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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' fleet of three ships unite for celebrations in Madeira

A fiesta-style celebration marked the historic coming together of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' fleet of ships.

Bolette, *Borealis* and *Balmoral* united in Madeira, for the first time for the Fleet in Funchal event on Thursday 9th November.

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The three ships sailed into Funchal harbour carrying more than 3,000 guests who were welcomed by live music and a quayside decked out with bunting, entertainment and a plethora of carnival stalls.

Peter Deer, Managing Director of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, said:

“This year marks the 175th anniversary of Fred. Olsen’s start as a shipping company and we are thrilled that we have been able to bring our current fleet together for the first time – although it is the third time we have held fleet events with Bergen in 2015 and Cadiz in 2018.

“A huge thank you needs to go to the Ports of Madeira and our partners in the city for their incredibly warm welcome and for the phenomenal fireworks display as the three ships sailed away in the evening.

“Of course, our fleet events would not be possible without the wonderful teams working across Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, so a big thank you to all of them too.

“We hope that our guests thoroughly enjoyed an unforgettable experience with the Fleet in Funchal celebrations.”

Working with the Ports of Madeira and Madeira Tourism Board, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines put on a jam-packed programme of festivities and activities during the day.

Paula Cabaço, Madeira Port's CEO, said:

“For Madeira, it was an honour and a privilege to have had the opportunity to host the celebration of the first post-pandemic reunion of the Fred, Olsen Cruise Lines fleet in the port of Funchal.

“For the port of Funchal, it was an unprecedented and beautiful event, during which everything went smoothly and will certainly remain in our memory.

“This beautiful initiative promoted a unique synergy between the port and the city, with unique moments of interaction and celebration in which passengers and crew came into contact with the population and regional habits and customs.

“We believe this was a turning point and shows that the cruise industry is vigorous and working for the good of all.”

During the celebrations, guests could take part in a treasure hunt through the city before returning to the quayside to enjoy live music, dance performances from the ships' theatre companies, try delicious local culinary treats, sample Madeiran wine and cheer on the crew in the inter-ship Tug of War contest.

The entertainment continued with a hotly contested Battle of the Bartenders making cocktails and showcasing their flair for bottle juggling and were judged by a celebrity panel featuring *Loose Women's* Linda Robson, *Coronation Street's* Sue Cleaver, Keith Brymer Jones from *The Great Pottery Throw Down* and Radhe Sivyer from *Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker*.

Captain Rommel Pineda, Master of *Borealis*, who has been with Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines for more than 25 years, said:

“Fleet in Funchal was a magnificent coming together of our fleet of smaller-sized ships and an event that special for both guests and crew alike.

“At every point, whether it was along the quayside or on board the ships, there were smiling faces enjoying the festival-style celebrations.

“I am incredibly proud to be part of the Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines family and

how we put 175 years of experience into every single day for our guests.”

Guests also had the rare opportunity to visit all three Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines ships throughout the day, with many taking advantage of the chance to meet up with friends or their favourite crew members, and experience the entire fleet for themselves.

Throughout the day, guests were invited to pay a £1 donation towards activities with all money collected – an impressive £15,000 – raised on behalf of the RNLI.

The event culminated in all ships departing from Funchal with a tugboat spraying its water cannons, while guests enjoyed a sail away party on the deck of each ship and a breathtaking firework display from the port.

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