

Haugesund's Journey to Sustainable Cruise Tourism Growth



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COVER PHOTO: ÅKRAFJORDEN / MATTIAS FREDRIKSSON

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Executive summary

Haugesund, a coastal port city in Norway, with around 150,000 people in the region, has transformed itself into a thriving cruise destination since its first cruise call in 2013. Through strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, and a commitment to sustainability, Haugesund has achieved remarkable growth in cruise tourism while preserving its local character and environment.

Key achievements include the development of modern port infrastructure, the implementation of shore power technology, and the creation of authentic cultural experiences for visitors.

It's important to note the town itself has just around 38,565 residents which demonstrates that small destinations can compete effectively in the global cruise market by prioritizing sustainable practices and engaging local communities.

Haugesund's approach has not only boosted its economy but also fostered pride among residents and

strengthened its reputation as a responsible and attractive destination.

This case study outlines the strategies, results, and lessons

learned from Haugesund's journey, offering actionable insights for other destinations seeking to balance growth with sustainability.

CRUISE SHIP VISITS AND PASSENGERS WELCOMED 2013-2026

Year	Arrivals	Pax	
2013	7	9,431	
2014	9	6,124	
2015	18	25,781	
2016	16	21,250	
2017	33	53,008	
2018	53	69,567	
2019	51	79,481	
2020	3	3,815	Booked 74, 147,816 pax but no calls after March due to COVID
2021	0	0	Booked 136 441,650 pax No calls due to COVID
2022	107	260,014	
2023	125	372,334	
2024	129	393,153	
2025	130	401,377	
2026	154	480,958	Projected



PHOTO: HAAKON NORDVIK



Nils Konrad Bua,
Mayor of Haugesund

Background

In 2013, Haugesund was a relatively unknown cruise destination with limited infrastructure and no established reputation in the industry. The city's port, managed by Karmsund Port Authority, had minimal facilities for handling cruise ships, and the local economy struggled during the summer months due to low retail activity.

Nils Konrad Bua, Mayor of Haugesund, described the situation as a time when,

'the summer months were among the toughest times of the year for retail, with lower revenues than the rest of the year.' Before cruise tourism, owning a shop in Haugesund was 'about survival', according to local shop owners.

The city recognized the potential of cruise tourism to revitalize its economy and embarked on a strategic journey to position itself as a competitive and sustainable destination.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Infrastructure Development

Haugesund invested heavily in port infrastructure to accommodate the growing cruise traffic.

Key projects included

1. 2012 upgraded cruise terminal, including mooring points; NOK 11m, financed by the port
2. 2021 reinforcement of the quay structure; NOK 2.5m, financed by the port
3. 2023 dredging project completed secured the depth required for safe manoeuvring of the largest vessels visiting the region; NOK 6.5m, financed by the port
4. 2024 high-voltage shore power for cruise ships added; NOK 70m, partly financed by port/OP supplier and public funds
5. 2025 Expanded ISPS facilities and reorganised shuttle and landside flow. Harbour Park, a clearly defined and guest-friendly zone opened; NOK 16m, financed by the port (including point 6. below)
6. 2025 Walking routes were reorganised, the information centre and shop were expanded and dedicated sales booths were introduced to structure excursion providers. Shuttle, public transport and service vehicle handling were also improved. (as point 5. above)

CRUISE BERTH: THEN AND NOW





Among the leading Norwegian ports in environmental efforts

PHOTO: TOR INGE VORMEDAL



The port adopted high-voltage shore power technology in 2024, enabling ships to reduce emissions while docked. This early adoption positioned Haugesund as a leader in environmental responsibility among Norwegian ports.

Haugesund-Karmsund has grown from handling its first cruise call in 2013 to over 150 cruise ships booked for

this year. The quay can accommodate one large cruise ship per day, carrying between 6,000-7,000 passengers, or two smaller vessels depending on the schedule. Infrastructure upgrades, such as expanded ISPS facilities and reorganised shuttle and landside flow, have ensured smooth operations even on days with more than 6,500 passengers and crew.

‘Cruise ships visiting have access to a broad range of services including large lifts for rent, waste handling, hull washing while berthed at the quay and ship-to-ship bunkering supported by Yokohama fenders when required,’ said Rasmus Tveit, Cruise Manager at Karmsund Port.

PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



◀ Harbour Park, guest friendly zone opened in 2025



Rasmus Tveit,
Cruise Manager at Karmsund Port



Visitor experience enhancements

PHOTO: STRØMMA NORWAY



PHOTO: MARY BOND



PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



L-R: Copper from Visnes used in the Statue of Liberty in New York, *The Rising Tide*, and a RIB adventure along the coastal landscape of Haugesund

To ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience for cruise passengers, Haugesund implemented measures such as improved city signage, modernised portside facilities and tailored excursion packages.

During the cruise season, the city allocates extra resources to maintain

cleanliness and order throughout the city, ensuring that both visitors and residents can enjoy a pleasant environment.

Attractions like Historical Avaldsnes and Åkrafjorden were developed to showcase the region's Viking heritage and natural beauty, offering visitors authentic and memorable experiences.

HAUGESUND CITY CENTRE HAS A LOT TO OFFER:

- Haugesund City Hall
- Karmund Civic Museum
- Haugesund Art Gallery
- Kyvik Herring Factory
- Panoramic movie showing the region
- City island cruise
- Our Saviour's Church
- Shopping
- City walks
- Guided Tours
- Visit the Statue of Harald the Fairhaired
- Hamnaberg Viewpoint
- Dokken Outdoor Museum
- Playground in City Park
- Christmas Market

INFORMATION:

Bus and boat can be combined from Ho Haugesund - Viking Farm, Arnehus and Skudeneshavn.

Boat: Haugesund - Røvær 25 min.
Boat: Haugesund - Utsira 70 min.

HOMELAND OF THE VIKING KINGS
NORWAY'S BIRTHPLACE

HAUGESUND SHORE EXCURSION PLANNING MAP

THE REGION IS RICH IN HISTORY with many exciting destinations to experience. A broad range of excursions is available for exploring the history, culture and stunning scenery the area has to offer.

WELCOME TO EXCITING ADVENTURES ON HISTORIC GROUND!



PHOTO: MISJE COLLECTION



St. Olav's Church and Nordvegen History Center on the horizon

Historical Avaldsnes

Historical Avaldsnes includes the Viking Farm, Nordvegen History Center, and St. Olav's Church together forming a historical experience located at Avaldsnes – known as 'Norway's oldest royal seat'. Cruise groups typically spend 3.5 hours exploring these sites, which offer an authentic glimpse into Norway's Viking and medieval history.

Representatives from Historical Avaldsnes shared, 'Cruise passengers now account for a substantial share of our total visitors – in 2025, around



PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND

Guided tour inside Nordvegen History Center

13,000 out of roughly 40,000 guests arrived via cruise ships. This has had a positive effect on our overall revenue.

To accommodate cruise passengers, opening hours have been extended,

additional guided tours scheduled and increased staffing during peak periods. The cruise arrivals have extended operations, bringing visitors not only in the summer, but also during the shoulder months.

Åkrafjorden



PHOTO: MATHIAS FREDRIKSSON

An excursion to Åkrafjorden is a full-day experience lasting around seven hours, the main attraction is Langfoss waterfall, and the fjord landscape often described by visitors as open, peaceful and beautiful.

Åkrafjorden has also seen remarkable growth, with visitor numbers increasing from 1,000 guests per year before cruise ships started calling at Haugesund to now where the main product – the fjord cruise and lunch – surpassed 20,000 guests in 2025 with cruise tourism contributing to a revenue increase from NOK2 million (€171,622) to NOK12 million (€1.1m) annually.

A representative from Åkrafjorden noted, 'All our guests arrive by bus and come directly to us, so we have no issues related to pedestrians. We've chosen to focus on local hosts rather than seasonal staff – "meet the people who live here". Additionally, we serve our guests local food from local producers, which is met with great enthusiasm.'





PHOTO: ALEXANDER N. ZECEVIC



Monica Berstad,
Chair of Cruise Norway

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration across sectors

Haugesund's success is rooted in strong collaboration between the port authority, local government, tourism organisations, and businesses. The municipality worked closely with Visit Haugesund and cruise line operators to align strategies and promote the city as a destination.

Cruise call dates and ship names are publicly available via the port authority website in a dedicated cruise tab.

