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**TRINIDAD WELCOMES THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST CRUISE SHIP OF THE
2023-2024 SEASON**

Port of Spain, October 12th, 2023: Trinidad and Tobago has welcomed the first cruise ship for the 2023-2024 cruise season. The vessel, Seabourn Pursuit, which has a passenger capacity of 298 and was launched in February 2023, made its inaugural visit to Port of Spain on October 11th, kicking off what promises to be a bumper season of cruise tourism with over 200,000 tourists expected across both islands.

Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Senator the Honourable Randall Mitchell, expressed his enthusiasm for the start of the season, highlighting its positive impact on the economy.

He stated, "The arrival of the Seabourn Pursuit and the commencement of our 2023-2024 cruise season will have many positive effects for Trinidad and Tobago. Between Trinidad and Tobago ports we have seen a 51% increase in cruise passenger arrivals with several vessels and lines visiting for the first time. During the last season, we saw an average visitor spend of \$43 US dollars per person, and we anticipate this season will further boost our local businesses and communities. This growth in cruise calls and tourist arrivals serve to underscore the confidence cruise lines have in our destination and the enduring appeal of our offerings."

Tourism Trinidad CEO Carla Cupid also shared her thoughts, saying, "We are delighted to welcome Seabourn Pursuit and all cruise visitors to our shores as we embark on this new season. This is an important milestone, and we are prepared to provide exceptional experiences that showcase the best of Trinidad's natural beauty and cultural richness."

This season holds special significance as it follows an assessment conducted by the renowned Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence at the end of the previous season (2022-2023). The findings from this assessment informed Tourism Trinidad Limited's efforts to enhance the cruise activity in Trinidad and Tobago, ensuring that the country meets and exceeds the expectations of our valued guests.

Seabourn is one of five new cruise lines that will be visiting during this season, including Ex Polaris, Victoria Cruises, Silver Seas Cruises, and Salen Ship Management Company. Seabourn Pursuit's first visit to Trinidad sees it travelling with passengers from 13 countries with the largest contingents being from the US, UK and Canada.

Passengers eagerly booked tours to Paramin, Caroni Swamp, Mt. St. Benedict and Angostura, with the largest tour destined to Paramin.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, in collaboration with Tourism Trinidad, will embark on a rigorous data collection exercise during the cruise season. The initiative aims to better understand tourist behaviour, determine visitor spend, ensure proper resource allocation, and continually improve the visitor experience, reinforcing Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

Port of Spain will see the largest ever vessel to call at the Port of Port Spain, as the MSC Seaside is expected to dock on December 14th, with a capacity of 5,119 passengers and 1,413 crew.

As we welcome the Seabourn Pursuit and the start of the 2023-2024 cruise season, we look forward to the formal opening of the season on November 14th with the arrival of the Ruby Princess of the Princess Cruises line.

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