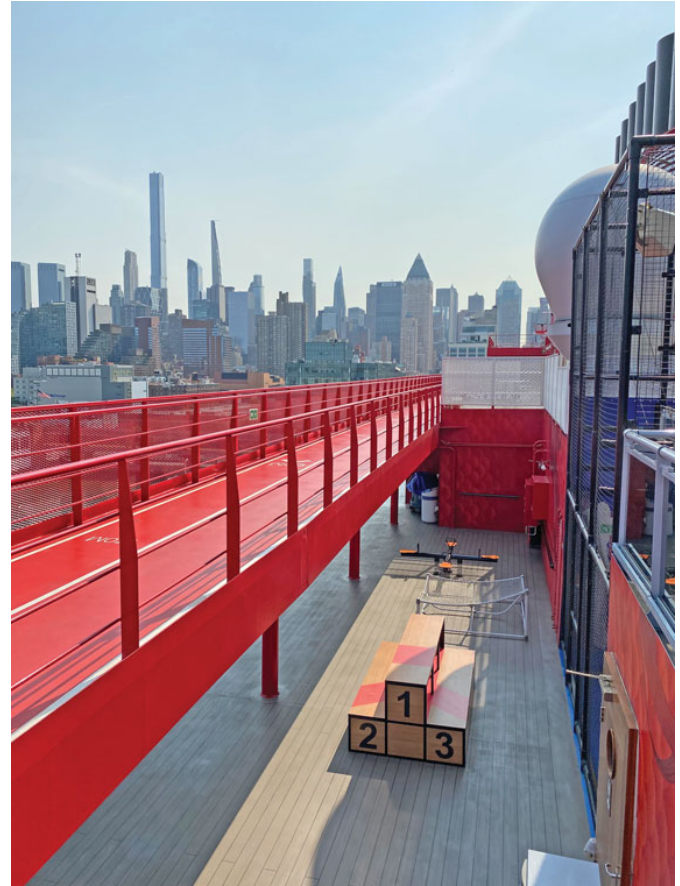
"It's all about the balance," said Chris Stubbs, Virgin's head of sailor and crew experience.

There are complimentary fitness class options almost hourly onboard. ("Everyone deserves a good workout," Stubbs said.) There is a basketball court, a dedicated running track around the top deck and an outdoor boxing ring and punching bags.

And, in a nod to the ship's home base, there's a MyBeast workout apparatus next to the wellness pool, similar to the outdoor gym equipment found along Miami Beach.

The prominently positioned fitness center is separated into two areas, one on each side of the ship: a cardio room and the build and balance wing dedicated to weights, stretching and core exercises.

On the flip side, there are "elements of Champagne all over," Stubbs said, standing next to a sculpture of a Champagne cork cover in the main atrium. Virgin partnered with Moët Chandon, and it is the Scarlet Lady's house Champagne and a featured bubbly in its Sip Champagne lounge. A "Shake for Champagne" option on the Virgin app enables guests to order a bottle of Moët Chandon Imperial from anywhere onboard with the shake of their phone.



The dedicated running track on Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady. Photo Credit: TW photo by Johanna Jainchill

First Look: Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady

Food, food and more food

There are more than 20 venues serving food, and a bar seems to surface at every turn.

The message -- at both ends of the spectrum -- seems to be, "Why not indulge?"

The Razzle Dazzle restaurant is vegetarian-forward and features whole roasted cauliflower, a probiotic hash and acai bowls, but it also has a Naughty section of its menu with fried chicken and pretzel pork schnitzel. (Virgin founder Richard Branson recommended the fried chicken to a table of journalists.)

Equilibrium seems to be such an important part of the experience that one of the crew is called Jordan the Balancer and is charged with helping passengers "detox/retox." He's one of 14 members of the Happenings Cast who take the place of a traditional cruise director.

Stubbs explained that they are "humans who are passionate about something" and who impart that passion to passengers.

"They are there to get to know you and help you find stuff around the ship," he said, adding that they move around and let people know what's going on.



The aptly named Red Bar in the Razzle Dazzle restaurant. Photo Credit: TW photo by Johanna Jainchill

For Jordan, it means helping people "eat, party and then go to the spa."

While Jordan may be found leading a fitness class, Michie the Flair is likely to be at the Dock House bar or the Manor nightclub or "dancing anywhere."

Joel the Hype runs onboard parties; the Charmer might do a magic trick while chatting with you.

Will the Foodie is self-explanatory.

The message of balance is not only there when it comes to food and fitness. There are no "white gloves and jackets," Stubbs said, and the officers wear the same outfits as the rest of the crew.

But less formality doesn't mean lesser service. "The attention to detail and quality is five-star," Stubbs said.

And although there is no dress code "or stuffy formalities" onboard, Stubbs said, passengers can choose to be "glam or casual."

As Virgin prominently says on its website, "This voyage is what you make it."

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