

NEWS CALMAC FORCED TO RING CHANGES

SUN PRINCESS
CRUISE
FOCUS

Ships

MONTHLY

DECEMBER 2024 • £4.99
www.shipsmonthly.com

FAREWELL BRETAGNE

**LAST CROSSING
FOR BRITTANY
FERRIES'
STALWART**

**BELFAST
CARGO
CALLERS
MARITIME
MOSAIC**



**NAVAL
HERITAGE
HMS CENTAUR**

SHIPSPOTTING WARSHIPS OF THE GERMAN NAVY

CALMAC Caledonian Isles at 30



CLAN LINE Wartime workers



SHIPBUILDING Meyer Werft



HERE COMES THE **SUN PRINCESS**

Princess Cruises' new flagship

Sun Princess, the latest addition to the Princess Cruises fleet, made her debut in September.

Completed by Fincantieri in Monfalcone, Italy, the new 177,882gt Bermuda-registered Sphere class ship and can accommodate between 4,320 and 5,189 passengers across 20 decks.

Since her completion, she has undertaken several itineraries. Her maiden voyage began on 31 August, departing Civitavecchia-Rome and she called at Cadiz, before arriving in Southampton on 23 September. This 23-day

The new Sphere class cruise ship Sun Princess made her debut at Southampton in September prior to an inaugural season which took in the Mediterranean, followed by a repositioning to Port Everglades and the Caribbean. Alan Moorhouse reviews this significant ship, three decades after he cruised on the earlier ship of the same name.

journey included stops in Naples, Santorini, Istanbul, Mykonos and Athens, and several other Mediterranean ports. She next completed a series of cruises, including a 16-day voyage from Southampton to Fort Lauderdale, departing the UK on 23 September.

She made a delayed arrival in Fort Lauderdale on 11 October due to Hurricane Milton. Her winter inaugural eastern and western Caribbean season includes itineraries taking in Princess Cays, Turks and Caicos Islands, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Belize, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

► Sun Princess departs Southampton on 23 September. Externally, she has a fairly traditional profile, with an all-white hull and the Princess 'sea witch' logo. MARITIME PHOTOGRAPHIC



Sun Princess has been in the planning since before the pandemic, with contracts being signed on 27 March 2019 between Italian builders Fincantieri and Princess Cruises, a company founded in 1965 by Canadian-born Stanley Macdonald. The company was subsequently acquired by P&O and now, under the Carnival Corporation umbrella, has 22,000 employees from 57 different countries. It is based in Santa Clarita, California and headed by John Padgett.

The first steel for *Sun Princess* was cut in 2021 and the ship was floated out on 8 March 2023. Costing approximately US\$1 billion, she is the first of two Sphere class ships, and is set to be followed by *Star Princess* next year. Following her completion, trials were undertaken in the Adriatic in December 2023 and January 2024, and delivery of the dual-fuelled (LNG/MGO) ship took place from Fincantieri on 28 February 2024. She was named by actress Hannah Waddingham on 23 April 2024 at Barcelona.

Sun Princess has a cruising speed of 22 knots and is powered by two azipod propulsion systems that provide both forward and reverse thrust. Additionally, she has four controllable pitch thrusters for enhanced manoeuvrability. The dual-fuel (LNG/MGO) Wärtsilä engines emit lower levels of CO₂ and sulphur dioxide compared to previous ships. As a result, *Sun Princess* requires fewer emission reduction scrubber facilities.

The LNG use does, however, require more purpose-built storage provision, and two 70,000ft³ tanks are needed. The ship also has advanced hull coating and air lubrication systems, producing bubbles to allow smoother passage through the water.

Sun Princess also features many eco-friendly technologies, including food waste digesters, desalination plants, reverse osmosis systems for fresh water, and LED lighting. Additionally, she has two shore power connections to reduce emissions when docked. The crew numbers 1,550.

Robert Tillberg of Hoganas, Sweden, part of the Viken Group, designed the main

THE THREE PRINCESSES



▲ The first *Sun Princess* pictured in 1983. She was well known as *Flamenco*, operated by Festival Cruises. TONY MARTIN/SHIPSPOTTING.COM

■ There have been three ships named *Sun Princess*. The first was launched in 1972 and was operated served under the name from 1974 until 1988. The 17,042gt ship was built as *Spirit of London* and famously featured in the TV series as the *Love Boat*. Originally named *Seaward*, she later operated as *Starship Majestic*, *Southern Cross*, *Flamenco* and *Ocean Dream*. As *Ocean Dream*, she sank off the coast of Laem Chebang Port in Thailand on 27 February 2016 and was scrapped in situ.

