



The First Academy For Advanced Training In On-Board Hospitality Opened Today

November 11, 2016

Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the prestigious Villa Figoli Des Geneys in Arenzano (Genoa) for Italy's first centre dedicated to training hospitality professionals who will work on passenger ships. The project is a result of collaboration between the Liguria Region, Italian Merchant Marine Academy ITS Foundation and the Municipality of Arenzano. Four courses are already available in partnership with Costa Cruises.

Genoa, 11 November 2016 – The new **Accademia di Alta Formazione per l'Hôtellerie di Bordo (Academy for Advanced Training in On-Board Hospitality)** was opened today at the prestigious **Villa Figoli Des Geneys in Arenzano (Genoa)**. It is the first school in Italy dedicated exclusively to training hospitality professionals to work on passenger ships: cooks, pastry-makers, bakers, tourism entertainers, customer service representatives, and other positions related to on-board hospitality and entertainment.

The initiative is a result of collaboration between the **Liguria Region**, the **Municipality of Arenzano** and **Italian Merchant Marine Academy ITS Foundation**, which will run the school, with the goal of promoting Italian excellence in on-board hospitality.

Thanks to the "Accademia Ospitalità Italiana Crociere" (Academy for Italian Cruise Hospitality) project, in which **Costa Cruises** will be a strong partner of Italian Merchant Marine Academy ITS Foundation, a very significant portion of the new school's activities will be dedicated to the cruise sector.

The project already offers four courses. The **Superior Technical Institutes course (ITS) for training on-board pastry-makers and bakers**, financed by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), designed for EU young people in search of employment, will be about one and a half years long, alternating classroom training with on-board internships. There are 22 places available, with Costa Cruises making a commitment to hire at least 70% of the students who successfully complete the training course. Registration is already open and will close on 9 January 2017, while classes are set to begin in February 2017.

Three other courses, financed by the Liguria Region through the European Social Fund through public notice process closed in February 2016, are designed to train **tourism entertainers, customer service representatives and cooks**, for a total of 60 places (20 places for each course), reserved to EU students over 24 years old who are in search of employment. Courses will be from 300 to 415 hours long, with Costa guaranteeing that 60% of qualified students will be hired. Applications are already being taken for courses for tourism entertainers and customer service representatives, with a closing date in mid-January 2017 and classes beginning in February 2017: these will be the first students to use the new facilities and equipment at Villa Figoli. Registrations for cooks will begin in mid-February 2017.

Students who take courses at the new academy will have an absolutely excellent facility available to them. The restoration work in the splendid 18th century liberty-style villa, done at the initiative of the Liguria Region (with total investment of 4 million euro coming from PAR FAS/FSC funds) and the Municipality of Arenzano, created 9 fully-equipped classrooms, a library, a tea room/exhibition hall, a multi-purpose Tapestry Room, a refreshment area, a bar and a kitchen for classroom use. The structure also has a dormitory that can accommodate up to 50 students off-site, and is surrounded by an Italianate park-garden about 35,000 m² in size.

As Arenzano mayor Maria Luisa Biorci explains: "*From time we have been waiting for Villa Figoli Des Geneys, a splendid 18th century liberty-style surrounded by an Italian of 35,000 square meter park-garden, to become the heart of a project able to give it a new life. That time has come, thanks to major support from the Municipality of Arenzano. We decided to focus right on the villa as the headquarters of the first training academy for onboard hospitality: a way to enhance our local vocation to the sea. But that's not all. The recovery of Villa Figoli Des Geneys means also that*

our town is getting a magnificent, renovated public park and a splendid facility for maritime education as well as large, elegant reception areas, used jointly with the Academy, which can become the location for ongoing initiatives to showcase Italian excellence. It will be a school, a place available to the citizens and also an open place, ready to host events dedicated to the culture of the sea and of the Italian food and wine. Today, in other words, our ambition is to make a real laboratory of beauty".

"Since our assignment – declared Giovanni Toti, President of Regione Liguria – we have worked hard to put young people more and more in contact with the job market through a quality education, in order to address them towards future choices, close to their legitimate aspirations. I think it's very positive that a company like Costa Cruises is at the frontline to ensure a job opportunity to many of the youngsters who will complete their training in this prestigious location, restored to its former splendor thanks to the support of Regione Liguria and integral part of the Ligurian historical and architectural heritage. The cruise sector is [anti-recession](#) and growing: here, in this prestigious location, we train people for a real and concrete employment. My wish – he concluded – is that others could exploit the educational potential of this center of excellence in the future, obviously with the same commitment and employment effort."

A desire shared by regional councilor for education Ilaria Cavo, who affirmed: "I hope that the training provided through last year's application process will be joined by additional educational opportunities after initiation of the application process for Technical Higher Education (through a Council resolution, the Liguria Region provided new courses of study in hospitality services: on-board pastry cook / baker, on-board cook, on-board lighting/sound/video technician and DJ) and for the new 5 million euro application process (ESF funds) dedicated to the Blue Economy, which is open to educational organizations and consortia or special purpose associations in the region that present projects for unemployed persons who possess a three year qualification, a higher secondary school diploma, or a college degree." Councilor Cavo also added, "Thank you to Costa Cruises for believing in this site, for guaranteeing employment opportunities for the courses offered, and for making a major contribution to the entire project."

According to the president of the Italian Merchant Marine Academy ITS Foundation, "The new site at Villa Figoli will make it possible, for the first time in Italy, to develop the on-board hospitality supply chain, offering an opportunity that can immediately be expanded to Technical Higher Education courses and training for other strategic positions in the sector, using cutting-edge technological systems and educational tools and guaranteeing a steady and continuous offer to both companies and to young people. Costa Cruises is an ideal partner for developing the cruise industry, as it is a major international company and the only cruise ship company that flies the Italian flag." In conclusion, he stated: "The Academy is delighted to work with others who may need to use Villa Figoli for future educational activities related to on-board hospitality."

"We are delighted to be a partner in this truly unique training project in Italy, which will offer many new career opportunities, guaranteeing an absolutely excellent education. Costa Cruises is an Italian company that brings Italy's finest to the world by investing in new Italian talent: suffice it to consider that from 2006 to 2015 we hired over 1600 people. Thanks to the Accademia Ospitalità Italiana Crociere, which was established at Villa Figoli, we will be able to further increase our commitment to train and hire Italian and EU on-board staff, as we are also planning to expand our fleet, which in 2019 and 2021 will welcome the arrival of two new 180,000-ton ships, the first in the world to be powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG)" – said Neil Palomba, President of Costa Cruises .

Further details on the courses, including information on how to apply, are available at www.career.costacrociere.it, www.accademiamarinamercantile.it and www.giovaniliguria.it. The new courses held at Villa Figoli will also be presented on 16 November at the "Salone Orientamenti" in Genoa, on 17 November at "Connect" in Berlin and from 24 to 26 November at "Job&Orienta" in Verona.