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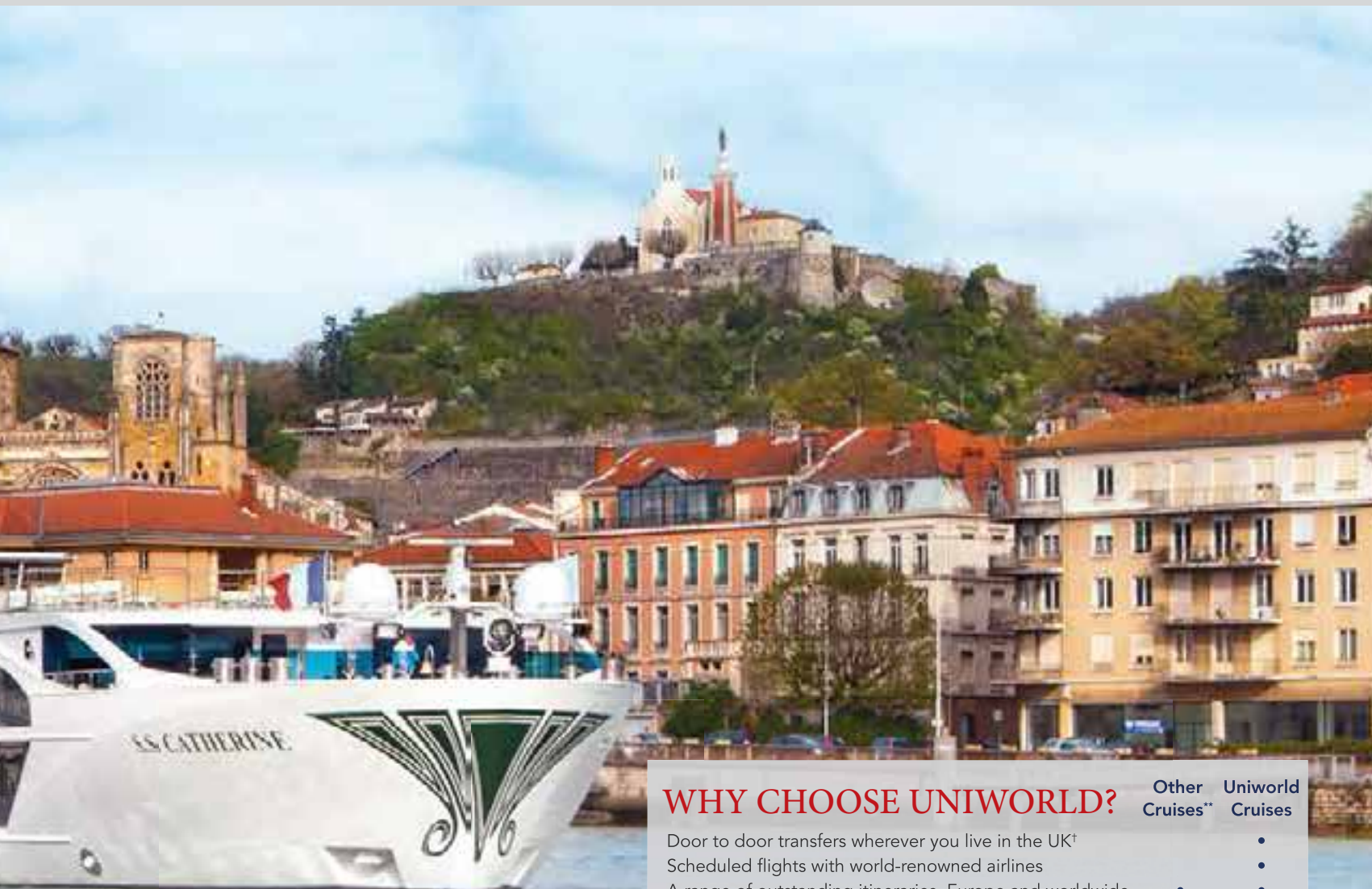
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ANTHONY NICHOLAS took his first cruise in 1981 and has written for *The Scotsman*, *Independent*, and *The Sun*, as well as a number of magazines. Based in the north-east of England, he also writes about hotels, rail journeys, and maritime history



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DANIELLE FEAR, known to her blog readers as *CruiseMiss*, is a freelance writer and social media professional covering all aspects of sea travel. In a 2014 poll conducted by *USA Today* she was one of only two British bloggers to figure in the Top 10



FRAN GOLDEN is an award-winning cruise writer for *USA Today* and author of several travel books including *Frommer's EasyGuide to Alaskan Cruises and Ports of Call*. She has travelled on more than 125 ships but lives in land-locked Cleveland, Ohio, with her husband, writer David Molyneux



BRIDGET MCGROUTHER is a newspaper and magazine journalist. After marrying a Yorkshireman and moving from Glasgow to The Dales, she realised a long-held dream to become a freelance travel writer. Bridget celebrated her 40th birthday on *Hebridean Princess*

Welcome

World of Cruising is on the crest of a wave – our first issue to go on sale in newsagents throughout Britain flew off the shelves and our hard-working crew are now planning the exciting Wave Awards to celebrate the best of cruising.

There's an island theme to this issue – so much so, I was thinking of including a recording of Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers singing *Islands in the Stream*.

We look at the Top 10 islands to visit by cruise ship, take an Azamazing Journey through the Aegean, and sail in search of Paradise in the South Pacific.

There's an EXCLUSIVE insight into the culinary changes coming to Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* and just as we went to press, Saga Cruises announced their first ever new-build ship – full details on our news pages.

While you're planning next year's cruise, don't forget to take out a subscription to *World of Cruising*.

JOHN HONEYWELL
EDITOR





COVER The Seychelles

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white RUSSIAN

The Solovetsky Monastery was built during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, and hides a sinister past as the site of Lenin's first Gulag prison camps. Today, this archipelago in the White Sea is one of the world's most fascinating cruise destinations

TOP 10 ISLANDS: Page 18



News

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALL THE LATEST FROM THE WORLD OF CRUISING

A FIRST FOR SAGA *new build ship to launch in 2019*



A new-build ship for just under 1,000 passengers is on the way for over-50s specialists Saga Cruises. The vessel, scheduled for delivery in June 2019, will be built by the Meyer-Werft yard in Germany which has just completed Norwegian Escape and is working on Ovation of the Seas.

Saga has taken an option for a second new ship for delivery in 2021 but is not prepared to discuss the cost of the contract.

The ships, developed under the code-name Project Olympic, will each have 540 suites, all with balconies. Approximately 15 per cent will be built for single occupancy. There will be single-sitting dining at a range of restaurants, plus indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a spa, sauna, treatment rooms and beauty salon.

The 55,900-ton vessels will be approx. 234 metres long and 30.8 metres wide

Saga Cruises chief executive, Robin Shaw, said: "There is a tendency to cram as

many cabins as possible onto many modern ships, to the detriment of the look, style and comfort. We have tried to keep some traditional elements with sweeping lines, a raked stern, and a funnel that may remind some passengers of our first vessels, Saga Rose and Saga Ruby.

"It will be a new ship, but it will still be Saga. We will retain an intimate small-ship feel, for fewer than 1,000 passengers, a high crew to customer ratio, great public spaces and entertainment facilities and dining can be accommodated in a single sitting.

"We have something very special. There's a different feel from the larger ships and we know how to look after our customers.

Shaw said he was particularly pleased the deal had been done with respected shipbuilder Meyer-Werft, and added: "We don't need roller coasters or dodgems. We are a traditional British cruise line and we will be able to offer something that no-one else can in terms of cruises from the UK."

Lance Batchelor, chief executive officer of Saga plc, who announced the decision at the company's half-year results said:

"The cruise operation remains at the heart of the Saga brand and demonstrates our commitment to deliver excellence in customer service and outstanding value. This investment will be transformational for the cruise business and for our cruise customers. The precise details of the new purpose built ship will be finalised over the coming months but will retain the traditional features our customers cherish."

Research commissioned by Saga into the UK's over 50s spending on travel and tourism, found that spending on cruising is expected to increase by 43 per cent to £2.2 billion by 2020. This compares to £1.65 billion in 2014 out of a total over-50s spend of £41 billion on travel and tourism. Nearly a third (32 per cent) of over 50s in work said they were planning to increase their spending on cruises after retirement.



WORLD OF CRUISING
COLUMNIST **CAPTAIN
GREYBEARD** WRITES:

Rumours of an addition to Saga's two-ship fleet had been growing in intensity for some time, but the announcement of a potential two newbuilds was something of a surprise.

Until now, Saga has relied on "pre-owned" ships – Saga Rose and Saga Ruby were built for the Norwegian American Line and later saw service with Cunard. The Ruby, launched at the Swan Hunter on Tyneside in 1972 was the last passenger ship to be built in Britain.

Current flagship Saga Sapphire began life as Europa, and Saga Pearl II went through a succession of changes before Saga gave her a £20 million refit in 2010.

The initial designs for Project Olympic look striking – it will be interesting to see if they survive intact through the build process and the results of on-going market research.



CHARITY
BAKE-OFF

Staff and crew from P&O Cruises are celebrating hitting the £1 million mark in their fund-raising for charity partner Macmillan Cancer Support. Pastry chef Eric Lanlard baked a special cake for a World's Biggest Coffee Morning event on board Britannia last month. P&O's partnership with Macmillan began in 2013, and the money raised is enough to fund 19 specialist nurses for a year.

PICTURED

Chef Eric Lanlard with Britannia captain David Pembridge, Macmillan's Rachel Gascoigne, and P&O Cruises director Christopher Edgington

*Kitchen
contest*



Marco Pierre White will be judging the cooking skills of celebrities including Blur's Alex James (above) and Boyzone's Keith Duffy during a TV series to be filmed on P&O Cruises' Britannia.

Battlechefs will take place during two Mediterranean cruises with five contestants on each squaring up in the Cookery Club. The series will be broadcast on the Watch channel in 2016.



Battle for the luxury crown



'The most well-heeled passengers will luxuriate in \$10,000-a-night suite already sold out for most of 2016'

Regent Seven Seas Cruises are promising that their new vessel Seven Seas Explorer, launching next summer, will be the most luxurious cruise ship ever.

They are so confident, that they invited a group of US and European cruise journalists to the Italian shipyard where Explorer is being built, just to show us mock-ups of two bathrooms and two suites.

We were not able to set foot on the ship – still very much a building site – and spent more time having a sumptuous Genoese lunch than in assessing the accommodation.

The 56,000-ton ship will be Regent's fourth, and largest to date, carrying just 750 passengers who will have 542 crew at their beck and call.

All the guests will share the opulence of Explorer's Compass Rose dining room and the Canyon Ranch spa. The spacious suites are equipped with almost every requirement and the balconies are far bigger than your average cruise ship's bathroom

The most well-heeled passengers will be able to luxuriate in a suite that is larger than the average house.

The 3,875-sq ft, two-bedroomed Regent Suite has a living room and its own private spa. It's yours for \$10,000 a night, but you'll have to be quick. It has already been booked for all of the cruises in Explorer's maiden season, except for one; the 16-night Transatlantic crossing from Rome to Miami next November.

Rival operator Crystal will no doubt contest the "most luxurious" title when the first of its promised three new ocean cruise ships arrives in 2018.

Few details of the design have been released, but the 1,000-passenger vessel will also carry 1,000 crew. Not to mention a deck of private residences which could – given the investment of sufficient millions from the purchaser – be larger even than Regent's top suite.

Watch this ever-growing space! — JH

CRUISE WEEK SUCCESSES

Travel agents and cruise lines throughout the country are celebrating a successful National Cruise Week, held last month.

Although they pledge to work together to grow the number of holidaymakers turning to cruises, none of the operators was

prepared to put a figure on the amount of business generated by the week's events, for fear of giving away commercially sensitive information to their competitors.

But Andy Harmer, Director of the Cruise Lines International

Association for UK & Ireland, said: "Cruise Week allowed us to demonstrate the great reasons why a cruise ticks all the holiday boxes. We were supported by hundreds of travel agents up and down the country together with dozens of cruise lines.

"We were particularly pleased with the number of visitors to our CruiseFest website where seven mini videos showcased our festival themes of destination, cuisine, entertainment, wellbeing, accommodation, family and boutique cruising.

Ms Koningsdam Maiden Season

Your chance to be onboard the newest ship of any major cruise line to sail in Europe in 2016.

Five star, mid-sized Ms Koningsdam will debut in April bringing a whole host of new and exciting venues alongside the classic elegance for which Holland America Line has long been known.

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7 nights Ms Koningsdam
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Greek & Turkish Treasures

Roundtrip Civitavecchia (Rome)
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Civitavecchia (Rome), Katakolon (Olympia, Greece), Piraeus (Athens), Istanbul (Turkey, overnight), Kusadasi (Ephesus), Rhodes, Iraklion (Crete), Naples (Italy), **Civitavecchia (Rome)**

- Overnight onboard in Istanbul

Cruise from £1,399^{pp}

Fly/cruise from £1,669^{pp}



Christening Cruise

Civitavecchia (Rome) to Rotterdam
11 nights Ms Koningsdam
9 May 2016

Civitavecchia (Rome), Cartagena (Spain), Gibraltar, Huelva (Seville, Spain), Lisbon (Portugal), Vigo (Spain), Cherbourg (France), Le Havre, **Rotterdam (Netherlands)**

- Enjoy pre-christening celebrations
- Overnight in Rotterdam

Cruise from £1,999^{pp}

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Roundtrip Amsterdam
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Explore with the Cloud

Silver Cloud, built in 1994 and the the first ship in Silversea Cruises' classic fleet, is to become a luxury expedition vessel in 2017, soon after the company takes delivery of newbuild Silver Muse. Cloud will have her hull strengthened to allow cruises to Antarctica, where she will carry only 200 guests - about two-thirds of maximum capacity. An armada of 18 Zodiac inflatables will be provided to take passengers ashore and get close up to penguins and other wildlife. Like sister ships Silver Explorer and Silver Discoverer, she will carry a team of expedition guides and lecturers

www.silversea.com

Re-boot

Walking holiday specialists Adagio, part of the Ramblers Worldwide Holiday group, have teamed up with Cruise & Maritime Voyages to provide guided walks for passengers on river cruises to the Rhine, Moselle and Danube in 2016.



JUST HOW BIG IS HARMONY?

Yes, Harmony of the Seas will be the biggest cruise ship in the world when she is launched next year – longer and wider even than Royal Caribbean sisters Oasis and Allure of the Seas. But just how big?

Instead of trying to help out by comparing it to a fleet of London buses, or a collection of football pitches, here you can see the vessel lined up against some of the world's most famous buildings.

All you have to do now is imagine the ship could be up-ended to stand on her stern.



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island, life

Some of the finest destinations in the world are islands, and there's no better way to visit them than by cruise ship. We round up the Top 10

By **LESLEY BELLEW**

Sicily

ITALY

Sicily is blessed with everything Italy has to offer combined with island traditions and a long season of sunshine. Cruise passengers who sail in to Messina can tour Mount Etna, which at 11,000ft is Europe's largest and one of its most active volcanoes, or marvel at the ancient Greek Theatre in Taormina which has Etna and the Ionian Sea as a dramatic backdrop. During 3BC almost 5,000 seats were built into the stone for Greeks to enjoy music and theatre while in 2AD the Romans ripped out the stage to make more room for gladiatorial battles and lion-fighting. Taormina has attracted the elite since the days of the Grand European Tour and in the 20th century D.H. Lawrence, Truman Capote and Cary Grant were regular guests; more recently Madonna has rented a property and fashion designer Giorgio Armani visits from his estate on a nearby island. Back in Messina, if there's time head to the Museo Regional to see Caravaggio's Adoration of the Shepherds (1609), his last painting while on the run in Sicily. He was wanted for murder in Rome but wealthy noblemen lined up to pay him handsomely for his work.

Don't Miss The English Garden created by Lady Florence Trevelyan in 1884. At 27, she was 'invited' to leave England when Queen Victoria realised she was falling in love with the future King Edward who was married to Alessandra of Denmark. Florence found herself in perpetual exile and after two years' travelling settled in Taormina. She fell in love again, with the town's mayor, and the couple bought 70 acres to create the garden which, although now reduced in size, is a public park.

Book it *Seven Seas Voyager* 21 nights from £6,399, departing Dubai on May 2, 2016, www.rssc.com, 02380 682 280; *Royal Princess* 7 nights from £999, departing Piraeus, Greece, on May 21, 2016, www.princess.com, 0843 374 4444, *Crystal Symphony* 11 nights from £2,568, departing Venice, Italy on September 14, 2016, www.crystalcruises.co.uk, 020 7399 7601



Corsica

FRANCE

Take a motorboat from Bonifacio to the Îles Lavezzi on an exhilarating journey past geological wonders of limestone strata created over millions of years.

On the one-hour journey enjoy a diversion into the magical sea cave Grotte du Sdragonatu where part of The Guns of Navarone movie was filmed. Look out for the pyramid of boulders that are a memorial to 700 soldiers who lost their lives when French frigate *Sémillante* was wrecked during a storm on the way to Crimea in the 1855. On the islands, join the Corsicans who laze and picnic on the beaches or take a stroll to get a close-up view of the granite rocks which are nature's answer to Henry Moore sculptures, smoothed by centuries of erosion. On the return boat ride cruise past Cavallo Island and the Pointe de Sperone where Caroline, Princess of Hanover, owns a villa and on the home stretch look up to see houses clinging on the cliff's edge at Bonifacio.

Don't forget Îles Lavezzi are clothed with wild flowers and home to several rare species including the yellow horned poppy and white sea daffodil.

Book it *Le Ponant* 8 nights from €4090 (£2971), departing Nice on May 5, 2016, www.eu.ponant.com, 0800 980 4027; *NeoClassica* 11 nights from £1,059, departing Savona, Italy, on May 30, 2016, www.costacruises.co.uk, 0800 389 0622; *Sojourn* 7 nights from £3,279, departing Monte Carlo on July 7, 2016, www.seabourn.com, 0843 373 2000



Spitsbergen NORWAY

Venture deep into the Arctic Circle where the land glows beneath the midnight sun and keep a lookout for polar bears padding across the glaciers and whales breaching in the icy seas. Spitsbergen rests between the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Arctic Ocean and is the largest island within Norway's Svalbard archipelago. Cruise ships sail in to Ny-Ålesund, the starting base for explorer Roald Amundsen's polar expeditions in the mid-1920s. Here polar bear numbers equal the number of people in the world's most northerly inhabited settlement which is also an important international research station for 200 scientists. In Longyearbyen, the largest and oldest settlement on Spitsbergen, passengers can join a glacier hike or dog-sledding trips while the former mining towns of Pyramidene and Barentsburg are also new ports of call.