■ The second *Sun Princess*, which could carry up to 2,000

passengers, was launched in 1995 and served under the name until 2020. The Monfalcone-built vessel became *Pacific World* for the Peaceboat operation. The 77,499gt ship was the lead ship in the new *Sun* class, and at the time of her construction was one of the largest cruise ships in the world. Her sisterships were *Dawn Princess* (now *Pacific Explorer*), *Sea Princess* (now *Dream Charming*) and *Ocean Princess* (now *Queen of the Oceans*).

■ The third *Sun Princess*, the largest of that name at 177,882gt, was launched in 2023, and entered service in 2024.



The 1995-built *Sun Princess* at Freemantle. She left the *Princess* fleet in 2020. SHIPSPOTTING.COM

concepts for the new *Sun Princess* under the direction of Fredrik Johansson. Tillberg and Johansson are established cruise ship designers with a history dating back to 1964. The ship's interior also features work by designer Jeffrey Beers.

The ship's key focal points include the *Dome*, the *Piazza*, and the *Princess Arena*. The *Dome* is an enclosed 9,500ft² venue with a glass-domed roof inspired by the tiered

landscapes of Santorini. During the day, it houses pools, transforming into an entertainment area with a stage at night. The multi-level *Piazza* serves as the ship's central public area and features a three-deck LED screen. The *Princess Arena* is the main entertainment venue, with a circular layout and centrally located stage, accommodating up to 900 guests. It features LED lighting and modern art,

SUN PRINCESS

| |
|--|
| BUILT Fincantieri, Monfalcone, Italy (hull no.6310) |
| ORDERED 7.2018, first steel cut 9.2021, delivered 14.2.2004 |
| TONNAGE 177,882gt |
| DIMENSIONS 345m by 47m |
| PASSENGERS 4,320/5,189, crew 1,550 |
| STATEROOMS 2,157 (51 accessible); 16 public decks |
| MACHINERY Dual-fuel LNG-powered, two forward and backwards Azimuth pod propulsion systems, four bow thrusters, speed 22 knots |
| NAMED Hannah Waddingham Barcelona April 23rd 2024 |
| COST \$1 billion |
| REGISTERED Hamilton, Bermuda |
| SISTERSHIP Star Princess due 2025 |

Sun Princess fitting out at Fincantieri shipyard in Monfalcone in June 2023. LAPPINO/SHIPSPOTTING.COM



including a sculptural piece spanning Decks 6 through 8.

Some Caribbean ports visited by the new *Sun Princess* are the same as those which her 1995-built predecessor called at. However, time has seen growth and development in terms of facilities and the ability to accommodate larger ships, more ships and a greater number of visitors. Cozumel in Mexico is a typical example, now offering excursions and visits to the historic Maya ruins of Tulum on the Mexican Yucatan peninsula, and cultural experiences on Isla Cozumel itself. Having

departed Europe for the winter, Sun Princess will return to the Mediterranean in the spring of 2025, with a departure from Barcelona planned for 5 April.

THE PRINCESS BRAND

Almost 60 years since the introduction of Princess Cruises' first ship, *Princess Patricia* (5,611gt, built by Fairfield in 1949), the ships in the current Princess fleet total 16 vessels, cruising worldwide. They include five Fincantieri-built Grand class ships (*Grand Princess*, *Caribbean Princess*, *Crown Princess*, *Emerald*

Princess, and *Ruby Princess*); two Mitsubishi, Japan-built Grand class ships (*Diamond Princess* and *Sapphire Princess*); two St Nazaire, France-built Coral class ships (*Coral Princess* and *Island Princess*); six Fincantieri, Monfalcone-built Royal class ships (*Royal Princess*, *Regal Princess*, *Majestic Princess*, *Sky Princess*, *Enchanted Princess* and *Discovery Princess*); and most recently, *Sun Princess*, the first of a pair of Sphere class ships.

In 1995, while navigating the Caribbean, the earlier *Sun Princess* was accompanied by some great ocean liners of

the past, including *Norway* (ex-*France*), *OceanBreeze* (ex-*Southern Cross*), *Regal Empress* (ex-*Olympia*); and *SeaBreeze* (ex-*Federico Costa*).

