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GPH NEWS

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LISBON CRUISE PORT, PORTUGAL



SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW ANDRES VILLALEVER

New Ancillary Strategy
to Shape the Future

GPH DESTINATIONS & MORE

It's Winter Time
at GPH Ports & Destinations

INTERVIEW LEON FALIC

A New Partnership with
Duty Free Americas

GPH NEWS WINTER 2024 ISSUE

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GREATER PERSONALIZATION,
INNOVATION, AND
INTEGRATION



Introducing Andres Villalver, a seasoned leader with over 20 years of experience in retail, guest commerce, and ancillary revenue, primarily within the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries. Throughout his career, he has worked across a wide range of sectors, including cruise lines, ports, tour operators, and amusement parks.

Can you tell us about yourself?

I'm an old-school family person, and family is everything to me. I'm married with three kids—Isabella, who's 12, Andres, who's 10, and Sebastian, who's 4. Outside of family life, I have a passion for sports, education, and traveling. I played soccer at a high level growing up, which taught me a lot about teamwork and discipline. That led me to pursue a degree in Business Administration and Marketing, where I was fortunate to receive a full scholarship at a prestigious Mexican university. After graduating, I spent 7 years teaching at the bachelor's and university levels, which allowed me to share my knowledge and experience with the next generation. I've always believed in lifelong learning, whether through education or through my love for sports and travel, which have helped shape my personal and professional life.

What is your role at Global Ports Holding?

At Global Ports Holding, I serve as the Vice President of Retail & Ancillary Revenue. In this role, I oversee all retail partnerships and operations across 32 ports in 14 countries and 4 continents, spanning the Caribbean, Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia-Pacific regions. My focus is on creating and driving the retail vision for the company, ensuring we offer high-quality products and services that enhance the guest experience while maximizing revenue across retail, food and beverage, advertising, and other ancillary revenue streams. Additionally, I work closely with both global and local partners to maintain a balance between international standards and the unique cultural offerings of each port.

Can you describe your overall strategy for managing retail areas across 32 ports in 19 countries?

GPH's overall strategy focuses on creating a balanced, dynamic experience that blends global standards with local flavor. The main strategy is to offer both local and global companies the opportunity to operate within our ports, ensuring our guests have access to high-quality products and services. This can range from small booths or kiosks in marketplaces to larger duty-free or travel retail shops in cruise terminals or shopping villages.

Rather than working with many partners, we focus on fewer but stronger relationships. This allows us to grow together, dedicating the right resources and attention to our partners while helping them expand their business. We also actively connect local vendors and entrepreneurs with our retail partners, enabling them to sell and promote their products. Additionally, we offer these local businesses opportunities to run their own 'shop-in-shop' concepts, corners, or even full shops and restaurants within our retail areas, creating an authentic and diverse shopping experience for our guests.



How do you balance local cultural influences with the need for a consistent retail experience across all ports?

We strive to balance global consistency with local cultural influences by focusing on a 'glocal' approach. This means we maintain a consistent retail experience across all ports, but we also make sure that each port's offerings reflect its unique cultural identity. We achieve this by carefully selecting key partners in retail, food & beverage, advertising, and other ancillary services, ensuring that we bring in local flavors and products while adhering to high standards across the board. By centralizing the strategy, we collaborate closely with our partners to adapt our global approach to each specific location, delivering a memorable experience that feels both familiar and authentically local to our guests.

How do you identify and evaluate new ancillary revenue opportunities?

We identify and evaluate new ancillary revenue opportunities by taking a hands-on approach. This involves visiting ports and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders—our guests, cruise line crew members, port associates, employees, and collaborators. We focus on observing guest behavior, noting how they walk, react, and spend throughout the port. We also analyze customer feedback and surveys to understand their needs and preferences better. Benchmarking against other successful ports with higher survey scores is another key element of my strategy. Ultimately, the most important factor is listening—listening to our guests, employees, and partners provides invaluable insights that help us identify and capitalize on new revenue opportunities.

How do you select and manage partnerships with retail brands and local vendors?

When selecting and managing partnerships with retail brands and local vendors, we focus on finding true partners, not just suppliers. Whether it's a local business, a global brand, or an entrepreneur, we look for companies that align with our vision of delivering best-in-class products, concepts, and experiences. The key qualities we seek are high ethical standards, a strong work ethic, and a customer-service-centric approach. It's also important for our partners to be flexible and adaptable to our ever-changing environment. We prioritize long-term relationships with those who share our commitment to excellence and are dedicated to evolving with us as the market and guest expectations continue to shift.

What trends do you foresee in the cruise port retail industry over the next five years?

In the next five years, we can expect several key trends to shape the cruise port retail industry. Firstly, there's a growing focus on creating unique, destination-specific experiences, with curated product assortments that reflect the local culture and heritage, making each port stand out. The idea of a traditional shop on the side is becoming outdated; new concepts are moving towards immersive, walk-through experiences, similar to what we see in modern airports where the entire terminal serves as a shopping space. Additionally, more brands are offering customization and personalization of products, catering to passengers who want a more tailored experience. Mixed concepts, where shops are integrated with coffee stations, bars, and F&B offerings, are becoming more popular. Lastly, interactive promotional tools, such as magic mirrors and augmented reality, will increasingly be used to enhance product displays and engage customers in new and exciting ways.