Don't Miss Heavy oil ships can no longer sail into Magdalena Bay, so take a tour to this natural inlet where glaciers meet the sea and towering mountain ranges reflect into the crystal clear water to create one of the most beautiful places on earth. The only trace of human life in this pristine, glistening fjord comes in the form of centuries-old whalers' graves and the remains of whaling vats.

Book it **Saga Pearl II** 15 nights from £2,757 departing Dover on June 4, 2016, www.travel.saga.co.uk, 0800 096 0079; **MSC Splendida** 14 nights from £1,539, departing Hamburg on June 10, 2016, www.msccruises.co.uk, 020 3426 3010; **MS Fram** 9 nights from £4,093, departing Longyearbyen on July 20, 2016, www.hurtigruten.com, 0203 393 4057; **MV Polaris** (12 passengers only), 10 nights from US\$10,950 (£7077.30) departing Longyearbyen on August 31, 2016, www.blueplanetexpeditions.co.uk, 0131 618 0713



Solovetsky Islands

RUSSIA

Stalin created his first prison labour camps on Russia's remote Solovetsky Islands in the 1930s and according to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, he did so because 'a scream would never be heard from the mother of the gulag'. Jump on a ship's tender to the main island Bolshoy and the morning mist will rise above the White Sea to reveal the onion domes of 15th century Solovetsky Monastery; the greatest citadel of Christianity in the north of Russia before being turned into a prison during The Great Terror when there was just one rule - praise Stalin or be purged. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, a small brotherhood has returned to the monastery but an eeriness looms over this harsh landscape where slave labourers died building the Belomorsk Canal or were murdered in mass executions.

Don't forget Mosquito repellent

Book it *Minerva* 18 nights from £3,555, departing Kirkenes, Norway on June 23, 2016, www.swanhellenic.com, 01858 897334; *Nautica* 20 nights from £4,939, departing Copenhagen on June 25, 2016, www.oceaniacruises.com, 0345 505 1920; *Silver Explorer* 9 nights from £4,650, departing Reykjavik on August 13, 2016, www.silversea.com, 0844 251 0837



Sao Antão

CAPE VERDE

After a long drive in blistering heat along dusty hillsides enter Paúl Valley – a lush, green Middle Earth and quite the most unexpected tropical paradise on Sao Antão, the second-largest of the Cape Verde Islands. Glossy breadfruit trees lean into the valley while water-loving pumpkin and yam soak up moisture to become plump and sweeter than anywhere else in the archipelago. Mangoes and maize fill every gap in the only Cape Verdean valley with a natural water source. A small community of farmers work the terraced land by hand and live in simple white-washed volcanic stone houses. A criss-cross pattern of banana and coconut leaves make the roofs pretty and practical; moisture runs off the thatch to keep the house dry and ensures the crops get every drop of water. Sao Antão is the greenest of the 10-island archipelago and one of only four which sees any rain. Paúl Valley's produce is much-prized, particularly the 'silver' bananas and premium sugar cane.

Don't miss The romantic music of Cesarie Evora who collected a Grammy for her melodic morna songs, the island's musical gift to the world.

Book it *Saga Pearl II* 21 nights from £2,599, departing Southampton on January 7, 2016, www.sagacruises.com, 0800 096 0079; *Insignia Oceania* 35 nights from £4,829, departing Cape Town on 30 November 30, 2015, www.oceaniacruises.com, 0345 505 1920; *Braemar* 14 nights from £949 cruise only, with flights from £1,199 (from Gatwick and Manchester), departing Tenerife on November 12, 2015, www.fredolsencruises.com, 0800 0355 242



Palma

MALLORCA

Waking up in the sunny port of Palma, the capital of Mallorca, is the classic Mediterranean treat. Superyachts bob in the harbour and a short walk along the sparkling waterfront brings visitors to the magnificent Royal Palace of La Almudaina and Le Seu cathedral, one of the most impressive examples of Gothic architecture in Spain. Take a look inside to see the altar designed by Gaudi and the 1,236-piece rose stained glass window which throws out a dramatic kaleidoscope of light and colour.

If it's too hot, just head to one of the islands 50 beaches!

Don't Miss A walk into the old town and Passeig d'es Born where there are plenty of cafes.

Book it *Norwegian Epic* 10 nights from £723 from London Heathrow to Barcelona with regular sailings from November 2015 through to February 2016, www.ncl.co.uk, 0845 201 8900; *Britannia* 17 nights from £1,229 departing Southampton on April 8, 2016, www.pocruises.com, 0843 374 0111

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Iceland

A record 103 cruise ships have visited Iceland this year and most offer an overnight stay in the arty capital of Reykjavik or the attractive northerly town of Akureyri, which has been voted Best European Destination 2015 by Lonely Planet. For first-time visitors, the Golden Circle takes in a broad sweep of the lava fields, mountains and glaciers of Skaftafell National Park, Gullfoss Waterfall and the Strokkur geyser which regularly shoots a 30-metre column of water for photo-happy visitors. Wildlife enthusiasts have many options; there are boat trips to Faxaflói bay to watch for blue, fin, humpback, minke and sei whales or sailings from Stykkishólmur to see puffins, black guillemots and perhaps white-tailed eagles. Whale-watching tours also leave daily from Akureyri, which sits at the end of Eyjafjörður, Iceland's longest fjord.

Remember Icelanders are a night-time community and after a hard day's work they gather in the geothermal pools and hot baths to relax and socialise. Cruise ship overnights mean passengers can immerse themselves in the Icelandic lifestyle to take a plunge after a busy day's touring.

Book it *Magellan* 11 nights from £1,479 departing London Tilbury on March 1, 2016 (inc overnight in Reykjavik), www.cruiseandmaritime.com, 0844 998 3939; *Seven Seas Voyager* 35 nights from £18,679 departing Southampton on June 6, 2016 (inc overnight in Reykjavik), www.rssc.com, 02380 682 280; *Azura* 14 nights from £1,299 departing Southampton on June 19, 2016 (inc overnight in Reykjavik), www.pocruises.com, 0843 374 0111; *Silver Wind* 12 nights from £5,150 departing Tower Bridge, London on August 5, 2016 (inc overnight in Akureyri), www.silversea.com, 0844 251 0837



The Seychelles

Tropical island fantasies start here. When it comes to swimsuit and advertising shoots, Anse Source d'Argent on La Digue island, is the one of the most photographed beaches on earth, a picture paradise of white powder sand, turquoise waters and stunning bays characterised by smooth granite boulders. This dream location is just one of 115 islands that make up the Seychelles archipelago, deep in the Indian Ocean, about 900 miles off the eastern coast of Africa. Such isolation not only brings unspoilt beauty and tranquillity but an abundance of wildlife. St Anne Island is a designated Marine National Park where snorkellers can swim over the coral reefs with green and hawksbill turtles while Vallée de Mai, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of Praslin Island, is a virgin palm forest preserved in almost its original state. The coco de mer, once believed to grow in the depths of the sea, is the largest seed in the plant kingdom. Rare birds are also found here, including the Seychelles Bulbul and the endemic Black Parrot.

The Seychelles is a member of the Commonwealth and will mark its 40th year of Independence in June 2016. Most cruise lines visit the Inner Islands scattered around the main island of Mahé.

Remember Migrating whale sharks pass Mahé from August to November, with most sightings in October.

Book it *Crystal Esprit* Crystal Cruises' latest venture, a 62-passenger yacht, begins a season of cruising the Seychelles this December. Seven-day voyages around the islands and as far as Desroches will be combined with two-night hotel stays in Dubai. From about £3,300, crystalcruises.com, 020 7399 7601; *Queen Victoria* The Cunard ship will call at the Seychelles capital which shares its name on 11 April 2016, during its World Voyage. Fares for the 38-night sector from Singapore to Southampton (departing 2 April) from £5,899, cunard.co.uk, 0843 374 2224



Belle-Île-en-Mer, Brittany

FRANCE

When a cruise ship drops anchor just off the Brittany coast passengers can immediately see Belle-Île-en-Mer is, as its name suggests, a beautiful island in the sea. Despite the British love affair with Brittany, the French have had this island pretty much to themselves so grab the first tender to picturesque Le Palais where a dramatic star-shaped citadel dominates the port. The unusually stylish fortress built by Vauban is open every day for visitors to explore the seemingly endless sequence of passages, prison cells and dungeons. Impressionist painters Monet and Matisse were more enchanted by the Côte Sauvage, on the wilder west coast, where Monet created a series of paintings including the famous needles of Port Coton. Make a stop there before moving north-west to Pointe des Poulines where the actress Sarah Bernhardt made her home.

Don't Miss One-off boutiques in Le Palais selling original Breton clothing.

Book it **Europa 2** 9 nights from £3,370 (cruise only and includes 5% booking discount until Dec 15, 2015) departing Lisbon on June 19, 2016, www.hl-cruises.com, +49 40 3070 3070; **Sea Cloud II** 15 nights from €6185 (£4,500), departing Dublin on August 20, 2016, www.seacloud.com, +49 (0)40-30 95 92-50; **Silver Wind** 11 nights from £3,479, departing Southampton on August 29, 2016, www.silversea.com, 0208 544 6620



St Helena

It's one of the most remote places in the world, an island of just 47 square miles and with a population of about 4,500. A British Overseas Territory that sets its clocks to Greenwich Mean Time, it is famous mostly for being where Napoleon was exiled 200 years ago. It lies in the middle of the Atlantic, 1,200 miles from Angola. The only way to reach it has been by sea; passengers and cargo share voyages on the RMS St Helena which once operated from Portland, Dorset, but now shuttles between Cape Town and on to Ascension. That's all about to change next year when an airport finally opens on the island's Prosperous Bay Plain – finally bringing an end to St Helena's isolation. Apart from yachtsmen with their own craft, the only other visitors are those on the (very) occasional cruise ships that drop anchor in James Bay and tender their passengers ashore for a few short hours in the capital, Jamestown, or touring the island's narrow roads in a makeshift fleet of taxis.

Don't miss St Helena claims to have more endemic species than the Galapagos; but the creatures unique to the island are mostly insects rather than photogenic birds and iguanas.

Book it **Marina** The Oceania ship makes a stop in Jamestown on 6 December, during a 24-day voyage from Cape Town to Buenos Aires (departing 28 November). Fares from £4,409, www.oceaniacruises.com, 0345 505 1920; **Seven Seas Mariner** visits Jamestown briefly on 17 December, during a 14-night crossing from Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro (departing 9 December). Fares from £3,599, www.rssc.com, 02380 682 280; **RMS St Helena** will continue its regular service to the island until shortly after the airport is brought into use, and will make a final nostalgic visit to London next June. The ship is scheduled to leave Jamestown for the last time on 10 July, rms-st-helena.com, 020 7575 6480



AN AMAZING JOURNEY

At the instigation of Larry Pimentel, Azamara Club Cruises has led the way in adding something extra to stays in port – staying later, offering Destination Immersion, and providing a complimentary special event during every voyage

By **GARY BUCHANAN**



Ill have an f'...in' vodka and coke", boomed a Northern Irish voice at the Pool Bar. Somewhat taken aback, my curiosity was aroused as I watched the brash man in vibrant yellow budgie smugglers place an order with the obliging bartender.

It soon became evident that the passenger had spied a bizarrely-named bottle from his perch at the bar. Surveying the array of spirits on offer, my eyes alighted on Effen Vodka. A quick Google search revealed that the Rapper known as 50 Cent has diversified from music to spirits and invested some of his fortune into the Dutch distiller.

As a premium brand, Effen was not one of the included spirits served on board Azamara Journey. Thankfully, I was out of earshot when the Hibernian guest was presented with his bar bill.

What is included on Azamara Club Cruises – and included in spades - is Destination Immersion. The company has led the way in creating a new selling

point for cruises. Luxury cruise industry veteran Larry Pimentel was appointed president and CEO of Azamara Club Cruises in 2009. He is responsible for the strategic direction and leadership of the boutique, upmarket brand and has ensured its continued growth and success. "Cruising has gone from exploration by sea to building ships that are destinations in themselves, I've reversed this trend and at Azamara we now place the emphasis on land discoveries," he said.

"I researched the motivation behind why people travel and discovered that 22 per cent of Azamara guests had never been on a cruise before. I then asked if longer stays in port would be a deciding factor in booking with us and the emphatic answer was 'yes'. It strikes me as crazy to sign up for a cruise where ports have an element of culture only to sail away in the afternoon, denying guests the opportunity for any in-depth exploration.

"Consequently we created Destination Immersion in our Land Discoveries programme by scheduling



→ multiple overnight stays which allow the opportunity for some night-time exploring.” A quick look at this year’s cruise schedule reveals no fewer than 210 late-night sailaways and 105 overnights in port.

With these tenets of Destination Immersion proving popular, Pimentel has come up with four additional facets that set Azamara Club Cruises apart. With a clutch of catchphrases, he has devised Azamazing Evenings, Nights & Cool Places, Cruise Global, Eat Local, and Insider Access tours.

A mid-summer cruise in the Greek Islands and Turkey provided an ideal opportunity to put these thoughtfully-crafted land experiences to the test. With a sailaway from Santorini at 10 in the evening, there was the chance to sample the Cruise Global, Eat Local concept.

A private tender took our small group to the ferry dock at Athens where a waiting private minibus drove us to the village of . Here we enjoyed authentic Aegean cuisine in the Kallisti Taverna with its expansive veranda overlooking the bustling village square. The meal began with a mezethes of Santorinian specialities such as white eggplant, fava, and domatokeftedes (tomato fritters); the main course was tasty grilled lamb chops and the meal concluded with baklava. All washed down with a most acceptable local Nykteri dry white wine.

After sunset the minibus took us on the short drive to Fira, the island’s capital. We walked through the warren of cobbled streets where the daytime of cruise tourists had been replaced by younger party-goers, and then

boarded the Teleferik cable car for the ride down to the cruise dock at Skala. I witnessed a sight that had eluded me on previous visits to this entrancing destination, as I had always left in the early evening. As we descended, a magical diorama of twinkling lights illuminated the whitewashed cube dwellings, churches, tavernas and hotels. The local tender conveyed us back to the ship beneath an inky-black sky, and I felt assured that Mr Pimentel’s mantras were hitting the right note.

On to Mykonos, an island renowned for its modern hedonism. The main town is a labyrinth of sugar-cubed dwellings with whitewashed walls interspersed with doors and window frames painted an intense blue, and balconies draped with crimson bougainvillea. Churches sit happily next to discos, and widows in black wander entirely unconcerned between the rat-packs of fashionista holidaymakers.

With no Nights & Cool Places event scheduled for my cruise I created my own and headed for a sundowner in Little Venice, where romantic cocktail bars and restaurants are licked by the blue Aegean while the island’s famous windmills complete an impossibly pretty scene that is not so much faked as well-edited, costumed, and choreographed. Returning to Azamara Journey I was back →



Saint John the Evangelist monastery on Patmos



Fira town, Santorini

FAST FACTS

Destination immersion

Azamazing Evenings.....	complimentary
Cruise Global, Eat Local.....	participants pay direct for transportation and restaurant
Insider Access: 3½ hour Daily Life at the Monastery of Evangelismos tour at Patmos.....	\$189
Nights & Cool Places.....	\$50 to \$125

The basics

On board included amenities

Select standard spirits and international beers (such as Gordon’s gin, Finlandia vodka, Cutty Sark whisky, Budweiser. International house wines at lunch and dinner. Speciality teas and coffees. Shuttle service to and from port.

Items not included

Drinks	
Tanqueray gin.....	\$4.95
Effen vodka.....	\$5.95
Glenfiddich single malt.....	\$5.95
Boddingtons.....	\$4.75
DeLoach Chardonnay.....	\$13
Beringer White Zinfandel.....	\$8
Valentin Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon.....	\$7
Nespresso cappuccino in Mosaic Café.....	\$5.50

Laundry

Shirt.....	\$3
Dress.....	\$5

Internet

150 minutes.....	\$69.95
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Spa

La Therapie 50 minute facial.....	\$129 +18% GRATUITY
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Casino

The casino imposes a 5% surcharge for charging money to on-board accounts.

Excursions

3½ hour tour to Lost City Excavations in Santorini.....	\$115.75
3½ hour tour to Ruins of Ancient Delos from Mykonos.....	\$89.75
4½ hour tour to The Heart and Soul of Patmos.....	\$102.75



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'When they are not praying, the convent's 40 nuns grow pomegranates, lemons and figs'

→ in time to join the White Nights dinner and party on the open deck – a feature of every voyage and on this occasion the coolest place in town.

If Mykonos was profane, the next port was sacred. Patmos – one of the northernmost of the Dodecanese Islands – is dominated by the Monastery of St John the Theologian. Within this fortress the library is noted for its collection of more than 200 icons and 6th century Codex Purpureus. Christian pilgrims have been visiting the island since St John wrote the Book of Revelations in the Cave of the Apocalypse during his years of exile in the first century AD. Appropriate then that my 'Insider Access' tour on this tranquil island was billed as Daily Life at the Monastery of Evangelismos.

Our guide Carolyn met us on the dockside and her cultured English accent came as a revelation of its own. She visited Patmos 40 years ago, fell in love with the island, and has never left.

The convent of Evangelismos started off as a small chapel with a hermitage in the 1600s and was rebuilt in 1937, founding the Convent of the Annunciation. The sisterhood is home to more than 40 Orthodox nuns who – when they are not praying – occupy themselves beekeeping, cultivating pomegranates, lemons and figs, and making an incredibly fine Byzantine embroidery called 'spitha,' which translates as 'spark.' They went about their tasks with a reverent demeanour, occasionally giving our small group a smile. It was a unique insight into religious mores isolated from modern-day life.

