Cruising into 2015 at Portsmouth International Port, - welcoming “one of the most impressive ships afloat”

The cruise team at Portsmouth International Port has had a busy winter ensuring everything is ship shape for the 2015 summer cruise season.

The diary for 2015 is looking extremely healthy, with 40 cruise calls booked so far. The season starts on March 1st and runs all the way through until November. Many of the cruise ships coming to Portsmouth International Port are repeat visitors, although there are some ships that are arriving at the waterfront city for the first time.

The first cruise liner into Port is Voyager on St David’s Day, 1 March. She arrives from La Coruna in the morning, disembarking passengers from one cruise holiday then departs for Kristiansund in the late afternoon with a new set of holidaymakers. These ‘turnaround’ calls are an important part of the business at Portsmouth International Port, built on large investment in new passenger facilities and a reputation for a flexible and tailored service. 2015 sees an increase in ‘turnaround’ calls at Portsmouth. Voyager is also scheduled for today 16 March, arriving from Bergen.

‘Europa 2’, a brand new visitor to PIP arrives in June and is described by the UK’s Daily Telegraph as “the ultimate in casual luxury for those who don’t stand on pomp and ceremony”; the paper says it is one of the most impressive ships afloat.

Europa 2 only came into service in 2013, so is also one of the most modern cruise liners to come calling at Portsmouth International Port. She is also one of the longest vessels to dock at Portsmouth, made possible by investment in new berthing facilities. The ship is 225 metres long, yet carries just 516 passengers. The focus is on space and luxury, with a variety of grand suites, penthouses and family apartments. The liner is owned and operated by German company Hapag-Lloyd, and most of the passengers on board will be from her home country. The ship operates on a bi-lingual basis though, so some British customers are
likely to be tempted to experience the latest in top end, relaxed and stylish travel.

Another new visitor this year is Funchal, booked to call four times during the season. The Portuguese vessel is a small vintage ship with wooden decks and public rooms all on one level. Funchal’s cruises are very much based on exploring and discovery - a niche of the cruise market that Portsmouth fits into beautifully.

Passengers visiting Portsmouth are able to experience the magical entry into the Port, sailing close to the Spinnaker Tower and with a great view of ships in the Historic Dockyard. Close access to the channel gives operators the chance to head off to other ports around the UK coast.

Portsmouth International Port is also looking forward to welcoming Sea Explorer to the waterfront city for the first time. Sister ship of Noble Caledonia's Island Sky, a regular at the Port, Sea Explorer is also described as one of the “world's finest small ships”. Although the luxury cruise ship will be heading to and from the Channel Islands from Portsmouth in May, it’s designed to withstand the toughest conditions. Sea Explorer has a proud history of exploring the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

Captain Rupert Taylor, Harbour Master at Portsmouth International Port, is in charge of cruise ship bookings and operations. He said “2015 is shaping up to be another successful year. I’m particularly pleased to see the number of turnaround calls is up for the year, a vote of confidence in the cruise services that we offer operators and passengers alike. It also means more work for the outside companies that provide services to cruise ships at Portsmouth International Port.”

Details of the 2015 Cruise schedule at Portsmouth International Port can be found here: http://www.portsmouth-port.co.uk/cruise/cruise_schedule_2015

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