In the 21st century the new considerably larger, 177,282gt *Sun Princess* shares the seas with modern day giants that are considerably different from those of the 1980s and 1990s. They include mega ships such as *Icon of the Seas*, *Carnival Celebration*, *Disney Dream*, *MSC Seashore* and *Norwegian Getaway*, which, in terms of size and passenger accommodation, dwarf those of previous generations. They



The 2004-built Sapphire Princess outward bound from Southampton, September 2019. ANDREW COOKE

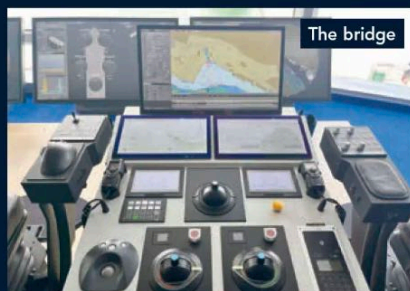


The 2022-built Enchanted Princess is one of Princess' latest ships.

PRINCESS CRUISES CURRENT FLEET

| BUILT | BUILT | GT | DIMENSIONS | PAX | CREW |
|---|-------|---------|--------------|-------|-------|
| CORAL CLASS | | | | | |
| Coral Princess | 2002 | 91,627 | 294m x 32.2m | 1,974 | 900 |
| Island Princess | 2003 | 91,627 | 294m x 32.2m | 1,974 | 900 |
| GRAND CLASS | | | | | |
| Grand Princess | 1998 | 107,517 | 289m x 36m | 2,602 | 1,150 |
| Diamond Princess | 2004 | 115,875 | 290m x 37.5m | 2,674 | 1,238 |
| Sapphire Princess | 2004 | 115,875 | 290m x 37.5m | 2,674 | 1,250 |
| Caribbean Princess | 2004 | 112,894 | 290m x 36m | 3,114 | 1,163 |
| Crown Princess | 2006 | 113,561 | 290m x 36m | 3,114 | 1,557 |
| Emerald Princess | 2007 | 113,561 | 290m x 36m | 3,114 | 1,200 |
| Ruby Princess | 2008 | 113,561 | 290m x 36m | 3,114 | 1,200 |
| ROYAL CLASS | | | | | |
| Royal Princess | 2013 | 142,229 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Regal Princess | 2014 | 142,229 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Majestic Princess | 2017 | 144,216 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Sky Princess | 2019 | 145,281 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Enchanted Princess | 2022 | 145,281 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Discovery Princess | 2022 | 145,281 | 330m x 38.4m | 3,560 | 1,346 |
| Plus Sphere class comprising Sun Princess (2024) and Star Princess (2025) | | | | | |

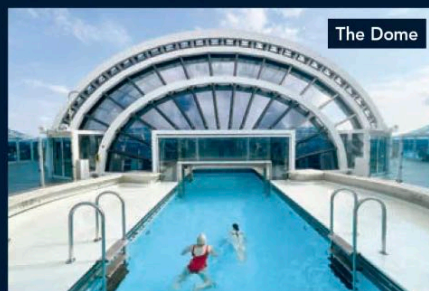
ON BOARD SUN PRINCESS



The bridge



Horizons Restaurant



The Dome

■ One of the standout features of Sun Princess is The Dome, a glass-enclosed structure, which is used as a pool area by day and an entertainment venue by night, hosting acrobatic performances in partnership with Cirque Éloize.

■ The Princess Arena is said to be the most technologically advanced theatre in the Princess fleet

■ The dining options include collaborations with famous chefs. The public areas are on decks 4 to 21, excluding the number 13.

■ Passengers are accommodated in 2,162 staterooms on decks 5, 6, 9 and 10 through to 16, and part

of deck 17, with 70 per cent having balconies; provision is made for wheelchair accessible cabins.

■ The ship introduces a new Signature suite class of stateroom.

■ Deck 4 comprises the main laundry and ship's Medical Centre.

■ Decks 5 and 6 feature the Lotus Spa wellness centre.

■ On Deck 7 are the Crown Grill (steakhouse), Horizons Dining Room (also deck 6 and 8), Signature Restaurant, and Reserve Collection Restaurant. This deck also includes the Gelateria, O'Malleys (Irish themed pub), Wheelhouse Bar, Princess Live Lounge and the

Princess retail outlets. The Good Spirits venue hosts afternoon teas.

