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Cruising towards a busy 2017 at Portsmouth International Port

With a successful 2016 summer season drawing to a close the schedule for cruise ships at Portsmouth International Port next year is looking healthy, with a 24% rise in bookings already in the diary.

2017 will see some globally significant operators and cruise ships visiting the Great Waterfront City for the first time, as well as the return of current customers and old favourites. Forty-seven cruise ships are booked to use the great facilities at Portsmouth International Port next year, a rise of almost a quarter on the 34 ships that visited this year.

In June a “Six Star” cruise ship will be calling at Portsmouth International Port. The 238metres Crystal Symphony is described as ultra-luxe, with a stunning selection of penthouse suites and deluxe staterooms. The luxury liner will visit the Port on a cruise that starts at Reykjavík in Iceland. The holiday takes passengers down the west coast of Britain, ending at the historic maritime city of Portsmouth.

Rupert Taylor, Harbour Master at Portsmouth International Port, said, “The wealth of world class attractions on the doorstep of Portsmouth International Port is a key factor for the rise in cruise ship calls. Passengers can walk off the gangway, and within minutes step into a host of historic attractions, stroll through the streets of old Portsmouth, and enjoy high quality shopping, dining and entertainment.”

Viking Cruises is another operator visiting Portsmouth International Port for the first time. A well-known name in river cruising, it has also recently branched out into ocean cruising. Viking Star will call in September, and at 228 metres will be another large caller arriving in 2017. It is also the newest vessel to visit, having only entered service in 2015. The ship will be on a cruise tracking the "Trade Routes of the Middle Ages", calling at Portsmouth on a journey from Norway to Spain.

The arrival of Crystal Symphony and Viking Star highlights Portsmouth International Port's expertise in dealing with some of the world's top luxury liners and their passengers. In her debut season Viking Star was given a 5-star rating by the editors of Cruise Critic, received the highest rating in the mid-size ship category in Berlitz Cruising & Cruise Ships 2016, and was heralded by CNN as the "world's best new cruise ship."

The beautiful 'yacht' Le Soléal is another new visitor in 2017. Just three years old, the cruise ship is owned by the respected French operator Compagnie du Ponant. The explorer ship's elegant exterior lines are matched by stylish interiors. Le Soléal arrives at Portsmouth International Port in April with more than two hundred passengers enjoying a cruise from Dublin.

The 2017 cruise season starts on 23 March with the arrival of Swan Hellenic's Minerva. The much loved cruise liner has been based at Portsmouth International Port for the past six summer seasons. Parent company All Leisure Holidays continues to commit its luxury brand to Portsmouth with passengers departing and arriving for cruise holidays benefiting from excellent transport links to London and elsewhere in the country. Minerva and ALH's Voyager will be the most frequently seen ships next summer

The growing trend for explorer cruises also continues at Portsmouth International Port in 2017. National Geographic is bringing NG Explorer and NG Orion back to the Waterfront City for passengers to experience the superb selection of museums and historic attractions. Silver Explorer is also making a welcome return, with two calls next year. Noble Caledonia's Ocean Nova will also be making several visits during the summer season.

With 29 cruises commencing their voyages at Portsmouth International Port in 2017 there's a wide range of holidays to choose from that bring the benefits of traveling from "Britain's Best Connected Port".

For a full list of cruise ship activity at Portsmouth International Port in 2017, please visit http://www.portsmouth-port.co.uk/cruises/schedule2017

For further information please contact Emma Gaisford/Julie Blackwell on +44 (0)1256 631696 or email julie.blackwell@purple-agency.com