

Floating New Brand Extensions, Aston Martin and Virgin Take to the Seas

Posted June 30, 2015 by [Mark J. Miller](#)



Aston Martin may be known for its James Bond-favored sporty luxury cars, but it's going big in its next venture. The 102-year-old British car manufacturer has decided to get into the boat business.

A partnership with Dutch yacht-maker Quintessence is producing a co-branded speedboat to extend the luxury spirit of the car to the high seas.

The AM37 and AM37 S are both being designed by naval architects Muldar Design with the input of Quintessence and Aston Martin on "every single item—from the dashboard, to the deck, and down the finest detail of the interior," according to a press release from Quintessence. The first AM37 will hit the water later this year.



And from yachts to ocean-liners, Sir Richard Branson headed to Miami last week to announce that the Virgin Cruises brand will literally launch from that city in 2020. During the press conference, Branson had fun cultivating his cheeky (and tie-hating) image by snipping off the ties of the mayor and the CEO of the port as well as the CEO of boat manufacturer Fincantieri.

“Starting a cruise line has been a dream of mine since I was 27,” Branson wrote in a blog post. “At the time I wanted to operate a cruise line for under 30s. Once I turned 30, I decided that we’d have to add a clause that would still allow the owner aboard!”



Branson gave up on the under-30 cruise line but the 64-year-old's new dream is getting closer to reality. As the *Financial Times* points out, Branson's presence at such events is still a bit of “magic dust” for the brand, bringing attention that wouldn't otherwise be there.



Richard Branson

@richardbranson

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There is a first time for everything. Having named my brand @Virgin, I'm thankful for that! virg.in/1st

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It's hard to know where Virgin will float off to with its maiden voyages and what other ports it will add but there's one market all floating brands are watching: China. According to the Cruise Lines International Association, between 2012 and 2014 Chinese passengers increased 79 percent per year, [ECNS.cn reports](#), and it's growing.

This has inspired Carnival Cruise Line to announce that it will add a fourth ship to its fleet in China next year. "Tourism overall originating from China and going overseas is still continuing to grow well ahead of the overall economy and ahead of retail sales,"

James Roy, an Associate Principal at China Market Research Group, told ECNS. "Billions of dollars are being spent on infrastructure all up and down the Chinese coast. Every major city, as well as many minor cities, have very large, new expensive cruise terminals."

With Virgin Airlines already established in China, can Virgin Cruises be far behind?



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