

**FIRST EVER ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL SHIP TO BE BASED
YEAR-ROUND IN UK**

***Independence of the Seas* to home port in Southampton year round from April 2010
delivering over £50 million to the local economy**

LONDON, 23 April – As the world's largest cruise ship, *Independence of the Seas*, returns to the UK for its second season based from Southampton on 25 April 2009, owners Royal Caribbean International announce that the ship will be based year round from the port in 2010. The development will see Royal Caribbean International generate a massive £50 million in terms of knock-on economic impact on the Southampton area ⁽¹⁾.

Independence of the Seas will be the first ever Royal Caribbean International ship to be based year-round from the UK and will remain the largest and most innovative ship sailing in Europe.

Robin Shaw, vice president and managing director, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, UK and Ireland explained:

“Royal Caribbean International is committed to continuing to grow its presence in the British and Irish markets. When *Independence of the Seas* first sailed from the UK it was one of the best performing ships in the fleet. The 2009 return of the ship has been equally successful due to the fantastic array of activity, entertainment and facilities onboard, and the enormous support we receive from our trade partners. It is great news that *Independence of the Seas* will call Southampton home for the long term and means that we firmly cement our position as one of the leading players in the UK cruise industry.”

Royal Caribbean International first based a ship from Southampton in 2005, the 2,076-guest *Legend of the Seas*. After two summer seasons from the port, Royal Caribbean International introduced the 3,114-guest *Navigator of the Seas* for one year in summer 2007. *Navigator of the Seas* was replaced in summer 2008 when the 3,600-guest *Independence of the Seas* launched in Southampton and became the first new Royal Caribbean International ship to operate its inaugural season from this port. Operating at maximum capacity, *Independence of the Seas* can carry up to 4,300 guests.

The first ever winter 2010 season of Royal Caribbean International's *Independence of the Seas* will go on sale on 1 June 2009. Royal Caribbean International will be supporting the push with a major trade and consumer marketing campaign, as well as dedicated point of sale materials for agents.

Winter cruises in 2010 and 2011 will include romantic destinations along the Italian Riviera, amazing island visits in the Sorrentine Peninsula on the south side of the Gulf of Naples, as well as the Balearic Islands, these cruises range from 11-to 18-nights in duration. Prices for an 11-night Winter Sun cruise to the Canary Islands start from £799 per person based on two sharing an inside stateroom or an 18-night Mediterranean Cities cruise visiting historic coastal towns from £999 per person based on two sharing an inside stateroom.

Traditionally, Royal Caribbean International ships have only operated the summer season (April until October) in Europe and the Mediterranean. In 2008, *Brilliance of the Seas* became the first ship in the fleet to operate year round in the Mediterranean from the homeport of Barcelona.

Currently one of the largest in-class of cruise ship in the world, *Independence of the Seas* is longer than three and half football pitches and is unlike any other to have operated in UK waters in terms of both its size and onboard facilities. If standing upright on its bow it would dwarf the UK's tallest building, London's One Canada Square at Canary Wharf (771 feet tall).

Featuring an onboard ice rink, rock climbing wall, surfing simulator and a 'street' packed with shops, restaurants and bars that is longer than the pitch at the new Wembley stadium, *Independence of the Seas* is an action-packed floating resort.

Royal Caribbean International is a global cruise brand with 20 ships currently in service and two under construction. The line also offers unique cruisetour vacations in Alaska, Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, South America and New Zealand. For additional information or to make reservations, call your travel agent, visit www.royalcaribbean.com or call (800) ROYAL-CARIBBEAN. Travel professionals should go to www.cruisingpower.com or call (800) 327-2056.

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Notes to Editor:

⁽¹⁾ The Southampton Cruise Tourism report states that each passenger that joins a cruise ship via the port of Southampton generates £380 for the local economy. It is currently estimated that Independence of the Seas will offer at least 36 sailings per year, with over 3,600 guests per sailing.

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