How do you envision the future of GPH's retail and ancillary services evolving over the next decade?

I see the future of GPH's retail and ancillary services evolving towards greater personalization, innovation, and integration. Over the next decade, we will continue to build on the foundation of offering unique, local experiences while enhancing the consistency and quality of service across all our ports. Retail will become more immersive, with stores becoming destination experiences rather than just places to shop. The use of technology will play a key role, from personalized shopping experiences powered by data and AI to interactive displays and augmented reality that engage guests in new ways. Additionally, we will continue to expand our ancillary offerings, integrating more experiential services like entertainment, dining, wellness, and digital experiences that align with the evolving expectations of today's travelers. The future will see more seamless and sustainable services, creating a dynamic and engaging environment for both cruise passengers and local communities.

SETTING NEW RECORDS AT LA GOULETTE CRUISE PORT A REMARKABLE 2024



2024 has been a record-breaking year at La Goulette Cruise Port, as we continue to bring Tunisia's remarkable heritage and vibrant culture to travelers worldwide. By the end of October, La Goulette had welcomed over 200,000 passengers across 66 cruise calls—a significant achievement that's set to grow. As we look ahead to the year's close, we anticipate a total of 230,000 passengers and 81 calls, marking a historic milestone for our port.

Beyond the numbers, the real magic lies in the experiences awaiting our guests. Passengers are invited to step into Tunisia's rich past at iconic destinations. Many explore La Medina, where ancient alleyways and lively souks offer an authentic taste of local life. Others journey to the ancient city of Carthage, where they can marvel at the grand ruins that tell the story of Tunisia's powerful history. And then there's Sidi Bou Said, the picturesque village with its blue and white buildings and stunning Mediterranean views, which never fails to captivate visitors.

Our team at La Goulette Cruise Port has worked tirelessly to ensure each visit reflects Tunisia's renowned hospitality and rich culture. We're thrilled to close 2024 on such a high note, and we look forward to welcoming even more visitors in 2025, inviting them to discover the timeless beauty of Tunisia.



FAMILY LIES AT THE HEART OF THE BUSINESS, SHAPING ITS VALUES, GUIDING ITS WORK, AND STRENGTHENING ITS PARTNERSHIPS.

Leon Falic is one of three brothers behind the Falic Group, a company recognized as a leader in travel retail, luxury goods, and distribution. The family proudly owns Duty Free Americas, the largest duty-free operator in the Americas.

Family lies at the heart of the business, shaping its values, guiding its work, and strengthening its partnerships. A deep commitment to philanthropy led to the establishment of the Falic Family Foundation, which supports meaningful causes and gives back to communities worldwide.

What differentiates your approach in the duty-free and travel retail sector, and how do you see these values translating to the cruise industry as you expand?

At Duty Free Americas, we stay ahead of trends, offering high quality products and exceptional service to travellers in our stores and online, across the Americas, China, and Europe. Our mission is to provide value, convenience, and a seamless shopping experience, with a focus on offering a high-quality concierge service in-store, from beauty and fashion, to wines and spirits. We take pride in partnering with world-leading, niche, and local brands, also recognising the importance of supporting local businesses and offering customers unique, regional products. As we expand into the cruise industry, we aim to provide an elevated shopping experience with luxury, local products and experiences, setting a new standard in travel retail.

How does Duty Free Americas tailor its product selection to appeal to this diverse customer base?

We are excited to showcase exceptional local brands and products within the cruise ports, in collaboration with local partners and Global Ports Holding. This partnership enhances the travel retail experience for cruise passengers while underscoring our commitment to offering unique, high-quality shopping experiences that feature local brands for travelers around the world. These stores will offer an extensive range of locally produced and artisanal goods.

With the cruise industry's growing focus on sustainability, what steps is Duty Free Americas taking to align its retail operations with environmentally friendly practices?

At Duty Free Americas, we are committed to turning sustainability from a trend into a long term mindset. Our comprehensive sustainability policies, from ethical sourcing to waste management, underscore our dedication to a greener future. We also work closely with local brands and suppliers to support sustainable practices and source products with a lower environmental impact. As we expand into the cruise industry, these efforts will continue to ensure our operations align with the growing demand for environmentally conscious travel retail.





What unique advantages does Duty Free Americas see in partnering with Global Ports Holding as you expand in the cruise industry?

As a land based retail proposition, we are able to carry a wider assortment of merchandise, specifically tailored to the location, really celebrating the local flavour as well as creating moments and memories unique to each destination. Working with local entrepreneurs will help us to connect with local artisans to curate assortments that will evolve with events and seasons - something that isn't easy, or even possible onboard the cruise ship itself. We don't want to be a copy/paste of existing retail stores, but to work closely with our partner GPH in making every location really come to life.

What long-term goals does Duty Free Americas hope to achieve in the cruise retail space?