The Turkish port of Kuşadası is the springboard for excursions to the ancient city of Ephesus – widely considered to be the best-preserved classical site in the Eastern Mediterranean. Having visited the incomparable ruins previously I chose to forego the oppressive heat and instead spent a relaxing day beside the pool, preparing myself for an Azamazing Evening.

Over the centuries, a succession of empires: Greek, Persian, Roman, Byzantine and, finally, Ottoman ruled Ephesus. No matter how many times it changed hands,



FAST FACTS

The ship

TONNAGE	30,277 GRT
PASSENGERS	676
CREW	390

Demographics: on my cruise

UK passengers – 42%; US passengers – 40%

Book it

Fares

A 7-night Croatia & Greek Isles cruise departing Venice on 2 August 2016 and visiting Dubrovnik; Chania; Santorini; Mykonos; and Piraeus, from £1,641.

www.azamarclubcruises.co.uk
0844 493 4016





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
 Celsus Library in Ephesus;
 narrow streets in Mykonos;
 windmills on Patmos;
 Azamazing Evening drinks

the city remained one of the most vibrant in the ancient world. Its greatest claim to fame was its temple to the goddess Artemis - one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; it was almost four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens. Today, a few columns are all that remain, but there is still much that evokes the city's former splendour.

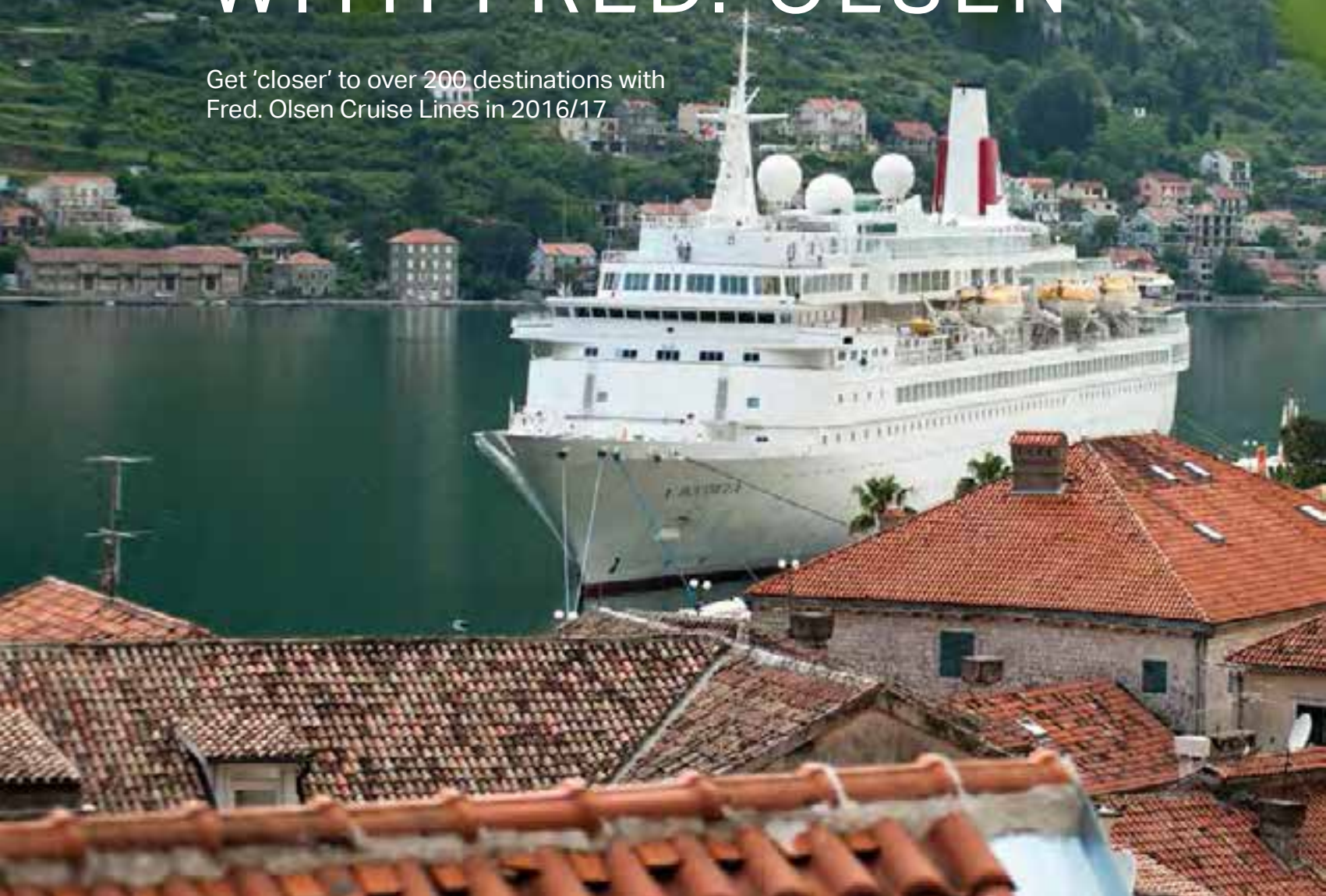
As dusk settled, Azamara passengers were greeted by Roman centurions for their complimentary Journey Back to Roman Times. The 2nd century Odeon Theatre was an entertainment venue for the Roman populace of Ephesus; now, almost 2000 years on, we were to be entertained at a private concert by the acclaimed Camerata Izmir Orchestra, featuring works by Handel, Bach, Boccherini, Borodin, Mozart and Brahms.

Azamara Club Cruises certainly know how to strike the right chord when it comes to showcasing each destination. All too often in this age of discounted cruising, shore excursions cater to passengers whose world is no wider than the tour bus's turning circle. It was a refreshing experience to indulge in bespoke ground arrangements that delve deeper and get under the skin of intriguing ports.

Returning to Azamara Journey from Ephesus I was intrigued to discover this is the Greek name for the showpiece of Aegean archaeology – the Turkish name being Efes. As advertised on countless billboards in the resort of Kuşadası, Efes it is also the name of Turkey's most popular pilsner lager. I wonder how the habitué of the Pool Bar would order a pint of that! 🍺

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Fred. Olsen ships are ideally suited to the traditional British cruise guest. The Fred. Olsen experience is very much a 'home-from-home' feel, offering unique cruise holidays, convenient departure ports and award-winning customer service and cuisine. Once on board, guests will enjoy a friendly and informal ambiance and the crew will quickly get to know them by name. Fred. Olsen ships offer a relaxed and informal style of cruising, yet retain those aspects that make

a cruise such a 'special' form of holiday, such as dressing for formal evenings. Guests can also enjoy a host of sparkling entertainment, from string trios and pianists to musicians, comedians and energetic, cabaret-style dance shows.

GRAND VOYAGES

Fred. Olsen's Black Watch and Boudicca will be embarking on two Grand Voyages in January 2017, visiting a total of 67 ports in 38 countries between them.

Black Watch will be taking in the exotic destinations of Hanga Roa (Easter Island), Bora Bora, in French Polynesia, and three stops in New Zealand – Auckland, Tauranga and Wellington – as well as some stunning scenic cruising of Milford Sound, Doubtful Sound and Dusky Sound, on a 107-night Around the World cruise.

This awe-inspiring journey also takes in a number of ports in Australia, including an overnight stay in Sydney, where guests can visit the famous Opera House, or stroll along the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge, plus a call to Brisbane for a cruise of the Great Barrier Reef.

Guests can choose to take part in a host of spectacular





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Boudicca in Kotor, Montenegro; lush Norwegian scenery; Amsterdam; Braemar in Flam; exploring the Highlands





ABOVE LEFT Cruising the tropics **ABOVE RIGHT** Kayaking in Eidfjord

shore tour experiences during this exotic voyage, including a two-night quest to the lost city of Machu Picchu from Callao in Peru, where they will uncover the vast jungle, rugged landscape and the Lost City of the Incas. Plus, on a visit to Komodo Island, which is only accessible by sea, guests can take a tour to find the National Park's most famous – or 'infamous' inhabitant – the formidable Komodo Dragon.

Boudicca will be offering a 77-night South American Discovery in January 2017, which includes stops in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro and Fernando de Noronha, rich in marine wildlife, lush landscapes and idyllic beaches. In Buenos Aires, guests can take a tour to the magnificent Iguazu Falls. There's also an overnight in Havana, Cuba's bustling capital, where a visit to the renowned Tropicana Club is highly recommended.

THE 'LOCAL' CRUISE LINE

In keeping with its ethos of being the 'local, global cruise line' of choice for UK cruisers, Fred. Olsen has increased its regional coverage during its 2016/17 cruise season. The cruise line's 1,350-guest flagship, Balmoral, will be sailing from Newcastle for the first time, with a record 11 departures, including a five-night Norwegian Festival & Fjords cruise, visiting Bergen during the International Festival; a 10-night UK Castles sailing; and an 11-night Spain, Portugal & Guernsey cruise.

Boudicca will also be cruising from the Cornish port of Falmouth for the first time in 2016, offering a 12-night Canaries & Portugal Spring Break and a 10-night Land's End to John O'Groats voyage.

In Liverpool, Fred. Olsen will be offering its guests a total of 15 calls on Boudicca, including a 16-night Rugged & Rural Canada journey and an 18-night Canaries Christmas & Funchal Fireworks sailing.

In addition, following its inaugural cruise season from Tilbury last year, Fred. Olsen has increased its sailings from the port by 50% in 2016/17, with a total of six departures aboard 804-guest Black Watch, including an adults-only nine-night Cruising the Fjordland voyage and a seven-night European Cities & Waterways experience.

Fred. Olsen's Black Watch will also be setting sail on six cruises from Rosyth in 2016/17, including a nine-night A Taste of Iceland cruise and a 13-night Scandinavian Capitals & St. Petersburg sailing.

OCEAN AND RIVER

Fred. Olsen will be making the most of its smaller-sized ships by offering even more river, fjord and scenic cruising in 2016/17, taking guests close to awe-inspiring scenery. The fleet will be visiting 84 scenic sea passages and

waterways during its 2016/17 cruise season, including the 350-mile Strait of Magellan in Chile which links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; Loch Fyne, one of the longest and finest sea lochs; the beautiful Bay of Kotor in Montenegro; and the wooded Stockholm archipelago.

Fred. Olsen's ships will also be sailing into the heart of cities such as Seville, Rouen and Bordeaux.

THE BEST OF THE FJORDS

Fred. Olsen is offering even more cruises to the Norwegian fjords in 2016/17. With a proud Norwegian heritage and smaller-sized ships that take guests closer to the destination, Fred. Olsen can showcase Norway's scenery in a way that larger cruise ships cannot.

Guests can choose from over 20 Norway itineraries in 2016/17. In addition to an array of summer voyages, Balmoral's 13-night Norway Winter cruise from Southampton is the ideal itinerary to take in some of the country's most outstanding natural wonders, at their beautiful, snow-capped best. There's even a guided trek of Tromsø Island, wearing snowshoes.

So, whether you are looking for a holiday with a difference, or a chance to head for the sunshine, Fred. Olsen has the ideal cruise for you.

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Fred. Olsen's new cruise programme is bursting with over 100 unique cruise holidays, offering adventure, exploration, relaxation, sunshine, culture and 'once-in-a-lifetime' experiences in abundance.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- ★ Two fantastic US adventures on board Balmoral; a 34-night Old England to New England sailing, which incorporates two calls in Bermuda, six American states, three maiden calls and three overnight stays – including Boston and the Big Apple.
- ★ Or a 46-night Central America & the Mardi Gras cruise, on which guests can visit the NASA rocket launch sites, enjoy traditional Southern hospitality and join in the colourful and vibrant Mardi Gras in New Orleans.
- ★ There are even more cruises around the UK and Ireland, including Black Watch's 11-night Tinsel & Hogmanay cruise, offering guests an unforgettable Christmas at sea and Hogmanay celebrations in Edinburgh. Guests don't even need a passport for this voyage provided they have valid photo ID.
- ★ The chance to explore snow-capped mountains and glaciers, and to spot wildlife on Balmoral's 14-night The Wonders of Spitsbergen cruise, with a maiden call to Pyramiden, once a Russian mining town, now eerily deserted.

For more information on Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, visit fredolsencruises.com.

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OF FREIGHT

Grass skirts and smiles on a cruise with a difference. Passengers share their ship with cargo, and they are a curiosity to the islanders in the Marquesas

By **FRAN GOLDEN**

Four days into the voyage, in the tiny village of Hakahau on the island of Ua-Pou, passengers on the Aranui 3 watched as a crane swung a coffin from the ship to shore. Pallbearers met the delivery.

The Romanian-built Aranui 3 is a working freighter connecting the remote Marquesas Islands of French Polynesia to the rest of the world – the name "Aranui" means "the great highway" in Maori. Adventure-seeking passengers enthusiastically come along for the ride.

While the 148 passengers on our cruise had plenty of creature comforts – air-conditioned cabins, a nice windowed dining room, lounging spots indoors and out, a pool – the front half of the ship was all cranes, winches and cargo, packed into containers.

Seventeen times a year on Saturdays, the Aranui 3 embarks from Papeete, Tahiti, on a two-week voyage north into the South Pacific – the nearest of the Marquesas some 800 miles away.

For the 9,000 people who live on the Marquesas, the ship delivers the essentials of everyday life – food, toilet paper, building materials, kitchen appliances, mail, Coca-Cola, bikes, cars – and yes, coffins. The crew once hauled on a helicopter. They have transported a cow.

The Marquesas are a tropical paradise of blue skies, blue sea, tropical forest, jagged volcanic peaks and lush green valleys. When the ship arrives in small villages, half the population might be on the waterfront awaiting their goods – people walking around in bare feet, trucks and cars idling, kids swimming nearby.



That my husband and I had chosen an experience that was different from your standard cruise was clear the minute we got to the cargo pier in Papeete and climbed the steep gangway. A burly crew member with a bunch of tattoos grabbed our suitcases and said "Don't worry, I'm strong."

Stepping onboard Aranui 3 was like a throwback to cruise ships of the 1980s (though it debuted in 2003).

The front desk looked like it belonged in an old Parisian hotel, though with a few Polynesian artefacts. Our standard cabin had a porthole and twin beds that were fixed in place. In-room storage included a locker. The tiny bathroom at least had a well-functioning, curtained shower. Towels and sheets are changed every fourth day.

'Grass-skirted, barely-covered women danced around the pool in welcome'



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
A bare-chested Huka welcome; author Fran and husband David; the Aranui 3 at anchor



FAST FACTS

The ship

BUILT	2003
FLAG	FRENCH
LENGTH	386 FT
PASSENGERS	188
CREW	69

Onboard currency French Pacific franc

Public areas Dining room, lounge, bar, meeting room, boutique, video room, library, small fitness room (also used by crew), pool and sun deck.

What to pack You won't have much storage space so pack light. Attire is casual at all times (the Captain wears a flowered shirt to Captain's Night). Bring lots of sunscreen, long pants and insect repellent with DEET – there are mosquitoes and so-called No-Nos (black flies that bite).

The ship also has more posh accommodations including suites with queen-sized beds, some even with balconies and turndown service. For those on a budget, dormitory accommodations have the sort of cubicles you'd find on an overnight railcar, and shared facilities.

A welcome celebration with grass-skirted, bare-chested men and grass skirted, barely-covered women exuberantly dancing a warrior dance around the pool while passengers sipped rum drinks, set the tone for the week.

At nearly every island stop – and there were 19 in total – muscular crew sweated in the tropical heat unloading supplies while passengers embarked onto the pier or whaling boats outfitted with seats and were whisked away to experience the local culture.

In some villages, the whisking was in cars owned by locals hired by the line to be at the pier at a set time on a set day. Other times we hiked, or sat in open-air trucks. Local guides and crew provided commentary. ➔

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FAST FACTS

The basics

Gratuities

None are expected, but there is a box at reception at the end of the cruise for those who want to leave something.

Drinks

The special Aranui cocktail (*dark rum, Triple Sec, coconut liqueur, banana cream, lime juice and Grenadine*).....**£6.99**
Coffee.....**£1.52**
1 litre of water.....**£1.52**
Gin and tonic.....**£3**

Laundry

There are washing machines and dryers for about **£3.25**. Complimentary laundry service is offered twice each cruise (though they don't do socks or underwear). There is no dry cleaning.

Internet

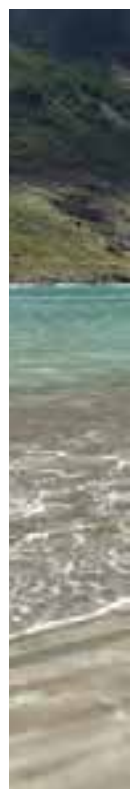
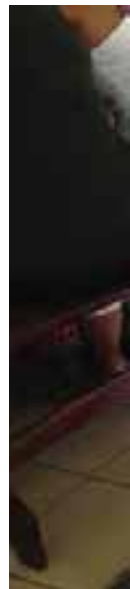
There will be some on Aranui 5, price to be determined.

Spa

There is no spa on Aranui 3. The costs have yet to be determined for massages on Aranui 5.

What's included?

Wine with lunch and dinner (one bottle for four passengers) and all land excursions.



➔ There was also free time to explore on your own – as long as you were mindful of the ship's tight schedule for departure. Some days we visited several ports; only two days were at sea.

An anxious moment came the first day when I discovered the ship had no Wi-Fi, though it was supposed to. I needed to get messages to editors and family.

Exploring the sleepy atoll that was our first stop, my husband and I came across a concrete patio that was clearly the local hotspot – several adults and kids sitting on the ground with cellphones and laptops.

We plopped down too and I tried to fiddle with my cellphone to no avail. Realizing the locals spoke French I tried to translate my needs. That didn't work— my French is pathetic.

A shirtless man, sizing up the situation, silently held out his hand. He borrowed my phone, programmed in his password and gave me a broad smile. The rest of the group paused from their devices to smile too. Saved.

Passengers, ranging in age from 8 to 90, were German- French- and English-speaking in that order. Unfortunately, the English-speaking lecturer called in sick for our cruise – the crew improvised before finding a replacement several days into our sailing.

Still, we learned that the Marquesas were visited by Spanish explorers, Captain Cook, whale hunters and French missionaries and that some of the visitors brought diseases ➔





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
 Ua Poa island; smiling child;
 unloading cargo; island views;
 Tino Tsien Young is the chief
 of the cargo operation; surf's
 up; island girl on Ua Haka;
 island tranquility



➤ that almost wiped out the population, once 100,000 strong; how the missionaries also tried to eradicate such customs as tattooing and huka dancing (which have only recently made a comeback); and how the French tested atom bombs nearby until 1996.