Haugesund's active participation in Cruise Norway has significantly enhanced its international position as a cruise destination. By leveraging a national network, the port engages with cruise lines in a more coordinated and professional manner, including joint representation at international trade fairs and ongoing industry dialogue.

Monica Berstad, chair of Cruise Norway, highlights Haugesund's commitment to understanding the diverse needs and decision-making processes of cruise operators. The close collaboration between port authorities, destination stakeholders, and public entities ensures clarity and predictability for cruise lines,

fostering sustainable and long-term growth in the cruise business.

Andrea Storl CEO of shorex provider and agency services in Norway, European Cruise Service (ECS), shared his perspective: 'Haugesund's success has been its ability to combine predictable operational quality with a genuinely collaborative approach to the cruise industry.'

'Many ports invest in infrastructure, but Haugesund has also consistently invested in relationships – with cruise lines, local stakeholders, ship agents and tour operators. That has created a level of trust that keeps calls returning year after year.'

'Haugesund didn't chase volume but focused on building a portfolio of calls that matched the port's capacity, the region's limits, and the expectations of cruise lines. Haugesund built a reputation for smooth operations, efficient logistics, and a shore experience that feels authentic rather than manufactured. That consistency has made the port a safe choice for itinerary planners.'



Andrea Storl,
CEO of European Cruise Service (ECS)





Ivor, owner of **ICON** menswear shop

Local retailers onboard for cruise tourism

Local retailers and service providers adapted their offerings to meet the needs of cruise passengers, fostering a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere.

For example, **ICON**, a menswear shop on the main street of Haugesund reported doubling its daily sales on cruise days, with owner Ivor noting, 'Cruise passengers are customers with real flesh and bone, standing in front of my shop with their wallet open and looking for products to buy. We must sell the right product at the right time at the right price – and we don't do anything special regarding treating cruise tourist different from other customers. Diesel jeans at a discount price is always a winner!'

Describe in one word what you associate with cruise traffic visiting Haugesund!



Word cloud depicting the local resident's view of cruise, by Haugesund Sentrum

and culture in the city centre area. Retail product range includes books, toys, children and family, fashion and lifestyle, groceries and cafes/restaurants.

The association stated, 'Cruise tourism generates a measurable increase in visitor numbers and retail turnover on cruise days, resulting in a clearly observable uplift in commercial activity in the city centre.'

Benny from **Krimz Kramz**, a collector's shop, believes 'cruise tourism has both inspired and challenged local shopkeepers in many ways, with everyone trying to identify what cruise tourists are looking for. There is a mutual respect, where businesses do not try to copy each other, but instead willingly share experiences and discuss opportunities without fear of competing directly. There is also a big difference depending on whether Haugesund is the first or the last port of call: at the last stop, passengers are generally much more comfortable with spending money.'



Owners of **Jaablom Bakst**, selling cup cakes

The owners of **Jaablom Bakst**, selling cup cakes, echoed this sentiment, stating, 'We've noticed a huge difference since Haugesund became a port of call for cruise ships. On big cruise ship days, we often see an additional turnover of between NOK25,000 (€2,200) and 40,000 (€3,400). The locals enjoy it when the streets are lively and full of people.' It does not offer discounts for cruise passengers.

These cruise day financial numbers are also reflected by the owners of **Den Lille Bokbutikken** and **Den Lille Barnebutikken**, a husband and wife owned shop selling books and children's clothing noted, 'on large cruise days, we often see an additional turnover of NOK25,000–40,000', noting revenue has increased substantially since cruise guest demographics have become younger.

Haugesund Sentrum, the city-centre business association, has also played a key role in fostering collaboration among local retailers. It works with marketing and events to create activity and drive traffic to the city centre. It is funded through member fees and a grant/ subsidy from Haugesund municipality.

It offers a combination of independent local businesses and national/ international chains with 200 members across retail, food and beverage, services



Owners of **Den Lille Bokbutikken** and **Den Lille Barnebutikken**, a bookshop and childrens' clothing shop



Benny from **Krimz Kramz**....collector's shop





Haugesund city centre

Headlines from local newspaper Haugesunds Avis



The most significant change the city centre has ever seen



So much fun – it's absolutely buzzing with activity!

