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USA Today

Royal Caribbean kicks off first year-round sailings out of Baltimore

By Gene Sloan, USA TODAY

Today is a big day at the Port of Baltimore as Royal Caribbean debuts its first year-round sailings from the city.

The industry giant's 2,252-passenger *Enchantment of the Seas* is replacing the smaller, 1,950-passenger *Grandeur of the Seas*, which only sailed seasonally out of the Baltimore port.

Enchantment of the Seas initially will sail a series of five-night Bermuda and nine-night Eastern Caribbean roundtrip itineraries from the city.

The Bermuda cruises will feature a two-day call at Kings Wharf. The Eastern Caribbean itinerary will include calls in San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; Samana, Dominican Republic; and Labadee, the cruise line's private beach destination on the northern coast of Haiti.

RELATED: Carnival launches year-round sailings from Baltimore

Starting in the fall, *Enchantment* will sail a series of nine-night cruises to Canada and New England (*Enchantment* also is sailing a special eight-night roundtrip itinerary to Canada and New England today that will boast extended port time in Halifax and Bar Harbor). The ship also will sail nine-night Bahamas and 12-night Southern Caribbean itineraries starting this coming winter.

In setting up shop year-round in Baltimore, Royal Caribbean is following in the footsteps of rival Carnival, which began year-round sailing out of Baltimore in April 2009 with the 2,124-passenger *Carnival Pride*. The *Pride* offers a seven-night itinerary to Florida and the Bahamas.

WJZ Channel 13

Jun 21, 2010

***Enchantment Of The Seas* Sails Into Baltimore Reporting**

Mary Bubala BALTIMORE (WJZ) —

Baltimore's cruise industry is making waves. On Friday, our harbor became home to a new, huge ship called the *Enchantment of the Seas*.

It used to be docked in Norfolk, Va., but as Mary Bubala reports, Royal Caribbean made a change, choosing Baltimore's port as its new launching pad.

Everyone is on the lookout in the Inner Harbor, making sure to get out of the way of Royal Caribbean's massive ship, *Enchantment of the Seas*.

Weighing 81,000 tons and able to carry 2,252 passengers, the ship arrived in Baltimore Friday morning.

The Cruise Maryland terminal is its new home base.

"Having Royal Caribbean here in Baltimore has been a win-win for many years. We've been here with the *Grandeur* for a while now, and because we've had so much success with Baltimore,

we've decided to bring a newer and larger ship to entertain the guests," said Ken Muskat, Royal Caribbean Vice President of Sales.

In 2005, engineers cut the Enchantment in half, adding a 73 foot extension, which houses bungee trampolines, a rock climbing wall and nine pools for guests to enjoy.

Now passengers are filling the ships based in Baltimore like never before.

Back in 2008, only 27 cruises left from Baltimore. In 2009, it grew to 81, and then 10 more this year.

A record 113 cruises are already scheduled for next year, with an expected 240,000 passengers, five times more than just a few years ago.

"Cruising out of the Port of Baltimore this year is going to generate about \$90 million in economic impact and also generate about 500 jobs for the local economy," said Richard Scher, Port of Baltimore.

The cruising industry has evolved at the Port of Baltimore, which is known for cargo imports and exports, but now counts precious cargo as key to its future.

The Enchantment of the Seas will cruise year-round from Baltimore.

One of the reasons Baltimore's port was chosen is its easy access off Interstate 95 for people coming from up and down the East Coast.

<http://wjz.com/local/port.of.baltimore.2.1760116.html>

Click on web site, scroll over to the right to see video

WBAL TV Channel 11

WBAL Radio

New, Yearlong Cruise Ship To Sail From Baltimore

BALTIMORE -- Those who are interested in cruising out of Baltimore have been given a new option.

Royal Caribbean's Enchantment of the Seas sailed into Baltimore on Friday. The ship offers year-round itineraries and is expected to bolster Baltimore's thriving cruise industry.

The Enchantment will set sail from Baltimore with 2,200 passengers on board, and port officials said that's an indication of just how strong the cruising industry is in the city. They estimated that 91 cruises will depart from Baltimore this year, each with an economic impact of \$1 million for the area.

The 989-foot ship will offer year-round cruises to destinations such as Bermuda, other parts of the Caribbean, New England and Canada.