Helping establish a strong sense of place, the hardworking cruise director, Manaril Maruhi, conducted classes in ukulele playing, drumming, grass weaving, tying pareos (dyed cloth worn as clothing) and huka dancing. He even taught a class on how to prepare poisson cru (raw fish with coconut milk and lime).

Manaril was endearingly enthusiastic. "Have fun. If you lost your smile I will try to find it," he exhorted.

Sometimes the scene was like Club Med on the high seas, complete with a sexy air. Watching a bare-chested Manaril gyrate his hips in a dance class, one passenger commented she needed a "cold shower." Passengers weren't the types that need much entertainment. They came onboard armed with books and Kindles, borrowing volumes about the South Pacific from the ship's library.

Still, night owls found entertainment in



the top-deck bar – where the Aranui Band (a cook, an officer, a cargo guy) played island tunes on a ukulele, drums and a homemade bass.

Lunch and dinner onboard were each an event, with two seatings a half-hour apart to give the flowered shirt-clad crew time to properly serve three courses – an entrée, main and dessert. You could sit anywhere you wanted.

The cuisine was French-meets-Polynesian and surprisingly good – a taste of foie gras here, caviar there, lots of fresh fish. The pastry chef showed skill with desserts. Bottles of complimentary wine were on each table.

Special requests were difficult, however – one man who was a fussy eater had the same

'Watching the bare-chested cruise director gyrate his hips in a dance class, one passenger said she needed a cold shower'

main of a thin steak and fried potatoes every night. Vegetarians were still served fish. The best approach here is an open mind.

The breakfast buffet has your standard cereal, scrambled eggs, bacon, fresh tropical fruit and bread.

There were also lunches at onshore restaurants. On Nuku Hiva, where Herman Melville jumped a whaling ship in 1842, we munched on the Marquesan specialties of pig baked underground, poisson cru and mashed breadfruit.



With the ship bringing us from one beautiful bay to another, we toured sacred sites, viewed tikis, visited artisan markets and hiked jungle trails and black sands.

Some islands were more memorable than others. On Hiva Oa, the rugged beauty (and beautiful women) of Atuona attracted French painter Paul Gauguin, who is buried in a mountaintop cemetery overlooking a green valley. Nearby is the grave of Belgian singer Jacques Brel.

On Tahuata, where Spanish explorers arrived in 1595 (and killed 200 curious locals), and where the French first settled in 1842, we toured a cathedral built by the Vatican.

At the end of our cruise, the popular Tahitian tourist island of Bora Bora brought us startlingly back to civilization.

The biggest lesson we had learnt came from the ship's cargo chief, reminding us that in the Marquesas, we ourselves were a curiosity.

"The magic of this ship is to mix a people with another people," said Tino Tsien Young. "When we look at you we see the complexity of the world."

In 2016 the Aranui 3 is due to be replaced by the new, 254-passenger Aranui 5 (the Chinese owners skipped the unlucky number, 4). The \$40 million ship has 103 passenger cabins in eight categories ranging from dormitories to a presidential suite. Suites and deluxe staterooms have balconies. The new ship adds additional public areas including a second lounge, a dancing room, a massage room and bars including a Sky Bar with sweeping panoramic views, plus a whirlpool at the pool. ⚓

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Tikis on the island of Ua Huka; crew member shows off his tattoos; tendering ashore

BOOK IT

When to go

Weather in the region is consistent year-round, warm temperatures.

Fares

For 2016, a standard cabin on the Aranui 5 is from about £2,918 per person, including taxes and port charges. The starting price for dormitory accommodations is from about £1,722.

Booking

UK travellers can book via the line's representative in France: Vaima Devimeux, Représentation Europe, PARIS, FRANCE, Tel: 00 33 (0)1 43 31 25 34, e-mail: brochures@aranui.info.

www.aranui.com

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The Seahorse Pool on Crystal Symphony ; Serenity in Geirangerfjord; Backgammon by the pool; Serenity's Cove Bar; Golf with a professional



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will take guest space up another level. The new ships will be 100,000 gross tons and still carry just 1,000 guests - that's a world-beating 100 gross tons per passenger - an industry first! There will also be 1,000 crew on board - one for every passenger.

QUALITY

Our all-Inclusive cruising includes fine wines, premium spirits, Champagne and beers throughout the ship; speciality dining in the most exquisite restaurants; complimentary soft drinks, bottled water and speciality coffees, and pre-paid gratuities for all housekeeping, bar and dining staff as well as butler service in our penthouses.

On board you can relax in a range of luxurious staterooms and penthouses where your every need is catered for. Take for example Crystal's PURE rooms - allergy sufferers can enjoy a holiday free from their discomfort in

THE ALL INCLUSIVE





our hypoallergenic staterooms. Each room has undergone PURE's seven-step air and surface purification process to remove allergens and reduce the risk of common irritants. Among the many steps to maintain this, a state-of-the-art medical grade air purifier in the cabin filters out 99.9% of all impurities and dust.

CHOICE

Choice is the buzzword for Crystal in every aspect of a cruise.

Your days can be filled (if you wish) with endless enrichment and entertainment including wine tasting seminars; hands-on cooking classes with celebrity guest chefs; art classes with Odyssey Art at Sea; bridge classes with ACBL instructors and Crystal Visions enrichment lectures featuring world renowned politicians, sports personalities and Hollywood royalty to name but a few.

But we don't stop at enriching just your mind, your body can also be pampered at the Crystal Spa offering an exotic Elemis Spa Therapy menu, or how about a complimentary fitness class including Pilates and yoga in the

state of the art fitness centre; expert instruction from Crystal Cruises' certified PGA golf pros, or enjoy a game on the full size paddle tennis courts or take a stroll around the broad, teak promenade deck?

Award-winning Broadway-style entertainment is presented each evening, including regular performances by one of the world's best Elton John tribute acts, and the iLuminate show which came to fame on America's Got Talent. Recent release films are shown in the surround-sound Hollywood Theatre accompanied by freshly popped popcorn; close up magic from members of the Magic Castle and the opportunity of a flutter in the Resorts World at Sea casino...

Sample up to seven dining options including speciality restaurants Silk Road and the Sushi Bar which feature the cuisine of renowned restaurateur Nobu Matsuhisa, and Prego with the delicious flavours of Northern Italy.

The choices don't end when you step ashore – our two ships travel the world, cruising

every ocean and visiting every continent. More overnights in port allow for further exploration, especially in your embarkation and debark destinations where guests often see nothing other than the airport.

Crystal's curated collection of more than 2,000 Crystal Adventures® shore excursions provides an enriching insight and privileged access to the world's most fascinating destinations, both popular and undiscovered, but you can also be as independent as you like too, with port maps and a complimentary shuttle in most ports.

Add to this, outstanding first class service from our attentive crew; elegant and sumptuous ships; and some 63 different itineraries visiting numerous ports throughout the world and it is understandable why Crystal guests return again and again.

Over the next three years, Crystal Cruises will introduce new ships – effectively establishing three brand new classes of cruising in Ocean, River and Yachting – as well as its own Boeing 787 Dreamliner and a second aircraft for Crystal Luxury Air.

All échange FOR MAGELLAN

How the excesses of Farcus-designed fun ship Holiday have been toned down to suit a more mature British clientele

By ANTHONY NICHOLAS



There was something incongruous about the sight of the familiar Carnival whale tale funnel, looming against the dawn fastness of a silent Norwegian fjord.

Only the chugging of a small motorboat disturbed a moment so still that it could have been frozen in time itself. Yet here we were, swinging idly at anchor in the still waters of Aurlandsfjord, almost within touching distance of the railway terminus at Flåm

And here was I, staring up at that alien and unexpected sight. That funnel belongs to Cruise and Maritime Voyage's new flagship, the Magellan, originally built in Denmark as the Holiday for Carnival in 1985. The still-sprightly ship is now carving a very popular niche for herself in the UK holiday market after a chequered past which included a spell with the Spanish operator, Iberocruise, and separate stints providing accommodation for victims of Hurricane Katrina and later for visitors to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

The transformation from hedonistic Carnival Fun Ship into a warm, welcoming matriach intended —>



FROM TOP Magellan at sea; Lido bar; main reception lobby; show lounge



to serve the British adults only market had to be very comprehensive. Out went all the whimsical, Joe Farcus-inspired neon and glass play zones, and in came a toned down, quite refined Scandinavian look that has given this ship an almost entirely different persona again.

It's most apparent in the cool cream furnishings and pale, Swedish style pine-finished tables that line the broad main thoroughfare along the starboard side of Deck nine. Flanked by a line of floor-to-ceiling windows, the entire area is an expansive, elegant procession of bars, clubs and lounging areas that flow from one into the next in a simple, clean and symmetrical line.

Passenger flow along this extraordinarily broad corridor is very good indeed. It is made possible by the wide beam of this ship, which also permits her an extraordinary amount of open deck space. In the fine, late summer weather that we savoured on our voyage to Norway, these open decks were full of sun worshippers well into the early twilight hours.

Especially nice is the original, well-deck pool area, placed in a central position just forward of the funnel. Surrounded by terraces, bars, and a grill, this contains the larger of two main pools. The second is set aft on a broad, open deck that offers spectacular views from the stern and is flanked by a pair of small hot tubs, which I found ideal for a gentle soak deep in the middle of the vast, visual smorgasbord that is Eidjford.

'The open decks were full of sun worshippers well into the twilight hours'

With most of the passengers on excursions ashore, it was sheer bliss to kick back for an hour to savour the sight of waterfalls threading their way through the pine carpeted, fog shrouded ravines and plunging straight into the water all around me.

This area also contains a circular open-air bar on two levels, a perfect vantage point for people-watching when the weather is good.

A few decks further down, under the shady overhang of one of the aft decks, Cruise and Maritime has created a lush outdoor lounging area covered with an artificial lawn and sprinkled with comfortable, club style chairs, sofas and tables. It is, quite simply, one of the most delightful and indulgent little retreats I have found on any ship and would not look out of place on a Crystal or Silversea vessel.

This lovely area - just as wonderful under a blanket of stars as a mellow setting sun - was created out of the old children's wading pool and play area, and it typifies the way in which CMV's re-vamp of the ship matches the taste, style and expectations of its newer, more mature clientele.

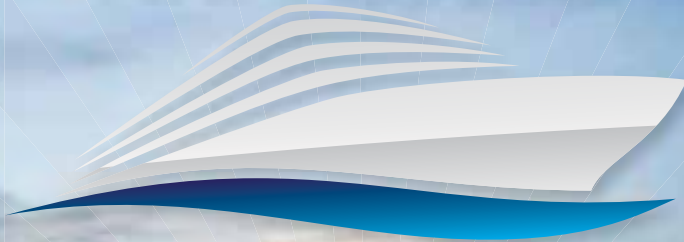
So popular has Magellan proved that the ship will operate a full, 117-day round the world cruise in 2017, a role no one could ever have foreseen in its Fun Ship days.

The high, boxy shape of the ship allows for a selection of roomy cabins, which are provided with comfortable beds, wardrobe and drawer space that is pretty much adequate for a cruise of up to 14 days. From next year, they will all get tea and coffee makers. Several twin cabins, inside and out, are reserved for single passengers for a relatively modest supplement of 25 per cent.

Many people will be pleasantly surprised to realise just

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Lido plunge pool; the lavish spa; de luxe balcony suite; Waldorf restaurant; the Livingston library

→ how much traditional teak decking this ship has but, in fact, that was a staple of all this original Carnival trio of mega ships.

Magellan's food shows a wide range of taste for her target clientele, and it was consistently good. The ship has two main dining rooms- the midships-located Kensington and the aft Waldorf - which both serve two main sittings for dinner. Stretching the width of the ship, they are bright, smartly-served venues with a good amount of space around the tables. There is also a large, aft facing lido buffet, ideal for those interested in spending more time in their swimwear than in formal clothes.

The bottom line on this ship is that you can be as casual or as chic as the whim takes you, and both are equally enjoyable. While the midnight buffet has finally gone as a cruising staple, Magellan did put on one lavish, flashy 'buffet magnifique' that was devoured with surprising speed by passengers who had finished dinner only an hour or so before.

While the dress code on board is largely casual, I was impressed by just how many people made the effort to dress for dinner on formal nights. The sight of couples in formal dress, sauntering into the post-50selegance of Sinatra's Bar was quite special. There was some live music through the ship but Magellan definitely needs a bigger entertainment handle than the one that she currently boasts. In

particular, it would benefit from a small jazz combo, one that could really be a big draw.

There is a decent-sized fitness room for those wishing to avail themselves of such instruments of torture, and also a lavish spa complex located aft on Deck 9. Even the pre-treatment area here has a lovely little group of steamer chairs for lounging.

To my mind, this is an artfully updated, finely styled ship with a wealth of places to eat, play, or be as sociable or solitary as the mood takes you. At 46,000 tons she is big enough, and yet not so big as to lose the sense of real,

sociable intimacy that Cruise and Maritime is striving to build. My six nights aboard Magellan passed way too quickly.

For her new owners, the ship has proved to be an inspired buy, and she is selling very well indeed. Practical and warm rather than pretentious and way over the top, Magellan is ideal for couples and singles who just want to get away on a smart, well run ship mercifully light on gimmicks, but long on comfort and space.

With itineraries ranging from two night party cruises to the full, three month world cruise quoted earlier, this new entry into the British market is worth a look. Coupled with the convenience of being able to sail from ports such as Newcastle, Dundee and Tilbury, Magellan is a sound, solid product. ⚓

FAST FACTS

The ship

TONNAGE	46,052
BUILT	1985 (rebuilt 2010)
LENGTH	726 FT (221.30m)
PASSENGERS	1,250
CABINS	726
PASSENGER DECKS	8

The extras

Drinks	
Speciality coffee.....	£3.40
One beer.....	£3.40
Small house wine.....	£2.60
Laundry	
Blouse (iron only).....	£1.85
Shirt (iron only).....	£1.60

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Springtime Fjordland



Magellan departs London Tilbury:
Saturday 26th March 2016, 6 nights

London Tilbury - Ulvik* - cruise Hardangerfjord - Eidfjord - cruise Sognefjord - Flåm - Bergen - London Tilbury.

Standard Twin Inner from			Standard Ocean View from		
Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult	Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult
£829	£629	£319	£1149	£869	£439

Land of the Northern Lights



Magellan departs London Tilbury:
Tuesday 16th February 2016, 14 nights

An amazing display of purple, blue, pink and green light dancing across the dark sky of night, the spectacular Aurora Borealis is one of nature's greatest wonders. This incredible voyage along Norway's beautiful coastline ventures high above the Arctic Circle where by day you have the opportunity to try your hand at wintry experiences, and by night, if atmospheric conditions are right, you have the chance to witness the incredible Northern Lights.

London Tilbury - Ålesund - view Svartisen Glacier - Tromsø - Alta (overnight) - Honningsvåg for North Cape - Sortland (Vesterålen Islands) - Åndalsnes - Bergen - London Tilbury.

Standard Twin Inner from			Standard Ocean View from		
Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult	Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult
£1869	£1309	£659	£2599	£1819	£909

Fjordland Splendour



Magellan departs Dundee:
Sunday 17th April 2016, 8 nights

Dundee - Ulvik* - cruise Hardangerfjord - Eidfjord - cruise Sognefjord - Flåm - cruise Nærøyfjord - Geiranger - cruise Geirangerfjord - Bergen - Newcastle Tyne - Dundee.

Standard Twin Inner from			Standard Ocean View from		
Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult	Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult
£1099	£829	£419	£1529	£1149	£579

Majestic Fjordland



Magellan departs Newcastle Tyne:
Saturday 2nd April 2016, 7 nights

Newcastle Tyne - Dundee - Ulvik* - cruise Hardangerfjord - Eidfjord - cruise Sognefjord - Flåm - cruise Nærøyfjord - Bergen - Newcastle Tyne.

Standard Twin Inner from			Standard Ocean View from		
Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult	Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult
£969	£729	£369	£1339	£1009	£509

Majestic Fjordland



Magellan departs London Tilbury:
Wednesday 27th July 2016, 7 nights

London Tilbury - cruise Hardangerfjord - Eidfjord - cruise Sognefjord - Flåm - Hellesylt* - cruise Geirangerfjord - Geiranger - Bergen - London Tilbury.

Standard Twin Inner from			Standard Ocean View from		
Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult	Full Fare	1st Adult	2nd Adult
£999	£799	£399	£1369	£1099	£549

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CRUISING AT *christmas*

Why floating in a winter wonderland could be the best way to spend the holiday

By DAVID FISKE

Classic storybooks colourfully paint Christmas as a tale of the perfect family unwrapping gifts, feasting on a grand banquet and celebrating the birth of Christ.

Sadly the reality can be somewhat different. Families get tangled in petty arguments, children attempt to mask their disappointment at not receiving the gifts they had asked Santa for, and as for the fabled feast, this typically consists of inedible food that bears no resemblance to the idyllic spread that celebrity chefs would have us believe can be created effortlessly.

Even if a bearable day could be achieved it might be thwarted by the weather, bringing yet more misery and chaos to the country. With bookmakers offering odds of 4/1 of a white Christmas in London this year it is no surprise that thousands will flee from another potentially dreary Christmas at home and take to the high seas instead.

By mid-December most cruise ships will have been transformed into floating winter wonderlands, enthusing children and filling adults with a warm sense of nostalgia.

Oversized Christmas trees adorn atriums, each dressed in twinkling lights; 60,000 baubles will be used across the MSC fleet alone! Elaborate garlands are draped across grand staircases while red Poinsettias set a festive undertone.

Festive music dominates the entertainment schedules inevitably resulting in passengers humming their favourite tunes to themselves on the walk back to their cabins. Seasonal production shows and pantomimes take centre stage alongside impromptu performances by choirs formed of children, passengers or crewmembers.