Duty-Free Americas has partnered with Mr. Tino Sands (picture to the right), a seasoned Bahamian retailer, to open a new store at Nassau Cruise Port. Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to expand our global partnership. By collaborating with local business owners and leveraging our expertise in travel retail, we aim to blend our premium shopping experience with their authentic offerings, creating a unique and exceptional shopping experience at Global Ports Holding destinations worldwide.



**WORKING WITH LOCAL ARTISANS
AND ENTREPRENEURS
TO CURATE ASSORTMENTS THAT
WILL EVOLVE WITH
EVENTS AND SEASONS**



LISBON CRUISE PORT WINS EUROPE'S BEST CRUISE TERMINAL AT THE 2024 WORLD CRUISE AWARDS

Lisbon Cruise Port has been awarded Europe's Best Cruise Terminal at the prestigious 2024 World Cruise Awards, held in Funchal, Madeira. This accolade underscores Lisbon Cruise Port's dedication to excellence in providing top-tier services for cruise lines and their passengers, affirming its position as a premier destination in the cruise industry.

Duarte Cabral, General Manager of Lisbon Cruise Port, expressed his pride in receiving this honor: "This award is a testament to the outstanding efforts of our team. It reflects the cruise lines' recognition of the exceptional service, safety, and efficiency Lisbon Cruise Port offers. We are thrilled to see our commitment to quality and passenger satisfaction acknowledged on such an international stage."

This recognition reinforces Lisbon Cruise Port as a homeport destination, delivering an unparalleled experience for passengers and cruise lines. LCP remains committed to enhancing its facilities and services, strengthening Lisbon's appeal as a world-class cruise destination.

DECARBONISING THE FUTURE SHORE TO SHIP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AT VALLETTA CRUISE PORT

The Decarbonising the Future Shore to Ship Leadership conference was recently held at Valletta Cruise Port's Magazzino Hall.

As part of Malta's commitment to sustainability and reducing environmental impact, the Grand Harbour Clean Air Project incorporates pioneering shore-to-ship electricity technology. This system allows docked cruise ships to power down their diesel engines and connect to Malta's electrical grid, significantly reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. Malta is first in Europe with port-wide shore-to-ship electricity for up to five cruise ships. By investing in this technology, Malta's Grand Harbour is set to become a leader in sustainable port operations in Europe, promoting a cleaner and greener future.

Valletta Cruise Port's Deputy General Manager and Head of Operations & Projects, Mark Cauchi Garzia zoomed into the present and future of Valletta Cruise Port as part of the largest worldwide cruise port operator Global Ports Holding, and the beneficial effects of the Grand Harbour On-Shore Power Supply, "The cruise industry is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 in line with the IMO 2023 Strategy on GHG Emissions Reduction. The port-wide roll out of the Onshore Power Supply project at Valletta Cruise Port is a first for the Mediterranean. Collaboration between the different parties has been key to its implementation. Communication, cooperation, education and training remain vital for a more sustainable future, to be able to identify possible bottlenecks and prioritise actions. An open dialogue needs to be constantly ongoing between the different parties involved in order to help reach mutual interests and goals."





BODRUM
CRUISE PORT



Bodrum: Where Every Step is a Delightful Discovery

Bodrum beckons as a realm of delightful discovery with each step. From the grand castle crafted by the Knights of Saint John to its charming streets, lively markets, and authentic eateries, the city reveals enchanting wonders, ensuring an unforgettable cruise experience.

bodrumcruiseport.com 

MÁLAGA CRUISE PORT DEBUTS ITS NEW BOARDING BRIDGE

On October 4th, the Costa Favolosa became the first cruise ship to connect to a newly designed passenger boarding bridge of Málaga Cruise Port, marking a significant milestone in port technology and passenger experience. Built and designed by Milan Port Equipment, this state-of-the-art boarding bridge employs the latest technological advancements to cater to the needs of modern cruise ships and passengers. Its debut connection was seamless and efficient, demonstrating the bridge's reliability and the technical expertise behind its construction.

The new boarding bridge is specifically tailored to handle the increasing size and demands of next-generation cruise vessels, enhancing both the boarding process and overall safety for passengers. Milan Port Equipment's design includes adaptable features that allow it to adjust to varying ship sizes, offering greater flexibility for ports with diverse cruise traffic. The successful operation of this bridge on the Costa Favolosa highlights a new era in cruise terminal infrastructure, showcasing innovations that improve efficiency and reinforce the commitment to elevating the passenger experience.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCES IN ANTIGUA AND SAINT LUCIA

GPH recently hosted two Cruise Connect Conferences as part of its Eastern Caribbean stakeholder engagement strategy, focusing on strengthening local cruise tourism. The first conference took place on October 1, in Antigua, followed by the Saint Lucia event on October 3, both bringing together key industry stakeholders.

The inaugural Cruise Connect Conference in Antigua featured keynotes from Minister of Tourism Hon. H. Charles 'Max' Fernandez and Colin C. James, CEO of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority. They outlined an ambitious vision for Antigua's growth as a leading cruise destination. The event included a panel discussion on the expansion of GPH across the Caribbean.

