

PRESS RELEASE

St. Maarten, 11.01.2017

Port St. Maarten attends Cruise World at Dutch Vakantie Beurs. Working to attract Luxury Cruise Lines

January 11, 2017 – UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS – Port St. Maarten in collaboration with SXM Airport and local stakeholders are currently in the Netherlands attending the 47th edition of the Dutch Vakantie Beurs Utrecht (Tourism and Leisure Fair), considered the trade show for the Dutch travel industry.

The Vakantie Beurs is being held from January 11-15, 2017 at the Convention Center in the Dutch city of Utrecht and the port has its destination promotion booth in the Caribbean Village.

Dutch and European consumers started to converge on the tourism and leisure fair as of Wednesday and this will continue up to Sunday. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the trade fair. The first fair was in 1917 based on the initiative of the Utrecht branch of the Association Nederlandsch Fabrikaat. The first trade fair attracted 150,000 visitors, and today it caters to approximately 2.5 million visitors a year.

Port St. Maarten took the lead once again as it did in January 2016 to make sure that the destination had representation at the trade show in the Netherlands in order to promote and drive business to the island from the Dutch and European market. The port and SXM Airport are supporting each other at the 2017 fair.

Port St. Maarten has committed itself to attend five editions of the trade fair over the next few years. The objective is to connect with luxury cruise lines in order to further expand the cruise sector with passengers who have a higher disposable income and spend more while visiting a destination.

In November Port St. Maarten took the lead in inviting travel professionals such as Travel agents/Tour operators to attend the Dutch Vakantie Beurs and be part of the port's destination promotion booth. The aforementioned stakeholders are essential in creating travel experiences as they can engage with clients and help them plan that perfect stay-over or cruise.

Sint Maarten's Minister Plenipotentiary visited the booth to show support and was very pleased with the design and support team in attendance.

Discussions have already been held with Air Berlin representatives regarding possible collaboration with certain cruise lines in order to further enhance homeporting services.

Port St. Maarten is moving full speed ahead in establishing itself as a homeport destination in the north eastern Caribbean catering to small and medium size vessels as well as the high-end market of the luxury cruise sector. The homeporting business will translate into a significant positive impact on the country's economy with spinoffs to the majority of business sectors.

Cruise lines such as Seabourn that caters to luxury cruising participates in tourism travel fairs such as Vakantie

Beurs Utrecht. Seabourn Encore will be making its inaugural call to the destination in March. Holland America Line (HAL) also has a presence at the fair. Back in November Port St. Maarten welcomed HAL's latest and largest ship in its fleet, the ms Koningsdam. HAL caters to European travelers and is widely recognized as a leader in the premium segment of the cruise industry. A number of HAL vessels call at Port St. Maarten.

22 cruise lines, river cruises and travel operators have a presence at the Vakantie Beurs under the Cruise Worldwide Pavilion. The Dutch branch of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is also a participant at the fair. Various personal stories of past cruisers were highlighted in the cruise world hall in an effort to increase the number of Dutch people taking a cruise.

Additional discussions have also taken place with European cruise line executives who are also taking part in the fair.

Vakantie Beurs Utrecht is the perfect opportunity to connect the thousands of travelers that visit the tourism and leisure fair every January with a vacation experience, and travel agents are the ambassadors.

Vakantie Beurs Utrecht caters to business to business and business to consumers. More Dutch travelers are becoming aware of cruises, and the St. Maarten cruise brand is the largest and most developed cruise port in the Dutch Kingdom.

In 2016, approximately 121,593 visited the Vakantie Beurs. This expo fits into the port's destination strategy to infiltrate the European Union tourist market.



PHOTO OUTLINE: Ariana Rivers (L) and Ichel Moeslika (R) of Port St. Maarten at the HAL pavilion.

For further questions, please contact: comments@portofstmaarten.com