

CS AIDAdiva ship on maiden call to Port Sultan Qaboos

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MUSCAT -- The CS AIDAdiva ship is on her maiden port call to Port Sultan Qaboos. AIDAdiva, which arrived here yesterday, is a 2007 built new generation of AIDA Cruises fleet. According to a press release issued by the Khimji Ramdas Shipping LLC, the ship is built at a cost around Euro 315 million and is full of innovative concepts, offering accommodation for 2,050 guests. Over two thirds of all outside cabins of the ship have balconies. New elements such as Theatrium, the retractable glass roof and the world's largest floating wellness area on board AIDAdiva make her unique of her class.

According to the release, the Sultanate is set to receive 50 per cent increase in tourist traffic arriving on cruise ships this winter as Costa Cruises, Italy and AIDA Cruises, Germany (both belonging to the Italian Group Costa Crociere SpA) have decided to position three of their vessels in the Middle East. Oman will receive in excess of 1,65,000 tourists during this winter on these three cruise vessels alone. The tourists who are visiting Oman on the cruise vessels will get a glimpse of Oman due to short port stay. As per the information received from the vessels, most of the passengers return to Oman for an extended period of stay.

Costa Cruises, Italy and AIDA Cruises, Germany are the first to schedule itineraries since 2006 intended for an international clientele with departures out of the Middle East, which is easily accessible from Europe and renowned for its fine, sunny weather and mild winter. The Middle East based cruises will be offered throughout the 2008-2009 winter season by three ships belonging to the Italian group viz, AIDAdiva, Costa Victoria and Costa Classica.

The seven-day itinerary includes two nights in Dubai and one-day stopovers in the ports of Muscat, Fujairah, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain. AIDAdiva will depart on Saturdays, Costa Victoria on Sundays, while the Costa Classica will sail on every Monday from Dubai. In all, the three ships will be deployed on a total of 52 cruises out of which 19 cruises on AIDAdiva, 20 cruises on Costa Victoria and 13 cruises on Costa Classica from December, 2008 to April, 2009.

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