Community involvement

Community engagement was a priority throughout Haugesund's development as a cruise destination. Residents were involved in discussions about the impact of cruise tourism, and their feedback helped shape policies to balance economic benefits with quality of life.

Mayor Konrad Bua highlighted the positive impact on the community, stating, 'Cruise has brought a revolution to the city centre. Local people feel proud of their own city when the cruise tourists enjoy Haugesund.'

The cupcake shop owner added, 'Most of the shops here in Haugesund city centre are very happy about the cruise guests, who have made the summer season much busier. We support each other and share experiences if someone has a question.'

Local customers enjoy Haugesund more when there are customers from the cruise ships in the town centre. They also spend more money because the cruise passengers create a 'shopping vibe' resulting in 1+1=3,' noted ICON's owner.

Monica Berstad, chair of Cruise Norway highlighted, 'The local business community and service sector have largely embraced cruise guests in a thoughtful and well-considered manner. The destination company has played an important role in communicating who these guests are, and what contributes to increased trade and positive visitor experiences. Understanding who is on board the different ships, the guests' nationalities and expectations, as well as the responsibility inherent in the local host role, has been central to this work.'

European Cruise Services, Andrea Storl shared, 'The port has been very deliberate in showing that cruise development is something done with the community, not to the community. By being open about both the opportunities and the challenges, the port has built trust. Haugesund has avoided the trap of overtourism by keeping cruise volumes at a level the town can absorb without losing its identity. The port has focused on quality over quantity, ensuring that the scale of operations matches the destination's capacity.'



PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



Controlled access to fragile historic sites like the Viking Farm

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES – ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL

Environmental initiatives

Haugesund has demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. **Key measures include:**

- **Shore Power:** Among the first Norwegian ports to offer shore power, reducing emissions and noise pollution.
- **Waste Management:** Efficient systems to handle waste generated by cruise ships and visitors.
- **Preservation Efforts:** Controlled access to fragile historical sites like St. Olav’s Church and the Viking Farm to minimise environmental impact.

The Port has also implemented a flexible cable management system, allowing maintenance, provisioning, waste handling, and technical deliveries to take place simultaneously while ships remain connected to shore power.

Social Sustainability

The city has prioritised authentic cultural experiences that respect local traditions and heritage. Attractions like Historical Avaldsnes offer educational tours and interactive exhibits, ensuring that tourism enhances rather than dilutes the region’s identity.

The Viking Farm offers a look into Viking life through reconstructed buildings and crafts, while the Nordvegen History Centre provides a journey through 10,000 years of history. St. Olav’s Church, dating back to the 13th century, adds another historical dimension to the visit.

Representatives from Åkrafjorden shared, ‘Approximately 90% of our turnover is linked to cruise tourism. This has lifted our company from NOK2m to NOK12m in annual revenue. The number of employees has grown from 1–2 people to as many as 40 during peak periods when we have large numbers of cruise guests.’

PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



Norway’s national monument Haraldshaugen



PHOTO: FJORD NORWAY



Coastal town of Skudeneshavn

Results and impact

Economic growth

Cruise tourism has revitalised Haugesund's economy, particularly during the summer months.

Key outcomes include:

Retail turnover: Shops in the city centre report significant increases in revenue, with some doubling their daily sales on cruise days. Another has seen business grow overall 37% compared to the pre-cruise ship years (2013).

Employment: Businesses like Åkrafjorden have expanded their workforce from 1–2 employees to as many as 40 during peak periods.

Visitor numbers: Attractions like Historical Avaldsnes and Åkrafjorden have seen substantial growth in cruise-related visitors, accounting for a significant share of their annual guests.

Local-produce: Haugesund Sentrum added, 'Cruise passengers typically display a preference for purchasing

smaller, distinctive, and locally produced items. They also tend to engage more actively with local offerings compared with other visitor segments.'

Community benefits

The influx of cruise passengers has created a lively and vibrant atmosphere in Haugesund, boosting local pride and fostering a sense of community. Residents appreciate the improved infrastructure and the positive impact on the city's image.

