

# PRESS STATEMENT

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## ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT WELCOMES FIRST PASSENGER VESSEL SINCE PANDEMIC PAUSE



**[St. John's, Antigua – July 15, 2021]** — Let the sailing begin! Antigua Cruise Port welcomed the Star Breeze, its first passenger cruise ship since March 14, 2020, to the country today. The luxurious all-suite vessel, which is a part of the Windstar Cruises fleet, will make one call in St. John's and the other in Falmouth to mark its visit. All 250 passengers aboard the ship and its crew have been fully vaccinated.

Dona Regis-Prosper, General Manager at Antigua Cruise Port, shared her excitement about the official restart of the local cruise industry. “Nothing could have given me greater joy today than the sight of the Star Breeze pulling into the port! We are absolutely thrilled to welcome this fabulous yacht-style cruise ship and its passengers and crew to Antigua & Barbuda.”

She noted that, “In recent weeks, we have been in many discussions with the Windstar Cruises team and the government to determine how to make this trip, and voyages to come, as safe and successful as possible for everyone involved. Given the fact that the threat of COVID-19 is still very real, the cruise line has advised that as a cautionary measure, only passengers taking organized tours will be allowed to disembark. These tours, which have been approved after weeks of planning and consultation. We have also arranged several escorted private tours with the merchants at Heritage Quay.”

Mrs. Regis-Prosper thanked The Hon. Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism & Investment, and his team, and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas, and the entire team at the Ministry of Health for their constant support and collaboration. “This momentous occasion has truly been a long time coming, and it would not have been possible without the collaboration and involvement of so many partners. We are grateful for the confidence that the Windstar Cruises team has demonstrated in our port and our destination by choosing Antigua & Barbuda as one of the exclusive destinations for this sailing. In addition to our government partners, I would like to thank our taxi association, tour operators, the entire business community, and all sectors who came together to make this day a success.”

She added that, “The safety of the passengers, crew, and of course, our community, is paramount, so while we are doing everything we can to bring the business back to our shores, we need everyone to continue to stick with the COVID-19 safety protocols to keep us all protected. The fact that cruise ships are coming back to our shores speaks to the level of dedication and hard work that many have put into this process over the last year and a half. While a full rebound will certainly take time, it is important to mark the significance of this occasion and to note that we, as the service providers, have a major hand in helping to keep the ships coming. Let’s do all we can, as a nation and as individuals, to support this effort toward our collective success.”

Antigua Cruise Port will welcome the ultra-luxurious Seabourn Odyssey on July 20, 2021.

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## ABOUT ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

Located In St. John's harbor, Antigua Cruise Port is the gateway to the city, serving over 800,000 passengers annually. The port will be redeveloped under the Antigua Cruise Port Development Project through a 30-year lease agreement between the Government of Antigua & Barbuda and Global Ports Holding. The newest pier constructed at the port, which was completed in November 2020, can accommodate Oasis Class vessels, making it possible for the destination to serve as many as 1 million cruise passengers per year. The new port will also have brand-new retail and food and beverage facilities, plus an additional 50,000 sq. ft. of commercial space to be leased to Antiguan and Barbudans.

Antigua Cruise Port launched operations in October 2019. Learn more about Antigua Cruise Port at [www.antiguacruiseport.com](http://www.antiguacruiseport.com).