

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Has Only 8 Cruise Ships Scheduled For Remainder Of 2017; 14 From Jan. To Aug. 2018

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ST. CROIX -- A document provided to the media on Wednesday showing ships scheduled to berth at the Ann E. Ambramson Marine Facility on St. Croix, brings to the fore the scarcity of cruise ships visiting the Big Island, even as Governor Kenneth Mapp along with members of the Senate [continue to lobby](#) cruise ship officials to consider the island.

According to the document, seen below, only 8 more ships are scheduled to visit St. Croix for the rest of 2017, while only 14 are scheduled to visit here from January through August of 2018. Furthermore, of all the calls, only three ships are part of the rotation: Jewel of the Seas, Celebrity Summit and Serenade of the Seas.

[Read the original document](#)

In March, Government House announced that administration officials [held "high-level" talks](#) with cruise line executives in South Florida aimed at improving the visitor experience for cruise ship passengers.

Mr. Mapp [in March 2015 tapped Disney officials](#) to help turn St. Croix into a "destination experience", the results of which would see the island attracting more tourists, among them those who'd travel here on ships. In April 2016, however, the governor said the results of Disney's assessment [were being held in private](#) to protect strategies.

"We're not releasing any of that report because it has essential, competitive advantage strategies particularly for St. Croix, and if we release the report everyone else in the Caribbean will be able to see some of the things that we need to undertake," Mr. Mapp told The Consortium last year. The governor described the report as a "working instrument" for the Government of the Virgin Islands in terms of how it moves to position St. Croix in particular as a destination for visitors, as well as the visitor experience in the entire territory."

Since then, Mr. Mapp has announced [the development of a four-star hotel on St. Croix](#), which would also help in bolstering the island's desirability relative to cruise passengers. But if there's any movement relative to the four-star hotel, the public would not know, as the governor has been mum on progress.

Instead, Mr. Mapp has been focusing on stabilizing the government, an immense task that has seemingly alluded his administration; ratings firm Fitch, one of the top three major players in the U.S., [recently placed the territory's bonds on negative watch](#), noting "a significant lack of requisite documentation to support key financial items" such as: tax revenues, payments in lieu of taxes, income tax receivables, and federal grants.

So the question on whether there will be substantial action by the government to help move St. Croix's cruise ship offering forward, is an open one.