



Carnival Cruise Line Christens Mardi Gras In First Naming Ceremony In The U.S. Since Industry Restart

October 23, 2021

Carnival's Chief Fun Officer Shaquille O'Neal and Ship Godmother Miss Universe, Dominican Republic, Kimberly Jimenez Help Usher in the "Universe of Fun"

PORT CANAVERAL, Oct. 23, 2021 – Carnival Cruise Line today christened Mardi Gras at Port Canaveral, Fla. at a "Universe of Fun" celebration befitting of the world's most fun cruise ship, in the first ship naming ceremony held in the U.S. since the cruise industry's restart this summer.

Carnival's Chief Fun Officer Shaquille O'Neal attended the festivities and cut the ribbon of his first Big Chicken restaurant at sea that debuted on Mardi Gras when she began cruise operations on July 31.

Miss Universe, Dominican Republic, Kimberly Jimenez served as the ship's Godmother and officially named the ship and was joined by Miss Universe, Andrea Meza and Miss USA, Asya Branch who sang the national anthem. The event featured a "World of Nations" flag procession to highlight the diversity of the 120 nationalities of Carnival crew members, and, of course, a Mardi Gras parade with a Second Line Band.

"Today's naming ceremony of our flagship Mardi Gras, the first in the industry since our restart of operations, signifies excitement and optimism as we look to bring our entire fleet back into guest service by spring 2022," said Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line. "This ship has been amazing guests during her pre-inaugural season and the celebration today with our Chief Fun Officer Shaq, our Godmother Kimberly, and so many special guests, was extremely gratifying and emotional."

Following remarks by Duffy and Carnival Corporation President and CEO Arnold Donald, Carnival friends and partners Romero Britto, Emeril Lagasse, Kathie Lee Gifford, Vanna White and Guy Fieri provided their congratulations on the ship's naming and helped bring the champagne bottle to the ship.

Godmother Jimenez blessed the ship in both English and her native Spanish and activated the traditional champagne bottle break, officially naming the ship. In a celebration of the ship's name, a special Mardi Gras parade with Duffy, Donald and O'Neal leading it, capped off the festivities.

Mardi Gras is the first cruise ship in the Americas to be powered by eco-friendly Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and the first to feature a roller coaster. The 180,000-ton ship boasts six distinct themed zones with a variety of food, beverage and entertainment options, including dining venues from Lagasse, Fieri, O'Neal and Rudi Sodamin. Mardi Gras sails weekly from Port Canaveral on alternating Eastern and Western Caribbean cruises.

For additional information on Carnival Cruise Line and to book a cruise vacation, call 1-800-CARNIVAL, visit www.carnival.com, or contact your favorite travel advisor or online travel site.

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About Carnival Cruise Line

Carnival Cruise Line is proud to be known as America's Cruise Line with a total of 24 ships, sailing from 14 U.S. homeports and employing more than 40,000 team members from 120 nationalities. The line resumed cruise operations July 3, 2021 while its newest and most innovative ship, Mardi Gras, featuring the first roller coaster at sea and the first in the Americas powered by eco-friendly Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sailed from Port Canaveral, Fla., July 31, 2021. As part of its 50th Birthday festivities, Carnival Celebration, sister ship to Mardi Gras, is set to debut in late 2022 from PortMiami. An as-yet-unnamed third Excel-class ship is scheduled to enter service in 2023.

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