Wintry model villages appear, as do classic train sets. Small settlements of gingerbread houses are carefully crafted and Disney takes this to the extreme as their chefs construct an edible, life-sized gingerbread house on each



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Hurtigruten's MS Nordlys; Disney Magic's atrium; decorating the lobby with Holland America Line; A gingerbread house scene on Hurtigruten

of their four ships. Disney Dream's house, the largest in the fleet, typically takes 320 hours to build and occupies 22 square metres. Consisting of 3,750 gingerbread bricks and 1,500 gingerbread roof tiles this creation is as much a feat of civil engineering as a culinary project.

Crewmembers chip in to help make guests feel more festive. Azamara produces a video with each crewmember wishing passengers a merry Christmas in their native language and on Hurtigruten's ships crew and passengers work as one to create decorations for the Christmas trees on-board.

Father Christmas makes an appearance on most family-friendly cruise ships and may deliver small gifts to children - this year P&O Cruises will distribute 21,000 gifts to its guests. Children are also encouraged to write a

'Spare a thought for the nation of crewmembers who will spend the day hard at work'



→ letter to Santa and Carnival installs red mailboxes in its atriums for this very purpose.

Christmas Day celebrations revolve around the gluttonous consumption of fine foods. Most ships offer the traditional roast turkey with all the trimmings as the centrepiece. Seabourn opts for a duck main course instead and Princess and Crystal also offer goose as an option. Gourmet touches include Crystal's chestnut stuffing, Princess' gingerbread mousse, and Saga's addictive mince pie ice cream.

Behind the scenes military precision in the galleys is required to serve Christmas dinner to thousands of guests per sitting. P&O's chefs prepare 1,100 turkeys in a carefully choreographed operation that puts most amateur chefs – and some professionals - to shame. Meanwhile Silversea's chefs prepare up to 6,600 six-course gala dinners across its fleet.

Traditions and customs for each cruise line are deeply engrained and their menus allow for a creative fusion of traditional dishes and regional delicacies. Costa injects Italian options into their proceedings by offering Cappelletti in Brodo (traditional pasta in broth). Silversea also looks to its Italian roots with its chefs producing 2,200 Panettone (sweet bread loaves). In line with its Norwegian heritage Hurtigruten serves 'Julekake', a sweet Christmas bread with raisins, candied lemon peel, nuts and cardamom. Some lines, such as Carnival and Regent Seven Seas, turn to America for inspiration and offer pumpkin pie as a dessert while British ships prefer Christmas pudding; Fred Olsen will dish up nearly 11,200 servings.

Christmas is a time for indulgence which may explain how Fred Olsen guests devour 89 tins of Quality Street and in excess of 3,700 marzipan holly leaves during the



festive period.

Gallons of Glögg, Glühwein and eggnog flow in abundance and many choose to celebrate with a glass of Champagne. During the festive period Silversea passengers work their way through 2,500 bottles of fizz in addition to 12,000 bottles of vintage wines.

Little escapes the festive treatment, least not High Tea, or Afternoon Tea, which sees cookies, mince pies, pastries, Stollen (a traditional German fruit cake, often filled with marzipan) and traditional Christmas cake added to the platters.

The true spirit and traditions of Christmas are never far away though. Some cruise lines, including Saga, use →

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Watching reindeer during a Hurtigruten excursion; a Christmas swim with Holland America

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the annual occasion to raise money for good causes. Cruise lines are also aware that not everyone celebrates Christmas in the same way or even at all. The Jewish holiday Hanukkah is often celebrated on-board and inter-denominational church services are normally held. P&O beams the Queen's speech live to its ships.

It is not just tourists who will be spending time away from home this Christmas though. Spare a thought for the veritable nation of crewmembers who will spend the day hard at work, as will the dockworkers, who will moor over 100 cruise ships across the world. Surprisingly, fewer than half of cruise ships sailing in December will spend Christmas Day out at sea.

By December all ships will be in prime locations across the globe designed to satisfy passenger thirst for perfect weather, picturesque destinations and immersive culture. This year the Bahamas will be one of the busiest regions, with the population of Nassau swelling by up to 20,000 people on Christmas Day. It is also where Norwegian Escape, launched this month, will spend her first Christmas. Royal Caribbean, NCL, and Disney will all be making full use of their own private islands in the region too.

Small and mid-sized ships retreat to quieter destinations. Azamara Quest will call at Komodo, home to the largest lizard on Earth and a rare pink sand beach. Instead of watching re-runs of the animated film Madagascar on the television at home MSC Sinfonia's passengers will experience the vast island for themselves, calling at Tôlanaro.

Celebrity Infinity will be cruising the Strait of Magellan while Holland America's Zaandam will be cruising the Chilean Fjords and Seabourn Quest will be cruising by the El Brujo Glacier providing guests with a welcomed distraction from the festivities.

Hurtigruten steals the award for the busiest cruise ships at Christmas though. Their fleet of working vessels call into as many as eight ports along the Norwegian coast in a single day.

Ports of call allow guests the opportunity to explore a destination but for those wishing to attend a church service

some cruise lines, including Carnival, will offer directions to local churches.

Sadly not all the port calls on Friday 25 December will be filled with the same levels of excitement. Bizarre scheduling decisions made by several cruise lines means that passengers of Carnival's Ecstasy and Inspiration, P&O's Azura and Royal Caribbean's Quantum of the Seas will be trading in their festive feasts and yuletide drinks for scant meals at airports as they await their flights home.

A cruise in December is a chance to escape the monotony of another depressing Christmas at home. It may not prevent the seasonal family quarrels and it may not mask the fact that the kids haven't received the gifts they were expecting but at least you can offload the stresses and strains work to an army of crewmembers who will ensure you have a holiday to remember. ♣

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Santa creeps up the stairs on a Celebrity ship; A family celebrates Christmas morning with Celebrity; the Disney gingerbread house; festive treats on MSC Splendida; a Christmas performance in the atrium on a Celebrity ship

A complete list of Christmas 2015 cruise line itineraries can be found at www.worldofcruising.co.uk/christmas-2015



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THERE'S BEEN A *murder*

A cruise holiday is not always about the ship or the destination – there's plenty of entertainment to be had on board, and it's all the more enjoyable when the passengers don't just sit back and watch, but actually get involved. We travelled on a crime-themed cruise aboard Saga Sapphire

By **DANIELLE FEAR**

This morning a cabin steward attempted to deliver a room service order to suite 8010. He knocked several times but there was no answer so he opened the door using his master key. Inside he found the body of Roscoe Barth, gagged and tied to the bed. His torso was covered in burns and he had clearly been dead for several hours.

The Clues

During an investigation of the suite, several items of importance were found. Clues that could potentially unlock the mystery and catch the killer. First of all we have a gentleman's wrist watch that stopped working at 10:45pm – does this indicate time of death? A piece of broken plastic was attached to a lock on a suitcase, a Geiger counter was found in the wardrobe, and most important of all, a note was found in Roscoe's pocket, which read "the nuclear material is in your cabin. I need the money by noon today or I will be forced to offer it to the next highest bidder. G.W.".

A post-mortem revealed the cause of death was third-degree burns to the body, which gave off worryingly high levels of radioactivity. A toxicology report showed alcohol was present in the blood.

The Suspects

All those on board – passengers and crew – were questioned, and six individuals were highlighted as potential suspects. At first glance it seems as if each has an airtight alibi, but someone is lying.



MARA CHERRY

At 8:15pm on the night of the murder, Mara knocked on the door of Gertrude Weiss. She received no response, so left and made her way for dinner on her own - Gertrude, however, joined her just a few minutes later. Following their meal they left together and headed for the bar. At around 10.25pm Mara began to feel light headed so left Gertrude, intending to return to her cabin. In the lift, she saw one of the men from the auction that had taken place that day. The next thing she remembers was waking up next to the man the following morning when she heard the cabin steward screaming.



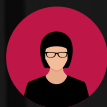
LARITA BRANDENBURG

Larita, eating dinner with Mohamed Guess, saw Roscoe Barth sitting alone at dinner on the night of the murder - she also saw Gertrude Weiss drop a piece of paper on his table. After dinner, Larita joined Roscoe at the bar and chatted with him about nuclear material. At 10.25pm he invited her back to his cabin. The two left the bar and on deck 8 she saw Mara Cherry and Bertram Blount getting out of the lift. Roscoe wouldn't show Larita the nuclear material, so at 10:35pm she left his cabin, which is when she saw Gertrude Weiss going into her cabin. At 10.55pm she saw Major Wren go into Gertrude Weiss's cabin.



BERTRAM BLOUNT

At dinner on the night of the murder he saw Gertrude Weiss give Roscoe Barth a piece of paper before she then took a seat opposite Mara Cherry - he assumed that they knew who the highest bidder was for the nuclear material. To find out for sure he slipped a truth drug into the drink of Mara. When she left the bar, he followed her. On deck 8 he saw Larita Brandenburg and Roscoe Barth go into one of the suites. Mara collapsed as a result of the truth drug and Bertram took her to his cabin where he put her to bed. At 10:35, from his cabin doorway, he saw Larita Brandenburg leave Roscoe Barth's suite empty handed. He then got into bed. He was woken the next morning by the cabin steward screaming.



GERTRUDE WEISS

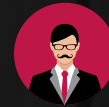
Gertrude stole radioactive waste which she intended to sell on board at an auction – Roscoe Barth had the highest bid. He had given her his cabin number, so Gertrude went to his suite, picked the lock and left the radioactive materials inside. She then went to dinner and gave him a note telling him where the material was. During dinner she flirted with a handsome waiter who eventually told her his cabin number. At 10:35pm Gertrude decided to go to her cabin via the lift, which is where

she saw Mohamed Guess. Mohamed remained in the lift when she got out on deck 8. Major Wren joined Gertrude in her cabin. They woke up when the cabin steward screamed for help.



MOHAMED GUESS

Mohamed was investigating Bertram Blount and followed him closely during their time on board. At dinner on the night of the murder, Mohamed enjoyed the company of Larita Brandenburg. After dinner, he followed Bertram Blount to the bar. At 10:25pm, Bertram left the bar and Mohamed followed him, but then lost him at passenger stairwell. Mohamed Guess then got into a lift with Gertrude Weiss. She got out on deck 8, Mohamed Guess got out on deck 9, but then ran back down to deck 8 and hid in the stairwell opposite 8030 – the suite of Bertram Blount. At 10:55pm he saw Major Wren go into Gertrude Weiss' cabin - 8020. Mohamed returned to his cabin shortly after a lady left suite 8030 the next morning.



MAJOR WREN

On the night of the murder, he posed as a waiter to hide his identity as a British M.I.5 agent. He saw Gertrude Weiss give Roscoe Barth a piece of paper before she sat with Mara Cherry for dinner. He assumed Gertrude was telling Roscoe that the auction would take place the next day. Wren flirted with Gertrude and she eventually told him her cabin number. After serving dinner, Wren worked in the bar. At 10:25pm, he saw Roscoe Barth and Larita Brandenburg leave the bar. Five minutes later, Mara and Bertram left. Then a few minutes later, Gertrude and Mohamed left. As the bar was empty he too left and went to Gertrude's cabin - she invited him in. They both woke up the next morning when the cabin steward shouted.

Whodunnit?

So, there you have the suspects and a detailed account of their actions and whereabouts on the evening of the murder – but who did it? And how? Turn to page 98 when you think you have solved the mystery. ⚔

The 'Catch the Killer' murder-mystery events on board Saga Sapphire were created and hosted by retired C.I.D. and Special Branch Officer Graham Hoyle. You can learn more about his events at www.CatchTheKiller.co.uk

Continuing the crime themed

aspect on board Saga Sapphire were several special guests, including Stephen Tompkinson, best known for his role as Alan Banks in the ITV crime series DCI Banks; Neil Stuke, the twice BAFTA-nominated actor who plays Billy Lamb in legal drama

Silk; Phil Davis, who plays DS Miles in the BBC drama Whitechapel; and Dr. Peter Dean, Her Majesty's Coroner for Essex and Forensic Medical Examiner for London's Metropolitan Police – among other highly distinguished titles.

The subjects for Dr Dean's

talks included Jack the Ripper, the Elephant Man, and an examination of crime in fiction and on television.

Tompkinson talked about his performances in series including Wild At heart, Ballykissangel, and Drop the Dead Donkey.

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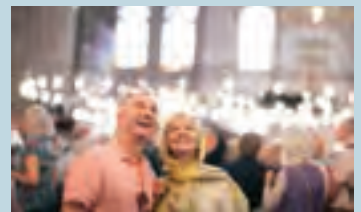
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Sao Miguel, Azores



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Cuban trogon



Gran Piedra National Park

Cuba

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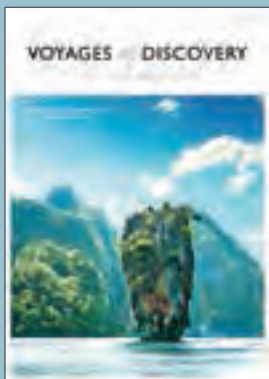
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Date	Cruise	Days	Date	Cruise	Days
Oct 28 2015	Atlantic Showcase	14	Mar 28 2016	Contrasts of Latin America	15
Nov 10 2015	Canary Islands & Caribbean Constellation	15	Apr 11 2016	Flavours of Cuba & the Caribbean	15
Nov 24 2015	South America's Wild Coast	13	May 10 2016	A Tapestry of Africa & Iberia	13
Dec 6 2015	Caribbean Colonial Trails	15	May 22 2016	Escape To Madeira & the Azores	16
Dec 20 2015	Caribbean Traditions	15	Jun 6 2016	Essence of Voyager Jersey & France	4
Jan 3 2016	Rhythms of the Caribbean & Cuba	15	Jun 9 2016	Britain's Beautiful Isles	12
Jan 17 2016	Wonders of Central America	15	Jun 20 2016	Viking Lands & Icelandic Explorer	13
Jan 31 2016	Colours of Central America	15	Sep 2 2016	Enchanting Mediterranean	12
Feb 14 2016	Mexico's Pacific Shores	14	Sep 13 2016	Dalmatian Venetian & Greek Wonders	14
Feb 27 2016	Central American Adventure	15	Sep 26 2016	Greek & Turkish Delight	14
Mar 12 2016	South American Exploration	17	Oct 9 2016	Tales of Turkey & a Grecian Escapade	14

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GOING AGAINST THE *flow*

The success of a cruise can depend as much on fellow passengers as on the ship or the destination. During a river cruise along the Seine, the American guests turned out to be something of a disappointment

By **GARY BUCHANAN**





PREVIOUS PAGE The River Seine from
Chateau Gaillard

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Rouen, AmaLegro cabin; Amalegro
bar; Pegasus Bridge

For some curious reason, I was reminded of the punning phrase “Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine” as AmaLegro’s gangway was raised and my river cruise got underway.

Fading twilight enveloped the Parisian version of the Statue of Liberty standing sentinel on the tiny Ile des Cygnes. This one-third scale copy, presented by the American community in Paris in 1889, turned out to be an unwitting symbol of my 388-mile round-trip voyage.

I have long held the belief that the ultimate success of a cruise is not solely dependent on the variety or beauty of the ports of call, the linchpin of felicity turns on one’s fellow travellers. Fortunately the visual delights of the River Seine, the intriguing ports and attentive crew, more than compensated for the disappointments of my motley hearties.

Over the course of a seven-day cruise in June, several encounters with my travelling companions prompted me to come up with another aphorism: “You can take the tourist out of America but you can’t take America out of the tourist.”

Their baseball caps might have been on the wrong way round, but this clan weren’t backwards in coming forwards with their excessive demands and an occasional rancour that reduced the Cruise Manager to tears. The received wisdom is that American’s don’t do nuance, and let’s face it you don’t have to be George W. Bush to be caught in the headlights of crass stereotypes.

Before anyone accuses me of Americanophobia I would like to point out that I have several close friends from the Land of Uncle Sam. They are far from culture vultures, but are worldly-wise enough not wear T-shirts and blue jeans at the Captain’s welcome dinner.

It was the nightly appointment with menus reflecting the cuisine of the region that appeared to be the most significant hurdle for many patrons of the Restaurant. I have it on good authority from the maitre d’ that when the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Dinner was featured there were 38 orders for cheeseburgers. It would appear that for many of my travelling companions from the New World, their only nod to local cuisine was French fries!

The dozen or so Australians on board preferred their own company and when it came to pretension, the ladies did a good impersonation of Hyacinth Bucket. As for couture on gala nights, these self-absorbed gals did their best to comply with the wacky Cruise Manager’s exhortation: “Tonight you cannot be overdressed - even

tiaras are in order.” A curious edict considering the cruise line’s brochure states a smart casual dress code in the evenings.

As one of only three Brits on board AmaLegro that week (the other two steered clear of excursions and appeared only when the complimentary wine flowed at lunch and dinner); I learnt a salutary lesson not only in how to amuse myself but also how to dodge inane verbal barbs from the Americans.

The 148-passenger AmaLegro was built in 2007 and is one of the few ships that navigate the Seine as far north as Caudebec-en-Caux. This has the benefit of shorter transfers for excursions to Honfleur and the Normandy Beaches than river cruisers that venture no further than Rouen. Currently there are 17 passenger vessels on the Seine but with the relentless momentum in river cruising, this is set to rise to 20 next year.

