



PRESS RELEASE

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EDINBURGH TO HOST PRESTIGIOUS EUROPEAN CRUISE EVENT IN 2020 FOR FIRST TIME

Capital Cruising has won a bid to host the prestigious Cruise Europe Conference for the first time in Edinburgh next year. The annual three-day event, which will be held in venues across the Capital in March 2020 including a gala dinner in the Museum of Scotland, is the largest and best attended cruise event in Europe with over 150 executives flying into Edinburgh from around the world.

Forth Port's cruise business, Capital Cruising, will host the event after successfully presenting to the Cruise Europe team in Bruges, Belgium earlier this year. The conference gives Edinburgh the chance to showcase the unique attractions of the beautiful UNESCO city to an influential cruise audience during Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2020.

Edinburgh remains a popular cruise destination for visitors. Last year, Edinburgh was named Western Europe's Top Cruise Destination 2018 for the first time. The award, managed by Cruise Critic, which is the world's largest online cruise resource, is based solely on consumer ratings and reviews posted to the Cruise Critic website over the year – so it is first-hand feedback from cruisers themselves. Edinburgh won the award ahead of other amazing cities including Lisbon, Bilbao and Amsterdam.

Event host, **Rob Mason, Head of Cruise for Capital Cruising in Scotland** said: *"This is brilliant news for Edinburgh and Scotland's cruise market as we are set to welcome 150 of*

the world's important players in the cruise sector to the City next year. This is a great opportunity to showcase what Edinburgh and the wider area has to offer cruise visitors and we are excited to be chosen as the hosts for 2020.

Scotland as a whole is a major draw for the cruise market, Edinburgh in particular is a 'must-see'. The cruise season in Scotland is well underway and across all our ports we are expecting to welcome around 170,000 passengers this year which is a strong increase since last year."

Commenting on the Edinburgh event, **Jens Skrede, Managing Director of Cruise Europe** said: "As soon as Edinburgh applied to be the hosting port, I knew they were frontrunners to be selected. Edinburgh is a marquee city which is on many people`s bucket list. In terms of cruise calls this is a great opportunity to showcase what not only Edinburgh, but the whole of Scotland has to offer cruise vessels and their guests.

For Cruise Europe it is a great venue, as we already have had very good feedback from decision makers working for the cruise lines that they want to join our event, network with our members and see what Edinburgh and surroundings have to offer. On a personal note, I can't wait for March 2020!"

Malcolm Roughead, Chief Executive of VisitScotland, said: "With the Year of Coasts and Waters right around the corner it is wonderful and timely to have such an important cruise event held in Scotland and a great achievement for Capital Cruising.

"The Cruise Europe Conference shines a global spotlight on Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland with key players from across the world attending and it also provides a chance to highlight the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 which will celebrate Scotland's stunning coastlines and inland waterways, our cultural and natural heritage, and food and drink.

"The cruise sector is hugely significant to our tourism industry - attracting visitors to our ports who then venture across the country, which in turn contributes to the economy and helps to create jobs and sustain communities."

Capital Cruising runs seven busy cruise terminals and anchorages across the UK and is the only port operator to offer unrivalled direct access to Edinburgh for cruise passengers. With ports in Leith, Rosyth and anchorages at Newhaven and South Queensferry, passengers are within easy reach of the famous attractions in Edinburgh. Last year (2018), Capital Cruising welcomed 114 liners into the River Forth with over 150,000 passengers onboard. 2019 will see further growth in passenger numbers with an estimated 155,000 passengers expected

to visit the country. Forth Ports is currently looking at further options on the River Forth to accommodate larger cruise liners along-side.

Cruise ship holidays continue to grow in popularity which is great news for Scotland's cruise business which is on track to welcome 1 million passengers annually across the country (source: Cruise Scotland). There has been a significant increase over the past decade with international travellers enjoying world-wide travel from the luxurious comfort of a well-equipped cruise liner calling into major cities around the globe. The cruise business is an important economic boost for Scotland and the local areas where the liners call, with many local businesses and attractions benefitting from the tourism spend.

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About Capital Cruising

www.capitalcruising.co.uk @capitalcruising

- Capital Cruising, part of Forth Ports Limited, manages seven ports and anchorages that gives passengers an unrivalled opportunity to visit the UK's two historic capital cities, London and Edinburgh
- Forth Ports - which owns Capital Cruising - is one of the UK's largest port operators, has invested significantly over the past few years in improved cruise terminal facilities in Tilbury, Rosyth, Newhaven and Leith
- In 2018, Capital Cruising was awarded a five-year contract for the management of its Central London Cruise Moorings with MBNA Thames Clippers which includes three moorings – Greenwich Ship Tier, Tower Bridge Upper and George's Stair Tier