

LUXURY TRAVEL

PRINCESS CRUISES HONOURS PENANG

52-year-old cruise line to continue featuring state as port of call till next year

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PRINCESS Cruises, the 52-year-old cruise line company, has set its eyes on Penang and will continue to feature the state as a port of call for its homeporting season out of Singapore until next year.

The cruise line, which set sail with a single ship cruising to Mexico in 1965, has today grown to become the third largest cruise line in the world, carrying about two million guests each year to destinations around the globe from three to 114 days.

Yesterday, one of its cruises, *Diamond Princess*, carrying more than 2,600 guests and 1,100 crew

members berthed at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal here, alongside three others for the eighth time since December last year.

Another cruise ship, *Sapphire Princess*, will follow with another eight calls for the next season, with both ships expected to bring a total of more than 40,000 guests for two seasons.

The 18-deck *Diamond Princess* cruise made its journey on March 13, 2004 to Southeast Asian destinations including Phuket, Thailand, with much to offer to its guests during the voyage.

It is equipped with three pools, eight whirlpool spas and a variety of dining selections including Kai Sushi Bar Restaurant and Sasbatini's Italian Restaurant.

Despite all the enjoyments the



Cruise ship *Diamond Princess*, carrying around 2,600 passengers and 1,100 cabin crew setting off from Singapore to voyage Southeast Asian countries last November. BERNAMA PIC

guests can get, Princess Cruises Southeast Asia director Farriek Tawfik said that almost 90 per cent of them would disembark to explore Penang.

"Over the years, Penang has become one of our guests' favourite port of call. More than 80 per cent of guests disembark the ship when they visit here to enjoy the

local food, shopping and charming attractions," said Farriek after touring inside the *Diamond Princess* yesterday.

Present at the press conference was state Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law Heng Kiang.

Earlier in the day, *Star Clipper* and *Mein Schiff 1* berthed at the

Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal here together with *Diamond Princess* while *Superstar Gemini* docked later in the evening, bringing almost 8,000 visitors into Penang.

Penang Port Commission chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng said cruise ship tourism boomed due to the strategic location of the terminal.