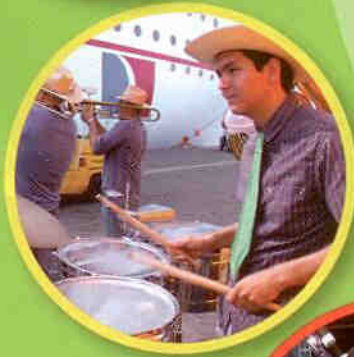


# CRUISE

North America  
magazine

SEASON OPENER



CRUISE  
SHIPPING  
MIAMI  
2009

# Banner season for Saguenay in 2009

Delegates to the 11th Canada New England Cruise Symposium gather this year in Saguenay from June 16 to 18.

It's not surprising the host of the event, the St. Lawrence Cruise Association, chose this bucolic region of Quebec. Here you can both commune with nature and enjoy the hustle and bustle of city life. No wonder it's a favourite destination for cruise passengers.

And 2009 will be a banner year.

Not only will the port welcome the greatest number of passengers ever, there's also a brand-new \$5.2-million cruise pavilion that houses a VIP lounge with a view of the majestic Saguenay Fjord, a coffee shop, tourist information kiosk, car, boat and bike rental agencies, souvenir and crafts boutiques and WiFi access for those who want to stay connected.

The region's natural beauty is such an attraction that 28,000 passengers will disembark this year – more than double last year's total. Holland America Line's Maasdam, which arrived in May, kicked off the 2009 season. Her sister ship, the Eurodam, inaugurated the new cruise pier last fall and returns again – three times in September. Another three-time visitor will be Canadian Sailing Expeditions' Caledonia, which arrives in the summer. October is still the most popular time of the year, however, with no less than nine ships visiting throughout the month.

Saguenay, a longtime shipping and fishing hub, is now a staple of almost all major Canada-New England cruises. That's because hospitality and joie de vivre are trademarks of the citizens of Saguenay, home to some 300,000, and the spectacular natural beauty is an authentic and distinctive experience. Here, in Parc nationale du Saguenay, cruise ships sail up the awe-inspiring Saguenay Fjord, the world's most southern fjord and the largest in eastern North America. A unique ecosystem of unparalleled beauty, sheer jagged cliffs rise 450 metres (1,500 feet) above sea level – 75 metres (250 feet) higher than the Empire State Building – and panoramic vistas of landscape and seascape extend as far as the eye can see.



Photo: Paul Shaw

Saguenay's natural beauty is such an attraction that 28,000 passengers will disembark this year

In the Saguenay, Mother Nature lives up to your expectations. Passengers can explore three national parks including a unique marine park by plane or helicopter, by zodiac, sea kayak or boat, or by hiking the trails. For cycling enthusiasts, the Véloroute des Bleuets, the blueberry bike trail, is a 255-kilometre (159-mile) network of trails around Lac Saint-Jean and Parc national de la Pointe-Taillon, home to moose, beavers, dunes, marshes and sandy beaches.

Dotted with picturesque fishing villages and breathtaking vistas, the region, nicknamed the Kingdom for its physical size and natural riches, is a visual feast and home to an abundance of fauna and marine life, including a dozen species of whale. Around Tadoussac, a resort community of about 1,000, cruise passengers are sure to see pods of whales cavorting in this natural feeding ground.

If you like history or the arts, the new hop-on/hop-off tourist bus takes you to heritage sites and cultural attractions. From Wednesday to Sunday, two non-stop guided tours in the districts of La Baie, Chicoutimi and Jonquière are offered so you can visit at your own pace.

By MARK CARDWELL

# SEPT-ÎLES

## welcomes

### first-ever international

Like in Texas, they do things big in Sept-Îles. And that gigantism is part of the appeal for cruise ship passengers, suggests the president of the city's port.

"We'll never be a romantic destination like Quebec City, but we've got some impressive sights of our own," Pierre Gagnon said in the wake of a day-long stopover by Holland America Line's ms Maasdam, which moored in the city's harbour on May 19. It was the first-ever visit by an international cruise ship to the mining and industrial hub on Quebec's rugged North Shore and the first of three this cruise season.

