



## Windstar Cruises Sails into 2018 with Numerous Travel Awards & Accolades



**Seattle, WA, January 8, 2018** – [Windstar Cruises](#), the upscale cruise line, is starting 2018 with a recent collection of prestigious accolades and numerous award wins. Windstar was voted Most Romantic Cruise Line and Best Tall Ship (*Wind Surf*) in *Porthole Cruise Magazine's* 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Readers' Choice Awards, in addition to earning Best Cruise Partnership in the magazine's newly announced Editor-in-Chief Awards; was best for romance in the Cruise Critic 2017 Editors' Picks Awards; scored a top spot in the Best Small Ships category in *Condé Nast Traveler's* Readers' Choice Awards, as well as was named to the magazine's prestigious Gold List for 2018; was lauded for its active itineraries and sports marinas in the *TOWN & COUNTRY* Cruise Awards; was a top selection in the 2017 *Travel Weekly* Readers' Choice Awards for Cruise Line Under 1,000 Berths and the Pacific cruising category; earned the Silver Award for Best Cruise Line/Small Ship in *Recommend* magazine's 2017 Readers' Choice Awards; and was named the #1 Boutique Cruise Line in the world by the *USA Today* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards. The company was also acknowledged within the travel industry as Cruise Specialty Partner of the Year by the travel agency collaboration Ensemble Travel Group.

"We are honored to be chosen as a reader's and editor's favorite several times over, particularly in categories such as 'best small ships' and 'romance' that represent quintessential components of our business," stated Windstar President John Delaney. "We pride ourselves on creating personal experiences in intimate, unique settings, for each of our guests. We are equally gratified by recognition from our valued travel agent partners who provide consumers with an extraordinary level of expertise and added benefits to all travelers that are looking for a cruise vacation that stands out and is different than most. This is what sets Windstar apart and makes us 180 degrees from ordinary."

### **Condé Nast Traveler – Best Small Ships (fewer than 500 guests) + 2018 Gold List Selection**

Each year, *Condé Nast Traveler* readers rank the best cruise lines in the world, announced in the November issue. In 2017, Windstar ranked #3 in the [Readers' Choice Awards](#) Small Ships category, with fewer than 500 guests. (In recent years, Windstar has held various positions in the top five spots of this category.) Editors noted that in 2017, rankings for all cruise lines were higher across the board, indicating broad customer satisfaction. This category is particularly meaningful for the small and sophisticated cruise line, whose personal and intimate

setting stands at the heart of the Windstar experience, distinguishing them from the competition. “180 Degrees from Ordinary,” Windstar Cruises takes a casually elegant approach to truly upscale small ship cruising.

Additionally, Windstar was selected to the magazine’s 2018 Gold List, published in the January issue. Editors suggested traveling from Tokyo to northern Japan before crossing the Pacific and sailing past Alaska’s Kenai Fjords National Park on Windstar Cruises’ *Star Legend* as a unique “out there” escape. Windstar has been named to the Gold List for the past six years.

### **Cruise Critic – Best for Romance**

In the Cruise Critic 2017 [Editors’ Picks Awards](#), chosen by the site’s team of international editors and announced in December, Windstar scored big for couples and honeymooners. Saying “the line’s sailing ships are perfect for wind-in-your-hair, sunset moments, while its yachts offer oversized suites and luxurious touches,” editors were impressed that all six Windstar ships can sneak into small harbors, providing access to uncrowded destinations and out-of-the-way locales to explore with a loved one.

### **Porthole Cruise Magazine – Most Romantic Cruise Line and Best Tall Ship + Best Cruise Partnership**

Windstar mimics the feeling of sailing on a private yacht, so it’s not surprising the line was chosen as the Most Romantic Cruise Line by *Porthole’s* Annual [Readers’ Choice Awards](#). Additionally, Windstar’s 310-guest flagship *Wind Surf* was selected as the Best Tall Ship. *Wind Surf’s* regal design draws admiring glances as she glides majestically into port. “The romance of cruising under sail is one thing that differentiates Windstar Cruises from other lines, so it comes as no surprise that our readers continually vote Windstar as not only the most romantic cruise line but also as best tall ship,” said Bill Panoff, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Porthole Cruise Magazine*. “For savvy travelers, I always recommend trying this unique sailing experience.” Winners of *Porthole’s* Annual Readers’ Choice Awards were determined by the magazine’s readers and online fans who completed ballots and voted on 55 cruise-related categories, ranging from the best ships to the best itineraries.

