

Cruise Industry News

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Cruise-Ship
Building



New Ships

Environmental Challenges
Food & Beverage



The
**Master's
Decision**

Cruise Symposium

Saguenay showed off its world-class new cruise terminal during the Canada New England Cruise Symposium, which was held there on June 16 - 18. Nine cruise ports on the Saint Lawrence River are making a big push to attract more cruise traffic, in addition to ports in Atlantic Canada and New England from New York to Boston and Maine.

Ben Atherly, director of tour operations at Holland America Line, commented that the Canada/New England ports generate the highest passenger satisfaction ratings of all the ports the cruise line calls at, and that Quebec generates the single highest satisfaction rating of any port.

"Compelling"

Atherly pointed out the Saint Lawrence region's many attractions, including its nature and French culture, which he described as "compelling." He said there is a direct relationship with the number of people taking tours and ports' satisfaction scores.

While there have been some challenges at times, Atherly said that Canada and New England have been consistently good not only in terms of passenger satisfaction, but also in terms of yield.

Chris Allen, director of deployment and itinerary planning for Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity and Azamara Cruises, and Neil Palomba, COO at MSC Cruises were also favorably impressed. Allen said that Royal Caribbean's capacity to the region will be up 35 percent in 2010, with ships from Royal and Celebrity making some 241 calls in Canada/New England, sailing from New York, Boston and Baltimore.

Allen said the region is also suitable for smaller ships such as Azamara. "I will be taking a hard look at opportunities for 2011," he said, "to see what other creative things we can do (on the Saint Lawrence River)."

MSC will sail the Poesia to Canada and New England for six weeks, starting in September 2010, offering 10-day as well as seven-day cruises between New York and Quebec. The cruises are designed both for North American and European passengers, according to Palomba.



The Eurodam participated in the official opening of Saguenay's new cruise terminal on Sept. 4, 2009.

(photo credit: Paul Cimon, Promotion Saguenay)

Saint Lawrence

According to Rene Trepanier, executive director of the Cruise the Saint Lawrence Association, the region expects 185,452 cruise passengers in 2009, compared to 123,620 in 2008. His forecasts call for continued growth – to 236,750 in 2010 and 315,520 in 2011.

Trois-Rivieres was celebrating its 375th anniversary this year. The town features a renovated waterfront and plans call for a new terminal to be built. Meanwhile, ships can dock downtown, and everything is within easy walking distance, according to a spokesperson.

Trois-Rivieres also hosts an auto racing event on its streets. For 40 years, the Grand Prix of Trois-Rivieres has been held in August.

Quebec expected eight turn-arounds this season with 30,000 passengers, more than double last year's numbers. In total, Quebec expects 93,000 passengers in 2009, with a first time call by the Queen Victoria.

A new airport has direct flights to Newark, Detroit, Chicago and Paris, in addition to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, and has capacity to add more airlift.

Situated on the Saguenay fjord, the city of Saguenay inaugurated its \$28 million Bagotville Wharf in Sept. 2008, and was in the process of completing its \$6 million, 12,000-square-foot terminal building, which was officially opened in September with the Eurodam calling. The port expects 15 ships and 28,000 passengers in 2009.

The port of Baie-Comeau features tours to its glacier information center and garden, adventure walks, kayaking and other activities, in addition to visits to the Manic-Outardes dam for hydro-electric power generation. The pier is about a mile from downtown, and a shuttle service is available.

Sept-Iles is building a wharf that is slated to be completed by fall 2010, according to Port Engineer Manon D'Auteuil. It will allow ships to dock right in downtown. Ten different shore excursions are offered, ranging from two to seven hours, including a train ride along the Saint Lawrence to an Innu summer camp, visits with local artists, golfing, biking, rollerblading or canoeing. The Maasdam and the Norwegian Spirit have called this year.

The Maasdam making her first call at Iles de la Madeleine this past summer.

(photo credit: Michel Bonato/Tourism Iles de la Madeleine)



The unique rock formations of the Mingan Archipelago are accessible from Havre-Saint Pierre. The port was upgraded in 2008 and there are plans to build a new welcoming facility.

Gaspé has plans to extend its wharf. Attractions include a train ride to Perce and its dramatic cliffs and colonies of seabirds, whale watching, kayaking, salmon fishing, beach walks and other outdoor activities. The peninsula of Gaspésie receives some 500,000 visitors during the summer of which 80 percent are from Quebec, said Marie Leblanc, responsible for tourism promotion.

