



Sunday May 16, 2021

Britain's largest and most environmentally-friendly cruise ship is named in a record-breaking virtual ceremony

Britain's largest and most environmentally-friendly cruise ship, P&O Cruises Iona, has been officially named in a very contemporary ceremony with a record-breaking virtual audience.

Iona, powered by liquefied natural gas, ground-breaking for the UK cruise industry and one of the cleanest fuels in the world, arrived for the first time into her home port of Southampton this morning ahead of tonight's official naming ceremony.

The ship was officially named tonight by Dame Irene Hays, chair of Hays Travel, Britain's largest independent travel agency, in a glittering quayside ceremony by the bow of the ship.

The event, held at sunset, was hosted by Jo Whiley and broadcast to a "virtual" audience of 25,000 guests. The highlight of the show was a rousing set from Iona's music director Gary Barlow performing two iconic Take That hits "Greatest Day" and "Rule the World" against the backdrop of a spectacular laser show.

A specially produced Nebuchadnezzar (equivalent to 20x 750ml bottles) of Alex James's Britpop cider smashed against the hull of the ship in spectacular style to bring it good fortune in the future.

There was also a special performance by The Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir and Mica Paris singing Believe, a song which was composed by Simon Haw MBE and was dedicated to Her Majesty The Queen, head of the Commonwealth, for its 70th anniversary in 2019.

In his speech P&O Cruises president Paul Ludlow referred to the prolonged pause of the cruise industry and highlighted that "It is 427 days since we have been able to do what we do best – welcome our guests on board and give them unforgettable, joyous holidays where they make memories on board and see the sights of the world."

He continued: "With our invited audience and millions more watching the ceremony on social media, today heralds a new beginning and new hope for the cruise industry. Iona is indeed a very visible symbol of our future."

Iona has 30 bars and restaurants with many new speciality dining options including tapas from award-winning Spanish chef José Pizarro paired with wines selected by Ollie Smith and a new Chef's Table menu from Marco Pierre White. Entertainment venues include the first "SkyDome" - an extraordinary glass structure which will be a relaxed poolside environment by day and then transform at night into a spectacular venue with DJs, stage and aerial acrobatic shows.

There will also be the first gin still on a cruise ship, created in association with Salcombe Gin, distilling tailor made spirit on board. The gin's maiden production will take place in Iona's custom-made still named "Columba" and will be distilled, bottled and labelled on board.

Highlights and a full edit of the ceremony will be available shortly on P&O Cruises YouTube channel, website and Facebook page.

Iona's season of UK coastal cruises including her maiden voyage on August 7 up to her namesake island of Iona are available to book on www.pocruises.com or through a travel agent

Ends

Note to editors: IONA STATISTICS

- Tonnage – 185,000 GT
- Length – 345m
- Breadth moulded – 42m
- Total engine power – 61.7 MW
- Propulsion power – 37MW
- Speed – 17kn
- Guest capacity– 5,200 Crew – 1,800
- Guest cabins – 2,614
- Largest ship ever to fly the UK flag
- Built at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany
- The largest ship built to serve the UK market, with a 5,200-guest capacity
- More than 30 places to eat and drink
- Four swimming pools including an infinity pool and 18 whirlpool spas (six infinity whirlpool spas and 12 whirlpool spas)
- The first gin distillery at sea in partnership with Salcombe Gin
- Gary Barlow is music director of The 710 Club
- Powered by liquefied natural gas - no sulphur/nitrogen emissions & a 20% reduction in carbon
- 26 suites, 95 conservatory mini-suites, 1,486 balcony cabins, 174 sea view cabins, 811 inside cabins and 22 single occupancy cabins

About P&O Cruises

P&O Cruises is Britain's favourite cruise line, welcoming guests to experience holidays with a blend of discovery, choice, relaxation and exceptional service catered towards British tastes. P&O Cruises fleet of premium ships combine genuine service, a sense of occasion and attention to detail.

In 2021, P&O Cruises will launch Iona its first Excel class ship. The new LNG-powered ship, with 5,200-guest capacity, will be the largest ship built to serve the UK market. Iona will feature enhancements to already successful brand signature venues from the existing fleet, as well as features newly developed for Iona. P&O Cruises second LNG-powered Excel class ship and sister ship to Iona is named Arvia, meaning from the seashore, and will join the fleet in December 2022. Arvia is an innovative and future-focused ship and will offer outstanding, varied and contemporary holidays. Arvia has been designed to travel to the sun all year-round and to maximise views of the ocean and the seashore from everywhere on board.

With over 200 destinations worldwide, P&O Cruises itineraries are carefully curated to inspire discovery, and are varied to suit newcomers and experienced guests alike. With a wide choice of holidays from two days to three months there is something for everyone. P&O Cruises sails to Australia & New Zealand, Baltic, the British Isles, Canada, the Spain, Portugal & the Canary Islands, the Caribbean, Central America, the Far East & Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, South America, the South Pacific, the United States and Western Europe.

The company is part of Carnival Corporation & plc (NYSE/LSE: CCL; NYSE:CUK).

Images

Iona's arrival and naming images can be found here:

<https://www.pocruisespresspictures.com/p/91673hrm/iona-arrival-naming>

All other Iona images can be found here:

<https://www.pocruisespresspictures.com/p/ourfleet/C385066405/iona>

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