Gasper George, Antigua Cruise Port GM, shared projections for a 58% increase in passenger numbers for the 2024-2025 season. He also emphasized the importance of unforgettable visitor experiences and local community benefits, stating, "This is only the beginning."

Saint Lucia Cruise Port Cruise Connect Conference focused on the island's growing tourism sector. Minister of Tourism, Hon. Dr. Ernest Hilaire, outlined the government's commitment to enhancing the role of cruise tourism in the economy. Lancelot Arnold, Saint Lucia Cruise Port GM spoke on cruise trends, strategies for managing high-traffic days, and forthcoming infrastructure improvements. The team reinforced Saint Lucia Cruise Port's commitment to supporting the island in becoming a stronger cruise destination.





HA LONG CRUISE PORT SEES STRONG GROWTH IN 2024

Ha Long Cruise Port completes its cruise season with 58 calls and over 150,000 passengers. 2024 has been a significant opportunity for HCP, as Chinese cruise lines have increasingly focused on destinations in northern Vietnam. This was demonstrated on November 16, 2024, when HCP hosted the first group of guests on the Blue Dream Melody cruise, departing from Beihai Port, Guangxi, China.

As the first and only cruise port in Vietnam, HCP is committed to listening to feedback from cruise lines. In response to a request from Royal Caribbean Group, HCP has upgraded its gangways to be more accessible and user-friendly for guests with disabilities or those using wheelchairs.

In 2025, HCP plans to welcome 63 cruises from various cruise lines. Ha Long is an attractive destination for international tourists, offering the chance to visit Ha Long Bay, one of the seven natural wonders of the world, explore the capital Hanoi, and experience the diverse cuisine of northern Vietnam.



FIRST DOUBLE CALL IN TARANTO

Taranto Cruise Port's Molo San Cataldo celebrated a historic milestone with its first-ever double call, marking a significant step forward in the port's evolution as a premier cruise destination. On June 30th, Costa Fascinosa and Mein Schiff 5 became the first two cruise vessels to dock simultaneously at the main pier, a striking sight that highlighted Taranto's expanded capacity and growing appeal.

The warm reception by the local community, the seamless service provided by the terminal, and the diverse range of experiences offered at the destination all played a crucial role in securing the commitment from cruise lines to return in 2025 and 2026. This achievement firmly positions Taranto as an emerging hub for cruise tourism, signaling a promising future for its continued role in Mediterranean itineraries.

A SUCCESS
STORY

BARCELONA CHRISTMAS MARKETS

The busiest time of the year has passed for Barcelona, however it does not take away from the great winter activities this city still has to offer during the festive season. Everyone loves their Christmas markets, and there are two famous markets that take place by the landmark monuments of the city, La Fira de Santa Llúcia and Fira Nadal de Sagrada Família.

The most popular market is La Fira de Santa Llúcia which takes place in front of the Barcelona Cathedral, located downtown in the Gothic quarter. Being organized since 1786, this 238-year-old tradition continues every year from November 29th to December 23rd. With over 200 stalls, it is one of the most extensive fairs selling strictly Christmas items. Definitely a must see for Christmas lovers.

Around the same time, Fira Nadal de Sagrada Família also takes place right in front of the most famous church in Barcelona. You can have a great view of Gaudi's amazing architecture as you walk around shopping for your favorite items. Operating since 1962, it is another market you can be sure to see every year here.



FUERTEVENTURA: TRACKING THE ISLAND'S HISTORY THROUGH AJUY CAVES

Located in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Morocco, Fuerteventura is one of the best Canary Islands to enjoy the stunning white sands and crystal-clear turquoise waters year-round. But beyond its beauty, it's also home to a unique geological significance dating back millions of years: The Ajuy Caves.

Ajuy Caves lie within the captivating seaside village of Ajuy, located on the west coast of Fuerteventura. This geological marvel, designated as a Natural Monument in 1987, consists of sedimentary rock formations created during the Cretaceous period—between 100 and 150 million years ago—making it the oldest geological formation in the Canary Islands. Since the caves hold immense geological and paleontological value, they are fully protected and are recognized among the 150 sites of primary geological interest in the world.

Besides the caves themselves, Ajuy offers visitors a charming village atmosphere and further points of interest. A stroll along Ajuy's long, striking black-sand beach offers the perfect complement to a visit to the caves, blending the island's fascinating natural history with the serenity of its coastal landscapes and showcases unforgettable views of the stunning ocean and fascinating cliffs.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FOR PASSENGERS AND CREW: TECO MOBILITY ARRIVES AT MÁLAGA CRUISE PORT



Since October, TECO Mobility has been providing sustainable transportation options at Terminals A and B of Málaga Cruise Port, offering cruise passengers and crew members an eco-friendly and efficient way to explore the city. This service aligns with the growing demand for green travel solutions, as visitors can now enjoy Málaga's attractions with minimal environmental impact. By offering electric bicycles on-site, TECO Mobility enables seamless, responsible movement through the city for all who arrive by cruise.