Rivers are ribbons of liquid history and the Seine is no exception. Rising near Dijon in Burgundy, it passes under 37 bridges on its journey through Paris. Leaving the City of Light, it meanders through Normandy before entering the English Channel in a broad estuary near Le Havre. This river has set the stage for many tumultuous events. In AD 885 the Vikings used the Seine to invade France, rowing hundreds of longboats and

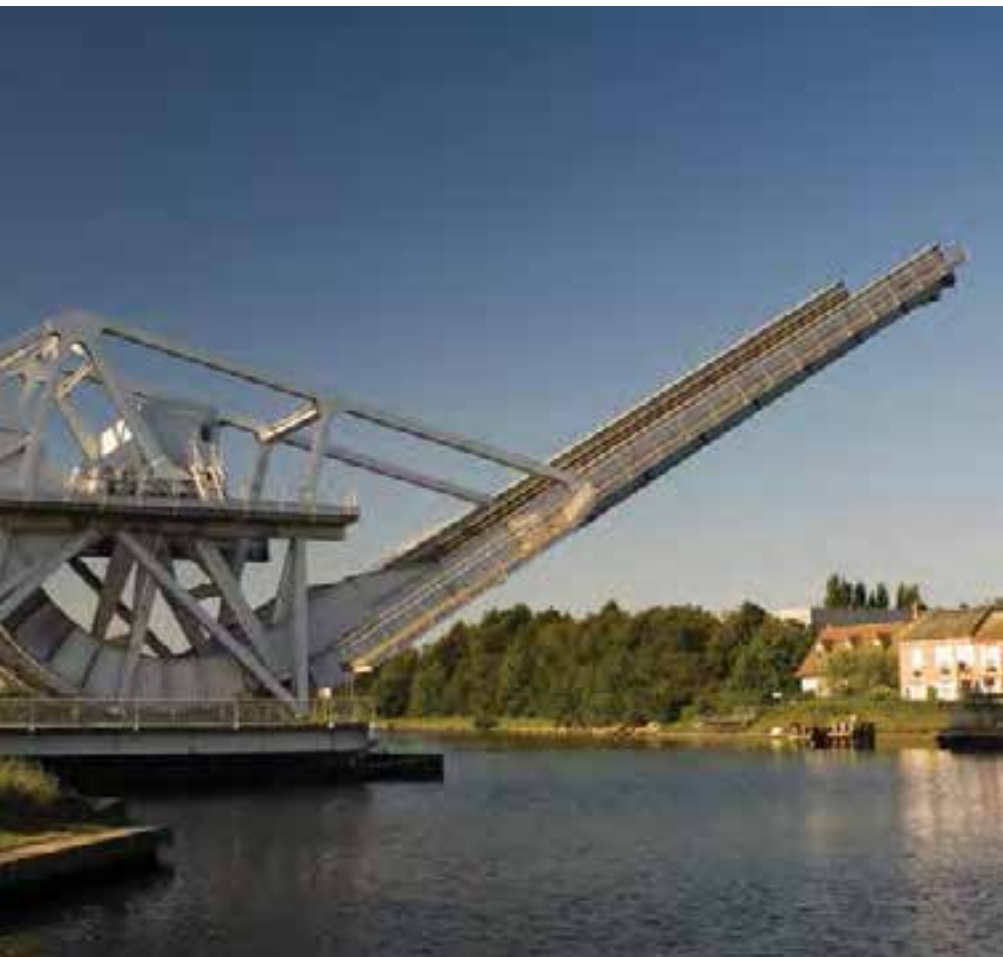
a 40,000-strong army inland to the heart of the country; and in the Middle Ages, Joan of Arc – the Maid of Orleans - was martyred in Rouen.

I took the opportunity during a late-night passage to chat to Captain Geoffrey Masson who was enjoying his second season on the Seine. This handsome mariner, who has traded his home in Provence for the cooler climate of Normandy, explained that during our navigation to Rouen we would pass through a series of six lock systems which would allow AmaLegro to drop 86 feet; the reaches between Rouen and Caudebec-en-Caux being tidal.

After a tranquil morning, gliding past sleepy, bucolic villages filled with cafés and boulangeries, we arrived in Vernon for an afternoon visit to Giverny and the house where Claude Monet lived for more than four decades. Inspired by tranquil scenes from the Japanese prints he collected, the leading exponent of the Impressionist movement diverted a river to form a pond which he filled with water lilies. He planted willows and bamboo on the banks and constructed an arched wooden footbridge across a narrow point in the pond. It’s a romantic scene worthy of a chocolate box cover. As I was about to consign-

'This clan's excessive demands and occasional rancour reduced the Cruise Manager to tears'







FROM TOP The landing beaches of Normandy; Ranville churchyard

→ the image to a million pixels, the lens was filled with an apparition in Breton stripes, neat pleats and shiny brass buttons – it was one of the vainglorious Australian ladies from AmaLegro in full Vogue pose.

AmaWaterways includes all excursions in its fares, so the uptake is high and the Saturday afternoon tour of Honfleur was no exception. This picturesque Norman port features in dozens of Impressionist paintings after local painter Eugène Boudin and a host of Parisian contemporaries tried to capture the impossibly-pretty town's ever-changing light, often against the backdrop of the pastel-coloured, slate-fronted houses that surround the ancient harbour.

While that day was enchanting, the next was profound. The tours of the Normandy Beaches were carefully orchestrated: American passengers headed to the flower-festooned village of Arrormanches, the US Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach and granite memorial at Pointe du Hoc, while the Canadian and British Landing Beaches' tour visited the British Cemetery at Ranville, the strategic Pegasus Bridge, the Canadian Cemetery, and windswept Juno Beach. Nothing had prepared me for the emotions that unfurled as memories of heroism and freedom during the Allied invasion were rekindled. Even the weather was similar to that momentous June day in 1944 when the fate of Europe hung in the balance: menacing cloud cover dulled the sea to a sinister battleship grey.

It was decidedly chilly when we docked in Rouen the next day. Victor Hugo called the Norman capital the 'city of a hundred spires' and this was magnificently illustrated during a late-night son et lumière show. Narrating the

Viking invasion, the filigree west façade of the Cathédrale de Notre Dame was illuminated with a vibrant tableau.

Attendance at the pre-dinner briefings started to wane, but Cruise Manager Rachel Couto-Gomes continued her off-the-wall presentations undaunted. Quite the fashionista, this beret-clad Brazilian was more than happy to show off her expensive Louboutin shoes as well as dispensing advice on high-end restaurants in Paris during her 'disembarkation briefing'. I wonder how many of my fellow guests followed the recommendation that she should receive a sizeable gratuity.

The weather improved considerably and by the time we reached Les Andelys the banks of the Seine were infused with the butterscotch light of early summer; doe-eyed cattle grazed in lush fields, while swans and their cygnets followed in our wake.

The following day, after visiting the imperial splendour of the 17th century Château de Malmaison - former home of Napoleon and Josephine – from the village of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, I sat on deck and contemplated my week in Normandy. River cruising is without doubt an effortless way to travel; no other mode of transport allows you to slip so silently, so unobtrusively, through such a beguiling mise en scène.

It would have been all too easy for Executive Chef Normen Albert and his brigade of 11 chefs to be caught between the deep blue sea of culinary ambition and the devil of acceding to mundane tastes. Thanks to his uncompromising approach, meals were consistently delicious and the accompanying French wines of high quality. The Eastern European crew were some of the most obliging I've ever encountered and the accommodations eminently comfortable.

If only my shipmates had taken note of the quip by American author Neale Donald Walsch: "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone." ♣

FAST FACTS

The ship

LENGTH	361 FT (110m)
PASSENGERS	148
CREW	42

The extras

Drinks	
Bottle of water.....	Complimentary
50cl of Bitburger draught beer.....	€4.60
33cl bottle of Becks beer.....	€3.70
Wine.....	Included at lunch and dinner
Bar prices: 25 cl glass of house wine €5.50 , Gin and tonic €5.80 , Macallan 12-year old single malt €7.60	
Laundry	
Dress.....	€3.50
Shirt.....	€3.00
Gratuities	
€12 per passenger, per day for the ship's crew (€84 total) – plus €3 per person per day for the Tour Manager.	

Fares A 7-night cruise from Paris, departing 25 March 2016 aboard AmaLegro, from £1,757.

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EXPLORE CUBA WITH THOMSON CRUISES



Americans are getting excited about the prospect of cruising to Cuba now that President Obama is working to relax restrictions on travel to the largest island in the Caribbean.

Brits have been able to visit unhindered by the trade embargo imposed before the 1962 Cold War missile crisis – and anyone planning a to travel there now would be well advised to get there before the next American invasion changes the place forever.

Cubans are a friendly people; despite the fact they have to queue at the shops and market stalls for rationed food, and often have to go without necessities like soap, and even nappies for their babies, they are eager to show off their homes and their home city.

Havana's El Capitolio building, with its huge white dome, is a copy of the US Capitol in Washington. Many of the hotels and shops in the nearby streets, though, need radical surgery to prevent them from crumbling to dust. Some, no doubt, will be rescued in the near future by

McDonalds and Coca Cola and other American icons. But to see the real Cuba, visitors need to get there before that happens.

This winter's cruises on board Thomson Dream provide the ideal opportunity, as the ship stays overnight in Havana. Thomson's Cuban Fusion voyage combines visits to Jamaica, Mexico and the Cayman Islands with the chance to explore Castro's capital.

There's no excuse not to take advantage of the night in port to visit the amazing Club Tropicana. This is not the tame venue from Wham's 1983 hit, but a dazzlingly glamorous extravaganza of song and dance, sequins and feathers, seduction and romance - all performed by a cast of hundreds on an open-air stage surrounded by tropical greenery.

It's been going strong since 1939 and among the headliners over the years have been Paul Robeson, Carmen Miranda, Nat King Cole and Josephine Baker, playing to an audience that has included such legendary





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Havana's El Capitolio;
vintage car; Mojito, the
local cocktail; watersports
on the beach

hand baggage for the exhilarating climb up Dunn's River Falls.

You will have time to explore Thomson Dream during a relaxing day at sea before arriving in Cozumel, an island just off the Yucatan Peninsula.

Here, there's a chance to visit Mayan ruins and a chance to discover more about the ancient civilisation that practised human sacrifice and was finally wiped out at the end of the 17th century by the Spanish Conquest.

The final port of call, Georgetown in Grand Cayman, provides several opportunities for interaction with marine life. Adventurous guests can swim with stingrays, while those who want to keep their feet - and everything else - dry, can take a trip down to the seabed on board a submarine. Its big windows provide excellent viewing of fish, turtles, and the inhabitants of the coral Cayman Wall. If you want to know which is the best side to sit for optimum views, choose the inside!

celebrities such as author Ernest Hemingway, musician Sammy Davis Jnr and film star Marlon Brando.

Passengers on a £78 excursion from Thomson Dream will be given a welcoming glass of sparkling wine and shots of Havana Club rum; for a few dollars more they could travel there in one of the classic American cars so familiar in Havana. It will take them to Sloppy Joe's, one of Hemingway's favourite bars, and for a spin along the seafront Malecon before delivering them to the club.

Other excursions in Havana include a four-hour drive through the highlights, including a cigar shop and the fascinating old town, or Havana Vieja, and a trip to Hemingway's one-time home, Finca Vigia, in the fishing village of Cojimar which inspired his novella, *The Old Man and the Sea* - plus a chance to drink a Daiquiri in his favourite bar, La Floridita.

There's more to these cruises than Cuba. If there's time after the flight - from one of seven regional airports in the UK - guests should plan ahead and keep a swimsuit in their

THE SHIP

Thomson Dream carries 1,506 passengers in its 753 cabins and is the fleet's flagship (until next summer's arrival of Thomson Discovery). There's a choice of dining options, from the main Orion restaurant to the Lido buffet and poolside Terrace Grill, plus the Mistral steakhouse/bistro and the Kora La Asian fusion eatery. The ship's two-deck-high Broadway Show Lounge is the venue for glamorous song-and-dance shows and visiting comedians and other guest acts from the UK. There's an extensive casino, too.

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- ★ **Day three:** Cozumel, Mexico
- ★ **Days four and five:** Havana, Cuba
- ★ **Day six:** At sea
- ★ **Day seven:** Georgetown, Cayman Islands
- ★ **Day eight:** Montego Bay, Jamaica

For more information, visit thomson.co.uk/cruise



EMERALD'S NEW GEMS

Inclusive tours and drinks on contemporary ships designed to attract younger passengers

By **BRIDGET MCGROUTHER**



SHINE BRIGHTLY



It was touch and go whether the twin christening of Emerald Waterways' newest starships - Sun and Dawn - would take place in Budapest as planned on 21 August. Not because of a delay in delivery from the Dutch shipyard, but as a result of the dangerously low water levels of the River Danube.

After a long, hot and particularly dry European summer (other than in the UK, obviously), the risk was such that the brand new ships might end up grounded trying to reach the Hungarian capital. However, the day before the christening, there was an almighty storm. River levels rose dramatically just in time to keep the plans afloat.

British travel industry expert Julie Kendrick was delighted to have won the prestigious honour of becoming Godmother to Emerald Sun. The Emerald Dawn was christened by Kelly Bergin, recently appointed President of the US-based OASIS.

Both Champagne bottles broke with resounding smashes on the bows, witnessed by the crews standing proudly on deck and international guests made up mainly of Australians, Brits and Americans toasting the ships from the shore.

It's only two years since UK-based Emerald Waterways (known as Evergreen Waterways in Australia), first launched with Emerald Sky, christened last April by Twiggy. Emerald Star sailed into European Waterways last summer and Emerald Belle will join the fleet in 2016.

The four-star deluxe Emerald Waterways ships are the younger and trendier sisters of parent company Scenic, founded and managed by Australian husband and wife team Glen and Karen Moroney, who attended



the Budapest celebration. Karen takes a personal interest in the stylish interiors of the ships and explained that there had been 70 detail changes from the original prototypes, made in response to feedback provided by passengers and crew.

Some of the key alterations include the main stairs to the Horizon Deck, which have been split so that they now have a 90 degree switch, making them less steep. The reception

'A quote to go here please A quote to go here please A quote to go here please A quote to go here'

area is much more reminiscent of a boutique hotel than a ship, with lots of plant pots, glass and greenery, as well as eye-catching pendant lighting.

TV displays show videos, worldwide times, weather reports and the itinerary for the day ahead, while the complimentary and fast Wi-Fi available throughout is a boon for any ship.

There are 72 suites and 20 staterooms

for a maximum 182 guests, including two specifically for solo occupancy and one ultra-spacious Owners' Suite. I was extremely impressed by my own Panorama balcony suite.

At a touch of a button, the upper half of the floor-to-ceiling window lowers to create an indoor balcony, where you can enjoy fresh air and riverside views from the comfort of modern, upholstered chairs on the laminate-floored deck area.

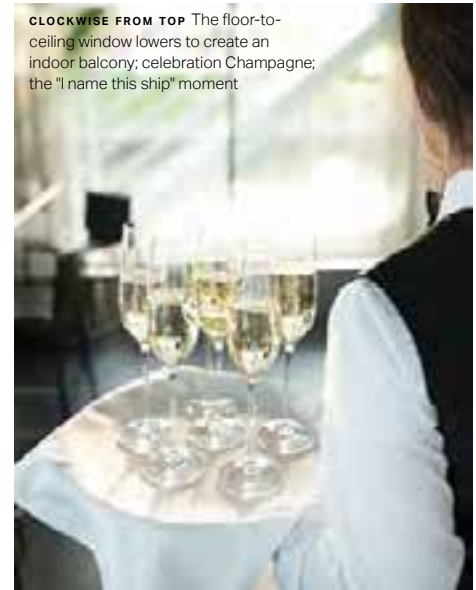
At only €5.50 for a glass of Champagne (with no extra gratuity charges), it would be rude not to, while wine and beer are complimentary during lunches and dinners served in the light and airy Terrace and Reflections Restaurants. The extraordinarily good coffee machine, which I'm led to believe cost £12,000, is well worth every penny invested, for the exceptional help-yourself cappuccinos, lattes and hot chocolates that it produces as seamlessly as any barista.

Full-length hanging space in the wardrobes for dresses and suits has been magically provided by the simple relocation of the safe and minibar, although the dress code on board Emerald Waterways is quite relaxed - smart casual during meal times with no formal nights.

A vanity area has been cleverly



FROM TOP XXXX
XXXX



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The floor-to-ceiling window lowers to create an indoor balcony; celebration Champagne; the "I name this ship" moment

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT
Stylish interiors – the main
restaurant; the author in
Budapest; open bar



FAST FACTS

Gratuities

Included.

Drinks

All tea and coffee is complimentary. Beer is complimentary with lunch and dinner and costs from **€3.30** per bottle outside meal times. Wine is complimentary with lunch and dinner and costs from **€2.70** per small glass or **€5** per large glass outside meal times. Cocktails: from **€6.20**.

Internet

Complimentary wi-fi throughout the ship.

Spa

30-minute aromatherapy massage or facial is **€35**.

Hair styling

Shampoo and blow-dry is **€30** for short hair and **€35** for long hair.

Free extras

Bottled water restocked daily to cabins. All airport transfers to and from the ship. An included shore excursion almost every cruise day. Free use of on-board bicycles. In addition, guests staying in an Owner's One-bedroom Suite and Grand Balcony Suite have complimentary mini-bar and coffee machine, free laundry (four items per day), and pre-dinner canapés and after-dinner petit fours.

Fares from £1,395 (8-day Jewels of the Rhine cruise from Amsterdam to Basel.) To book, visit www.emeraldwaterways.co.uk or Tel 0800 270 7017

– incorporated with a desk that folds back to provide a dressing table and mirror as well as a stool that stows away neatly underneath. There is also a useful full-length mirror on the wall behind.

In the shower room, accessed by a sliding door, additional storage has been included for toiletries next to the designer basin – not that you need to bring many as Italian Prija products are provided.

The mirrored walls help make this compact area seem more spacious, although there is not enough room for simultaneous his 'n' her brushing of teeth. On the plus side, a discreet night light gives you half a chance of not being disturbed by your partner stumbling to the loo in the early hours.

A long lie-in is facilitated by blackout blinds – if you can find them. The ones I drew at first turned out to be the transparent sunshades, so I offer my apologies to the fisherman on the riverbank who may have got more of a view than he bargained for. That's the trouble on a ship when you go to bed thinking you're in the middle of nowhere...

The outside public deck areas are fun with lots of sunbeds, free use of on-board bikes, al fresco tables and chairs, a putting

green and quirky noughts and crosses – a more well-used option than the usual chess board. Below deck, there is a massage therapy room, hairdresser and gym, as well as the convivial Horizon lounge and bar – the hub of the ship.

It seems Emerald Waterways have successfully designed their state-of-the-art ships to attract those younger-than-your-average age 55+ river cruise ship passenger. I'd be very happy to sail on their only slightly less 'all-included' and more affordable fares than Scenic (as well as many other cruise lines) on a choice of numerous eight to 17-day itineraries of the Danube, Rhine, Main, Saône and Rhône Rivers. There is an exciting brand-new South-East Asia fully-inclusive cruise for 2016 through Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand along the Mekong.

You'd most likely find me hanging out in my favourite part of the ship – the ingenious infinity heated indoor swimming pool with retractable roof, which can be transformed into a cinema after dark.

