

## More Than 2,200 Norwegian Jewel Guests Visit Banana Coast

**MIAMI (Oct. 16, 2014)** — Norwegian Cruise Line's 2,376-passenger Norwegian Jewel brought more than 2,200 guests ashore at Banana Coast, the newest Caribbean cruise destination, Wednesday, Oct. 15. It was the first call at the Trujillo, Honduras, port by a mega cruise ship.

Ricardo Alvarez, vice president of Honduras, officiated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony and traditional plaque exchange to open the port. He was joined by Jose Lainez, mayor of Trujillo; Captain Sven Kenneth Harstrom, master of Norwegian Jewel; and Randy Jorgensen, general manager of Grand Trujillo Autoridad, the port developer.

"Overall, the call went extremely well," said Jorgensen. "The product is a winner and the community and destination received very positive reviews from the exit interviews we conducted. The positive response was validated by Norwegian's shore excursion team asking us to add more tour capacity as soon as possible.

"We did experience a few first-call hiccups, which we expected," said Jorgensen. "There was some congestion, as local folks wanted to welcome the cruise passengers, and we need to work on traffic flow. As the ship departed at 5 p.m., we already had started reviewing the day and have begun to implement some changes, and we expect improvements with every call going forward."

Jorgensen added that almost all the shore excursions offered were sold out, and although 900 guests were accommodated on organized tours, NCL anticipates high ongoing demand during its next 12 weekly calls. Banana Coast Tours offers 15 tours that include snorkeling, kayaking, waterfall explorations, horseback riding, beach breaks, nature expeditions, mangrove boat rides, jungle ATV adventures, and a variety of other cultural, historical and gastronomic excursions.

Six cruise lines have scheduled a total of 29 calls on eight ships at Banana Coast during the 2014-2015 winter Caribbean cruise season. Holland America Line was the first major cruise company to commit to a series of calls from November 2014 through March 2015. In addition to Norwegian Cruise Line and Holland America, Silversea Cruises has slated calls in December 2014 and March 2015, and P&O Cruises and Oceania Cruises plan to call in the first quarter of 2015.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Captioned images of Norwegian Jewel's first call at Banana Coast are available at <http://bit.ly/1sNlbon>.

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**About Banana Coast**

A new port development that brings the banana boom days back to life, Banana Coast is located at Trujillo, Honduras, offering retail shops and a 10-acre stretch of beach. Christopher Columbus landed there more than 500 years ago during his last voyage to the Americas. Since then, the area has been a Spanish colony and at various times was under the control of the Dutch, French, English — and pirates. During the early 20th century Trujillo was the banana export capital of the world, shipping more than 8 million stems annually. Today, visitors can enjoy the sun, sand, a nearby tropical rainforest and historic 16th-century Santa Bárbara Fort.

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