

## **ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S *INDEPENDENCE OF THE SEAS* ARRIVES IN SOUTHAMPTON FOLLOWING HER MULTI-MILLION POUND MAKEOVER**

Each ship visit worth an estimated £2m to local Southampton economy- totalling a whopping £44million a year

London, UK, 12th May 2018 – *Independence of the Seas*, voted the UK's favourite cruise ship\*, and one of the Royal Caribbean International fleet, arrived today at her new home in Southampton, amped up with all new experiences and boasting even more extraordinary features after her amazing, family-focused multi-million pound makeover.

Dubbed 'the ultimate family ship', *Independence of the Seas* has an array of stunning new features to delight kids and adults alike. For the first time ever, guests can hop into the Sky Pad, an out-of-this-world new virtual reality bungee trampoline experience, and splash away their days at interactive aqua park, Splashaway Bay, which is bigger and better than ever before.

The reimagined ship also includes a host of other new features:

- The Perfect Storm, a duo of racing waterslides called Cyclone and Typhoon.
- Glow-in-the-dark laser tag, an experience in Studio B unlike any other, where friends and family can team up to play "Battle for Planet Z".
- Puzzle Break, a new escape room experience where competitors can put their minds to the test, working together to find hidden clues and solve a series of high-tech riddles to unravel a mystery. With only 60 minutes of play, the excitement builds with each tick of the clock.\*\*
- Breathtakingly beautiful new lounges and Panoramic Oceanview staterooms adds an extra bit of extraordinary to *Independence*. With stunning wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling views, guests can soak up the feeling of standing on the bridge of the ship and watching the sunset over the coastline, all from the privacy of their own stateroom.
- Playmakers Sports Bar & Arcade, enables sports fans to enjoy all the biggest live sporting events over ice-cold beers, wings, sliders and more.
- Izumi Hibachi & Sushi, the exotic Asian-inspired dining experience gives guests the chance to enjoy fresh sushi and experience skilled chefs cooking tableside on teppanyaki grills.
- Fish & Ships, a poolside eatery where guests can grab quintessentially British seaside treats.

- Sugar Beach candy shop, a wondrous world of delicious delights, along with a few exciting surprises.

The icing on the cake is that all this can now be enjoyed by UK holiday makers with the added convenience of sailing from Southampton.

A real gem in Royal Caribbean International's fleet of 25 ships, her return will not only add innovation, but also investment to the area, as each ship visit is worth an estimated £2million to the local economy - totalling a whopping £44million a year.

Managing Director, Royal Caribbean International UK and Ireland, Ben Bouldin said "Holiday time is precious, and travellers today have higher expectations and more options than ever before. We don't just want to meet these expectations, but smash them and redefine how to holiday. From our largest yet hibachi restaurant to a virtual reality bungee trampoline experience, *Independence of the Seas* is set to be the most spectacular ship sailing out of Southampton this coming season."

Guests will be welcomed onboard for her first new sailing on 15th May 2018 where she will embark on a two-night cruise to Paris from Southampton. Guests can dabble in modern art at the fabulous Musée d'Orsay, explore the Normandy coast, visit glorious Versailles or take in iconic sights such as the Paris Opera, Notre Dame, the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower.

Following her inaugural sailing, *Independence of the Seas* will call at destinations across Europe and the Mediterranean until November 2018.

*Independence* spans 15 decks, encompasses 154,407 gross registered tons, carries 3,858 guests at double occupancy and features 1,929 staterooms.

\*As voted in a survey of over 1,000 participants conducted 21-23 June 2017

\*\*Surcharge applies to Escape Room: *The Observatory*

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**About Royal Caribbean:**

[Royal Caribbean International](#) is an award-winning global cruise brand with a 49-year legacy of innovation and introducing industry “firsts” never before seen at sea. The cruise line features an expansive and unmatched array of features and amenities only found on Royal Caribbean, including jaw-dropping, West-End style entertainment and industry-acclaimed programming that appeals to families and adventurous holidaymakers alike. Onboard, guests are catered to with the cruise line’s world-renowned friendly and engaging service by every staff and crew member.

Even more, UK consumers and travel agents think we’re doing great things... in 2017, Royal Caribbean won over 40 national and international awards including "Best in Cruise " in the Sun Travel Awards, "Best Cruise Line for Entertainment" and "Best Cruise Line for Suites" in the Cruise Critic UK Editor's Picks, “Cruise Line of the Year 2017” in the Virgin Holidays Travel Awards and “Best Mainstream Cruise Company” in the Globe Travel Awards.

The cruise line sails 25 of the world’s most innovative cruise ships to the most popular destinations in Bermuda and the Caribbean, Europe, Canada and New England, Alaska, South America, Asia, and Australia and New Zealand.

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