TECO Mobility is a Málaga-based company dedicated to sustainable micromobility solutions, particularly within the tourism sector. The company provides electric bicycles and scooters tailored to hotels, resorts, and high-traffic areas, ensuring convenient, low-impact transportation. TECO Mobility's services include the supply of private e-bike fleets supported by advanced technology solutions for effortless sharing and fleet management. Through these initiatives, TECO Mobility supports a green and innovative approach to urban mobility, promoting a cleaner, more sustainable way to experience Málaga.



CATANIA CRUISE PORT: REDEFINING HOSPITALITY WITH INNOVATION & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The revitalization of Catania Cruise Port stands out as one of the year's most successful transformations, setting a new standard for welcoming international visitors. Rethinking terminal accessibility and guest flows, the terminal now offers a seamless and more comfortable experience for cruise passengers.

As part of an elevated guest experience, the "Safe Reception of Cruise Passengers" project was launched in collaboration with the city's Tourism Councillor. Thanks to this initiative, visitors are greeted by members of Catania's Youth Council, instantly recognizable by their bright orange vests and caps labeled "Accoglienza." These young ambassadors provide essential information to help tourists make the most of their time in the city. They also offer a newly developed QR code, making it easy for visitors to navigate Catania's cultural treasures and key landmarks.

This comprehensive effort to improve local hospitality has elevated Catania's profile as a must-visit destination in the Mediterranean, ensuring that cruise passengers feel welcomed and empowered to explore the city with ease. The project is a shining example of how thoughtful planning and community involvement can create an exceptional tourist experience.

LANZAROTE: A BREATH-TAKING JOURNEY THROUGH TIMANFAYA NATIONAL PARK

Lanzarote, the fourth-largest island in the Canary Islands, is a destination like no other. Besides offering a great trade of winter chill for island warmth with mild temperatures around 20°C, the island is also known for its dramatic volcanic landscapes and distinct geology.

One of Lanzarote's main attractions is Timanfaya National Park, an astonishing area shaped by powerful volcanic eruptions during the 18th century. Timanfaya is very special for the region since it is the only national park in Spain that is entirely geological, and is the direct result of volcanic activities which happened between 1720 and 1736, and in 1824.

This otherworldly park covers more than 50 square kilometers and showcases dark lava fields, craters and vibrant red and ochre hills that hint at its fiery origins while revealing the geological history of the fascinating region. Visitors to Timanfaya can witness geysers of steam erupting from the ground, a reminder of the intense geothermal activity still present beneath the surface. This park's dramatic scenery embodies the essence of Lanzarote's wild beauty and offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



A YEAR OF SUCCESS IN BODRUM



Looking back at 2024, Bodrum Cruise Port has experienced a year of remarkable success. Passenger numbers have seen a significant increase compared to the previous year, highlighting the growing popularity of Bodrum as a cruise destination. Several new ships have been welcomed, including Norwegian Getaway, Costa Fortuna, Crystal Symphony, Silver Ray, and Marella Discovery. As we enter the winter months, Bodrum Cruise Port continues to solidify its position as one of the leading ports in the Mediterranean.

This year, Bodrum Cruise Port launched a successful social responsibility project that brought together local students and cruise passengers. Through activities like beach cleanups, ship tours, and educational seminars; awareness was raised about environmental conservation and sustainability. The project received positive feedback from participants and helped strengthen the community's connection with the sea.

For the first time, a mini handicrafts bazaar was hosted at Bodrum Cruise Port this summer. With four local stalls offering handmade goods, the market became a charming addition to the port experience. Passengers had the opportunity to purchase authentic, locally crafted items, showcasing the creativity of regional artisans.

While cruise activity slows during the winter, Bodrum Cruise Port remains active with its seasonal ferry service to Kos. This connection offers a wonderful opportunity for travelers to explore the peaceful winter beauty of the Greek island, while staying in Bodrum. The port looks forward to welcoming more cruise passengers when the season resumes in the spring.

WINTER CRUISING IN ITALY



Cagliari, the vibrant capital of Sardinia, is a must-visit destination for winter cruising, enchanting travellers with its mild climate and rich cultural tapestry. Cruise guests can navigate the historic Castello district, where the narrow alleys unveil spectacular views of the Gulf of Cagliari and the surrounding hills. The ancient Roman amphitheatre stands as a proud reminder of the city's storied past, while a wealth of museums offer deeper insights into Sardinia's artistic and historical richness. Cagliari's culinary scene is a feast for the senses, featuring an array of dishes, from freshly caught seafood in charming seaside restaurants to traditional pastas, complemented by excellent local wines in renowned local vineyards. With its enchanting blend of culture, cuisine, and a warm Mediterranean climate, Cagliari and its territory promise an unforgettable winter escape for every cruise passenger seeking adventure and relaxation.

