

# New Canadian Ports

## Measure Up

**Holland America Line visits approximately 350 ports of call worldwide, and about 7 percent of those are maiden ports each year. All ports must meet strict Holland America Line criteria to be included on itineraries. Three of the new ports in 2009 are in Canada.**



The ports of Gaspé, Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles, all in Québec, fulfill Holland America's expectations for new destinations, from security requirements to onshore attractions.

"We want to continually refresh our itineraries, add new ports, because we have so many repeat guests," said Simon Douwes, director, Deployment & Itinerary Planning. "We want to offer them interesting new places."

A primary consideration for a new port of call is, of course, the type of attractions it offers. The appeal can be historical, cultural, scenic or recreational in nature; and Gaspé, Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles have many or all those ingredients.

"They matched our criteria, and we expect them to offer a great experience for our

guests," said Timothy Littley, manager, Deployment & Itinerary Planning.

"Sept-Îles," Littley said, "is undiscovered. We will be the first major cruise line to go there." He was impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the various agencies he met with in Sept-Îles. A train excursion, departing from near the pier, will offer guests both magnificent views of amazing scenery and a rich cultural experience with the Innu tribal community. The availability of a train excursion is a plus in any port, Littley said.

The primary draw in Baie-Comeau is the glacial history of the region. The Borealis Center, a maritime adventure park, lets guests experience spectacular maritime landscapes formed by glaciers through multiple activities

## EURODAM SAILS INTO CANADA & NEW ENGLAND WATERS

Holland America Line's newest ship, *ms Eurodam*, will make her North American debut on Aug. 29 and then sail a series of 10-day cruises during the fall Canada/New England season. She will cruise between New York and Québec City, which becomes a new home port for *Eurodam's* fall itinerary. Each cruise features an overnight in Québec City for guests to fully experience this unique port city.

With *Eurodam* replacing *ms Veendam*, guest capacity for the popular fall cruises increases by more than 5,400. The *ms Maasdam* will continue to sail seven-day cruises between Boston and Montréal.

The 2009 Canada /New England program features 21 sailings offered May through October on *Maasdam* sailings in the spring, summer and fall; and *Eurodam* in the late summer and fall. In addition, three new ports of call, Gaspé, Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles, will be incorporated into spring and fall repositioning itineraries.

The Canada/New England sailings provide guests with an opportunity to explore history, culture and natural beauty. Summer sailings, featuring lots of outdoor happenings and shipboard teen and Club HAL® activities, are popular with families.

such as Tyrolean traverses, hiking, sea kayaking and interpretive cruises. A special Glacier Center allows guests to walk through a man-made glacier and experience the temperature, sound and movements found under glaciers.

In the past, Holland America Line has called occasionally in Gaspé. “This port has really stepped up its efforts in recent years,” Littlely commented. “Gaspé is a gateway to many great attractions. The destination has a good existing tourism infrastructure and the port is improving its facilities.” Forillon National Park, Bonaventure Island and Percé Rock National Park are the main attractions. In addition, the area is known for its whale-watching opportunities.

The attractions of a port city are not the sole determining factor in choosing a new port of call. The first consideration is whether the ships can physically reach and enter a port. If so, anchorage is next on the list. “We don’t want to anchor more than a mile from a tender pier.” Douwes said, “If available, we generally prefer to tie up to a dock.” The dock must be in good condition so that guests and crew can safely traverse it and the ship is safe and secure while moored.

*Opposite: Percé Rock, an impressive limestone monolith, dominates the sea near the town of Percé on the Gaspé Peninsula.*

*Right: A Rail and River tour from Sept-Îles offers a train ride along the Moisie River, a salmon river of international renown, to an Innu summer camp where guests observe reenactments of tribal customs and enjoy a salmon bake.*

Security is always a concern, and Douwes said his team checks to see if a potential port of call meets international security standards, ISPS, that were set after Sept. 11. Also, the terminal must be clean and large enough to accommodate the number of guests that will be disembarking from a cruise ship.

If all those criteria are met, the next consideration is the port city itself. Douwes said his team tries to find locations where some attractions, restaurants, stores, museums and the like are within easy walking distance of the ship or tender pier. The general friendliness, attractiveness and cleanliness of the city is very important, Douwes said.

Great ports of call are key to making everyone’s jobs a little easier, from the sales teams to the shore excursion people to the

officers and crew on board the ships who welcome back excited, happy guests returning from great shoreside experiences.

Before choosing Gaspé, Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles, Littlely researched six or seven ports in Québec. These three, he said, “had all the right ingredients.”

