



A momentous start to Portland Port's 2019 cruise season

The start of Portland Port's cruise season was spectacular! The first visit of 2019 was the inaugural call of the panamax size ship Costa Mediterranea. This ship is a spirit-class cruise ship operated by the Costa Crociere cruise line. The Costa Mediterranea can carry a total of 2,680 passengers, has 1056 cabins and a crew capacity of 902 in 509 crew staterooms. At a length of 292.5m a breadth of 38.8m and a draught of 7.8m she was designed to meet the highest environmental standards.

Ian McQuade General Manager - Commercial said 'It's always exciting when we welcome a new ship to Portland Port and with this being the first call of the new season it is even more significant than usual. We are also fortunate enough to be welcoming her back again on 23rd April.'

As an inaugural call the ship was welcomed into Portland Harbour by the tug, Rufus Castle, spraying its water cannons. This also meant that the usual welcome ceremony took place on board the vessel when

the Captain was given a Portland Port plaque to commemorate the visit. These plaques are hand made with Portland stone from Portland Sculpture and Quarry Trust to commemorate the ships first visit to Portland. The Port's quayside welcome team were also on hand to assist and guide the passengers as they disembarked answering any questions they may have had about the local area-

Portland Port pride themselves on giving the cruise passengers a fantastic time to remember, so when the ship leaves us later this evening there will be live music from The Weymouth Concert Brass Band and three shots fired from the Nothe Fort Artillery Volunteer's canon.

Portland Port's cruise business is seeing continued growth and a shift towards larger ships like the *Mediterranea*, with 44 ships visiting this year bringing in over 62,000 passengers.

Over the last 10 years the number of cruise ships visiting Portland Port has grown substantially from just 4 calls and 2,000 passengers in 2009 to the record-breaking figures of 2019. This is a trend that Portland Port is keen to continue.

Ian McQuade, General Manager - Commercial commented 'It is exciting to see everyone's hard work pay off with the ever-increasing number of cruise ships that are choosing to visit Portland Port and the local area, which was highlighted today with the inaugural call of the *Costa Mediterranea*. We are looking forward to a busy season.'