PHOTO: JONE TORKELSEN



Cafe in Skudeneshavn

PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



Walking in the park at Haugesund town hall

PHOTO: VISIT HAUGESUND



Locally produced cup cakes





◀ Haugesund Cruise Port: clear signage

well-adapted shore excursion program. This provides guests with flexibility and choice, making the destination attractive to different cruise concepts and market segments. In my view, reliability is a key reason why cruise lines choose to return.' Cruise Norway's Monica Berstad.

'Cruise lines appreciate ports that make their lives easier and Haugesund has consistently done exactly that. Haugesund Port has built a reputation for being easy to work with. Responsive, pragmatic, and solution oriented,' Andrea Storl, European Cruise Services.

Stakeholder collaboration

Strong partnerships between the port authority, tourism organisations, the municipality and local businesses have created a unified strategy that benefits all stakeholders and by maintaining awareness of scale and impact, Haugesund has been able to generate value from cruise traffic while also paying attention to environmental considerations and the character of the city. When cruise activity is managed locally and with transparency, it can contribute to value creation, support local businesses and jobs, without exceeding what the local community perceives as acceptable.

Key success factors

Strategic planning

Haugesund's clear vision and proactive approach have been instrumental in its success. The one-ship-per-day policy ensures manageable traffic and high-quality experiences for visitors.

It guarantees quality and avoids congestion, signalling Haugesund's commitment to sustainability.

Industry engagement

Visit Haugesund is a fully committed member of Cruise Norway, Cruise Europe, and Executive Partner of Cruise Lines Industry Association. Together with the Port Authority in many cases, executives have been attending international trade shows and conferences including Seatrade Cruise Global, Seatrade Europe and Seatrade Cruise Med as well as CLIA events and International Cruise Summit on a regular basis and the port/destination regularly features on Cruise Norway fam trips attended by itinerary planners, port operations and shorex from a diverse selection of international cruise brands calling or planning to call in Norway.

Clear communication and consistency

'Cruise lines value Haugesund for its predictability, clear communication, and efficient handling of port calls. At the same time, the destination offers a compact and accessible city, with the city centre within walking distance of the ship, combined with a varied and



Shore excursion to Akrafjorden



Infrastructure developed alongside the arrival of larger ships



Cruise lines' views on Haugesund

Three executives from cruise lines which frequently call in Haugesund on transit visits as part of Norway itineraries share their views for this case study.

What has been the most significant factor in Haugesund Port's ability to grow its cruise business sustainably over the past 12 or so years?

Meachem: Haugesund Port's early development of infrastructure to accommodate large cruise vessels and its pioneering implementation of shore power have been critical to its sustainable growth.

Puttich: The port's operational efficiency, clear infrastructure, and focus on stakeholder collaboration have been instrumental in its sustainable development. These efforts align with the cruise industry's growing emphasis on responsible destination management.

Crossley: Collaboration between the port, local tourism company, municipality, and political leadership has ensured alignment with local interests while meeting cruise lines' needs. Investments in facilities like the Harbour Park and shore power, combined with Haugesund's strategic location, have positioned it as a modern and sustainable cruise destination.

continued...



Ian Meachem, Head of Technical Port Operations, Global Port Operations Department at MSC Cruises



Marcus Puttich, Director Destinations at TUI Cruises



Abigail Crossley, Director, Strategic Sourcing, Carnival Corp and plc brands



...continued

How do you think Haugesund Port has balanced the economic benefits of increased cruise traffic with the concerns of the local community, such as environmental impact and preserving the town's character?

Meachem: Limiting cruise traffic to one large vessel per day helps manage guest movements and preserve the town's character. Engaging community groups onboard ships fosters understanding of sustainable cruise tourism and its benefits.

Puttich: The port's walkable city centre reduces environmental impact by minimising transport needs while enhancing passenger autonomy and local spending. Its balanced development

model ensures economic benefits while respecting the town's identity.

Crossley: Sustainability and dialogue have been prioritised. Shore power and the Harbour Park reduce emissions and manage traffic, while the berth's location near the city centre ensures manageable visitor flow and preserves the town's charm. Continuous engagement with residents and stakeholders supports economic growth while considering environmental and cultural concerns.

What unique qualities or strategies do you think have made the port an attractive destination for cruise lines?

Meachem: Haugesund's geographic location is a major advantage, along with its ability to cater to large vessels.

Improvements in the welcome centre and traffic areas outside the port gate have enhanced operations, reduced congestion, and improved safety.

