

The Virgin Islands Consortium

WICO Welcomes Anthem Of The Seas, Royal Caribbean's 5,000-Passenger Quantum-Class Ship

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ST. THOMAS -- Aboard a mammoth ship towering over the West Indian Company dock here on Tuesday, one loses all sense of island. The 5,000-passenger behemoth, called Anthem of the Seas, the latest quantum-class ship from Royal Caribbean, comes replete with amenities and many of the commerce items offered to tourists on an island; bar local souvenirs and island tours (even island tours are now purchased from cruise lines).

The West Indian Company is no stranger to outsize ships, as [it's the dock](#) where most of the 1.9 million tourists who visit the territory annually are accommodated. But it's always a special occasion to have new lines berth in St. Thomas, or as WICO officials say, it puts in perspective the importance of the territory as a destination, when cruise lines

deem it of paramount importance to send their newest and latest offerings to the island. Then there's the prominence of the territory -- more pointedly St. Thomas -- as being the WICO President and CEO,



L-R Attending the WICO

plaque ceremony welcoming the Anthem of the Seas on its inaugural visit to St. Thomas WICO Board Secretary, Edward Thomas WICO President and CEO, Joseph B. Boschulte RCCI Anthem of the Seas Captain, Anders Ingebrigtsen Assistant Director of Tourism and WICO Vice Chairperson, Joyce Dore-Griffith WICO Board Chairman, Randolph H. Knight WICO Board Member, Michael Watson

"When we have an opportunity to parlay our relationship with the cruise lines and make sure the biggest and the best come to us, it's a positive way of saying the work that we've been doing and the time that invested to build the business is paying off," Mr. Boschulte told The Consortium aboard the ship yesterday. He said it was important that the territory continues to be innovative and remain above an every-growing fray of competitors -- St. Maarten being the number threat as it's the second most popular destination behind St. Thomas, along with growing markets like the British Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The Anthem of the Seas has, and in many instances exceeds, what cruise passengers have come to expect on a ship. And it boasts innovative features as well, including what it calls the "North Star", a jewel-shaped glass capsule located at the very top of the ship that houses 14 individuals and gives a panoramic view. There's also a bionic bar controlled by robotic arms that serves drinks to guests. It also dances, we were told.

At first glance, the service on Anthem of the Seas appears to be impeccable. Crew members -- even those outside the hospitality department -- greet visitors with smiles and seem always ready to help. And the food, always too much to choose from, was satisfying.

To continue attracting such ships and the thousands of visitors who come with them, Mr. Boschulte said the sustenance of quality to the WICO facility is indelible to success.

"We have a philosophy that it's better for us to take care of the small problems before they become big. So you will come on a day with no ships and you'll see teams working all around. You'll see us in the mall painting and doing other things. It's nice to have the icing on the cake with a brand new ship like Anthem of the Seas, but it's what happens in-between the big ships that keeps the product where it is."

The receive on the ship, WICO held a special plaque ceremony that included cruise officials, Mapp administration representatives as well as WICO executives.

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