Port spokesman Richard Scher said he expects the new ship to confirm Baltimore's reputation as an easy-access departure point with wide appeal.

"From Philadelphia to Northern Virginia, it's a population base of 14 million people. Also, because we're so easy to drive to, it's a draw for the Midwest," he said.

The ship was built in 1997 and received a major overhaul in 2005, officials said.

"We literally took this ship and cut it in half. We put in a new 73-foot midsection," said Royal Caribbean spokesman Ken Muskat.

The new midsection has made room for 151 new state rooms, as well as more amenities such as an expanded pool deck, a new steakhouse and a Latin lounge.

Royal Caribbean said it focused on making the ship family friendly, including features like a bungee trampoline and a rock climbing wall.

"The demand has been there, so we figured we'd bring in a new ship that's a little bit larger and offer a whole new experience for people," Muskat said.

Port officials said that Baltimore's cruising industry has thrived throughout the recession, in large part because it offers a vacation option without the cost of a flight. They estimated that the industry supports 500 jobs in the area.

"Those are jobs like security, ground transportation, processing and a myriad of other jobs, as well," Scher said.

Royal Caribbean officials said to get the best deals, book as far in advance as you can. Copyright 2010 by wbaltv.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Daily Record **\$3M to make port's cruisers more comfortable**

by Nicholas Sohr

June 21, 2010

The Port of Baltimore is planning for a bit of a makeover as it seeks to accommodate a booming cruise business.

Port officials will seek approval of a state spending panel this week to purchase a new gangway to take passengers to and from the growing number of ships calling at the South Locust Point Cruise Terminal.

The \$2.9 million bridge, similar to a walkway that takes airline passengers from terminal to plane, could open this winter if the Board of Public Works gives the project the go ahead on Wednesday.

For decades, cruises trickled into the port at a rate that sometimes lagged to just five or six departures a year. And even as the number climbed to between 25 and 32, the business remained seasonal, with ships calling in the spring, summer and early fall.

In 2008, the port hosted 27 cruises and nearly 90,000 passengers before a threefold increase brought the totals to 81 cruises and 329,000 passengers the next year.

The cruise business is expected to bring in \$5.7 million in revenue to the Maryland Port Administration in 2009, according to state records, and inject \$90 million in spending to the area.

The administration is planning for the number of cruises to rise to 113 in 2011 with the addition of the Royal Caribbean line.

Royal Caribbean's Enchantment of the Seas, the largest cruise ship ever to call in Baltimore, made its first visit to the city on Friday. The 990-foot ship had been based in Norfolk since 2007.

"Certainly we are very pleased with the growth of the business over the last couple years," Scher said. "We're in a great location just off of I-95 and I-70, and in the middle of a large population base."

Royal Caribbean joins Carnival Cruises in offering year-round trips from Baltimore. Celebrity Cruises operates out of the port from November through February.

With the port expected to be operating at capacity next year, Scher said port officials are engaged in "internal discussions" about options for expanding and upgrading the cruise terminal, which can handle only one ship at a time. But, Scher cautioned that any such plans are unlikely to gain traction in the near future.

"We're having those discussions though with the mindset that we are in a very tough economy," he said. "Certainly when you're talking about the future of possibly expanding the current terminal or constructing a new terminal, it's just not doable right now with the amount of dollars that are available."

Faced with a similar quandary at the Seagirt Marine Terminal, the state agreed in January to lease the facility to a private company, which is funding the construction of a new berth and the purchase of plus-sized cargo cranes.

Scher said a similar public-private partnership at the cruise terminal "is a possibility."

The new gangway could make stepping on to the ships more comfortable for passengers. If approved, the contract calls for TEAM Ports & Maritime, S.L., a Barcelona-based company, to install heating and air conditioning and give it enough flexibility to accommodate the range of different ships that call at the port.

WJZ TV

June 14, 2010

Port Of Baltimore Preps For Another Cruise Ship Reporting

Weijia Jiang BALTIMORE (WJZ) — While most businesses are struggling to survive in this tough economy, one industry is surging in Baltimore: the cruise ship industry. Weijia Jiang has more on a new ship that's coming to Charm City.

The Port of Baltimore is making room for another cruise ship. Carnival, Celebrity and Norwegian lines already have trips from here. Now Royal Caribbean International will house its ship Enchantment of the Seas in Charm City starting on Friday.