The Maasdam was on a 14-day trip that began in Fort Lauderdale and included stops in Charleston, Newport, Bar Harbor, Halifax, Sydney, Charlottetown, Quebec City and Montreal.

Mr. Gagnon presented Capt. Hendrik Draper, master of the Maasdam, with a gold-headed cane to mark the event.

Mr. Gagnon said more than half of the Maasdam's 1,250 passengers and 550 crew members boarded tenders for the five-minute ride to the port's 200-metre-long Monseigneur Blanche Wharf. There they were greeted by hundreds of local residents who turned out to watch the ship's 7 a.m. arrival.



Artist's rendering of  
cruise ship wharf

Image: Sept-Îles Port Authority



## cruise ship

"It was a huge event here," Mr. Gagnon. "This was two years in the making (and) we did everything we could to ensure that we had a lot of people on the dock. We even picked a day when we knew the local schools would be closed."

Most passengers, he added, took part in three excursion packages in the area. One was a visit by train to a newly built Innu village on the banks of the nearby Moises River, just west of the city, featuring costumed interpreters and traditional native food. Another was a bus and walking tour of the Alouette aluminum plant. The 1.6-kilometre- (1-mile-) long facility produces some 600,000 tonnes of aluminum annually, making it one of the biggest aluminum factories in the world and the biggest in North America. "The industrial footprint here is very big and very impressive," Mr. Gagnon said.

At the same time, he added, Sept-Îles is also the continent's biggest transit centre for iron ore. Produced by mining giants Iron Ore Company of Canada and Wabush at massive operations in northern Quebec and Labrador, iron ore accounted for roughly 85 per cent of the 22.6 million tonnes of cargo that was carried from the port's 12 docks on 578 ships in 2008.

As a result, cruise ship visitors have a good chance of seeing some of the biggest cargo ships in the world in the city's natural 10-kilometre- (6-mile-) wide, moon-shaped harbour, which is more than 80 metres (260 feet) deep and is open to navigation year round.

"People see things here that they won't likely see anywhere else," Mr. Gagnon said.

He added that the local greeting, together with the excursions offered, resulted in an 85-per-cent satisfaction rate among passengers – the second-best result registered for the ship's stops along the St. Lawrence. The Maasdam's visit also makes Sept-Îles the second (after Baie-Comeau) of the half-dozen Quebec ports that are currently being developed as stopover destinations (as part of a federally and provincially funded ini-

Pierre Gagnon presents gold-headed cane to Capt. Hendrik Draper



Photos: Sept-Îles Port Authority

tiative aimed at developing the St. Lawrence cruise ship market) to welcome a big international cruise ship.

"It's a nice reward for all the efforts by many people," Mr. Gagnon said. "And it's very encouraging for the future."

Now, he said, the focus of the port and its two principal partners in the cruise ship project – the City of Sept-Îles and the regional Innu council – is working to refine and reload their tourism products in order to welcome the Eurodam, another Holland America vessel that will visit Sept-Îles twice this fall.

Several bids also have been received for the planned construction of a 315-metre- (1,030-foot-) long pile wharf that would be able to accommodate cruise ships of up to 3,000 passengers. The projected \$21-million wharf would be built at the end of the Monseigneur Blanche Wharf, at an angle that Mr. Gagnon said resembles a hockey stick.

A large white tent is also being used in lieu of a passenger terminal – a scenario Mr. Gagnon compared to Saint John, which used a dockside tent to welcome cruise ship passengers for a decade before building a terminal that officially opened in June.

"We're taking things one step at a time," said Mr. Gagnon, adding the port's goal is to have 10 to 15 cruise ship stopovers a year by 2011. "We want to see how we position ourselves (and) how we can improve our offerings. This is all new for us. We want to learn as we go – and we don't want to go too fast."

# MONTREAL *named* best turnaround port



Photo: Montreal Port Authority

Jean-Luc Bédard (left), the Montreal Port Authority's vice-president of operations and harbour master, Stephen Masters, operations co-ordinator, and Tony Boemi, vice-president of growth and development, proudly display award.

