

Record-breaking arrival drives CruiseAberdeenshire's growth ambitions

Port of Aberdeen set a new benchmark for its capability and capacity as it welcomed the spectacular 290-metre long Costa Favolosa cruise ship, the largest vessel to visit the port in its 888-year history.

The Costa Cruises ship, which has 13 decks and a gross tonnage of 113,307 arrived at South Harbour from Kirkwall for a day-long stopover before departing to Edinburgh. The 4,000 guests and crew received an authentic Scottish welcome from the Robert Gordon College Pipe Band, Alba Bagpipes, and VisitAberdeenshire's 'Welcome to Aberdeenshire' volunteers.

Costa Favolosa, which berthed in the port's South Harbour on 26 July, is the latest arrival in a record-breaking season of 60 cruise calls, up more than 150% from 2022. The port's current cruise call bookings extend through 2027, with over 100 cruise calls anticipated, including visits from industry giants such as Fred. Olsen Cruises and Holland America.

Marlene Mitchell, Commercial Manager, Port of Aberdeen said. "It is wonderful to welcome the Costa Favolosa to Port of Aberdeen. Her arrival is testament to the hard work of many – the port team who delivered the transformational South Harbour, which enables us to welcome ships of this stature, our marine and operational teams, and all our CruiseAberdeenshire partners who have been focused on raising the profile of our amazing region and all it has to offer."

Chris Foy, CEO, VisitAberdeenshire, said: "VisitAberdeenshire is enhancing the visitor welcome offered to passengers through the bolstered volunteer programme and continues to develop more opportunities for local suppliers to benefit from cruise calls."

Under the Cruise Aberdeenshire banner, Port of Aberdeen and VisitAberdeenshire continue to actively market the North East region as an attractive cruise destination, with a presence at Seatrade Cruise Med in Malaga, Spain on the Cruise Britain stand (360), on 11 and 12 September 2024.

Ian McQuade, Chair, Cruise Britain, said: 'It's thrilling to see Port of Aberdeen welcome Costa Favolosa, the largest cruise ship ever to call. The Port's development of South Harbour is playing a key role in bringing more ships and more planned tourism benefit to the city and to Aberdeenshire as a whole.

"A call into Aberdeen is a growing part of the region's cruise itineraries and Cruise Britain is delighted to support the port."

On their maiden calls into the port, Aberdeen also welcomed Ambassador Cruises' 245-metre Ambience and AIDA Cruises' 253-metre AIDA Sol in July.

The vessels berthed in South Harbour where passengers were transferred into the city centre and further afield on a number of shore excursions. Activities have included Dunnottar Castle, Old Aberdeen walking tour, distillery visits, Castle Fraser, Royal Lochnagar, and more.

Dan Barnett, Co-founder and Distiller, City of Aberdeen Distillery, said: "The City of Aberdeen Distillery & Gin School is delighted to welcome visitors from around the world, and the new port has added an exciting dimension to the city and shire. In support of this we introduced a new "Flight of Fancy" – this is a self-guided gin tasting experience at the distillery."

Christina Polson, Founder, Farm Stop, said: "The cruise ships coming into Aberdeen are a tremendous boost for the tourist economy and are a great way to showcase our stunning coastline and everything Aberdeenshire has to offer. We are lucky to have had visitors from the cruise ships come to Farm Stop and are looking forward to welcoming more in the future."

Located in the heart of the city, Port of Aberdeen operates 24 hours a day, boasting exceptional transportation connections and abundant space to cater to tour coaches.

The port's berthing options cater to various needs, accommodating small boutique vessels to sizable cruise ships, with impressive deepwater berths that can welcome vessel lengths of up to 300 metres.