

## Portland Port looks forward to cruise restart and UK domestic itineraries

With the huge impact that the COVID pandemic has had on the global cruise industry, Portland Port, joined cruise lines, other ports, businesses and industries in welcoming the news that UK domestic cruising could set sail from May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ian McQuade, General Manager – Commercial at Portland Port has said ‘the port has been able to support numerous cruise lines throughout the pandemic and has witnessed first-hand how all sectors of the maritime industry have pulled together to help each other and collaborate. It is exciting to now see some light at the end of the tunnel and the prospect of passenger cruises re-starting.’

What has become evident from the webinars and virtual meetings the port has attended over the last few months, is that cruise lines have spared no expense, using the latest technology and teams of experts, in transforming their vessels and procedures to produce the safest and best experience possible.

Portland Port is looking forward to being able to safely welcome passengers to the stunning Jurassic Coast and has been reviewing its own policies and procedures to comply with Government guidelines and to provide a safe environment for cruise ships to bring their passengers.

From the end of May some fantastic vessels will be touring the British Isles, which is a great opportunity for avid or new cruisers, to experience what they have to offer. 2021 was scheduled to be another record-breaking cruise season for Portland Port; the first half of its programme has been cancelled; however, many scheduled calls have been now replaced with domestic cruise calls which shows just how well the cruise restart has been received.

The port is particularly excited to be included in the inaugural season of MSC’s newest flagship, Virtuosa, Viking’s latest ship, Viking Venus and Celebrity’s Silhouette. All will be making first time visits to Portland.

The MSC Virtuosa was designed to offer its guests innovative features and facilities and is one of the two largest in the MSC Cruises’ fleet, whilst also being one of the most environmentally advanced.

Viking’s newest luxury small ship, the Viking Venus, can host 930 passengers who will experience understated elegance, modern Scandinavian design and verandas from every cabin.

The Celebrity Silhouette was launched in 2011 and is fresh from her luxurious upgrade as part of the Celebrity Revolution, a \$500 million programme for their entire fleet.

Discussions continue with a number of other cruise lines and it is expected that more “re-start” cruises will be added to the programme in the near future.

Ian McQuade also said that ‘Portland Port is delighted to be included in these itineraries for the resumption of passenger cruises for the UK market. The port has maintained an excellent relationship with our local Port Health Authority throughout the pandemic and it is clear that cruise lines have developed a thorough set of protocols to ensure the safe restart of operations. Passengers can look forward to a taste of quintessential England when they visit Portland. From golden beaches to the rolling green hills, winding country lanes, picture postcard villages and numerous attractions of Dorset. After the last 12 months I am sure that these cruises will offer a much-welcomed relief to many eager holiday makers.’