

It's a hat trick! Guernsey wins Best UK & British Isles Port of Call in Cruise Critic UK Editors' Picks Awards for third time.

Guernsey is delighted to announce that it is the winner of the 'Best UK / British Isles Port of Call' category in the 2018 Cruise Critic Editors' Picks Awards, winning the title for the third time in four years.

Over recent years VisitGuernsey has continued to focus on the cruise market with strong YOY growth and positive commitment from the cruise industry. This has resulted in 91 calls scheduled for 2019 so far, nine of which are inaugural calls. This includes the prestigious MSC Preziosa which has a capacity of 4,300 passengers. Other flagship visits will come from Windstar's MS Star Breeze, Royal Caribbean's Brilliance of the Seas and Princess Cruises Sapphire Princess.

The award by Cruise Critic acknowledges the beauty and charm of Guernsey's St Peter Port, the warm welcome offered by the people of Guernsey and also the infrastructure developments that have taken place over the last year, including the improvement of the tendering and disembarkation process and the creation of unique and innovative shore excursion products that maximize shore time.

Provision of extra shade / cover for those waiting for tenders has been implemented allowing those less mobile passengers and the elderly a more comfortable wait in the peak summer season or during showers. The Meet and Greet system which sees the VisitGuernsey cruise team welcoming passengers ashore has also been enhanced with a staggered system to ease bottlenecks and ensure an even flow of passengers into the town alleviating any congestion. Further improvements are planned for next year; in order to allow multiple tenders to dock simultaneously dredging around the pontoon on the southern side will take place over the winter season making disembarkation / embarkation quicker and easier particularly during the Spring tides.

New tours for the cruise market have focused on the success of this year's 'The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society' film. The film which launched Nationwide in April 2018 was followed by the August launch in the US where its success has driven the book of the same name back up the best-seller charts and has rekindled interest from the US cruise market. Tours now include a guided tour of St Peter Port highlighting the key historical facts linked to Guernsey's WWII occupation and a tours through the rural lanes and communities so well depicted in the film.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find any British Isles port of call that goes as far as Guernsey to welcome cruise passengers. Thoughtful improvements are constantly made and feature parasols on the pier for hot or rainy weather, an army of helpers directing passengers towards the town, staggering tour times to avoid overcrowding, dredging the harbour and even a new section for disabled passengers to wait." Quotes Adam Coulter, editor Cruise Critic.

Mike Hopkins, Director of Marketing and Tourism at VisitGuernsey comments; "Guernsey is delighted to be the winners of this prestigious award again. We are committed to the cruise industry and to successfully responding to the needs and requirements of the thousands of cruise passengers that visit our island each year. Cruise represents a significant and important part of our tourism industry and we will therefore continue to look for ways to offer passengers a positive experience and exceed their expectations when visiting our island."

Deputy Dawn Tindall, member of the Committee for Economic Development echoed Mike Hopkin's delight

at being the winners of this prestigious award yet again, and added, "The cruise market has supported the significant development of the guided tour sector, whether by coach, car, bike, foot, or Petit Train, and has helped to support the growth of not only the tourism industry but also the retail and other sectors who indirectly benefit from this important visitor group. We hope to welcome them to our beautiful island for many years to come".

David Barker, Harbour Master said, "It is tremendous news that Guernsey has won this award for the third time, and clear recognition of what is a really strong team effort. My staff and I work very closely with VisitGuernsey to make sure that these visits go smoothly, and to work out how we can continue to improve the guests' experience. We have a uniquely beautiful island and harbour and it is great to see them appreciated by such a global audience. We are, of course, aware of the challenges of hosting several thousand extra visitors in a single day. These challenges have however been met with supportive enthusiasm, and I would like to thank all involved and islanders for extending such a warm Guernsey welcome to our international guests".