The Port of Montreal has won the 2008 Best Turnaround Port Operations Award from Dream World Cruise Destinations Magazine. Montreal received the distinction along with eight other ports around the world.

For the magazine's 2008 awards edition, 231 ports and destinations around the world were surveyed. The Best Turnaround Port Operations category recognizes the ports with the best berths, terminal or covered passenger facility, and the most efficient services, such as security, customs, baggage handling, communications, passenger services, link with airport, logistics capability, stevedoring, storage and ship services.

"It is a great honour to receive this award," said Tony Boemi, the Montreal Port Authority's vice-president of growth and development. "The Montreal Port Authority works very hard to maintain high-standard quality for its cruise operations and we will keep on improving our operations for the benefit of cruise operators and passengers."

In 2008, 39,638 cruise passengers transited through the Port of Montreal, up 14 per cent from the previous year.

Photo: Brent Frederick



# PORT OF QUEBEC excellence awards wins

The Port of Quebec has received two excellence awards from Dream World Cruise Destinations magazine for its performance in 2008.

The awards, Most Responsive Port and Best Destination Experience, Independent, were presented at Seatrade Cruise Shipping Miami in March.

Dream World Cruise Destinations conducts an annual industry-wide survey to identify the top-performing ports and destinations in the international cruise market. The Most Responsive Port award is given to the port that responds most quickly to inquiries and finds solutions to cruise line requirements and special requests. Among the other 2008 winners are the ports of Barcelona, Dubai and Stockholm.

The Best Destination Experience, Independent award is based on a vote by passengers who booked their own land excursions and had the best tourism experience. Other 2008 recipients are Venice; Sydney, Australia; and Dublin. It is the third time that the Port of Quebec has won this award.

The Port of Quebec won the Best Destination Port (Rest of the World) award in 2002 for the best port outside the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Northern Europe geographic areas.

The awards are icing on the cake for Quebec's outstanding 2008 international cruise season in which the port welcomed more than 112,000 passengers and crew members.

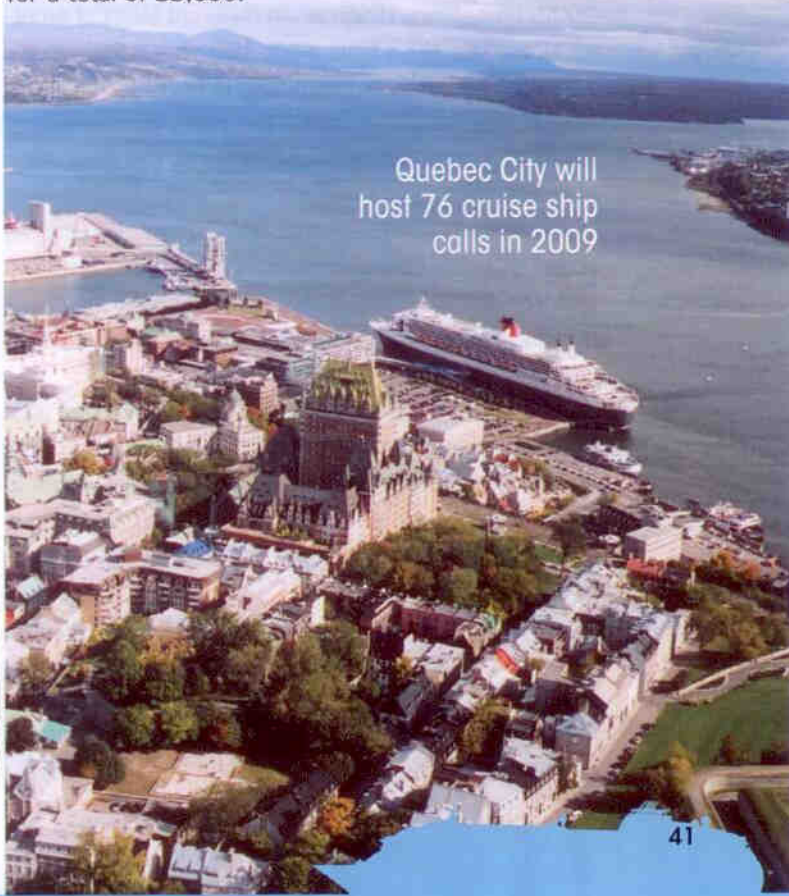
After many years of development efforts with international cruise lines, the Port of Quebec said it is pleased by the recognition, which speaks to Quebec City's growing reputation as a must-visit destination on the Canada and New England route.