Catania, perched on the eastern coast of Sicily, is a vibrant winter cruising destination that captivates visitors with its mild climate, rich history, and flourishing culinary scene. The city's baroque architecture, including the majestic Piazza del Duomo and the iconic Elephant Fountain, creates a stunning backdrop for leisurely strolls. The nearby Mount Etna adds a touch of adventure, offering opportunities for breathtaking winter excursions and perhaps even some snow-capped scenery. Catania's culinary landscape is a true highlight, showcasing a delightful array of local dishes that reflect the island's rich agricultural traditions and coastal bounty. From classic pasta alla Norma to delectable pastries like cannoli, every meal is a celebration of Sicilian culture. Moreover, winter cruising here fosters a deeper connection with the welcoming local community, allowing travellers to experience the famed Sicilian hospitality firsthand. With its unique combination of stunning architecture, vibrant culture, and delectable cuisine, Catania invites cruise passengers to immerse themselves in the beauty of Sicily, promising an unforgettable winter escape filled with memorable adventures.

Nestled along the Ionian Sea, Crotona is a captivating coastal town that emerges as an exceptional choice for winter cruising, offering a delightful blend of pleasant weather, historical significance, and exquisite local cuisine. Strolling through the picturesque old town reveals a treasure trove of vibrant homes and historic landmarks, including the impressive Castle of Charles V and stretching to the ancient Greek ruins of Capo Colonna that whisper tales of a rich past. The connection to the renowned philosopher Pythagoras adds a layer of intrigue, making every visit feel like a step back in time. Crotona's culinary delights are sure to tantalize the palate, featuring an array of fresh seafood and traditional Calabrian dishes, all complemented by the region's exceptional wines. Dining options range from elegant waterfront establishments to cozy family-run trattorias, to inns in quaint villages in the hinterland, ensuring that every meal is a celebration of local flavours. Additionally, winter cruising in Crotona offers the chance for authentic interactions with the friendly locals, providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere. With its enchanting combination of culture, history, and gastronomy, Crotona invites cruise passengers to immerse themselves in the charm and beauty of this hidden gem.

Renowned for its deep historical roots and stunning coastal views, Taranto stands as an enchanting winter cruising destination in southern Italy, offering travellers a unique blend of mild weather, rich cultural experiences, and delightful local cuisine. The city's historical heart is a treasure trove, where visitors can meander through the old town, taking in the beautifully preserved architecture of the Aragonese Castle and the stunning Cathedral of San Cataldo. Taranto's heritage, steeped in ancient Greek civilization, comes alive in its archaeological sites, particularly the National Archaeological Museum MARTA, which showcases artifacts that narrate the city's fascinating history. Food lovers will find themselves delighted by Taranto's culinary offerings, which prominently feature fresh seafood from the surrounding waters and traditional Apulian dishes that reflect the region's agricultural bounty. Dining here is an experience to cherish, ranging from upscale seaside restaurants to intimate local trattorias that serve authentic dishes made with love. With its unique combination of history, culture, and exceptional cuisine, Taranto beckons cruise passengers to explore the rich tapestry of this remarkable coastal city, creating unforgettable memories along the way.



TARRAGONA CRUISE PORT: A NEW HUB FOR EVENTS

Tarragona Cruise Port, following its successful inauguration on June 11, has recently announced plans to expand its operations by hosting events, recognizing the immense potential of the space. The cruise terminal boasts an expansive, versatile, and open design that makes it an ideal venue for corporate gatherings and celebrations.

This new initiative aims to capitalize on the terminal's spacious and modern facilities, offering a unique backdrop with scenic views of the Mediterranean.

The terminal hosted its first major event on October 17, with the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Tarragona (FEHT) organizing the third edition of "La Nit de les Estrelles." This notable gathering brought together 320 guests to celebrate and honor achievements within the tourism industry. As a highly successful event, it marked the beginning of a new chapter for the terminal, showcasing its capability as a premier event venue in Tarragona.



DISCOVER NORTHERN GERMANY'S CHRISTMAS MAGIC

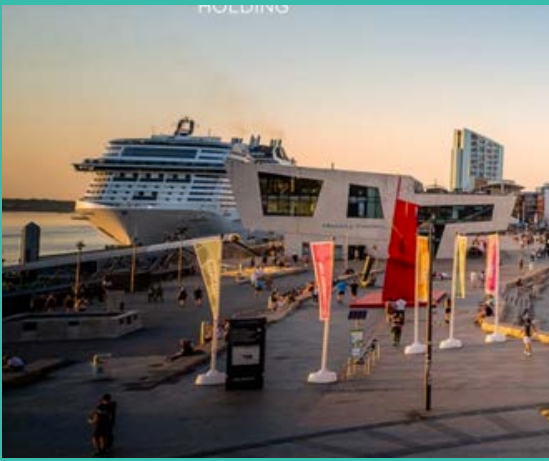


Bremerhaven Cruise Port offers a convenient starting point to explore the festive charm of Northern Germany's renowned Christmas markets. The Christmas markets in Bremen, Oldenburg, and Bremerhaven offer a blend of tradition, charm, and maritime flair, making them a must-see for those seeking North German Christmas magic.

Just an hour's drive from Bremerhaven, Bremen's market, set in the historic city center near the UNESCO World Heritage Town Hall and Roland statue, features over 170 beautifully decorated stalls with crafts, treats, and gifts. Don't miss the medieval-inspired Schlachte-Zauber along the Weser promenade, where rustic goods and open fireplaces create a unique festive experience.