"Even in a very challenging economy, people still want to take vacations and they see a real good bang for the buck with taking a cruise," said Richard Scher.

In 2008, only 27 cruises left from Baltimore. In 2009, business grew three times and a record 113 cruises are already scheduled for 2011, with an expected 240,000 passengers, compared to only 47,000 three years ago.

"It's a cost-effective vacation for families and younger sets. Usually everything is all inclusive," said cruise passenger Jim Moore.

Scher says the Port of Baltimore is such a hot spot because of its location. It's right off I-95, just 10 miles away from BWI and within 90 miles of three other major airports.

"It's one of the booming ports of the northeast, so it does definitely make sense," said Tiano Brown.

For many, it's also an easy road trip.

"It would be great to just drive down and not have to pay for flights to Miami or Fort Lauderdale," said Eva Lemker.

While vacations on the sea are taking off, cargo business at the port is rebuilding. Despite automakers Kia and Hyundai leaving in April, BWI recently moved in.

"Which brought 200 new jobs, so it's a good split between cruise and cargo," Scher said. "Things are going pretty well."

The ship coming to Baltimore had been based in Norfolk since 2007.

This article also ran on upi.com, yahoo.com, shipwatchernews.com

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Cruise Addicts

***Enchantment of the Seas* begins year-round service from Baltimore**

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"Royal Caribbean is delighted to bring *Enchantment of the Seas* to historic Baltimore to offer year-round cruises," said Ken Muskat, vice president of Sales, Royal Caribbean Intl. "*Enchantment of the Seas* offers so many ways for guests of all ages to enjoy an exciting family vacation or romantic cruise getaway, conveniently accessible by car."

This year the Port of Baltimore will have a record 91 home-ported cruises. The total economic value to the State of Maryland of cruising from the Port of Baltimore in 2010 is expected to be about \$90 million, an increase of about \$10 million from 2009. Last year, the Port of Baltimore handled a record 167,000 passengers on 81 home-ported cruises. The Port of Baltimore is the closest East Coast drive-to port from Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Chicago. Baltimore is also within a 3-hour drive from the New York City metro area. The Cruise Maryland Terminal is only 2.5 miles from Baltimore's world famous Inner Harbor, 10 miles from Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, and within 90 minutes from three other major airports.

Cruise Critic

ENCHANTMENT OF THE SEAS BEGINS YEAR-ROUND SERVICE FROM PORT OF BALTIMORE

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onboard amenities that cater to families, coupled with delectable dining options and compelling itineraries to make for a memorable cruise vacation.

"The State of Maryland welcomes Royal Caribbean's Enchantment of the Seas for year-round cruising from the Port of Baltimore," said Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley. "Even in these tough times, Baltimore's geographic location, its entertainment and cultural attractions and our cruise terminal's easy access off of Interstate 95 continue to attract passengers in record-setting numbers."

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Enchantment of the Seas features three pools and six whirlpools for guests to relax in, including the adults-only Solarium and the Splash Deck interactive fountain play area for kids. The solarium is covered by a crystal canopy, a glass roof that retracts and deploys to suit any weather. More active guests can try the bungee trampoline or work up a sweat on the jogging track or on the cruise line's iconic rock-climbing wall. Additionally, the Enchantment Fitness Center and Day Spa features an extensive fitness program and a full modern spa menu.

Royal Caribbean's award-winning Adventure Ocean kids and teen program, with five age-tiered curricula, also entertains and enlightens younger guests under the age of 18. On Enchantment of the Seas, the teen-only Fuel hang-out and disco offers a perfect setting for teens to relax and make new friends.

Enchantment of the Seas underwent an impressive engineering feat in 2005, when she received a 73-foot extension. The ultimate maritime makeover capitalized on an innovative new procedure

that allowed workmen to complete the “stretch” in an unprecedented 31 days. It took six days alone to bisect the ship, cutting through more than 1,969 linear feet of steel with gas and oxygen torches and circular saws. The forward and aft sections of Enchantment of the Seas were slid apart to accommodate a new 2,939-ton midsection. Workers then reconnected the three sections and nearly 1,300 individual cables, pipes and ducts on each end of the mid-body.

Cruise Reviews

Enchantment Of The Seas Begins Year-Round Cruising From Baltimore

Written by: Cruise News

June 21, 2010.

