



PRESS RELEASE
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International

SUPERSTARS BACK IN ASIAN WATERS

Star Cruises, “*The First Global Cruise Line*” and “*The Leading Cruise Line in Asia-Pacific*” announces with pride, the return of both its world-class megaships, **SuperStar Virgo** and **SuperStar Leo**, to Asia.

The spectacular homecoming of **SuperStar Leo to Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbour** on 31st July 2003 with nearly 800 Australian and international passengers onboard marks the completion of the return of the luxurious twin-sister ships from Australia after a successful three-month cruise programme.

Star Cruises is also pleased to note the active roles played by the various tourism boards in each and every one of the countries (Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand). With the strong support extended by the government and authorities of these countries coupled with increased interest in its cruises from the public, Star Cruises is confident in saying that cruise tourism in the region is rapidly returning to normal and anticipates positive growth in the industry.

“We are very excited to bring the SuperStars home to Asia and it heralds an even more exciting time for cruise tourism in Asia which by all indications are experiencing a resurgence in the region,” said Mr. Chong Chee Tut, Chief Operating Officer of Star Cruises. “The response from all fronts, including our past passengers, the local governments, our trade and commercial partners and the public has been very encouraging which we trust this will help boost the tourism industry at both the international and domestic levels.”

“The near-capacity loads for the first few cruises since their return reflect the healthy return of confidence in cruise travel as a viable holiday option.”

SUPERSTAR VIRGO

SuperStar Virgo departed Fremantle on 11th July 2003 – with stops in Broome and Darwin – en route to Singapore. Reaching Singapore on 20th July 2003, SuperStar Virgo was received with much anticipation from all her stops in Asia.

Singapore - July 20th, 2003

At her first Asian stop on her return journey, SuperStar Virgo with her 600 Australian tourists onboard, were greeted auspiciously by a troop of lion and dragon dancers (courtesy of the Singapore Tourism Board) and graced by the **Singapore Tourism Board Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive, Mr Lim Neo Chian** himself. With him to greet SuperStar Virgo were other distinguished guests from the Singapore Tourism Board, Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore, members of the media, travel & business associates and partners.

Port Klang, Malaysia – July 21st, 2003

At SuperStar Virgo’s first stop in Malaysia (Port Klang), she was greeted by the **Malaysian Minister of Transport, YB’ Dato Chan Kong Choy** amidst an atmosphere of cultural festivity. Malay cultural performers and “kompang” (Malay cultural drums) players dressed in colourful costumes, arranged by the Selangor State Tourism Department greeted passengers as they disembarked.

After a ship tour led by SuperStar Virgo’s captain, Captain Toivo Norell, the Minister in his speech, expressed much confidence in attaining success in developing Malaysia as a cruise hub with Star Cruises and the Ministry of Transport working closely together to reach a common goal. Pointing out the fact that the cruise business is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, he said that the terminal built by Star Cruises provides an indication of the large untapped potential for cruising in the region.

The different sectors in our local business community such as the travel and hospitality sectors, will invariably benefit economically as well as in growth, from the success of the cooperation between Star Cruises and the Ministry of Transport.

Penang, Malaysia – July 22nd, 2003

The next day on her maiden call at one of Malaysia's premier tourist destinations, Penang, *Pearl of the Orient*, SuperStar Virgo arrived amidst a colourful welcome of multi-cultural performances, courtesy of the Penang State Tourism Department who were also there to present gifts to disembarking passengers. To witness her arrival with almost a full load of passengers onboard (close to 2,000 cruisers) was guest of honour, **YAB Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, Chief Minister of Penang** and other distinguished guests.

"I see this (the arrival of of SuperStar Virgo in Penang) as a beginning of many good things to come", said the Chief Minister. He went on to congratulate Star Cruises for playing a key role in effectively growing the cruise industry and for being one of the top three cruise lines in the world.

Phuket, Thailand – July 23rd, 2003.

