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WINDSTAR TO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF SMALL SHIP CRUISING IN ALASKA & BRITISH COLUMBIA RETURNING IN SUMMER 2018

Cruising back to the region after two decades, Windstar will offer a new, luxurious choice, with its boutique brand of small ship cruising and experiential travel.



Seattle, WA – January 24, 2017 – Award-winning boutique cruise line Windstar Cruises today announces plans to sail to Alaska in spring/summer 2018, bringing the Windstar way of [small](#) ship cruising to one of the world’s most popular cruise destinations.

Windstar’s Alaska beckons guests to slow down over leisurely journeys. With voyages starting at 11 days, there is ample time for scenic cruising in both Canada’s and Alaska’s famed inside passages – where guests can look for orcas, bears, and bald eagles from the comfort of their elegant ship. Guests can enjoy a cup of cocoa on deck as they sail through Misty Fjords National Monument and Kenai Fjords National Park, experiences usually booked via a shore excursion because the “big ships” just don’t go there.

Each Windstar Alaska itinerary includes sailing through Tracy Arm Fjord – so close that noise of the ice breaking and falling into the water during glacier calving will surprise you. Enthusiastic park rangers, scientists, glaciologists, geologists, and other experts will be aboard each cruise to provide education, perspective, one-on-one discussions, and ample opportunities for individual discovery in America’s “last frontier.”

“We are so excited to be enhancing the Alaskan travel marketplace by introducing our brand of true small ship cruising to Alaska. Sailing closer to pristine deciduous shorelines, delving deeper into all-enveloping fjords, kayaking in icy straits right off the ship’s Watersports Platform, and viewing an endless wilderness from sea level. We are bringing our guests right to the heart of what makes Alaska and the Great Pacific Northwest such an amazing destination and magical place to visit,” remarked Windstar President John Delaney.

“We are working hard now to arrange customized bucket list moments like the chance to hike atop the massive Mendenhall Glacier in Alaska’s capitol of Juneau, zipline over crystal-clear creeks in bear country, snap a classic whale tail picture on your mobile phone – during a romantic deckside dinner, fly over majestic Glacier Bay in a private plane, uncover Sitka’s rich Russian heritage, or check out Petroglyph Beach in Wrangell – a destination rarely visited by cruise ships. Windstar is thrilled to put its stamp on this classic cruise region and expects it will quickly become a Yacht Club Member favorite. We honestly can’t wait!”

Highlights of Windstar’s inaugural Alaska season with the 212-guest *Star Legend* yacht include:

- Every cruise features Tracy Arm and Misty Fjords.
- Optional up-close and personal kayaking and scenic cruising by Zodiac directly from the ship.
- Full destination immersion with 7 to 8 Southeast Alaska and British Columbia ports each cruise.
- Due to the small size of the ship, *Star Legend* will sail right into Misty Fjords and Kenai Fjords.
- Multiple glacier experiences on northbound/southbound sailings featuring Mendenhall Glacier, Tracy Arm, and Kenai Fjords.
- Longer itineraries of 11- to 14-days let the yacht move slower and get closer to shore exploring more off the usual charted course.
- Naturalist/Expedition Leaders on all voyages who will customize the experience for guests along with speakers from Native American tribes.

The news comes on the heels of Windstar’s recent announcement of its return to Asia in 2017/18, with the 212-guest, all-suite *Star Legend* yacht sailing from Tokyo to Seward (Anchorage), Alaska over a 14-day trans-Pacific cruise, which also stops in Miyako, Hakodate, and Kushiro in Japan.

Once in Alaska, the elegant *Star Legend* embarks on three new itineraries with eight sailing dates, departing May to August, including a 14-day Seward (Anchorage) to Vancouver option; 12-day Vancouver round trip itinerary, and 11- or 12-day Vancouver to Seward (Anchorage) voyages. Windstar also plans to offer pre- and post- cruise land excursions, allowing guests more time to explore Alaska’s interior.