■ Deck 7 also features the lower section of the three-deck Princess Arena, and the Piazza, the focal point of the ship, with 360 degree outward looking views.

■ Deck 8 hosts the Princess Casino, Crooners, Kai Sushi (seafood), Sabatinis (Italian), and the Wake View Terrace.

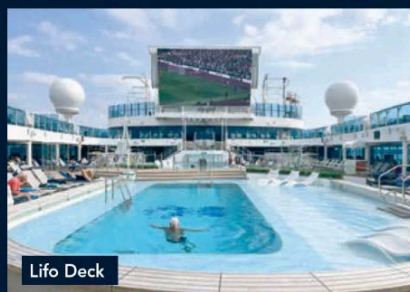
■ The Piazza rises up through Deck 9, where the al fresco Alfredos Pizzeria, International Cafe and the World Fresh Marketplace can be found along the promenade. The dining venues

offer reservable, traditional and walk-in dining options.

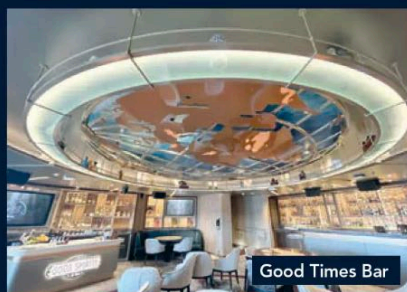
■ The upper public areas start on Deck 16, with the Sea View Terrace, and Deck 17, which includes the two-tier glazed roofed circular Dome entertainment space; Casaca Bar; Lido pool; grill and Jacuzzis.

■ The Dome rises up to Deck 18 and also hosts the Sun Bar, Fitness Center, the Sanctuary, and Sun deck.

■ Decks 19, 20 and 21 feature Park 19 leisure activities, including relaxation areas, a jogging track, water activities, gliding and climbing, a games arena and children's adventure facilities.



Lido Deck



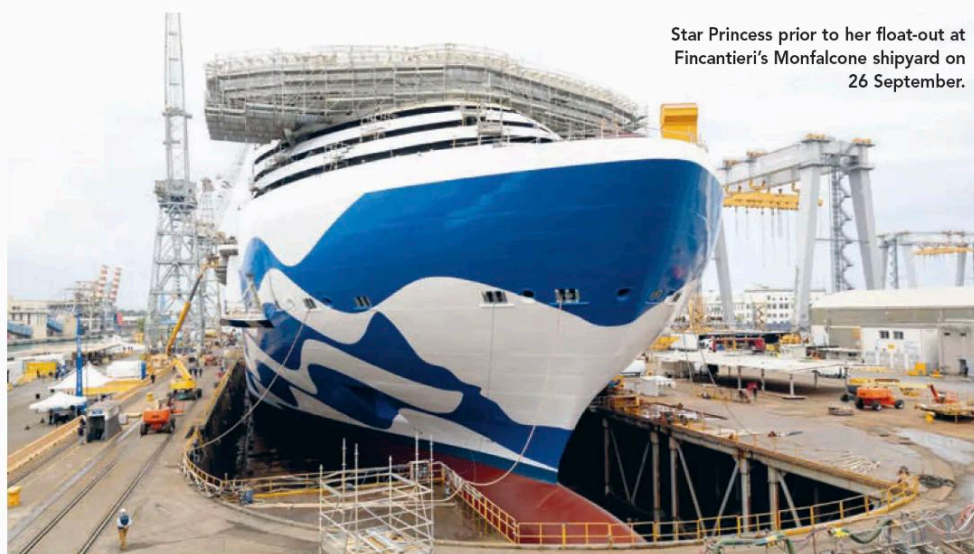
Good Times Bar



The Dome

also incorporate cutting edge technological developments, particularly in terms of fuel efficiency, power generation and manoeuvrability.

Sun Princess, the new Princess flagship, is the largest ship in the Princess Cruises fleet and the largest Italian-built cruise ship to date. She will undertake worldwide cruising for the key Princess brand in the Carnival stable, with an anticipated life of at least the 25 years achieved by both her namesake predecessors. She will also be at the forefront of the post-Covid recovery and growth pursued by Princess Cruises, Carnival and the industry as a whole. **SM**



Star Princess prior to her float-out at Fincantieri's Monfalcone shipyard on 26 September.

ON BOARD PHOTOS BY DONNA COOKE