

Set Sail! Royal Caribbean Ship Returns To Baltimore After Major Revitalization

WJZ TV

BALTIMORE (WJZ)—After four years and a multi-million dollar renovation, one popular cruise ship is back in the Port of Baltimore.

As Gigi Barnett explains, the ship's return is a sign that Baltimore's cruise industry is still booming.

She's Royal Caribbean's Grandeur of the Seas, one of the ships that kicked off the Port of Baltimore's cruise industry nine years ago.

Now, after a \$48 million facelift, she's back.

"It's wonderful. Everybody should go on that ship," said Essie Cade, cruise passenger.

"We love being able to just get on the ship and take off," said Gloria Castle, cruise passenger.

The port's easy access to and from I-95 draws a record number of passengers every year, making it one of the fastest growing cruise departure points in the nation. It's number 11, in fact.

"It's one of the few cruise facilities where you can actually drive and park right next to the ship," said James White, executive director of Maryland Port Administration.

And the return of the Grandeur adds travel options.

"When they told us they were going to be bringing it back, they said we were going to love what they did with the ship," said travel agent Paula Dozier.

Dozier says the Grandeur is selling when other cruise lines saw major disasters in recent months.

"People expressed concerns, but we try to explain to them how rare these occurrences have been in the cruise industry. I look at it more like a fluke," Dozier said.

All of the rooms are renovated. There's a new and improved entertainment area and a rock climbing wall. Even the pool has been renovated. It also has a 220 square foot movie screen, so passengers can watch movies as they cruise.

Royal Caribbean says those kinds of upgrades bring passengers back time and again.

"If you look at the value in cruising, it's a great bang for your buck," White said.

Last year, nearly 250,000 passengers sailed out of the Port of Baltimore on about 100 cruises. This year the port has just as many cruises set to go out at about 96.

The port's cruise industry brings in about \$90 million and 200 jobs to Maryland.

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Cruise ship returns to Baltimore after \$48 million renovation

Refurbished Grandeur of the Seas offers new amenities including poolside movie screen

By Michelle Deal-Zimmerman, The Baltimore Sun

5:38 PM EDT, May 3, 2013

Royal Caribbean's Grandeur of the Seas cruise ship returned to the Port of Baltimore Friday after undergoing a \$48 million renovation.

The ship, which replaces the Enchantment of the Seas, arrived early Friday morning for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a proclamation from Gov. Martin O'Malley, who declared May 3 "Royal Caribbean Cruise Day" in Maryland.

As part of the renovation, all of the ship's staterooms have been refurbished with new carpet, furniture and upholstery and flat-screen TVs. New amenities onboard include upgrades ranging from dining to entertainment.

The ship offers six new specialty restaurants, including Asian fare, a steakhouse and an Italian trattoria-style eatery. A 220-foot movie screen now overlooks the pool. Also new is the Royal Babies and Tots Nursery, which caters to families with children ages 6 to 36 months. The ship tops it all off with a new aerial show featuring trapeze artists performing nightly on specially designed apparatus above the six-story Centrum atrium.

The cruise ship will offer six-night and 10-night cruises year-round from Baltimore to destinations that include Bermuda, the Bahamas and Canada and New England.

The first sailing departs Friday evening with passengers headed for a six-night cruise to Bermuda.

Grandeur of the Seas first deployed to Baltimore from 2004 to 2009. Since its departure, Enchantment of the Seas has offered sailings to Marylanders, but that ship will now be based in Florida, with cruises from Port Canaveral.

Grandeur of the Seas Photo Gallery (Baltimore Sun)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/travel/bal-grandeur-of-the-seas-cruise-20130503,0,4266796.photogallery>

Baltimore Business Journal

May 3, 2013, 2:35pm EDT

Royal Caribbean's revitalized Grandeur of the Seas begins sailing from Baltimore

Royal Caribbean International on Friday unveiled \$48 million in upgrades to Grandeur of the Seas, a ship that will begin year-round voyages out of the Port of Baltimore this weekend.