Oldenburg's Lambertimarkt, nestled around the historic Lamberti Church, captivates visitors with its cozy atmosphere and stalls offering arts, crafts, and culinary delights. It is just a short trip from Bremerhaven.

In Bremerhaven, the seaside market dazzles with festive lights and maritime charm. Enjoy mulled wine, North German specialties, and freshly baked treats in this unique waterfront setting.



LIVERPOOL CRUISE PORT WRAPS UP RECORD BREAKING 2024 SEASON

Liverpool Cruise Port (LCP) wrapped up its 2024 season with notable achievements under Global Ports Holding's management. Hosting 98 cruise vessels and approximately 200,000 visitors, LCP generated £16 million for the local economy and supported 50 local jobs, reinforcing its importance to Liverpool's growth.

A season highlight was the Queen Anne naming ceremony on 3 June, attended by 50,000 guests and featuring Andrea Bocelli, earning a nomination for the "Positive Impact Award" at the MMIA Awards. Additionally, GPH's acquisition of LCP in April was recognized with the "Maritime Campaign of the Year" award.

General Manager John Mawer announced a projected 10% increase in cruise calls for 2025 and shared plans to enhance facilities, further supporting the city's cruise industry. With a successful 2024 season behind it, LCP remains a vital gateway to Liverpool's cultural and economic vibrancy.



RECORD
BREAKING
MILESTONE

CAGLIARI CRUISE PORT CELEBRATES A RECORD-BREAKING MILESTONE

On the 5th of November Cagliari Cruise Port celebrated a significant milestone with the arrival in 2024 cruise season of its 500,000th passenger, a momentous occasion for both the terminal and the city of Cagliari reflecting the growing importance of Cagliari as a top tourist destination in the Mediterranean. With calls all year round, Cagliari further confirms its reputation as an attracting international cruise lines and visitors' destination.

The milestone was celebrated by the General Manager Raffaella Del Prete, along with representatives from the Port Authority and the city's Tourist Department, underscoring the collaborative effort in promoting Cagliari as a hub for tourism. To honour the lucky 500,000th passenger, a special gift was presented: a voucher for roundtrip flight to Cagliari and a two-night stay in a five-star hotel in the heart of the city centre.

This event not only marked a key moment in the port's development but also highlighted the positive impact of cruises on local economy and attractiveness, strengthening its position as a Mediterranean gem for cruise tourism.

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GLOBAL PORTS SERVICES EXPANDS SERVICES IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Global Ports Services (GPS), a leading provider of ground services and port agency services, is continuing to make waves in Spain and Portugal with its growing portfolio of services, particularly in support of Virgin Voyages. Acting as the general agent for Virgin Voyages in all Spanish and Portuguese ports, GPS has demonstrated impressive growth and a commitment to enhancing the passenger experience over the past three seasons.

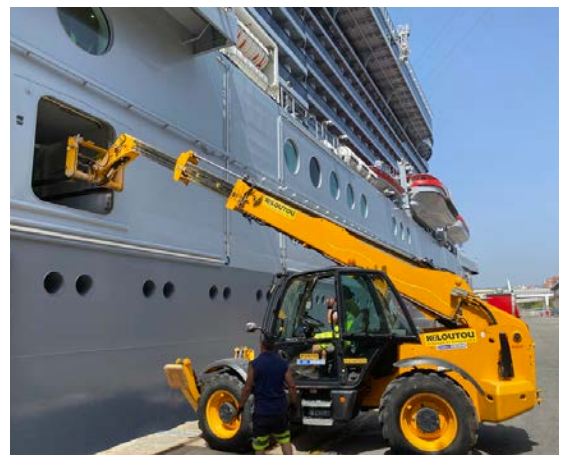
In Barcelona, GPS employs a dedicated team of approximately 60 staff members, who provide essential services including guiding Virgin Voyages passengers through the terminals, handling check-ins, and organizing private transportation. This extensive, hands-on service offering is a key factor in the company's success in integrating services at its terminals, including stevedoring and last-mile logistics.

As GPS completes its third season working with Virgin Voyages, the company is in the process of renewing its port agent contract while also bidding for the Ground Services contracts for both Barcelona and Lisbon. This expansion and the successful delivery of services across multiple ports highlight the success of GPS's strategic approach to streamlining cruise operations and offering a comprehensive range of services from a single point of contact.

The company is also making strides in diversifying its client base, with plans to grow its services to more destinations and cruise lines. GPS is currently participating in several bidding processes with other cruise lines, confident that its reputation for excellence will allow for further expansion.

In addition to supporting cruise lines, GPS has recently broadened its offerings with the introduction of husbandry services from its Alicante terminal to a yacht vessel docked in Denia. Husbandry services, which involve the care and maintenance of vessels and crew, are a critical part of maritime operations, covering a wide range of needs from hospitality arrangements to medical appointments.

As GPS looks ahead to the future, the company remains committed to increasing its presence in Spain and Portugal while continuing to provide high-quality, tailored services that meet the unique needs of cruise lines and their passengers. With its growing portfolio of services, GPS is poised to become a key player in the region's cruise industry.