"The Port of Quebec has worked hard to develop this market in the face of global competition," said Ross Gaudreault, president and CEO of the Quebec Port Authority. "We are pleased to have succeeded in positioning Quebec City among the most prized destinations in the world."

With the current economic downturn, the Port of Quebec is cautious about the 2009 season, despite average annual growth in the cruise industry of 7.4 per cent since 1990. "The international cruise industry proved resistant to economic turmoil in the 20th century," Mr. Gaudreault said. "We must therefore keep up our sales efforts and promote the message that Quebec City is an extraordinary destination with 400 years of rich history and a European appeal found nowhere else."

A number of firsts in 2009 will provide a boost to Quebec City, including the inaugural visits of the Queen Victoria, Norwegian Spirit and Princess Danae. Moreover, European line Costa Cruises will sail the St. Lawrence River for the first time with its ship Costa Atlantica.

Quebec City will host 76 cruise ship calls this season and expects to welcome nearly 124,000 passengers and crew members. The port also anticipates twice the number of embarking passengers from last year, for a total of 35,000.



Quebec City will  
host 76 cruise ship  
calls in 2009

Photo: Québec Port Authority

# Maasdam

## again kicks off Quebec's international cruise season

For the third consecutive year, the Quebec Port Authority proudly gave its international cruise season opener award to Capt. Hendrik Draper, master of the Holland America Line vessel ms Maasdam, which docked at Pier 22 on the morning of May 21.

"We are very proud that our biggest client has won this award again this year," said Ross Gaudreault, president and CEO of the Quebec Port Authority. "Holland America Line has supported us tremendously in recent years. This is a very small way we can thank them for their confidence in Quebec City."

A bronze bird sculpture by Quebec artist Marc Martel was presented to Capt. Draper.

It was the Maasdam's 87th port visit since 1999, and on Sept. 27 it will tie up in Quebec City for the 100th time. Since 1995, seven different Holland America Line cruise ships have made 150 port visits.

After leaving Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale on May 8, the Maasdam called the ports of Charleston, Newport, Gaspé, Sept-Îles and Saguenay before arriving in Quebec City.

"We are happy to see that Holland America Line has added new St. Lawrence stops to its itineraries," Mr. Gaudreault said. "This speaks volumes about the development of new ports of call supported by the St. Lawrence Cruise Association.

"In this period of economic uncertainty, the fact that hundreds of Americans are coming to Quebec City and spending money in our shops and restaurants is encouraging. They are proof that we need to continue our sales efforts and build on our exceptional destination and its unique appeal."

In 2009, inaugural visits by the Queen Victoria, Norwegian Spirit, Princess Danae and Clelia II are on the cruise schedule. In addition, European cruise line Costa Cruises will make its maiden voyage on the St. Lawrence with the Costa Atlantica.



Ross Gaudreault with Capt. Hendrik Draper

Some 124,000 passengers and crew members are expected in Quebec City this season over the course of 76 visits. The Quebec Port Authority also expects the number of destination passengers to reach 35,000 – twice as many as last year.

This year, Quebec City will be the destination or departure city for 16 itineraries with four different vessels: Eurodam, Crown Princess, Norwegian Spirit and Costa Atlantica. Three of these four cruise ships will be visiting the region for the first time.

"The year will be especially busy, with twice as many passengers whose destination is Quebec City compared to last year," Mr. Gaudreault said. "We are confident we can accommodate them, however, thanks to the expertise we have developed over the years and our good business relations with all our partners in the region."

Quebec's international cruise industry generates direct economic spinoffs of nearly \$80 million, with each passenger spending an average of \$118 per port of call. Quebec City is the leading port of call for cruise ships plying the waters of the St. Lawrence.