The vessel replaces the Enchantment of the Seas and offers six- to 10-night cruises to Bermuda, the Bahamas, Eastern and Western Caribbean, as well as Canada and New England. The renovated Grandeur of the Seas was previously in Baltimore from 2004 to 2009. The new amenities puts the boat among Royal Caribbean's (NYSE: RCL) two largest classes of ships.

Upgrades include six new dining options, Wi-Fi service and a 220-square-foot outdoor video screen overlooking the pool deck. The boat also includes a nursery for toddlers and guests seeking a high-flying experience can glide through the ship's six-story atrium. The boat's staterooms have also been refreshed with furniture, carpet and upholstery.

Last year, more than 240,800 travelers sailed on 100 cruises from the Port of Baltimore's terminal in Locust Point. Baltimore has 96 scheduled cruises for 2013.

MarketWatch (also in Stockhouse, Broadway World, Travel Weekly, e-Travel Blackboard, May 4, 2013

Royal Caribbean International's Newly Revitalized Grandeur of the Seas Begins Year-Round Service From Maryland

Governor Martin O'Malley Declares May 3 as 'Royal Caribbean Cruise Day'

BALTIMORE, May 3, 2013 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- The Port of Baltimore today welcomed Royal Caribbean International's Grandeur of the Seas to Maryland, where she replaces Enchantment of the Seas and offers six-, to 10-night cruises year-round to Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Eastern and Western Caribbean, as well as Canada and New England. Originally deployed in Baltimore from 2004 to 2009, Grandeur of the Seas was welcomed back today with a special proclamation from Governor Martin O'Malley, who declared May 3, 2013 as 'Royal Caribbean Cruise Day' in Maryland.

"Maryland welcomes the new and improved Grandeur of the Seas to our state," said Governor O'Malley. "Royal Caribbean's decision to place this beautiful ship here is another strong vote of confidence in the Port of Baltimore, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland as one of the top cruise markets in the nation, providing approximately \$90 million in economic activity and generating about 200 direct jobs in Maryland."

Grandeur of the Seas is fresh from a \$48 million bow-to-stern revitalization, which incorporated six new specialty dining options, technological upgrades and new entertainment features, as well as a refresh of all furniture, carpet, upholstery and staterooms. Families with toddlers can take advantage of the newly installed Royal Babies and Tots Nursery, which caters to the cruise line's youngest guests, ages six months to 36 months. Guests can also enjoy a 220-square foot poolside movie screen and take in a new high-flying experience whereby aerialists glide through the ship's six-story atrium.

"Royal Caribbean International thanks Governor Martin O'Malley and the Maryland Port Administration for their ongoing support of the cruise vacation industry in the great state of Maryland," said Adam Goldstein, President and CEO, Royal Caribbean International. "Maryland's rich history and diverse cultural attractions make it an unmatched destination to pair with a Royal Caribbean cruise vacation. We

are delighted to mark the beginning of Grandeur of the Seas' year-round service from Baltimore on 'Royal Caribbean Cruise Day' in Maryland."

Throughout the year, vacationers can choose among a variety of itineraries to Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Eastern and Western Caribbean. In the summer, the itineraries alternate between seven-night Bermuda sailings, featuring a two-night call at Kings Wharf, and seven-night sailings to the Bahamas, calling at Port Canaveral, Florida; Nassau, Bahamas; and CocoCay, Royal Caribbean's private island paradise in the Bahamas. In the fall, Grandeur of the Seas will alternate between six-night Bermuda and eight-night Canada and New England sailings. The winter season will consist of rotating 10-night sailings to the Eastern and Western Caribbean, as well as eight-night sailings to the Bahamas.

The Port of Baltimore's cruise facility, with its unique location immediately off Interstate 95 and close to Interstate 70, has become a convenient drive-to cruise port for many residents throughout the mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest. Last year, more than 240,800 travelers sailed on 100 cruises from the Port of Baltimore. Baltimore has 96 scheduled cruises for 2013.

