

PRESS RELEASE

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Five New Cruise Vessels to call in November as Destination prepares for 2016-2017 Cruise Season

November 03, 2016 – POINT BLANCHE – October represented ‘Plan a Cruise Month,’ according to Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), celebrating all cruise travel has to offer throughout North America, Australasia and Europe.

For the month of November, Port St. Maarten will welcome five new cruise vessels which have joined the fleets of various cruise lines. For the month of October, the destination saw 25 cruise ship calls and 89,367 cruise passengers (October 2015 was 28/Passengers 91,783), and for the month of November 2016 the forecast calls for 67, and an estimated 178,953 cruise passengers (November 2015 was 70/Passengers 184,338). In December 2016, the forecast for cruise ship calls are 93 with an estimated 219,089 passengers (December 2015 was 94/Passengers 226,817).

November will also see two days with six ships in port, November 16 and November 30, and two days with seven ships in port, November 24 and November 26.

11 cruise ships during the month of November will also remain in port during the evening hours up until midnight. This will be a plus for restaurants in the Philipsburg area.

Cruise season 2016-2017 for the destination kicked off last week with the inaugural call of Viking Ocean Cruises ship Viking Star. Various businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector are preparing for the 2016-2017 high season.

Port St. Maarten management calls on the tourism and hospitality sector to once again as they always do, to provide a memorable destination experience for the country’s cruise passengers while they explore what the island has to offer.

The cruise industry is very important for the economy of Sint Maarten contributing one third of the Gross Domestic Product of the country which in turn provides thousands of jobs and generates foreign exchange for the government and businesses.

Port St. Maarten has also been at the forefront of various infrastructure enhancements that have been made over the years in order to improve the tourism product which is essential for the growth of the destination and its economy.

The benefits of taking a cruise are the ease of travel to the best return on experience. According to the CLIA 2016 State of the Cruise Industry report, cruise travel is outpacing land-based general leisure travel by 22 per cent in the United States.

Five benefits of cruise-based travel versus land-based travel:

Convenient Cruising: The cruise industry is constantly expanding availability of ports, both domestically and internationally, meaning travelers have never had so much access to a cruise ship with many of them are within driving distance of major cities. Cruising internationally also offers travelers a less intimidating chance to sample different destinations while negating anxieties about dealing with foreign airports, hotels and transportation. Cruising gives travelers the chance to see, do and experience great things from all over the world, packing as little or as much into their trip as they'd like, but their suitcase only needs to be unpacked once.

A Cruise for Every Traveler: A cruise vacation affords travelers a chance to create a trip that is completely customized to their tastes and preferences. Whether a traveler hopes to indulge in a luxe massage every morning or check out a spin class, a cruise can be tailored to every kind of traveler. From yoga classes for kids to craft beer tastings for adults, travelers of all ages don't need to worry about being bored onboard.

Diverse Destinations: Both ocean and river cruising allow travelers to see exotic and unique destinations. Ocean cruisers can look forward to distant voyages around the globe and river cruises offer a chance to sail more intimate spaces. Whether traveling by ocean or river, cruises offer the chance to visit far ends of the Earth all in one single trip.

Experts at the Ready: A certified cruise travel agent help travelers partake in a nearly hands-free vacation planning experience while also lending an ear for questions once onboard. Agents can help travelers maximize their dollars, tailor activities to each guest's preference, and help scout out the best excursions, among other things.

Best Return of Experience: Cruising offers travelers a window to the world within their vacation budget. Instead of having to worry about travel, hotel, transportation, meals and entertainment costs, many cruisers pay one flat fee and travelers are able to enjoy paradise.

CLIA is the world's largest cruise industry trade association, providing a unified voice and leading authority of the global cruise community. The association has 15 offices globally with representation in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

CLIA supports policies and practices that foster a safe, secure, healthy and sustainable cruise ship environment for the more than 23 million passengers who cruise annually and is dedicated to promote the cruise travel experience. Members are comprised of the world's most prestigious ocean, river and specialty cruise lines; a highly trained and certified travel agent community; and cruise line suppliers and partners, including ports & destinations, ship development, suppliers and business services.



PHOTO OUTLINE: L to R: Viking Star Captain Rune Lokling, Port St. Maarten Acting Human Resources Manager Hector Peters and Minister Ingrid Arrindell displaying the plaques that were exchanged during a ceremony on-board the vessel.

For further questions, please contact: comments@portofstmaarten.com