SHAKING UP CREW EXPERIENCES IN NASSAU

In late November, Nassau Cruise Port welcomed Virgin Voyages' Resilient Lady with a unique Bahamian mixology class for the ship's crew. Led by renowned mixologist Marv Cunningham, known as Mr. Mix Bahamas, the session introduced 24 crew members to crafting four distinct Bahamian cocktails.

Mike Maura Jr., CEO of Nassau Cruise Port, highlighted the importance of engaging crew members as key stakeholders in the port's success, noting their influence through firsthand recommendations. "This mixology experience is the first step in our enhanced crew engagement strategy, ensuring they feel valued and enjoy positive experiences during their visits to Nassau."

The initiative aligns with Global Ports Holding's broader goals to elevate service offerings, including a planned concierge service for passengers to meet the growing demand for VIP experiences.

Nassau Cruise Port remains dedicated to creating meaningful experiences for both passengers and crew, fostering lasting impressions for all visitors.



CROTONE CRUISE PORT MARKS A YEAR OF GROWTH

Crotone Cruise Port is establishing itself as a year-round cruise destination, achieving significant growth and success in the 2024 cruise season. This year, the port welcomed six maiden calls, setting a new record for the terminal and highlighting the destination's increasing appeal among international cruise lines. Among these prestigious first-time visitors were the impressive Viking Saturn, which kicked off the cruising season on February 24th, as well as the esteemed Seven Seas Grandeur and the breathtaking Star Legend. The latter made its inaugural call on November 10th, marking the final cruise visit of the year.

The arrival of these ships is a clear sign of Crotone's expanding presence in the cruise industry, as it continues to attract vessels beyond the traditional summer cruise season. With its rich blend of history, culture, stunning coastal beauty, and warm weather, Crotone is becoming a sought-after destination for passengers looking for unique experiences year-round, reinforcing its position as a key port in the Mediterranean.

EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS CHARM THE FESTIVE SEASON AT VALLETTA WATERFRONT

As every year, Valletta Waterfront located in Valletta's historic Grand Harbour and operated by Valletta Cruise Port is decked up for the holiday season.

Guests can stop at platform 1752 - Valletta Waterfront, and arrive into a world of Christmas magic featuring a towering 35-foot tree, larger-than-life characters including the 20-foot nutcracker soldier and a jumbo gingerbread man, amidst a program of activities and interactive games. The month of December features choirs, marching bands and majorettes, a traditional Baby Jesus procession and more, in a packed calendar of activities. The jolly man himself, Father Christmas together with his Mrs., Mother Christmas will be available for photo opportunities from Saturday 30th November until the 24th December prior to their round-the-world annual trip!

Visitors can make the most of the season with a cozy meal or a festive drink at one of the many restaurants dotting the waterfront conveniently located just opposite the Valletta Cruise Port quays, perfect for some down-time post excursion. A spot of local cuisine can be sampled or a warming cup of mulled wine enjoyed amidst a backdrop of historic buildings commissioned and inaugurated by Grand Master Pinto of Knights of Malta fame in 1752 offering both indoor and outdoor seating options.



YEAR-ROUND SUNSHINE: WINTER CRUISING IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

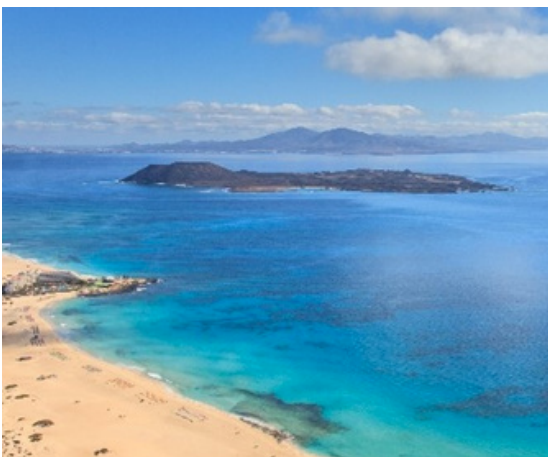
The Canary Islands have emerged as a premier destination for cruise tourism during the Winter months, and the reasons are evident. While much of Europe endures freezing temperatures, the islands of Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, and Gran Canaria provide a warm and sunny haven, with an average climate of around 22 degrees.

Visitors arriving at Lanzarote Cruise Port will explore striking volcanic landscapes beneath clear skies—a luxury increasingly rare in Winter across other European regions. Adventurous tourists can hike in Timanfaya National Park or enjoy wine tasting in La Geria.

Those who choose Fuerteventura Cruise Port will fall in love with its endless beaches and gentle breezes, perfect for water sports such as windsurfing and serene walks far removed from the Summer crowds. The stunning dunes at Corralejo are a must-see.

Docking at Las Palmas Cruise Port offers a vibrant urban atmosphere, where visitors can wander through the historic Vegueta district or unwind on Las Canteras beach. Travelers can savor traditional Canarian dishes like papas arrugadas and fresh seafood.

Tourists have the extraordinary opportunity to experience the eternal spring that our climate offers year-round, and welcome the New Year on the beach, enjoying festive events throughout the season.





GLOBAL PORTS HOLDING

www.globalportsholding.com

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