SuperStar Virgo sailed on to Phuket, Thailand where she was welcomed by **Mr Niran Kanlayanamit, the Vice Governor of Phuket**. All passengers on board the vessel were given a royal welcome – an elephant, a revered animal in the country for generations dazzled the crowd amidst the traditional Thai welcome of a colourful display of cultural dances.

Says Mr Chong Chee Tut, the Chief Operating Officer of Star Cruises, "Phuket has always been a popular destination for our passengers and SuperStar Virgo's return will once again generate many economic spin-offs for the community and the tourism sector as we continue our marketing efforts in our worldwide network of marketing offices and travel partners in promoting cruises to Thailand."

Cruisers will also be delighted to know that the vessel will be making a maiden call to Bangkok on a special cruise in October.

Star Cruises agents in these three countries have been anticipating the return of SuperStar Virgo and have registered an increased interest in and bookings for her cruises.

SuperStar Leo

SuperStar Virgo's twin ship, the **SuperStar Leo**, which departed Sydney on 19th July 2003 with stops in CID Harbour, Cairns and Darwin arrived in **Hong Kong** on **31st July 2003** amidst a colourful celebration of lion and dragon dances and even a performance by the national Hong Kong Police Pipe Band. Said Mr William Ng, Executive Director of Star

Cruises, "We are very appreciative indeed for the tremendous support given by the Tourism Commission and the Hong Kong Tourism Board in conjunction with today's special occasion.

Also welcoming the return of SuperStar Leo, was **Mr Stephen Ip, Secretary for Economic Development and Labour**.

Her first few cruises out of Hong Kong upon returning home comprising overnight cruises and cruises to Sanya and Halong Bay (4 days/3 nights) and Xiamen (3days/2 nights) have registered strong booking numbers.

ABOUT SUPERSTAR VIRGO AND SUPERSTAR LEO

The 76,800 gross tonne luxury cruise ships can carry up to a total capacity of 1,960 lower berths (passenger load). Both vessels offer a variety of wining, dining, and world-class entertainment options with more than 25 outlets; ensuring that all her passengers will be spoilt for options to choose from and to enjoy the ultimate cruise experience. This ranges from libraries to discos and from swimming pools to jogging tracks on deck. The twin ships also offer a wide range of suites and staterooms to suit all tastes and budgets.

SuperStar Virgo will be based in Singapore whilst her twin, SuperStar Leo will be based in Hong Kong. Both ships are ideal not only for individual and family holidays but also offer corporations a refreshing and unique venue option for their activities and meetings.

To view pictures, please log on to <http://www.starcruiises.com/News/2003/030801.html> which will be available on 2nd August 2003 at 1200 hours Malaysian time (GMT+ 8.00)

ABOUT STAR CRUISES

Star Cruises, the **third largest cruise line in the world** is a global cruise brand presently operating a combined fleet of 20 ships with over 26,000 lower berths, with cruises to destinations and islands in Asia-Pacific, North and South America, Hawaii, Caribbean, Alaska, Europe, Mediterranean, Bermuda and the Antarctica under the Star Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Orient Lines & Cruise Ferries brands.

The *Pride of America* - the first of the two Project America vessels - is presently under construction at the Lloyd Werft shipyard in Germany. The 81,000-grt and 2,100 lower berth vessel is expected to commence Hawaii inter-island cruising next year with a "Best of America" theme. The second Project America vessel, which is currently sailing as Norwegian Sky will be renamed *Pride of Aloha* and will reflect a strong Hawaiian theme which will be accomplished after a refurbishment in September 2004. Both ships will sail under NCL's new US-flag brand - NCL America (sm).

Star Cruises is represented in more than 20 locations worldwide with offices in Australia, New Zealand, China, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia,

Norway, Philippines, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

For more information on Star Cruises and NCL, please visit www.starcruiises.com and www.ncl.com

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