No wonder prize credits have already begun to roll for the imaginative design of these stylish ships with film star good looks and a touch of Hollywood glamour. ✂





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A *kid's guide* TO BRITANNIA

It's no real surprise to find Rhys Hunt on a cruise ship; his mother, Louise, was chosen to be the madrina for P&O Cruises' Britannia. She smashed a bottle of Prosecco against the vessel's hull when it was floated out of dry-dock, more than a year before The Queen followed her example at the ship's christening. But how would a 10-year-old schoolboy enjoy a cruise on board?

The first impression I made of the ship was that she was massive: It felt about five-and-a-half times the size of the Holiday Inn in Southampton, and that is big!

When I got on Britannia, it felt like a modern hotel that could move as fast as a car on a track. I liked my cabin a lot, but having two TVs was the best because Dadi didn't want to move from watching the rugby, so I watched the Lego movie on the other TV. Yippee!!

So far I've only been to the kids' club once, they do a variety of different activities: I'm on the way there now and will write more later...

Later that same day ... I'm back! That was fun. I played on the PS4 most of the time but there are more exciting things on other nights like Connect 4 quiz. That is a quiz where if you get a point, you get a disk and place it in the grid.

I went to the gym with Dadi, you are allowed in with your parents but not allowed to do the weights. I cycled 10k on the bike playing Angry Birds. The running machines, the bikes and rowing machines all looked out at the sea.

There are five swimming pools: two family, one spa, one adult and a teens' pool. I'm only allowed in the family pools but they were just as fun. I'd like to go back on board in three years when I can go in the teen pool at the back of the ship.

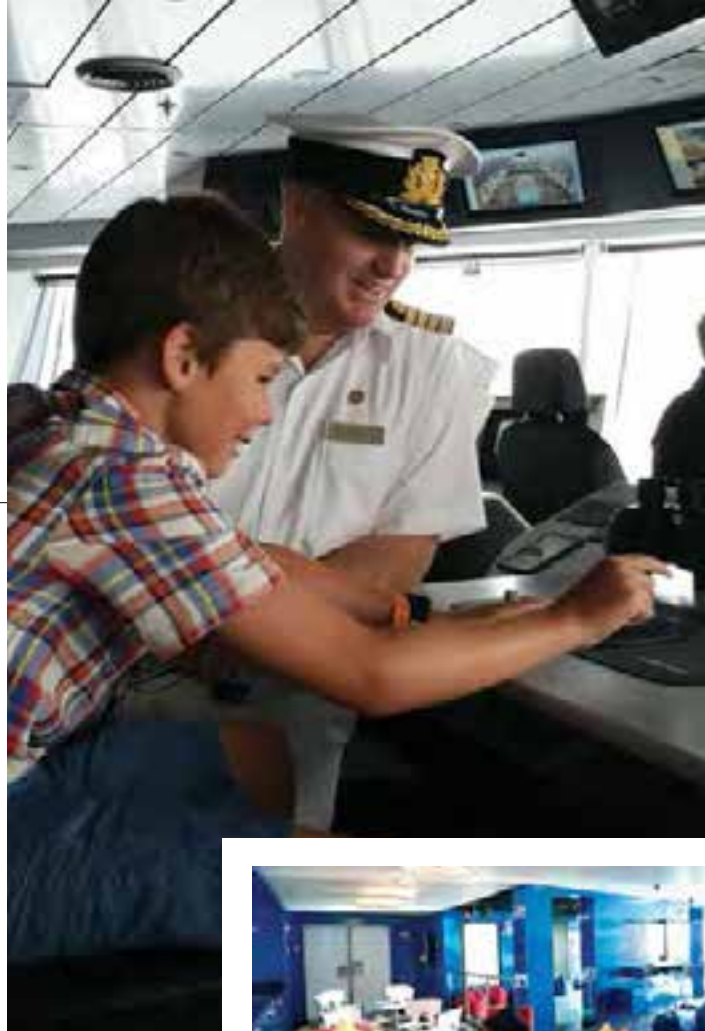
I had dinner in the Oriental restaurant every night with all of the people who came with us, all 14 were there: It was really nice meeting up and talking about our day. The food was good on the adults' menu but sometimes I had the kids' menu. Some nights



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A few notes about the writer and his review from his mummy!

Rhys (aged 10) stayed in a deluxe balcony cabin, travelling to Guernsey, La Coruna, Bilbao and La Rochelle. He travelled on P&O's newest cruise ship with his parents, grandparents and family friends in August. - Rhys' Dadi is Welsh, and only watched one game of rugby, whereas Rhys watched several free movies in the cabin over the week! - Rhys did lots of activities in kids' club... but the memories of the PS4s still linger.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Captain Paul Brown gives Rhys a navigation lesson; The Reef kids' club; The Reef pool table

we went to the theatre; my favourite show was *Once Upon a Time* because it had loads of funny things in it.

My favourite restaurant was Sindhu; that was one of the specialist chefs called Atul. I had onion bhaji, chicken korma and lamb samosa – I enjoyed every mouthful – Yum!

Despite all the fun on the ship, we did get off to some nice places but my favourite was Guernsey because we had breakfast at a café on a terrace looking back at Britannia. We also had to get a tender to and from the ship.

On the last day, we met the captain who showed us the spotter in the bridge who looks out for whales and dolphins. He showed us the levers which are used to turn the ship. There are three steering wheels, two little ones which the captain had control of. He told us about the flags, each one meant a different thing, and you can send messages with the flags. He doesn't use them all, all of the time, but he uses the one that says 'diver overboard' quite a lot.

He showed us the sword which the queen presented, and that was very cool. We also saw all the badges for the other P&O ships which they got when the ships were docked together with Britannia. Captain Brown said that Britannia was the biggest of all the P&O group, and I think that she is the best ship ever! ♡

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DEALS

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- ★ On board ms Volendam. Holland America Line
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- ★ Visits Calgary (1 night hotel), Summit Helicopter Tour, Banff (1 night hotel), Lake Louise (1 night hotel), Jasper (2 nights hotel), Rocky Mountaineer Jasper to Vancouver, Journey Through the Clouds, including 1 night hotel in Kamloops, then 2 nights in a Vancouver hotel, cruise from Vancouver to Inside Passage, Tracy Arm Fjord, Juneau, Skagway, Glacier Bay, Ketchikan, Vancouver

17 NIGHT ROCKY MOUNTAINEER & ALASKA DISCOVERY DRIVE FROM £3,599PP

- ★ Departs 13 May 2016 from Vancouver
- ★ On board Star Princess. Princess Cruises
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- ★ Departs 21 May 2016 from Vancouver
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- ★ Includes SilverLeaf all-inclusive service on First Passage to the West Rocky Mountaineer Rail Journey Vancouver to Banff. Direct return flights, 4 night hotel accommodation in Vancouver, Kamloops & Banff.
- ★ Cruise from Vancouver to Inside Passage, Icy Strait Point, Hubbard Glacier, Juneau, Ketchikan, Inside Passage, Vancouver. Rocky Mountaineer Vancouver Banff including 1 night hotel stay in Kamloops.

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LIFE ON BOARD

MARK *Symonds*

CAPTAIN, CRYSTAL SYMPHONY

DID OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY WORK AT SEA, OR WAS IT JUST A LOVE OF THE SEA THAT LED YOU INTO A MARITIME CAREER?

My father had ambitions to join the Fleet Air Arm, but I am the first member of my family to go to sea. I grew up around the Solent, and I first wanted to be an airline pilot. I took part in dinghy racing and yacht racing and while I was at 6th form college in Southampton one of my mother's friends showed me an advertisement for careers in the Merchant Navy. I applied and within a few weeks, at the age of 16, I was flying to Singapore to join my first tanker, working for Mobil Oil. It was a very big adventure. My father insisted that I should wear a collar and tie, and I found myself flying out with a chief engineer who was much more casually dressed. I discovered why as soon as I stepped off the plane into the tropical heat and humidity. I was still wearing my tie and my shiny shoes as I climbed the steep pilots' ladder onto my first ship. It was quite a shock to the system.

WHAT TRAINING DID YOU UNDERTAKE, AND AT WHAT POINT DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE THE MOVE TO CRUISE SHIPS?

The cadetship with Mobil lasted for three years, with time on board ships alternating with studies at Warsash College. I worked my way up to 3rd officer and second officer during my nine years with Mobil.

It wasn't all glamour and fun. I had been working in the North Sea for a while and one day, while we were anchored off the Isle of Wight, the QE2 was steaming past. I happened to have a college friend who was 3rd

officer on board and I called to ask about life on cruise ships. There were also ex-cruise ship crew on the tankers, who confirmed that I would enjoy life on board with passengers. I went for an interview with P&O Cruises and found myself with two options – re-joining the tanker in Aberdeen in January, or flying to the Seychelles to join P&O's Victoria, with a pay rise in my pocket.

I joined P&O just as they were starting to expand, first of all with the construction of Oriana. Which meant I managed to achieve some quick promotions, through P&O and then Princess Cruises. I was deputy captain on Dawn Princess and then had an involvement in the construction of Ocean Princess and the development of Grand Princess. I took command of Sapphire Princess and then I came back to P&O for about three years.

Although I enjoyed the big ships and the interaction with passengers, I started to feel it was all a bit impersonal. By this time I had a young daughter, of 18 months, so I stayed ashore for a while and when I went back to sea I decided it would be with smaller ships where it was easier to meet people.

I signed up with Saga Cruises and sailed for 18 months on Saga Pearl 2 and the old Saga Ruby. It was an enjoyable time, but a little bit too small.

WHAT WAS THE ATTRACTION OF MOVING TO CRYSTAL?

In 2013 I was approached by the agency that found me the Saga job. They actually said: "You will not believe who is looking for a captain." I never dreamt it would be Crystal – they are such a close-knit community with a low



↳ turnover of crew. I was very excited, but I assumed I would be up against tremendous competition. I didn't dare to dream that I would get the job. I had interviews in Oslo and Los Angeles. I joined the ship in July 2013 and I have been here ever since, sharing duties with Captain Zander.

Now there are some even more exciting opportunities. There was talk of a third ship but this expansion was a huge surprise. The prospects ahead are limitless and it is very exciting. I'm 46 now, so I will still be around when the new ships arrive and it's nice to see development ahead. Everyone here is looking forward to what it's going to be like. We can develop members of crew who are on their way up through the ranks. The promise of the future is wonderful for morale and building great excitement here.

HOW IS LIFE ON BOARD?

We try to make the ship a home away from home for the guests. They want to relax but they also become part of the family. Like the passengers, I have very comfortable accommodation, but you have to remember it is also my office as well as my home.

WHAT ABOUT LIFE AWAY FROM THE SHIP?

Home is in Derbyshire, where I live with my wife Kerry, - we met when she was a shop manageress on Ocean Princess. Our daughter Grace came along in 2010. We have rebuilt a home out in the country, surrounded by dairy farmers' fields. The garden is about three-quarters of an acre and I'm a bit of a DIY man. I have just finished building a climbing frame that turned into a tree house and is so big it probably should have had planning

permission. I used to play golf but I don't get many opportunities now, so we relax on visits to places like York, or at the coast. We recently had a week in Whitby, and a long weekend in Staithes. My wife and daughter both love the beach, and when you find peace and tranquility it helps recharge the batteries. Being a captain is the best job in the world, but after three months in charge of the ship, and meeting new people on every cruise, it's great to be able to switch off at home and then I look forward all the more to the next trip.

This year it's my turn to be off at Christmas, so I will be at home with my family. That means that the following year I will be on duty, and I'll be in Australia and New Zealand which is a bit too far for my wife and daughter to fly out and join me for a few days on the ship.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DESTINATION?

You can't beat the sail-ins to Sydney and New York, especially when we have an arrival in daylight and the passengers can get to see exactly what we see from the bridge. I love the scenery in Alaska and Norway. The fjords are magnificent. Singapore and Hong Kong are wonderful clean, modern cities, but they are also some of the busiest places we visit.

LEAST FAVOURITE?

I used to say Southampton because when I came into port on turnaround days I was so close to home but I couldn't leave the ship to go home. Nowadays it would any port that's cold and rainy, especially if I had to work on an open bridge wing. ⚓

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All this comes at a very reasonable price, and travellers can also choose to enjoy dinner at one of three restaurants at Careys Manor, including the one everyone is talking about, the stylish new Cambium.

One of the most exciting new restaurants in the South of England, Cambium takes inspiration for its décor and menu from the forest that surrounds it. Executive Chef Paul Peters has created a menu that showcases the spectacular fresh produce and rich natural resources of the Hampshire countryside.

Careys Manor has won many awards including the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence, Beautiful South Gold awards and four AA stars. The hotel offers a warm and relaxed environment, undisputed service, timeless elegance and well-equipped facilities. It is situated in the picturesque town of Brockenhurst, and travellers who wish to extend their stay in this beautiful corner of England will find much to see and enjoy.

Full details of our cruise packages can be seen on the website www.careysmanor.com

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- 1 The New Forest
- 2 The Old Forest
- 3 The Young Forest

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3 OF A KIND

Private resorts

One of the features of cruising in the Caribbean and the Bahamas is that the ship may call at a private resort operated by the cruise line. For some, there is little discernable difference from being on board, except passengers can wiggle their toes in the sand and take a swim in the sea. We look at three of the best

By **SUSAN PARKER**



Half Moon Cay

The sign at the entrance to Half Moon Cay says it all really. **I WISH I COULD STAY HERE FOREVER**, it reads. For most, a few hours ashore in this paradise resort is all they can hope for.

Half Moon Cay occupies 50 acres of the uninhabited 2,400-acre island of Little San Salvador, about 100 miles from Nassau in the Bahamas. The remainder is designated a migratory bird reserve. It was developed for Holland America Line but other ships from Carnival Corporation occasionally get a chance to visit. There will be more than 250 calls next year.

Passengers are taken ashore by tender and the development comprises three areas, a landing and welcome centre, Bahamian village and Tropics restaurant serving barbecue buffet lunch.

Well-marked paths lead to all the activities and there is an accessible tram running continuously to the restaurant. The site is

wheelchair-friendly, and some have balloon tires for use on sand.

And it's the sand that is the main attraction – a long crescent-shaped curve of beach where guests can either gather together, or wander off to find space away from the crowds. Half Moon Lagoon aqua park has plenty of distractions in the form of water toys. A pirate-themed playground adds to the excitement especially the ship waterslide that sprays water from its cannons.

Watersport gear including aqua bikes and hobie cats, are available for hire and excursions include deep-sea fishing trips. Therapists from the ship's spa may also be available for massages on the beach or in one of the cabanas.

The real jewel in the crown of the resort is a riding stable – how cool can it be to lead your horse into the water?

www.hollandamerica.com

Need to know

OPERATOR

Holland America Line

WHERE IS IT?

Little San Salvador, Bahamas

WHO ELSE VISITS?

Carnival Cruise Line

HIGHLIGHT

Horse riding in the surf



Labadee

Royal Caribbean's resort at Labadee occupies a 260-acre wooded peninsula at Pointe Ste Honore, about six miles from Cape Haitien on the mountainous and secluded northern coast of Haiti. The concrete pier can accommodate the biggest cruise ships in the world and the resort's facilities are capable of catering for more than 6,000 passengers a day.

Not all of them will be brave enough to tackle the Dragon's Breath Flight Line – at 2,600 feet, it's the longest over-water zipwire in the world. Not everyone will be prepared to shell out £64 for the privilege, either. Another experience to get the adrenaline pumping is the 30 mph Dragon's Tail Coaster, and there's a 300-ft water slide.

Are you brave enough to ride the Dragon's Breath zipwire?

The Arawak Aqua Park has floating trampolines, inflatable iceberg-shaped slides and water seesaws to provide hours of fun. Other water activities include snorkelling, kayak adventures, floating beach mats and banana boat rides. Jet-skis are available for escorted excursions.

There are a number of different neighbourhoods to explore including Adrenaline Beach, Columbus Cove, Buccaneer's Bay, Nellie's Beach and Labadee Town Square, and one beach area and its bungalows are reserved for suite guests.

Labadee is a gated community and passengers are not allowed to travel to other parts of the island. Locals are allowed in, to sell craft products – including hats, masks and purses – at the Town Square market.

All the food provided at Labadee's buffet restaurants is brought ashore from the ship.

www.royalcaribbean.co.uk

Need to know

TOURISM

www.xxx.com

OPERATOR

Royal Caribbean

WHERE IS IT?

On the north coast of Haiti

WHO ELSE VISITS?

Celebrity Cruise Line

HIGHLIGHT

The world's longest over-sea zipline





Amber Cove

Carnival Corporation's newly-developed \$85 million facility in the Dominican Republic welcomes its first passengers this month. Its two-berth pier can welcome up to 8,000 passengers a day, served by 2,000 crewmembers.

Cunard's Queen Mary 2 will be there on November 22 and again in January; P&O's Azura will be a regular visitor throughout the winter.

There's a welcome centre with a familiar slew of retail stores, including jewellers offering amber and larimar, clothes, and art right on the waterfront, and an artisans' market selling Dominican crafts and souvenirs.

Tours are available to other parts of the island, including a big game fishing charter and an outback adventure. As a scuba diver I would probably opt for the trip to Paradise Island by speedboat for underwater photographs, or the deluxe catamaran sail

'Fathom guests from Adonia will work on projects to help the island's poor'

and snorkel which includes a beach party. There is also the opportunity to go for the dolphin swim at one of the region's largest marine adventure parks.

Amber Cove will also be the Dominican Republic base for Adonia, the P&O ship which will transfer next year to Carnival's voluntourism brand, Fathom – alternating with the ship's cruises to Cuba.

Passengers will spend a couple of days on the island helping with projects such as a chocolate collective and a factory making drainage pipes.

www.ambercove.com

Need to know

OPERATOR

Carnival Corporation

WHERE IS IT?

On the north coast of the Dominican Republic

WHO ELSE VISITS?

Cunard, P&O Cruises, Fathom

HIGHLIGHTS

Whale-watching, dolphin swimming, and duty-free shops

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Prices correct at the time of going to print but are subject to change. From prices are per person and based on two people sharing the lowest grade veranda stateroom available, departing on selected dates in 2016 and 2017. Prices valid until 31 December 2015. Single supplements apply. For more information please visit www.vikingcruises.co.uk/terms-conditions or call us.