Additionally, Windstar was included in the magazine’s [2018 Editor-in-Chief Awards](#), given to those that “left amazing impressions in terms of service, quality, and memorable moments.” Windstar was recognized for Best Cruise Partnership: Windstar Cruises and James Beard Foundation, honoring the fact that Windstar has [partnered with the foundation](#) to celebrate food- and wine-themed cruises and offer signature recipes nightly on dining room menus.

### **Recommend - Silver Award for Best Cruise Line/Small Ship**

Windstar recently received the Silver Award for Best Cruise Line/Small Ship in *Recommend* magazine’s 2017 [Readers’ Choice Awards](#), highlighted in the December issue. Readers were given the opportunity to name the best in the business from individual hotel and tour operators to companies that do the best to support travel professionals. The magazine helps travel agents sell travel by providing them with in-depth destination information.

### **TOWN & COUNTRY – Best Active Itineraries + Best Sports Marinas**

Editors and writers at *TOWN & COUNTRY* magazine collectively selected the best luxury cruise lines in the world for their *T&C* Cruise Awards in the December issue. With their hand-picked selection of the top ships at sea, Windstar is thrilled to be included in two categories: [Best Active Itineraries](#) and [Best Sports Marinas](#). Saying “these ships have devised entire trips to make you move,” Windstar’s [Costa Rica & Panama Canal](#) cruises were specifically recognized for being both active and unexpected, with experiences like hiking in the rain forest, sport fishing, and river rafting on offer. Declaring “these (ships) have the best toys and the most ways to get you on the water,” ALL of Windstar’s six-ship fleet was recognized for high-quality and diverse

watersports equipment and the ability to use them more often than other cruise lines due to Windstar's small size and access to smaller (and less restrictive) ports.

### ***Travel Weekly – Readers' Choice Award Finalist for Cruise Line Under 1,000 Berths + Pacific***

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual *Travel Weekly* [Readers' Choice Awards](#) took place in December, with Windstar recognized as a finalist for Cruise Line Under 1,000 Berths and for the Pacific cruising category (in recognition of its year-round offerings in Tahiti). Finalists were nominated by *Travel Weekly* readers who have first-hand knowledge and a deep understanding of the destinations and businesses that serve their clients. To be a finalist means Windstar's product is significantly above industry standards, says Arnie Weissmann, editor in chief.

### ***USA Today – 10Best Readers' Choice Award for #1 Boutique Cruise Line***

Windstar was named the #1 Boutique Cruise Line in the world by the *USA Today* [10Best Readers' Choice Awards](#) for the second year in a row in late December. Twenty boutique cruise lines were nominated by a panel of experts, which included a combination of editors from *USA Today* and 10Best.com, cruise journalists, and top cruise industry media sources. In addition to being named the Best Boutique Cruise Line again, Windstar also placed in the top five as a Best Cruise Line for Millennials, a new category this year, and in the top ten as a Best Cruise Ship for Dining (the 212-passenger, all-suite *Star Pride* specifically), Best Ocean Cruise Line, and Best Adventure Cruise Line.

### ***Ensemble Travel Group – 2017 Cruise Specialty Partner of the Year***

Lastly, [Ensemble Travel Group](#) awarded Windstar with the 2017 Cruise Specialty Partner of the Year at their annual Circle of Excellence Gala in Dallas in October. The award reflected input from members across the United States and Canada. Ensemble, a member-owned and run organization of top-tier independent travel agencies, designs unique consumer vacation programs. Members based their selections on three key performance areas: quality of customer service (timeliness and accuracy of communications and documentation, ease of the booking process, and overall problem solving); level of agency support (local sales rep, co-op funds, group support, marketing guidance, product training, and commitment to agency sales channel); and client satisfaction (product delivery, fulfillment of client expectations, and repeat bookings).

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](http://www.windstarcruises.com).

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### ***About Windstar Cruises***

[Windstar Cruises](#) operates a six-ship fleet of small sailing and all-suite ships visiting approximately 270 ports in 2018 sailing throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Asia, Alaska, Canada and New England, and cruising year-round in Tahiti. Windstar's fleet is the market leader in small ship cruising with a total of 1,242 passenger berths calling on off-the-beaten-path and popular ports in over 60 countries. The boutique cruise line carries fewer than 310 passengers on its small ships and takes travelers on cruises that are 180 degrees from ordinary. They are known for their immersive and authentic experiences, unique, port-intensive itineraries, exceptional award-winning service, and innovative culinary program as the Official Cruise Line of the James Beard Foundation. Windstar Cruises is a part of Xanterra Parks & Resorts®, known for "Legendary Hospitality with a Softer Footprint."

### **Follow the Windstar Yachts:**



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