New Alaska Itineraries Sail Longer, Slower, Closer to Shore, and Deeper into Fjords

Wonders of Alaska & Canada – These 14-day voyages from Seward (Anchorage) to Vancouver are offered three times, allowing guests a full two weeks of jaw-dropping scenery and history. British Columbia’s Prince Rupert, located on Kaien Island just north of the mouth of the Skeena River, is a highlight – a picturesque port rich in culture and heritage. Teeming with wildlife, guests can expect whale, eagle, salmon, and grizzly bear sightings, and also visit the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary, with one of the densest remaining North American bear populations.

Alaskan Splendors – Multiple journeys between Vancouver and Seward (Anchorage) over 11- or 12-days offers a *tour de force* of top Alaskan destinations. From the wildlife and glaciers of the Inside Passage to the First Nations totems of Ketchikan; hiking in Haines or sampling its cultural offerings like the Alaska Indian Arts Center, where traditional craftsmen offer demonstrations of their work; to the biggest zipline in the United States in Icy Strait Point ... it’s all of southeast Alaska’s most intriguing ports.

Islands & Inlets of the Inside Passage – Offering two 12-day sailings, this itinerary cruises roundtrip from Vancouver, passing under the famed Lions Gate Bridge twice, both en route to the rugged coastline and on the return. A hidden gem at the midway point of the Inside Passage sits Metlakatla, Alaska on verdant Annette Island. This locale is the only U.S. settlement of the indigenous Tsimshian people, where guests get to visit a traditional longhouse and experience the full regalia of Native American song and dance shows.

Luxury Slows Down & Gets Closer to Nature Aboard Star Legend

Star Legend, one of the world's most luxurious small cruise ships, plays the casually elegant host to no more than 212 guests. The experience is like sailing on your own private yacht with nearly a 1:1 staff to guest ratio, boasting all-suite accommodations and beautifully appointed public spaces such as the elegant *AmphorA* and romantic *Candles* restaurants. The classy and comfortable *Yacht Club* lounge located on the top guest deck is sure to be the place for spotting whale spouts and wildlife on the shoreline, as cruisers relax with a Captain's Coffee and enjoy the 270-degree indoor/outdoor viewing opportunities.

Star Legend's 106 suites offer more room than many hotels, with stylish décor, walk-in closets, marble bathrooms, L'Occitane® toiletries, and a tranquil seating area — all with a view. Alaska-bound travelers may choose from 106 suites, including 36 Balcony Suites with floor-to-ceiling sliding doors that bring fresh air and sweeping scenery indoors; or select one of 64 Ocean View Suites with large picture windows; or splurge on a decadent Owner's or Classic Suite located just below the yacht's Open Bridge, with a stunning view from the private veranda. Yacht guests will enjoy "destination authenticity" like only Windstar can deliver with regionally themed cuisine, libations, entertainment, speakers and activities, as well as personalized small group shore excursions, and always gracious and attentive service.

The leader in small ship cruising, Windstar recently won the "10Best" award as *#1 Best Boutique Cruise Line* voted on by readers of *USA Today* and was named to *Condé Nast Traveler's* 2017 Gold List.

For additional information on private yacht-style cruising with Windstar, contact a travel professional or Windstar Cruises by phone at 877-958-7718, or visit www.windstarcruises.com.

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Follow the Windstar Yachts:



Windstar Cruises operates a six-ship fleet of small boutique sailing and all-suite yachts visiting 170 ports throughout Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Costa Rica, the Panama Canal, sailing year-round in Tahiti and the South Pacific, and adding newly-announced Asia and Arabia. The boutique cruise ships are known for an intimate yacht-style experience, unique itineraries and exclusive access to the world's best small ports and hidden harbors. Windstar's fleet is the market leader in boutique small ship cruising with a total of 1,242 passenger berths. All ships in the fleet have recently undergone multi-million dollar transformations to embody casually elegant yacht travel. The all-suite yachts *Star Breeze*, *Star Legend* and *Star Pride* serve 212 guests in all-suite accommodations; while sailing yachts *Wind Spirit* and *Wind Star* sail with up to 148 guests, and *Wind Surf* serves 310 guests. The yachts cruise to 59 nations worldwide. Windstar Cruises is a part of Xanterra Parks & Resorts®, known for "Legendary Hospitality with a Softer Footprint." Xanterra's entities also include lodges, restaurants, tours and activities in national and state parks, as well as resorts, railway and tour companies. More information: www.windstarcruises.com.