

## Belfast Harbour named best UK & Ireland Port of Call by Cruise Critic

Belfast has been recognised as the Best UK & British Isles Port of Call at this year's Cruise Critic UK Editors' Picks Awards.

Cruise Critic®, a subsidiary of TripAdvisor, is the world's leading cruise reviews site and online cruise community and each year it names the winners of its Editors' Picks Awards, chosen by the site's international team of cruise experts.

Guided by the Cruise Critic editorial team's impartial cruise expertise – based on first-hand experiences and industry knowledge – the awards name the best-in-industry while also helping travelers select the best cruise for their specific interests and needs.

At the 15th annual awards Belfast took home the prize for Best Port Call in a year when the city enjoyed a record cruise season, with 159 cruise calls from 57 ships from 32 different cruise lines in 2023. That was an 8% increase on the pre-pandemic record set in 2019.

Michael Robinson, Port Director of Belfast Harbour said: "This award is recognition of the fantastic job that everyone connected with the cruise industry has done to create a product that gives visitors to Northern Ireland a brilliant experience. Significant investment has gone into the cruise facilities in Belfast and we continue to receive positive feedback from passengers, crew and cruise line management on both the high levels of service provided and the quality of NI's tourism offering.

"A lot of work has been done through Cruise Belfast, our partnership with Visit Belfast, to promote the region and bring visitors here. But, crucially, working collaboratively with tourist attractions, the hospitality sector and industry bodies, we have helped create a compelling offer that gives the cruise lines the confidence to come back to the region and expand the number of calls they make every year."



Gerry Lennon, Chief Executive of Visit Belfast, said: "Belfast is a compelling, unique destination steeped in history, culture, heritage and intrigue that boasts great hospitality, a big retail offer and a wealth of world class attractions and I'm delighted that its success is officially recognised this year by Cruise Critic as the Best UK and British Isles Port of Call.

"Welcoming record numbers every year, we're really grateful for the support of our award-winning team, Belfast Harbour, and many other important stakeholders across the city, who work hard to deliver an exemplary experience for our cruise visitors and to Cruise Critic for shining the spotlight on this increasingly popular and exciting cruise destination."

Cruise Critic is the world's largest cruise reviews and information site, offering a comprehensive resource for cruise travelers, featuring more than 50 million opinions, reviews & photos and hosts the world's

largest online cruise community.

“This was a phenomenal year for the cruise industry”, said Adam Coulter, Executive Editor of Cruise Critic UK & AU. “Between record-breaking sales and capacity numbers exceeding 100 percent, we saw travellers flock to the seas for high-value holidays. And for UK-based travellers, the introduction of ground-breaking new ships helped to drive interest in cruising even more.”