



New member Cowes announces 2019 cruise season

Six cruise ships to visit Cowes Harbour and four maiden calls

Cowes Harbour Commission is extremely pleased to announce that Cowes, Isle of Wight, has six cruise ship calls booked for 2019, including four inaugural calls from some of the world's premium luxury cruise lines.

The Cowes cruise season started on 10th May with a call from *Bremen*. *HANSEATIC Nature*, one of Hapag Lloyd's new expedition class ships, made a maiden call to Cowes on 27th May.

Cowes Harbour Commission held a plaque exchange onboard the Hapag-Lloyd Cruises new ship *HANSEATIC Nature* to welcome the ship to Cowes. Attending the plaque presentation were the *HANSEATIC Nature*'s Staff Captain Christoph Kunz, Cowes Harbour Master Capt. Stuart McIntosh, Cowes Mayor Lora Peacey Wilcox, and Chairman of Visit Isle of Wight Ian Griffiths.

July will mark an exciting point in the development of the harbour's cruise business; the inaugural visits to Cowes of ultra-luxury cruise ships *The World*, *Seabourn Quest*, and *Silver Wind*.

The World, the largest private residential ship on the planet, will be the first cruise ship to pay an overnight visit to Cowes on 12th-13th July. *Seabourn Quest* will visit Cowes on 15th July and is the third iteration of the vessel design that has been called a "game-changer for the luxury segment". Silversea's intimate cruise ship *Silver Wind*, which had a major upgrade in December 2018, will call on 18th July.

The global cruise market is currently growing at an exponential rate, and it is also excellent news that the UK is experiencing growth in ports-of-call visits. Locally, Cowes Harbour Commission has a strategic policy to contribute with stakeholders to the promotion of Cowes as a destination, including attracting increased cruise calls to Cowes.

Harbour Master at Cowes, Capt. Stuart McIntosh said: "Working with local partners, the Commission aims

to deliver annual growth in cruise visits to Cowes. We believe that the Isle of Wight offers an ideal destination for luxury cruise operators looking to cater to current demand for experiential and personalised travel. By bringing additional international attention to the Island, we hope to see a continual development in cruise tourism."

New for 2019, Cowes Harbour Commission has facilitated the development by shoreside tour operators of several new land and water-based excursions to further enhance the range of unique experiences available to cruise passengers, including for the first time tours based in and around the vibrant Cowes town.

Cowes Harbour Commission is working proactively with the Island's tourism organisation "Visit Isle of Wight" and other local stakeholders to promote Cowes as a unique destination port-of-call, encouraged by the rising demand in the cruise ship market, including growth in the Northern European luxury cruise market.

Jack Brooke, Senior Account Manager Shore Excursions UK & Ireland for Intercoaches, said: "Cowes is a fascinating coastal town with a long, prestigious maritime history. It is with great pleasure that we have started working with Cowes Harbour Commission and local stakeholders in recent years as the Island grows in recognition and reputation as an up-and-coming UK cruise destination. With the support of local business and the port authority, Intercoaches has been able to develop a varied portfolio of tour excursions from Cowes with several new tours debuting this year for cruise passengers."

The Isle of Wight is ready to provide itinerary planners with a host of tour options for cruise passengers wanting high quality and authentic experiences at destinations. All cruise operators considering Cowes as a potential port-of-call are welcome to contact Cowes Harbour Commission for further information.