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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines voted 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' at the 'Group Leisure Awards 2016', for a record sixth time!

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines has once again triumphed at the '*Group Leisure Awards*', after being voted '**Best Cruise Line for Groups**' by readers of leading travel title, *Group Leisure* magazine, for a record sixth time! The prestigious award recognises the very best groups cruise experience, from the initial booking process to onboard facilities, and the quality of excursions on offer.

Fred. Olsen was recognised at a special awards ceremony at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel on 19th October 2016, and beat off stiff competition from other finalists Hurtigruten, Norwegian Cruise Line, The

River Cruise Line and Thomson Cruises.

The 'Group Leisure 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.

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

“It is such an honour to have been voted 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' at this year's 'Group Leisure Awards'; it is an excellent publication and we are very proud to be associated with it.

“We are so thrilled that our efforts have been recognised in this significant way, and we would like to pass on our sincere thanks to all those who selected us! We have had a fantastic year, with our portfolio of group travel organisers and their groups growing and becoming more varied, as well as an exciting expansion of our team, with Hayley Walker joining us as **Sales Assistant – Groups** in February 2016.

“We are committed to offering our groups the very best, tailor-made cruise experience, and this is thanks to the tremendous efforts of our colleagues shoreside and the Officers and crew across our fleet, who all work extremely hard to provide the very best service for our groups. We are looking forward to a successful and exciting 2017/18 cruise season!”

Feedback from Fred. Olsen's group guests has shown that the intimate and very welcoming atmosphere on board *Balmoral*, *Braemar*, *Boudicca* and *Black Watch* is very well-suited to the groups travel market, as well as the excellent value for money that a Fred. Olsen cruise offers. Groups receive so much included in the price of their cruise fare – all meals and entertainment on board the ship, as well as port taxes, and the opportunity to upgrade to the 'all-inclusive' drinks package from just £10 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.

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.

During its 2017/18 cruise season, Fred. Olsen will be setting sail from 10 regional ports around the UK – Southampton, Dover, London Tilbury, Harwich, Falmouth, Liverpool, Newcastle, Greenock (Glasgow), Rosyth (Edinburgh) and Belfast – taking guests to no fewer than 220 destinations in 70 countries around the globe.

This '*Group Leisure Award*' follows hot on the heels of Fred. Olsen's recent success in the Cruise Critic 'UK Editors' Picks Awards 2016', where the cruise line was delighted to be voted '**Best Cruise Line for Itineraries**', for the second successive year.

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

Photo caption:

Harold Burke of 'Just for Groups!' (far left), sponsor of the 'Best Cruise Line for Groups' category, presents Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines' Ellie Fulcher, Sales Manager – Groups (third from right), Sophie Thomas, Sales Executive – Groups (second from left), and Hayley Walker, Sales Assistant – Groups (third from left) with the coveted winner's trophy at the '*Group Leisure Awards 2016*' at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel on 19th October 2016, alongside special guests Anton Du Beke and Erin Boag, from the BBC's hit show, 'Strictly Come Dancing'.

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for

a more personal cruising experience.

Contacts



Ellis Barker

Press Contact

Public Relations Executive

Public Relations

ellis.barker@fredolsen.co.uk

+44 (0) 1473 292237