The best kept secret is said to be Iles de la Madeleine, a chain of windswept islands at the mouth of the Saint Lawrence. Already receiving some 50,000 visitors during the summer months, the community, which has a population of 13,000, also wants to develop cruise tourism with ships up to 1,200 passengers. The Maasdam called this season as did the Caledonian and the Prince Albert. The islands offer historical sites, wildlife and ocean experiences.

Montreal was being revitalized, said Tony Boemi, vice president of cruise development. "The port can handle up to 1,200 and 1,500-passenger ships comfortably, but we have been able to handle triple that," he said. Tour options are many. "We can customize tours for special interest groups," Boemi said. "We have

the potential to offer more than 100 different tours."

Atlantic Canada

Atlantic Canada was also expecting growth with an additional 100,000 passengers and crew in 2009, up from 814,000 passengers and crew in 2008, according to Berni Wood, marketing manager.

Saint John has opened the Marco Polo cruise terminal in June of this year and a proposed new terminal may come on line at Long Wharf in the next year or two, she said. Alan Buckelew, president of Princess Cruises, opened the new terminal.

Corner Brook has completed a major renovation, including landscaping of the waterfront to include walking trails. Canadian Sailing Expeditions homeports the Caledonia in Corner Brook.

Sydney reported an 80 percent

increase in cruise traffic in 2008 over 2007 and has also expanded its crew services.

Halifax expects 117 calls and from 215,000 to 220,000 passengers in 2009.

Charlottetown has a new tender dock, and six inaugural calls were scheduled for this season.

New England

Maine has 12 cruise ports, according to Amy Powers of Cruise Maine, but only Bar Harbor and Portland have big ships calling.

Nick Billows, deputy port director, sales and marketing for Boston, said that the cruise port, airport and downtown are all within the "golden triangle" – a 10 minute taxi ride. For 2009, Boston expects 103 calls, including 41 homeported sailings and 62 transits with a total of 290,000 passengers, he said. New callers include Costa in 2009 and MSC in 2010.

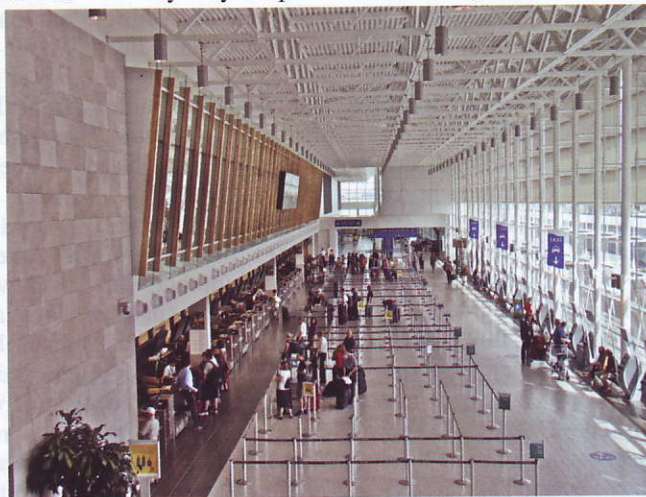
Billows said that there are 13 million consumers in the New England area with the highest per capita income in the U.S., and 58 million within a five-hour drive, adding that Boston passengers have set records for onboard spending.

Another possibility that Billows sees is Boston-to-Caribbean cruises. He said that Boston is only 125 miles further north than New York and the distance can be covered by raising the speed by "one to one-and-a-half knots." Passengers would save in the range from \$225 to \$335 per person by not having to fly anywhere, he added.

The Boston terminal is being renovated and will be completed by April 2010.

In New York, Tom Spina, director of cruise operations, said the refurbished Manhattan terminal has helped ease traffic and congestion. The facility will normally accommodate three ships – two at Pier 88 – with segregated embarkation and debarkation spaces – and one at Pier 98. In addition, ships are calling in Brooklyn and at Port Liberty in Bayonne, New Jersey.

Next year's conference is slated for June 8 to 10 in Saint John, New Brunswick. – *Angela Reale Mathisen and Oivind Mathisen*



Inside the new airport terminal in Quebec