Puttich: The port offers a combination of scenic landscapes, accessible city experiences, and high-quality shore excursions, appealing to diverse guest segments. Its walkable city centre and product diversification broaden its appeal while reducing environmental impact.

Crossley: Haugesund's proactive approach, including investments in facilities like the Harbour Park and early adoption of shore power, signals its commitment to sustainability. Its strategic location on the west coast adds itinerary flexibility, making it a natural choice for cruise lines.

Sustainability focus

The Rising Tide by Jason DeCaires Taylor is located in Kvalsvik just north of Haugesund. *The Rising Tide* was originally set in the Thames in London



PHOTO: MARY BOND

By prioritising environmental and social sustainability, Haugesund has positioned itself as a responsible and attractive destination, earning the trust of cruise lines and passengers alike.

'Haugesund's sustainable development of its cruise business over the past 12

years has been driven by a long-term and predictable approach,' according to Monica Berstad, Chair of Cruise Norway. Rather than prioritising rapid volume growth, Haugesund has focused on understanding the entire value chain, its capacity, and how cruise traffic can evolve at a pace aligned with the destination's

broader needs. This strategy has fostered stable, trust-based relationships with cruise lines, supported by consistent and professional port operations and tailored shore excursion programs. Over time, this predictability has established Haugesund as a reliable destination, providing a strong foundation for sustainable growth.





PHOTO: MARY BOND



◀ **Vigleik Dueland**,
director of tourism at Visit Haugesund

From idea to cruise destination....a man on a mission

Vigleik Dueland, director of tourism at Visit Haugesund shares his journey to date and identifies key lessons learnt.

Engaged in autumn 2011 by the local destination company and the port to assess the potential for Haugesund to become a cruise destination, Dueland was asked to take on the role of building awareness and knowledge about Haugesund as a cruise destination in January 2012.

His background was in aviation, where he had worked as commercial director for a small regional airline. He saw clear parallels with that work: identifying market opportunities, developing routes and convincing partners that even a smaller destination can become part of an international network.

Here is his story...

Haugesund, now a prominent cruise destination welcoming hundreds of thousands of guests annually, was once overlooked by passing ships heading to established locations like Bergen, Stavanger and the fjords.

The idea to transform Haugesund into a cruise destination emerged as a way to create business opportunities for the port and generate revenue for tourism, retail, restaurants, transport providers, cultural institutions, and local suppliers. This vision aimed to boost value creation, jobs, and community vibrancy.

Having been hired to assess the situation, my journey began by **attending Seatrade Cruise trade shows and conferences, visiting cruise lines and gaining insight into how Norwegian coastal itineraries are planned and developed.** Equally

important was learning from destinations in Norway that had already been part of the cruise industry for many years.

Many colleagues from other Norwegian destinations were incredibly generous with their knowledge and experience. They openly shared their insights, advice and reflections. This was invaluable learning. Equally important, however, were the people I met within the cruise lines and the broader industry who were happy to share their knowledge in a selfless manner.

At the same time, I discovered something that still characterises the cruise industry today: **relationships matter.**

I quickly realised that dialogue and trust between destinations, ports and cruise lines can often determine whether a destination becomes part of an itinerary – or not.

This has been a fundamental principle in our work ever since.

Haugesund became **active in organisations such as Cruise Norway, Cruise Europe and CLIA**, and we regularly participated in trade shows, conferences and industry meetings. At the same time, we developed **strong dialogue with the agents** who play an important role in connecting destinations with cruise lines.

Collaboration with local stakeholders, including municipalities, cultural



Haugesund Cruise Port has grown from its first cruise call in 2013





Accessible experiences

institutions, and businesses, was essential to create a shared understanding of the benefits of cruise tourism.

Contributing to the local debate on cruise tourism requires knowledge and facts to foster trust and understanding with politicians, media, and the public. While often viewed as marketing platforms, cruise trade shows and conferences also serve as vital learning environments, offering insights through content programs and peer interactions. **Attending these events not only promotes the destination but also equips us to manage cruise tourism responsibly.**

A strong collaboration between the destination company and the port has been absolutely crucial. Also, the **work done on product development** focused on offering attractive and accessible experiences, such as Viking heritage tours and showcasing Haugesund's coastal landscapes and culture for the cruise market has strengthened us in other tourism markets as well.

