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## Double victory for Fred. Olsen in the ‘2019 Group Leisure & Travel Awards’ – ‘Best Cruise Line for Groups’, for a record eighth time, and ‘The Excellence Award’

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines has once again been crowned ‘**Best Cruise Line for Groups**’ by readers of leading travel title, Group Leisure & Travelmagazine, for a record eighth time, in the prestigious ‘2019 Group Leisure & TravelAwards’. This important accolade recognises the very best groups’ cruise experience, from the initial booking process to onboard facilities, and the quality of shore excursions on offer.

Fred. Olsen was recognised at a glittering awards ceremony held on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel at the Marshall Arena in Stadium MK, Milton Keynes. Other finalists in the 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' category were Cruise & Maritime Voyages, P&O Cruises, and Saga Cruises.

Ellie Fulcher, Sales Manager – Groups & Affinity at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, also won '**The Excellence Award**', in recognition of her outstanding service to group travel organisers nationwide.

Now in their 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the 'Group Leisure & Travel Awards' are voted for by active group travel organisers from sports and social clubs, retired associations, special interest societies and other groups, on what they consider to be the best groups experience across 21 categories.

The Awards were presented by TV presenter and former England International Rugby Player, Martin Bayfield, alongside Group Leisure & Travel Magazine publisher, Rob Yandell. Well-known for serving as the body and stunt double of the giant Rubeus Hagrid in the *Harry Potter* films, Martin previously presented *Crimewatch*, the NFL and *World's Strongest Man*.

Group Leisure & Travel is the UK's leading monthly magazine for people who organise group trips and holidays, including major sports and social clubs, retired groups, National Trust groups, PROBUS groups, Women's Institutes, U3A groups, Rotary, Round Table, plus a myriad of others, as well as groups of friends, family and like-minded people who travel together.

Ellie Fulcher, Sales Manager – Groups & Affinity at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

"It is a great honour to receive the 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' award for a record eighth time – a huge thank you to everyone who voted for us.

"2019 has been another excellent year, with an increasing number of group travel organisers and their groups choosing to travel with us, including on our river ship *Brabant*, for holidays along the Rhine, Main, Moselle and Danube.

"Of course, Fred. Olsen was also The Royal British Legion's chosen cruise line to take over 250 D-Day veterans back to the beaches of Normandy for the

historic 'D-Day 75 Voyage of Remembrance' in June this year, in partnership with Arena Travel, a 'full ship group' project which, as a company, we were immensely proud to be involved in.

"On a personal note, I feel very privileged to work in an industry that I love, and am truly honoured to have received 'The Excellence Award' this year - thank you to all of the GTOs who voted for me. It is down to the great working relationships that I have with our loyal clients that makes my job even more enjoyable and rewarding. I would also like to say a 'Big well done!' to the other three deserving finalists nominated in this category."

Geoff Ridgeon, Head of Sales at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

"I am extremely proud of our whole team, both ship-based and shoreside. It is a huge achievement to win the 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' award and be acknowledged for our ability to accommodate these various groups on our cruises so well.

"I am also pleased for Ellie personally, as being recognised in this significant way is a testimony to her close and long-standing relationships with group travel organisers all across the UK."

Keeley Rodgers, Group Leisure & Travel Editor, said:

"Congratulations again to the team at Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines on once again winning 'Best Cruise Line' at the 'Group Leisure & Travel Awards' for 2019.

"Fred. Olsen has dominated this award in previous years and has clearly struck a chord with our readers, who voted for the cruise line to win this very special title – something the whole team should be very proud of."

Feedback from Fred. Olsen's group guests has shown that the intimate and welcoming atmosphere on board its stylish, classic cruise ships is very well-suited to the groups travel market, as well as the excellent value for money that a Fred. Olsen holiday offers. Groups receive so much included in the price of their cruise fare – all meals and entertainment on board the ship, and the opportunity to upgrade to the 'all-inclusive' drinks package from just £19 per person, per night.

Fred. Olsen's bespoke groups' service appeals to all types of groups, including family and friendship groups, corporate and incentive groups, and all kinds of clubs, associations and societies. Fred. Olsen can even offer exclusive use of an entire ship for full-ship allocation group's & private charters.

Groups are welcome on all Fred. Olsen's cruises and, depending upon the size, they may be eligible for a choice of 'added value' benefits. There are many extras that can also be arranged to make the experience even more special, such as a private Traditional Afternoon Tea, group dining plans, exclusive use of public rooms on board for group activities, specialist group shore tours and priority disembarkation for groups travelling by coach.

The two Group Leisure & Travel awards follow hot on the heels of Fred. Olsen's recent success in the '2019 Group Travel Awards', where it was crowned 'Best Cruise Line Operator for Groups', for a record eighth year, as voted by readers of Group Travel Organiser magazine.

**For group bookings and enquiries, please contact Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' dedicated Group Sales Department on [01473 746169](tel:01473746169) (Monday to Friday, [9am](#) until [5pm](#)), or e-mail [group.sales@fredolsen.co.uk](mailto:group.sales@fredolsen.co.uk). For further information on Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, visit the website at [www.fredolsencruises.com](http://www.fredolsencruises.com)**

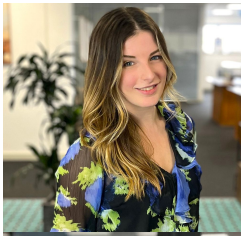
**Photo caption:**

Category sponsor, Harold Burke, Sales Director at The UK Holiday Group Ltd (far left), and TV presenter and former England International Rugby Player, Martin Bayfield, present Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' Zoe Murphy, Ellie Fulcher and Hayley Walker with the 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' accolade at the '2019 Group Leisure & Travel Awards', held at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel at the Marshall Arena in Stadium MK, Milton Keynes on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

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Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

## Contacts



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