In 2011, the Port of Baltimore ranked fifth for cruise passengers among East Coast cruise ports, 11th in the U.S. and 20th in the world. Recently, the Port began using a state-of-the-art, climate-controlled, enclosed passenger boarding bridge. The bridge is mobile and flexible to accommodate various sized cruise ships. Since beginning a year-round cruise schedule in 2009, nearly every cruise ship that has sailed from the Port of Baltimore has left at full guest capacity.

Baltimore is within a six hour drive of 40 million people. It is the closest East Coast drive-to-port from Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Chicago, and is within a three-hour drive from the New York City metro area. The Cruise Maryland terminal is 2.5 miles from Baltimore's world famous Inner Harbor and 10 miles from BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Maryland's median household income of \$70,004 is the highest in the U.S. Baltimore is also located within a four-hour drive of eight of the ten wealthiest countries in the U.S. The Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-Northern Virginia region is recognized as one of the most affluent in the nation.

About Royal Caribbean International: Royal Caribbean International is an award-winning global cruise brand with a 40-year legacy of innovation and introducing industry firsts never-before-seen at sea. The cruise line features an expansive and unmatched array of features and amenities only found on Royal Caribbean including, jaw-dropping, Broadway-style entertainment and industry-acclaimed programming that appeals to families and adventurous vacationers alike. Owned by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. (nyse/ose:RCL), the cruise line sails 21 of the world's most innovative cruise ships to the most popular destinations in the Caribbean, Europe, Alaska, South America, the Far East, and Australia and New Zealand. World renowned for its friendly and engaging Gold Anchor Service, delivered by every staff and crew member, Royal Caribbean has been voted "Best Cruise Line Overall" for 10 consecutive years in the Travel Weekly Reader's Choice Awards.

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Grandeur of the Seas Back to Baltimore

Phil Reimer

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I get excited when I see more ships, some of them re-furbished ships, operating year-round from ports around North America.

Take the case of Grandeur of the Seas. In going to Baltimore, it becomes a step up from the ship it is replacing, Enchantment of the Seas. It will operate 6-and-10-day cruises, year round, to Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Eastern and Western Caribbean, Canada and New England.

Originally deployed in Baltimore from 2004 to 2009, Grandeur of the Seas was recently welcomed "home" with a special proclamation from Governor Martin O'Malley, declaring last Friday as Royal Caribbean Cruise Day in Maryland.

"Maryland welcomes the new and improved Grandeur of the Seas," said Governor O'Malley. "Royal Caribbean's decision to place this beautiful ship here is another strong vote of confidence in the Port of Baltimore, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland."

Grandeur is fresh from a \$48 million bow-to-stern revitalization, which incorporated six new specialty dining options, technological upgrades and new entertainment features, plus a refresh of all furniture, carpet, upholstery and staterooms. Families with toddlers can take advantage of the newly installed Royal Babies and Tots Nursery, which caters to the cruise line's youngest guests, ages 6 to 36 months. Guests can also enjoy a 220-square foot poolside movie screen and a new high-flying experience whereby aerialists glide through the ship's six-story atrium.

Here is the plan for Baltimore:

- Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Eastern and Western Caribbean are the summer destinations, with itineraries alternating between 7-night Bermuda sailings featuring a two-night call at King's Wharf, and 7-night sailings to the Bahamas, calling at Port Canaveral, Nassau and Coco Cay, Royal Caribbean's private island paradise in the Bahamas.
- In the fall, Grandeur of the Seas will alternate between 6-night Bermuda and 8-night Canada and New England sailings.
- The winter season will consist of rotating 10-night sailings to the Eastern and Western Caribbean, as well as 8-night sailings to the Bahamas.

The Port of Baltimore's cruise facility conveniently located between two interstates, immediately off I-95 and close to I-70.

With U.S. airlines jacking up fees for carry-on baggage and raising fees on cancellations and flight changes, the more opportunities you have drive to ports, the better. Baltimore, New York and Boston all it make it possible for Canadians to drive to their ships.

All for now.