The process required patience, as cruise itineraries are planned years in advance amidst strong competition. Gradually,

Haugesund gained visibility among cruise planners, leading to its first regular cruise call in 2013. This milestone marked the culmination of vision, collaboration, and persistence.

Another milestone was when Haugesund won Port of the Year at the Seatrade Cruise Awards in 2023.

Today, Haugesund's success highlights the importance of **cooperation, continuous relationship-building, and strategic planning**. I have been fortunate to work alongside highly skilled colleagues who have taken care of other important areas whenever my focus has needed to be on cruise development.

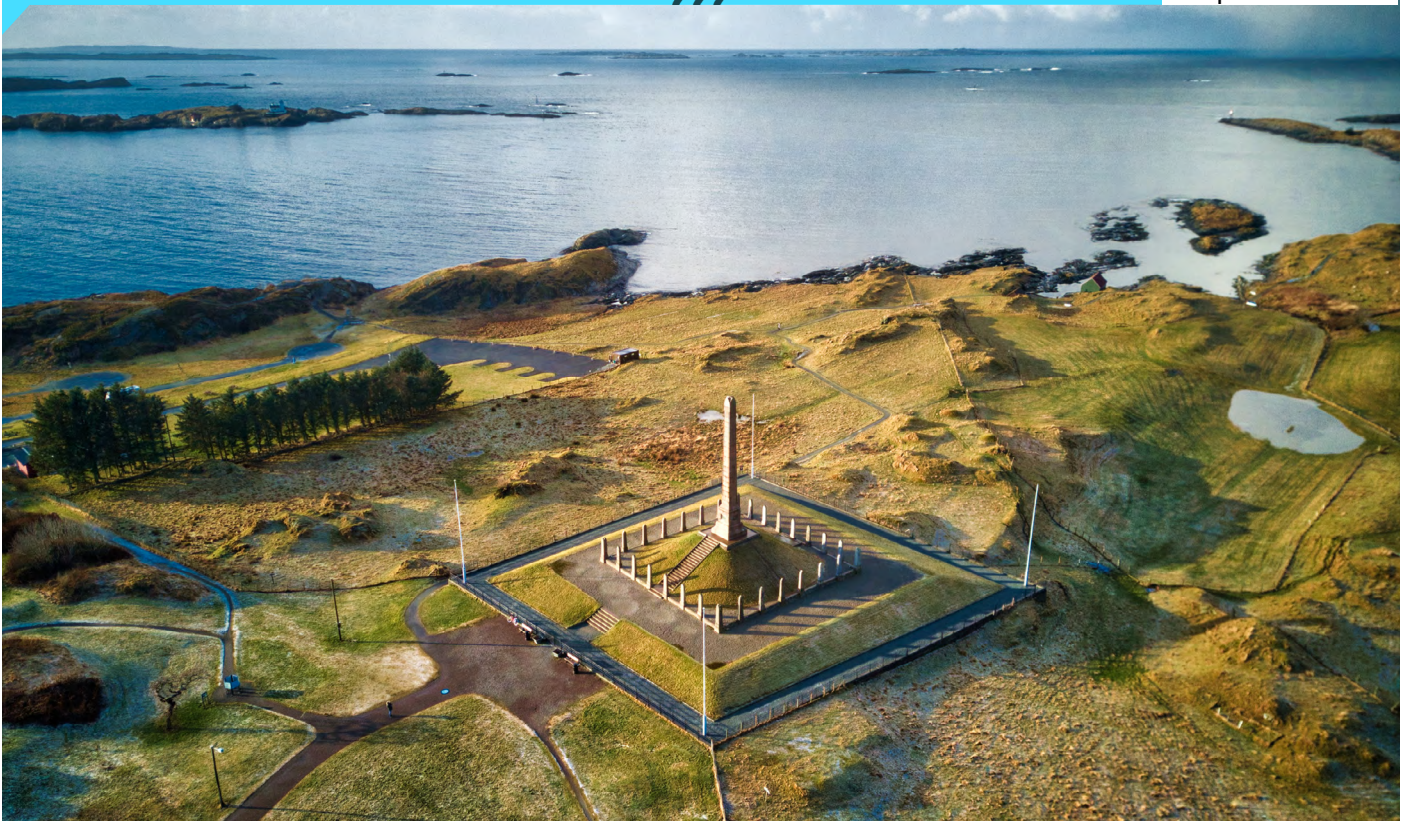
As cruise tourism grows, it demands better information flow, shared understanding, and strategies to balance opportunities for businesses with the interests of the local community. **It's also important to view the tourism industry as a whole. It is not a question of cruise versus other tourism – the different segments support and strengthen each other.**

Dialogue, cooperation and a shared direction must therefore remain central elements of the work in the years ahead.