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BYM Maritime and Maritime News USA

Enchantment of the Seas begins year round service from Port of Baltimore Friday, 21 June 2010

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Baltimore Sun

Baltimore gets boost to cruise business

Royal Caribbean launches the port's second year-round cruise service

By Lorraine Mirabella, The Baltimore Sun

June 22, 2010

Despite a deep recession that has put a crimp in vacation budgets, a record number of cruise ship passengers and voyages are expected at the port of Baltimore this year.

Last week, Royal Caribbean launched year-round cruise service from the city, and its Enchantment of the Seas cruise liner set sail for the first time from its new home port in Locust Point.

As more people are choosing the sometimes deeply discounted cruise vacations, Baltimore's piece of the industry is benefitting from being a "drive-to" location. Cruise lines recognize the size and affluence of the population within driving distance of Baltimore's port and are expanding trips based out of the four-year-old terminal.

"We see a lot of consumer demand here," said Ken Muskat, vice president of sales for Royal Caribbean, which is offering five- to 12-night trips to Bermuda, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, New England and Canada.

Royal Caribbean's decision to expand to year-round trips out of Baltimore with a larger, 2,252-passenger ship came after a survey of the market from the past five years, during which time the Grandeur of the Seas sailed from the port on seasonal trips and attracted many passengers who would drive as many as three or four hours to the port to avoid flying, he said.

Vacationers boarding at the cruise terminal Friday said the convenience of driving adds to the appeal of spending days at sea, jumping on bungee trampolines, bellying up to buffets or simply sitting by a pool.

"We'll go wherever the ships in Baltimore will go," said passenger Peggy Barnabei, who boarded the Enchantment of the Seas with her husband, Arnold, after an hour-and-a-half drive from Harrisburg, Pa. "I can bring as much luggage as I want. Cruises are relaxing."

Royal Caribbean's expansion sets the stage for another record year at Locust Point, where the state's first-ever terminal dedicated to cruising was built in 2006. Baltimore has 91 trips set for this year that will serve an estimated 190,000 passengers, said Richard Scher, a port spokesman. That would surpass last year's record of 81 voyages and 167,000 passengers.

Baltimore's cruise business generated a local economic impact last year of \$80 million and is on track to contribute \$91 million this year. About 500 jobs, 220 of them at the port, are generated by cruise activity in Maryland, Scher said. To handle the increase of passengers and accommodate different cruise ships, port officials are planning a \$2.9 million adjustable gangway with heating and air-conditioning that would lead from the terminal to the ship. The proposal goes to the state Board of Public Works this week.

Kathy Broadwater, deputy executive director of the Maryland Port Administration, said Baltimore's proximity to densely populated areas and high median household incomes are driving the growth. "I don't think any other port on the East Coast, except New York, can bring together those two factors," she said.

Baltimore now has the sixth-busiest cruise port on the East Coast in terms of passengers, behind four ports in Florida and one in New York, Scher said.

Last spring, Carnival Cruise Lines became the first to offer a year-round schedule from Baltimore. And last fall, Celebrity, which had discontinued cruises out of Baltimore in 2004, returned to Locust Point with a new offering of winter cruises.

Carnival returned after a limited schedule in 2002 and 2003. The cruise line now offers about 50 voyages annually to the Bahamas, Florida and the eastern Caribbean.

"It's part of an overall strategy of making cruises easier for people to get to," said Carnival spokesman Vance Gulliksen. "It makes cruising more affordable for a larger number of people, and it's been successful."

Cruise lines nationally carried a record 13.4 million passengers in 2009, up from 13 million in 2008, according to the Cruise Lines International Association.

"People may cut back on some things, but people need a vacation, and they're trying to find a way to do it that stretches their vacation dollar," said Bob Sharak, executive vice president of marketing and distribution for the association. "Nothing delivers like a cruise."

Pricing promotions helped boost business, Sharak said. He estimates cruise lines shaved 12 percent to 14 percent off their ticket prices last year compared with 2008.

Cruise veterans Tony and Rita Armistead, retired teachers from St. Louis who flew in for the Enchantment's New England cruise, said they were initially unsure about Baltimore as a departure port because they didn't know much about the city.

The couple said they were pleasantly surprised by the Cruise Maryland Terminal's efficiency and by Baltimore's downtown, where they visited before the cruise and rode the water taxi to harbor attractions and restaurants.

"We'll come back here," Tony Armistead said.

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