

As Consumers Respond Strongly to Innovation, Diversity of Cruise Experiences, Industry Anticipates Record Year
2008-01-16

With 10 Ships Joining the Fleet, CLIA Predicts 12.8 Million Passengers Worldwide in 2008

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the cruise industry organization for 24 member cruise lines and 16,000 travel agency members, today predicted a record year for 2008, with its member lines projected to carry 12.8 million passengers. Of the total, 10.5 million passengers will originate from North America, 2.3 million from international markets.

"The cruise industry, represented by CLIA member lines and driven by new ships, innovative itineraries and ground-breaking shipboard facilities and activities, continues to demonstrate enviable strength," said Dan Hanrahan, CLIA's marketing committee chairman and president & CEO of Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Cruises. "We anticipate that the unparalleled diversity of cruise experiences offered by our members will result in another record year for the industry."

Also newly released today are third quarter 2007 passenger carrying results and fourth quarter estimates, which revealed that CLIA member cruise lines are anticipated to have carried 12.6 million worldwide passengers last year, a 4.6 percent increase over the 12.01 million carried in 2006. Included in that forecast is 10.33 million North Americans in 2007, compared with 10.08 million the previous year. Cruise lines also maintained their high utilization rates, posting a collective occupancy factor of over 105 percent in 2007.

Adding to the excitement of cruising in 2008 will be the introduction of eight new ships and two redeployed vessels joining the CLIA fleet, representing a total increase in berths of 23,275. Taking into account the timing of ship introductions and deletions throughout the year, the actual annual increase in available net bed days -- and passenger growth -- is projected to be a moderate 1.6 percent. Based on known 35 new ships that CLIA will introduce from 2008 - 2012, the CLIA fleet will have a 29 percent increase in capacity from 2007, reflecting a dynamically changing capacity environment.

CLIA's optimism is supported by early reports from CLIA member travel agents on this year's Wave Season, the period between January and March traditionally known as the heaviest booking period of the year. A recent survey indicated that 90 percent of agents expect as good or better annual sales results as 2007, 60 percent of agents expect 2008 to be better than 2007, and 20 percent expect it will be their best year ever overall for cruise bookings. Almost 35 percent of respondents expect Wave Season to be their highest volume booking period although 32 percent reported that their cruise sales are generally consistent throughout the year -- which is also good news for the industry.

"With consumers typically booking at least five to six months out, Wave Season gives us a good indication of the year to come and it's looking positive," said Terry L. Dale, president and CEO of CLIA. "We are also heartened by the fact that cruise bookings and sales are increasingly strong throughout the year, extending beyond Wave Season. From all indications, CLIA member lines are having great success reaching an increasingly diverse population of vacationers -- of all ages, backgrounds and interests. And, according to the travel agents who sell nearly 90 percent of all cruises, they are strongly receptive to the extraordinary range of different experiences offered on CLIA member ships."

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article30762.html>

© 1998 - 2008 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html