

CRUISE NEWS December 2005

SEASONAL SAILINGS ADD MORE CHOICES FOR CRUISERS

They're back! *Grand Princess*, Celebrity's *Galaxy* and Royal Caribbean's *Splendour of the Seas* have resumed their seasonal itineraries making a total of 6 ships sailing from the Port of Galveston. Add the two Norwegian Cruise Lines' ships *Norwegian Sun* and *Norwegian Dream* that call the Port of Houston (LaPorte) home for a while, and that makes 8 vessels and lots of choices for cruise vacations.

Here's a brief rundown on: At 109,000 tons, the 2600-passenger *Grand Princess* is now the second largest ship sailing from Galveston; *Carnival Conquest* is the largest and newest. *Grand Princess* features the unique "Movies Under the Stars" poolside screen. Throughout the day, passengers can watch a variety of feature films, concerts, sporting events and family favorites. Evening showings include special touches such as cushions and throws on the deck's lounge chairs, fresh popcorn and movie-themed drink specials.

With the Princess *Anytime Dining*, guests can choose when, where and with whom they want to dine. Want a fixed traditional seating? It's as simple as asking. The ship also offers two alternative restaurants by reservation (and extra cost): *Sabbatini's*, an authentic Italian trattoria and a premium steakhouse.

Grand Princess offers 7-day itineraries departing on Saturdays through April 8, 2006. Ports include Costa Maya, Belize City, Grand Cayman and Cozumel.

Celebrity's 1870-passenger, 77,713 ton *Galaxy* returns with the popular 11-and 12-night Panama Canal itineraries. Celebrity has maintained top ratings in Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Survey based on itineraries, crew/service, cabins/design, food/dining and activities/excursions. *Galaxy* offers guests Enrichment Lectures, Computing Classes and Acupuncture at Sea—even a Thalassotherapy pool for a relaxing soak. Concierge Class provides several upscale extras for guests in need of additional pampering.

Galaxy visits Cozumel, Costa Maya, Puerto Limon, Costa Rica; Panama Canal cruising, Cristobal Pier, Panama, and Georgetown, Grand Cayman on the 11-night voyages and adds Montego Bay, Jamaica to its 12-night sailings.

Royal Caribbean's 2,076-passenger, 70,000 ton *Splendour of the Seas* returns for 4- and 5-day Western Caribbean cruises through April 19, 2006. Like *Rhapsody of the Seas*, *Splendour* has the daring Rock Climbing Wall for the more adventurous types. Less stressful alternatives are the 18-hole miniature golf course or better yet the indoor/outdoor Solarium pool with sliding roof. *Splendour* visits Cozumel on the 4-day cruises and adds Costa Maya for the 5-day trip.

Meanwhile, over at the Port of Houston, Norwegian Caribbean's *Norwegian Dream* and *Norwegian Sun* both sail to Roatan, Honduras; Belize City and Cozumel. *Dream* will cruise from Houston through April 2006. *Norwegian Sun*, which was to be based in New Orleans this winter, will offer Sunday sailings through January 8, 2006.

Add *Carnival Conquest's* and *Rhapsody of the Seas* 7-day Western Caribbean voyages and *Carnival's Elation's* 4- and 5-day trips to Mexico to the lineup and you've got options for nearly everyone's budget, tastes and preferences.

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One note about itineraries including Cozumel: Hurricane Wilma caused much damage to the docks at that popular stop. Cozumel began receiving cruise ships on November 14 on a limited basis, allowing only four ships per day. We have seen as many as nine ships there in one day, and understand Cozumel could handle as many as 15. Now, because ships cannot dock, passengers must tender ashore. It is possible that calls scheduled in this port might be replaced with other ports, such as Progreso, Playa del Carmen, Costa Maya—or even a day at sea until the damage to the docks has been repaired.

**WORLDWIDE SHORE SERVICES
CELEBRATES 5TH ANNIVERSARY**

It's hard to believe that five years have passed since Worldwide Shore Services began operations in Galveston for Carnival Cruise Lines. To mark the occasion, the group recently celebrated with a gala dinner and awards ceremony at the Hotel Galvez.

Amy Hervin, Galveston pier manager for Carnival and Princess, started the operation from scratch in September 2000, developing the supervisory staff, hiring and training the embarkation and airport staff. Today, she is responsible for 280 pier and airport employees. Twelve of those employees have been with WWS the entire 5 years—including assistant manager Leslie Sobota and Debbie Garcia, administrative assistant.

"I'm so very proud of our staff's hard work and dedication and sincerely appreciate their commitment to provide excellent customer service above and beyond our guests' expectations. It requires a team effort and we enjoy a great working relationship with the port, port police, shore side security, stevedores, vendors and bus companies," Hervin said.

Worldwide Shore Services, a subsidiary of Holland America Line, is a ground handling company for any cruise line that would like to utilize their services. Their operations include cities of San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Tampa and ports in Alaska.

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