Seatrade Cruise Awards Port of the Year winner 2023





Norway's National Monument

Lessons learned and recommendations

For Smaller Ports/Destinations

- **Strategic Infrastructure Development:** If an option, decide whether to target large cruise ships or small-medium size and invest in relevant port facilities including mooring points, quay reinforcements, dredging, and shore power technology. These upgrades ensure operational efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Adopt environmentally friendly practices such as shore power and waste management systems to reduce emissions and preserve local ecosystems.
- **Authentic Visitor Experiences:** Develop unique cultural and natural attractions that showcase the destination's heritage and beauty
- **Manageable Growth:** Limit cruise traffic to one large vessel per day to avoid congestion and maintain the destination's charm.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Build strong partnerships with local

businesses, tourism organisations, and cruise operators to align strategies and ensure mutual benefits.

For Cruise Lines

- **Support Sustainable Destinations:** Prioritise ports that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, such as those offering shore power and managing visitor flow effectively.
- **Diversify Shore Excursions:** Offer a range of high-quality, tailored excursions that cater to diverse guest preferences, including cultural, historical, and natural experiences.
- **Engage with Local Communities:** Collaborate with local stakeholders so they understand guest expectations and ensure excursions enhance the destination's identity.
- **Promote Responsible Tourism:** Educate passengers on the importance of sustainable tourism practices and encourage respectful engagement with local communities.

For Government Officials/Local Authorities

- **Long-Term Planning:** Develop a clear vision for cruise tourism growth that balances economic benefits with environmental and social sustainability.
- **Community Involvement:** Engage residents in discussions about cruise tourism impacts and incorporate their feedback into policies to ensure alignment with local interests.
- **Transparent Communication:** Provide clear and consistent information to cruise lines and local stakeholders about port operations, schedules, and capacity.
- **Funding and Support:** Allocate resources to support infrastructure development, marketing efforts, and community initiatives that enhance the destination's appeal.
- **Regulate Visitor Flow:** Implement policies to manage cruise traffic and ensure the destination's character and quality of life are preserved.





PHOTO: NORDICDRONE



Haugesund from above

PHOTO: NORDICDRONE

For Local Communities/Tourism Stakeholders

- **Adapt to Cruise Tourism:** Tailor offerings to meet the needs of cruise passengers, such as extending business hours, improving signage, and providing locally produced goods.
- **Collaborate and Share Knowledge:** Foster mutual respect and cooperation among businesses to identify opportunities and share best practices without fear of competition.
- **Leverage Economic Opportunities:** Capitalise on increased visitor numbers to boost retail turnover and employment, while maintaining authenticity in products and services.
- **Preserve Local Identity:** Ensure tourism enhances rather than dilutes the region's cultural and historical heritage by offering authentic experiences.
- **Support Sustainable Practices:** Work with local authorities and cruise operators to promote environmentally friendly initiatives and maintain the destination's appeal.

And for Haugesund's future journey...

'Looking ahead, it will be important for the town to further build and refine its brand identity to stand out from nearby destinations in Western Norway. By strengthening Haugesund's distinctive positioning – both as a historic Viking seat and as a cozy, coastal town with a strong maritime industry, the destination can further complement a well balanced regional cruise schedule. Continued

development of diverse half day tours, together with adequate shore excursion capacity, will help ensure sustainable cruise growth and reinforce Haugesund's appeal as a unique and attractive port of call for cruise lines,' Carnival Corp. and plc's Abigail Crosley.

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Special thanks to everyone who participated in the research and delivery of this case study.

PHOTO: MATTIAS FREDRIKSSON



Himakånå – family-friendly hiking

