

Royal Caribbean Floats Out Independence of the Seas

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Independence to Share Title of World's Largest with Sister-Ships

In less than a year, Royal Caribbean International's Independence of the Seas will make her debut in Southampton, England where she will be the largest ship ever to be home-ported in Europe. With her hull now complete, Independence of the Seas, under construction at Aker Yards in Turku, Finland, reached an important maritime milestone today when she was "floated out" -- moved from dry dock to wet dock -- for the final months of finishing work leading up to her May 2008 debut.

At official ceremonies held at the shipyard, Royal Caribbean executives, Harri Kulovaara, executive vice president, Maritime, Lisa Bauer, senior vice president, Sales, and Captain Hernan Zini were joined by Juha Heikinheimo, president, Aker Yards Cruise and Ferries, and Jykri Heinamaa, Turku Yard Director, Aker Yards, as well as an exclusive group of Royal Caribbean's travel partners, to turn the valve releasing 87 million gallons of water into the wet dock area.

Independence of the Seas will share the title of world's largest cruise ship with her sister-ships, Freedom of the Seas and Liberty of the Seas, weighing in at 160,000 GRT and holding 3,634 guests, double-occupancy. In addition to new programs and onboard embellishments yet to be announced, amenities on Independence will include the popular innovations already found on her sister-ships, including the FlowRider surf simulator, the wet and wild H2O Zone aqua park, cantilevered whirlpools suspended 112 feet above the ocean, an ice-skating rink, a boxing ring, and the 1,215-square-foot Presidential Family Suite, which sleeps up to 14.

Royal Caribbean International is a global cruise brand with 21 ships currently in service and three under construction.

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