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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines celebrates a fourth victory as 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' at the 'Group Leisure Awards 2013'

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines is celebrating being voted the '**Best Cruise Line for Groups**' for the fourth consecutive year by readers of leading travel title, *Group Leisure* magazine, at the prestigious 'Group Leisure Awards 2013'.

Having seen off competition from Norwegian Cruise Line, P&O Cruises and The River Cruise Line, Fred. Olsen was recognised at the special awards ceremony held in Birmingham on 18th September 2013. The award recognises

the very best groups cruise experience, from the initial booking process to onboard facilities, to the quality of excursions offered.

The awards were first established in 1997, and 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 glittering awards ceremony, which took place at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole, was attended by some of the top names in the travel industry. Awards were presented by *Group Leisure* magazine Editor, Rob Yandell, alongside special guest, former England rugby international and television presenter, Martin Bayfield.

Group Leisure magazine Editor, Rob Yandell, said:

“It’s great that the group travel industry can come together on this one night each year to celebrate the successes and achievements of so many individuals and companies, as recognised by the very people who use their services to arrange group trips and holidays every day.”

Ellie Fulcher, Group Sales Manager for Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

“This is the fourth year in a row that that we have been awarded the prestigious ‘Best Cruise Line for Groups’ by readers of *Group Leisure* magazine, and we would like to thank all the Group Travel Organisers who have travelled with us, supported us and voted for us – we are absolutely thrilled!

“At Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, we are very proud of the personalised service that we are able to offer to GTOs, which is reflected in our company ethos of ‘*It’s all about the people!*’ We provide tailor-made quotations to suit individual group requirements, and we are also able to offer visits to our ships, in UK ports, so that GTOs can see what we have to offer at first hand.”

Feedback from Fred. Olsen’s group guests has shown that they are very appreciative of the excellent value for money that a Fred. Olsen cruise offers, as – in addition to the special benefits offered to groups – the cruise price includes all meals and entertainment on board the ship, as well as port taxes.

Mr. John Everson, GTO for a party of 21 from Hinckley Social Theatre & Travel Club on *Balmoral's* ten-night 'Islands, Highlands & Ireland' cruise in July 2013, said of the Fred. Olsen experience:

"I know that all my party had a great time. I would recommend strongly all aspects of the Fred. Olsen service – from making the arrangements on board, to the post-cruise service – to any group looking to take a party to a number of different destinations of interest in one holiday."

Groups are welcome on all Fred. Olsen's cruises and, depending on the size of the group, they may be eligible for a choice of benefits, including:

- Group leaders travel free when they achieve their group passenger target, ranging from 10 to 20 guests (depending upon the chosen cruise)
- Free 'Welcome aboard' drinks party, with wine, sherry, soft drinks and cold canapés
- Funding towards coach transfers to and from the port or airport
- Free car parking at the port or airport
- Free onboard spending credit, ranging from £25 to £150 per person (this amount varies depending upon the chosen cruise)
- Free supporting promotional material provided
- Assistance with group promotional events

Larger groups will be pleased to know that there are no limits on the free places that they can earn. There are many extras that can also be arranged to make the experience even more special, such as group private Traditional Afternoon Tea, group dining plans, private use of public rooms on board for group activities, private group shore tours and priority disembarkation for groups travelling by coach.

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

Contacts



Ellis Orchard

Press Contact

Public Relations Manager

Public Relations

ellis.orchard@fredolsen.co.uk

07557672265



Georgina May

Press Contact

Public Relations Executive

Public Relations

georgina.may@fredolsen.co.uk