

PRESS RELEASE

St. Maarten, 18.03.2015

Port St. Maarten Wins Best Cruise Port Destination for 2014

POINT BLANCHE (March 19, 2015) – A top delegation from management and the supervisory board of directors from Port St. Maarten, will return on Friday after attending the 31st Cruise Shipping Miami 2015, with an award: Port St. Maarten, best cruise port destination of 2014.

This is the third consecutive time that Port St. Maarten has won this award. Port management and board have been busy to reinvent cruise St. Maarten by being innovative, facilitating continuous port improvements and promoting product enhancements. Also playing a dominant role is the shopping opportunities for cruise passengers, local and diverse international cuisine, and the friendliness and hospitality of the St. Maarten people.

The port delegation had successful meetings with cruise industry figures. One of the upcoming opportunities is the continued development of home porting operations for the country.

Home porting will mean additional and considerable foreign exchange earnings for the national economy. Additional charter flights will have to be organized by cruise lines to fly to the island to bring in cruise passengers who would start their cruise from here. Before these passengers board the vessel, they will spend some time on the island and also upon their return from their cruise. This will pump millions of additional dollars into the economy.

Port St. Maarten has been diligently working to cater to cruise vessels that accommodate between 500-1000 passengers. Vessel provisioning here will also mean more business for wholesalers. For the past two years Port St. Maarten has catered to small cruise vessels with the capacity of 150-300, which was a test case, and the results have been very positive which supports that the destination can handle home porting operations in an efficient and professional manner.

This week Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) of the world's largest cruise companies, discussed the "State of the Industry," where they touched upon the health and future of the global cruise business, which was of great interests to a mature cruise destination such as Sint Maarten.

The opening plenary session featured CNN's Richard Quest as the panel's moderator. Quest is CNN's foremost international business correspondent and presenter of "Quest Means Business" and the monthly "CNN Business Traveler" programs.

The panel discussion looked at the significant changes in the cruise industry where there have been brand consolidations; where the industry is today, and what they foresee going forward. The panel included Arnold Donald, president and CEO of Carnival Corporation & plc; Richard Fain, chairman and CEO of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.; Frank J. Del Rio, president and CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd.; and Pierfrancesco Vago, executive chairman of MSC Cruises.

Between now and up to 2020, 30 new cruise vessels are to be built valued at more than US\$23 billion.



One state of the industry topic discussed was, “The Future of the Caribbean and How it is Being Reshaped”; how will infrastructure developments and the emergence of new destinations, combined with the need for fuel efficiency, reshape the Caribbean? How might the opening of Cuba impact deployment? Which areas will emerge in the cruise charts of the future, and which will decline? Port St. Maarten reps received a wealth of information with respect to this and how the port will reinvent itself for the 21st century.

On Thursday, cruise executives and delegates discussed Itineraries and Shore Excursions: Thinking Outside the Box. Extended stays and overnights are appearing more regularly in itineraries. Cruise destinations and lines will be looking at how they can continue to work together to maximize shorex revenue and the product offering, and how can overland tours fit into the mix.

Creating shorex programs for the more active passenger and for families was also discussed on Thursday, as well as planning itineraries and shorex for the rising numbers of repeat passengers.

The cruise industry’s premier annual event started on March 16 and concluded March 19. It was held at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

In 2014, at the 30th anniversary of the event, Port St. Maarten’s CEO Mark Mingo was a panelist bringing forward his experience and stewardship on, “How Can Destinations and Ports Maximize the Benefit of Cruise Tourism?”

Since 1985 Cruise Shipping Miami has been the premier annual event of the worldwide cruise industry. From a small gathering of 150 cruise industry executives in a hotel meeting room in New York City, Cruise Shipping Miami has grown into a four-day conference and three-day exhibition drawing 11,000 attendees, more than 900 exhibiting companies from 123 countries and over 300 journalists to become the cruise industry’s annual marketplace of ideas, products and services.



PHOTO CUTLINE: Minister of Tourism and Economic Affairs Hon. Claret Connor (left) receiving a plaque from Adam Goldstein (right), President and Chief Operations Officer of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. The plaque is in recognition of St. Maarten Harbour Group of Companies contribution to the cruise sector and being a distinguished sponsor of Florida Caribbean Cruise Association activities throughout 2014.

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