



PRESS RELEASE

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July Cruise Figures Surpass Expectations

PORT ST. MAARTEN – For the first seven months of 2017, Port St. Maarten has catered to 1,097,040 cruise passengers via 387 vessel calls. For the month of July, the destination saw a 16.5 per cent increase in cruise passengers – 85,432 when compared to the same month in 2016 (73,338). Overall ship occupancy for the month of July was 119.40 per cent. The destination has seen figures grow over five consecutive months.

Port St. Maarten Management is pleased with the growth signs especially when looking at the challenges being faced by other regional ports of call. The country's port was recognized in January for the third straight year in a row, voted the best cruise port in the Caribbean in 2016 by readers of Cruise Fever out of 10 Caribbean cruise ports.

In July, Port St. Maarten was chosen by cruisers as the number two port of call in Cruise Critic Cruiser's Choice 2017 in the top-five rated Eastern Caribbean, Bahamas & Bermuda Destinations.

A number of Caribbean cruise destinations have reported declines in cruise numbers for 2016 in the Western, Southern and Eastern Caribbean.

Port St. Maarten will be attending Seatrade Europe next month in Hamburg, Germany, to meet with cruise line executives to rekindle business relationships with key decision makers in order to grow destination numbers for the foreseeable future based on industry trends. The port will also showcase the destination and inform executives and other stakeholders about developments.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), a unified global organization of 60 cruise lines, 15,000 travel agencies, 300 executive partners, and 25,000 travel agent members worldwide, in its State of the Cruise Industry Outlook 2017, says global cruise travel is continuing to grow at a steady pace.

For 2017, based on current new vessel launch schedule and expected regional deployment, CLIA is projecting another positive year of growth for the industry with a passenger forecast of 25.8 million.

26 new ships have been ordered as of December 2016 with a total investment of more than US\$6.8 billion in new ocean vessels for 2017. CLIA added that the demand for cruising has increased 62 per cent in the last 10-years (2005-2015).

Port St. Maarten has been receiving over 1.5 million cruise passengers since 2010 (1,512,618) and has sustained over 1.5 million over the past six years with the exception of 2014 when the destination catered to 2,000,864 cruise passengers.

Cruise tourism contributions to St. Maarten as a destination is very prominent and represents one third of the country's gross domestic product.

The country's cruise industry plays an important role in the economy and makes a considerable contribution. According to the BREA (Business Research & Economic Advisors) Report, which is a survey-based analysis of the impacts of passenger, crew and cruise line spending, that was prepared for the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) and Participating Destinations, October 2015 edition, destination Sint Maarten led all destinations with nearly US\$423 million in cruise passenger spending for the 2014/15 cruise season, generating an estimated 9,259 jobs paying \$189 million in wage income during the 2014/15 cruise year. This placed Sint Maarten with the highest income impact and the second highest employment impact.

Average per passenger expenditures ranged from a low of \$42.58 in Trinidad to a high of \$191.26 in Sint Maarten. Sint Maarten with \$355 million in total passenger expenditures led all destinations and accounted for 14 percent of total passenger spending among the 35 destinations in the FCCA survey.

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According to CLIA, in 2016, the cruise industry surpassed 2016 ocean cruise passenger projections, reaching 24.7 million cruise passengers globally up from a projection of 24.2 million.

CLIA says that one of the many reasons that the cruise industry continues to thrive is because of the personalization it is able to offer its guests from around the world, and this comes from cruise passenger surveys.

The top three cruise destinations for 2016 were: Caribbean, accounting for 35 per cent of the cruise market; Mediterranean 18.3 per cent; and Europe (excluding Mediterranean) 11.1 per cent. The other areas that followed were Asia, Australia/New Zealand/Pacific, Alaska, and South America.



Port Sint Maarten