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Cocktail of the month

Shekhar Grover is a mixologist on board Royal Caribbean's Radiance of the Seas and last year beat 5,500 contenders to become World Champion Bartender of the Year.

He named this cocktail Across The Universe because its ingredients come from so many different sources - gin from the UK, Aperol and Prosecco from Italy, and St Germain elderflower liqueur from France. Tanqueray was originally distilled in London, but is now produced in Scotland. The brand used here, Tanqueray 10, is distilled four times. Aperol is an aperitif similar to Campari, and St Germain is a liqueur first created in 2007.

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

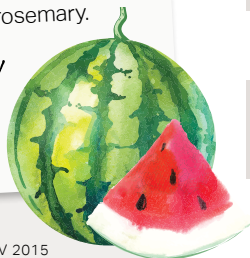
Freeze some watermelon flesh to make ice cubes.

- ◆ 1.5 oz Tanqueray 10
- ◆ 0.5 oz Aperol
- ◆ 0.5 oz St Germain
- ◆ 0.5 oz fresh lime juice
- ◆ 0.5 oz simple syrup
- ◆ Prosecco to finish
- ◆ Rosemary, to garnish

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice and add the Tanqueray, Aperol, St Germain, lime juice and syrup. Shake well until cold and then pour into a balloon wine glass, over the water melon ice cubes. Top up with Prosecco and garnish with a sprig of rosemary.

Cheers!

(Please drink responsibly - we always do)



letter to the editor

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some of the recipes you publish in your excellent cuisine feature sound absolutely delicious, but they all look like they involve hours of work in the kitchen. Way too much for me. They remind me why I am content to eat ready meals at home, while looking forward to savouring the results of the chefs' labours when I am at sea on a cruise ship.

— **E. Dempster**
Kent



DID YOU SOLVE THE SAGA MURDER MYSTERY?

(pages 58-59)

THE KILLER

Mara and Bertram are innocent because if they had left Bertram's cabin, they would have been seen by Larita Brandenburg. Larita is innocent because Bertram saw her leave Roscoe Barth's cabin at 10:35pm, before the time of death. Mohamed Guess couldn't have killed Roscoe because he was running to deck 8 at 10.45pm. Gertrude Weiss couldn't be the killer because she would have been seen by Bertram, therefore it had to have been Major Wren - the M.I.5 agent who was instructed to seize the nuclear material and dispose of the 'spy' who had it.

BUT HOW DID HE DO IT?

After leaving the bar, Major Wren returned to his cabin where he retrieved the gloves and Geiger counter. Wren was occupying the cabin directly above Barth's. He climbed down from his balcony to Barth's balcony and picked the lock on the door. He then knocked out, gagged and tied Roscoe to the bed. While Roscoe was unconscious, Wren put on the gloves, broke into the suitcase and discovered that the material was radioactive waste. He then used it to burn Roscoe's torso.

Elementary!

'book reviews

A CRUISING AFFAIR



Mandy Lee Sim's *A Cruising Affair* is an engagingly frothy tale, ideal for passing the hours while relaxing on a

steamer chair or sunbed, perhaps while crossing the Bay of Biscay or the Atlantic.

The author's pseudonym hides the identity of a genuine cruise ship captain's wife, and it's clear she knows the ropes.

There's just enough romance and intrigue to keep the temperatures soaring.

A Cruising Affair, Mandy Lee Sim, Grosvenor House Publishing, £9.99

THE SHIP



The book's called *The Ship*; the author shares my surname. So I had to read this - even though I realised right from the start it

was never going to be an idyllic gambol.

Honeywell (she's no relation) creates a dystopian future in which a chosen few hope to survive the end of the world by escaping on a vessel that - with some imagination - resembles a cruise ship.

At the centre of the action, teenager Lalla is not instantly likeable, and many of the other characters are transformed from hero to villain at the turn of a page. It's this unpredictability that helps make *The Ship* such an intriguing read and the ending is more of a cliffhanger than a conclusion. Not so much an unhappy ending as a trailer for *The Ship 2*.

The Ship, Antonia Honeywell, Weidenfeld, £12.99



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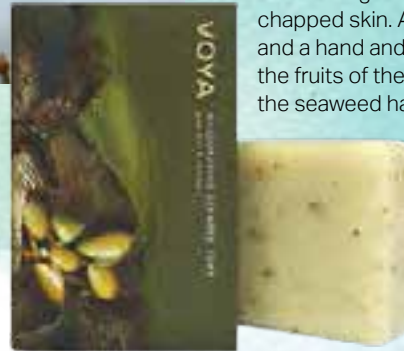


The sea – the great healer

Voya, an Irish Spa brand based on the healing properties of seaweed, has joined forces with Quark Expeditions on the Ocean Endeavour to launch their first spa treatments at sea. Adventurers heading off to the south Atlantic and Antarctica can now enjoy an Explorer's Revive Ritual – a massage dedicated to restoring sore aching muscles and dry chapped skin. Add to that a facial and a hand and foot ritual...and the fruits of the North Atlantic, the seaweed harvested off the

Sligo coast are available to repair.

www.voya.ie



World of Spas

Take time out to relax and get in shape



TIME FOR A DIGITAL DETOX?

Are you wedded to your mobile? Do you even take it to bed with you? If this is the case, then you are either scrambling your brains or well on the way to terminal insomnia according to the latest reports.

All the pundits tell us to turn them off and keep them out of the bedroom.

I admit I am as bad as the next person, checking emails, texting, WhatsApping and Instagramming, and can become very unpleasant when the battery dies.

One of the easiest ways to give ourselves a digital detox is to book a cruise. Out on the ocean wave the signal can be expensive at best, and slight or dodgy, which in turn teaches us patience and forces us to wait to check our emails and messages.

And while we may feel lost and slightly nervous to begin with, the good news is that the brain quickly adapts to the fact that 24/7 is no longer available...allowing us to relax and stay calm.

JO FOLEY

SUPREME LUXURY

One of the top Italian fashion and beauty brands is Etro – discreet, elegant and oh-so-chic. The company has just teamed up with Crystal Cruises to provide amenities as well as bathrobes and slippers on Crystal Symphony and Crystal Serenity. Passengers will be cocooned in luxury.

www.celebritycruises.co.uk



Light Refreshments

Chiva Som is one of the most iconic and influential spas on the planet. Famed for its treatments and programmes, it is also renowned for its food and chef who teaches guests how to eat healthily, and also how to prepare favourite dishes using the lightest, and most nutritious of ingredients. Chef Paisarn has just produced an e-book 'Cooking with Light' designed for iPhone, tablets and smartphones – an easy and indispensable guide for healthy eating at home. Available on line from

www.chivasomproducts.com





FOOD glorious FOOD

How to have your cake, eat some of it, and enjoy your cruise holiday without totally wrecking your waistline

By JO FOLEY

Living should be fun. Life should be enjoyable. Holidays should be about pleasure, excitement, rest, discovery and even more fun. And yet, by the time all the pundits, experts, health gurus and downright spoilsports have had their say we are left cowering in the corner, not knowing which way to turn, what to say or do and most particularly what to eat.

One of cruising's great pleasures is not just visiting new and different places, but also being given the opportunity to taste new and different things. Food is one of life's great joys and no wonder we love it – for many of us it includes shopping for and cooking as well as eating the stuff.

But nowadays we can't hit the breakfast table each morning without hearing yet another warning about some other tasty pleasure being bad for us. Sure we all know that eating too much of the wrong types of food is bad for our weight, arteries, heart and mobility. We also know that there is a huge increase in the occurrence of both diabetes and obesity. However we are also aware that most of us know and understand more about our health than any other previous generation and we take note of what we learn.

So too do the cruise ships, their kitchens and their chefs.

Food has always been one of the great attractions of cruising – the variety, the frequency, the novelties and the fun, especially as we don't even have to lift a finger in its preparation. Want a cup of tea? It's yours in an instant. Fancy an ice-cream? A choice of flavour, colour, topping, or even a low-fat job is just half a deck away. And should you desire a gourmet experience, then that too is available.

Cruise companies know which side their bread is buttered on, and realise their passengers now want not just healthy options in many of the restaurants, but also need their own eating restrictions catered for. Long gone are the days when a vegetarian was offered either a salad or a simple plate of steamed or boiled vegetables. There's a vegetarian option on every menu, and most

offer vegan as well as lactose-free and gluten-free alternatives.

Restaurants on Hapag Lloyd ships such as Europa have a special 'cuisine naturelle' menu in two of their restaurants which offers an entire six course meal including both a smoothie and a sorbet with accompanying organic wine. Best of all this menu, or choices from it, can be augmented with or combined with choices from the main menu including fish or meat. So if you fancy a lighter option but with a favourite fish dish... you just combine.

The company has also joined forces with German drinks maker Van Nahmen so that all of the latter's natural fruit juices are available on the ship's drinks list. The Europa 2 has even created its own unique juice... a cocktail of apple and quince.

Crystal Cruises have been catering to a variety of dietary needs and preferences for almost a decade, including diabetic, vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free, while menu options include complete three-course low-carb menus in all dining areas.

The good news is that cruise companies want to know what guests require before they come on board, so that when you book you can list your needs and demands on foodstuffs.

Allergies and intolerances are catered for in all restaurants and menus – whether you need gluten free, are lactose intolerant or have any allergies from nuts to strawberries. These will be noted and your orders will be adjusted accordingly.

On many of the P&O menus 'lighter options' are available next to the main dishes...and these can include everything from a lighter version of a traditional prawn cocktail to a choice of different cold meats and salads with different dressings. And even if you are not counting calories, or watching your weight, what on a warm evening is nicer or more delicious than a few grilled scallops with salad and a delicious dressing?

Passengers on Cunard's Queens have the added bonus of being able to choose Canyon Ranch selections on many of their menus.

Canyon Ranch is the iconic Arizona spa brand now available on these ships which not only provides great massages and facials but offers a wider programme incorporating nutrition and exercise. The special Canyon Ranch selections on menus offer three courses of healthy, calorie and fat controlled dishes... and yes, they do include puddings! But each dish is not only accompanied by its calorie count but also with the number of fat and fibre grams.

Gluten-free bread is invariably available alongside rice and barley options for breakfast. A choice of milks at breakfast for drinks and cereals is also on offer from low-fat to soya...while a wide choice of cereals from porridge (good for high cholesterol) to sugar-free granolas and yoghurts. It's the same with salad dressings...from the full creamy blue cheese version to the lighter option, but then as most of us know, nothing is quite as good for us as a dollop of best virgin olive oil.

Of course there are the special afternoon teas, the creamy cocktails (Brandy Alexander anyone?) and the mouth-watering puddings. Just relax and remember that you are, after all on holiday, and a little of what you fancy does you good...but possibly not too much of it.

Bon Appetit! 🍴

RIGHT
Caprese salad

BELOW
Scallops in low-cal sauce





The Britannia Restaurant - up to 2,500 dinners every evening

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Cunard plans to make major changes to Queen Mary 2 restaurants during dry dock refit

By JOHN HONEYWELL

Change is coming to Cunard flagship Queen Mary 2, in her most extensive update since she was launched in January 2004.

And the improvements – to be collectively referred to as “Queen Mary 2 Remastered” - will go beyond the addition of some balcony cabins, new accommodation for single travellers, and extra space for some of her most pampered guests in the only kennels at sea.

Major plans are being put in place for the restaurants that keep more than 2,600 passengers fed and watered every day. The only official announcements made by Cunard so far are about “lavish enhancements” to the exclusive Grills restaurants reserved for passengers travelling in the most expensive suites but there’s a lot more to come.

World of Cruising has been given an exclusive insight into what is under consideration around the ship although, like everyone else, we’ll probably have to wait a while for more details to emerge.

The changes – mostly affecting the buffet, the Todd English speciality restaurant, and a new food offering in the Winter Garden, can’t come soon enough for some.

Douglas Ward, editor of the Berlitz Guide to Cruising and Cruise ships, is particularly scathing about the ship’s Deck 7 buffet restaurant which also transforms into themed eating areas on selected evenings.

He describes the 478-seat Kings Court as “truly nondescript” and adds that with its “obnoxious daytime lighting [it is] more suited to a land-based shopping mall.”

In the past, I have compared the venue to a motorway service station café - from the days when the M1’s Blue Boar was trendy – although it’s the cramped serveries with their limited and repetitive choice that upset me, rather than the lighting.

Outside peak hours, the alcove tables overlooking the Promenade Deck are as pleasant a place as any to eat a

meal off a tray, but I can never understand why people are prepared to queue to be served breakfast and then queue for a table when cabin service meals can be delivered at no extra cost.

Be that as it may, it was good to hear from Executive Chef Nick Oldroyd that he will be spending the next few months working with designers to improve the buffet – for the cooks in the galley as well as for the passengers.

The two glass lifts that arrive in the middle of Deck 7 from the Grand Lobby on Deck 2 seem likely to be sacrificed to provide more space, and some design options will be adapted from the much newer P&O flagship Britannia and her sisters Royal Princess and Regal Princess.

Queen Mary 2’s Winter Garden, occupying the space between Kings Court and the Canyon Ranch spa, has always been under-used. It might have an attractive trompe l’oeil ceiling and a soothing water feature, but its wicker chairs could be filled more frequently.

My understanding is that it is another of the ship’s public rooms to be given a makeover, and it could be adapted to provide a light-bite option, with food choices for fitness fanatics at certain times of the day.

Next, the Todd English restaurant, tucked away at the end of passenger accommodation corridors on Deck 8. It can’t be moved, but it will be tweaked to improve access to the aft pool terrace. The heavy drapes decorating the entrance foyer and giving the air of a Bedouin tent designed for Libya’s Colonel Gaddafi will probably be the first victim of 2016’s designers.

More significantly, the restaurant will no longer be serving food overseen by an American celebrity chef whose name means little or nothing in the UK.

Texas-born Todd English opened his first restaurant in Boston in 1989 and has appeared on a couple of US television series – although he’s no Paul Hollywood. His Olives restaurants are now in the Bellagio Hotel in Las

‘It’s the end of the road for the motorway service station-style Kings Court buffet’

➔



↳ Vegas and Union Square, New York and among his other outlets is the BlueZoo at DisneyWorld's Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

The food in his QM2 restaurant is excellent, if a little heavily-sauced, but it is not to British tastes. The venue which carried his name on board Queen Victoria was replaced not long after Queen Elizabeth's Verandah Restaurant, serving lighter, French-inspired dishes, proved to be such a success. Those menus were created by Cunard culinary ambassador Jean-Marie Zimmermann.

Now on to the changes coming to QM2's Grills restaurants, which provide open-seating meals for passengers travelling in the most expensive suites.

They are the first to benefit from an official Cunard announcement, released at the end of September. In its usual hyperbolic PR-speak, Cunard say the Grills will "undergo lavish enhancements ascending to a new level of luxury, sharing company with the world's finest hotels. Cunard's iconic flagship will stay true to her classic art deco heritage, while offering updated, crisp, contemporary interiors painstakingly re-designed for today's most discerning travellers and further solidifying the unique position of these distinctively luxurious at-sea accommodations.

"The décor and furnishings will be redesigned to offer beautiful and elegant dining rooms that will compliment the enticing menus and excellent White Star service."

Cunard director Angus Struthers added: "Queen Mary 2's Grill suites and restaurants are already rated as the best of the best. The work to be undertaken in 2016 will ensure they continue to be the finest luxury experience at sea, with an unparalleled glamour and sophistication. I am confident that the new Grills experience on board the world's most iconic ship will attract even more accolades and exceed the expectations of all those who book to sail Queens Grill or Princess Grill."

Yes, yes, yes ... but what will the passengers actually get? Thankfully, some additional tables for two, and there's a promise of more space between the tables for extra privacy on those. Flexibility will also be gained by un-bolting some tables from the floor, so they can be re-

configured when necessary.

What about the food, you may ask? Dinners that take 148 chefs to prepare, and which are served in efficient banqueting style at the rate of 1,200 in an hour during two separate dinner sittings in the Britannia restaurant each and every evening of the year.

As we sat in Carnival UK's atrium canteen in their Southampton headquarters – a relatively austere contrast with the grandeur of QM2 - Nick Oldroyd assured me that he would continue to develop the menus over the winter, at the same time as he is working with the designers.

"We keep up with new trends and you see much more lighter food on the menus. It's not as heavily sauced, there's less salt, and we have enhancements such as

smoked meat and fish. Texture is key, and over the years we have moved to lighter sauces and lightly-cooked vegetables.

"It's important to ensure good provenance and to have everything as fresh as possible," he said. "We are always looking at different products to bring

contemporary flavours, but we can't ignore the customers who still want the classic gourmet experience.

"When possible, and especially in the Grills, we use organic meats and fresh fish and shellfish. We get to know our suppliers and we work with them. It's important that when we prepare the meals, we do not spoil the fresh ingredients."

Nick is not just a behind-the-scenes chef – he also puts on a show at the Chef's Table during each voyage. Guests booked for the dinner are treated to a galley tour earlier in the day, during which they prepare for the evening ahead with a few de luxe canapés and a glass or two of Buck's Fizz.

At the dinner table, the hotel general manager plays host while the chef sweats over his stove before coming out to describe every course, going through the ingredients while a sommelier pours perfectly-paired wines.

It's a special treat for a select few. But with the "Queen Mary 2 Remastered" enhancements on the way, none of the ship's guests – and just as importantly, not one of the 1,242 crew – need feel left out. ♣

'We keep up with new trends and you see much lighter food on the menus'

NICK OLDROYD
executive chef



Twin towers

Nicholas Oldroyd is one of Cunard's Executive Chefs, and he is not the only one to be called Oldroyd – his twin brother Mark also works at sea with Cunard.

They were born in Bridlington, East Yorkshire; Nick gained a diploma in Catering and Hospitality from Yorkshire Coast College in Scarborough – where TV chef James Martin also studied.

Nick then worked at two Michelin-starred restaurants in France, Les Cedres, in Darome, and La Table de Frere Ibarboure in Biarritz. Returning to Yorkshire, he was appointed head chef at restaurants in Norton and in Scarborough before teaming up once again with his brother to work at the York Golf Club in Strensall.

The brothers decided to go to sea in 1999, when they joined Cunard's QE2. Nick has worked his way to Executive Chef and was Chef de Cuisine on Queen Victoria during the ship's maiden season.



DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

Officially, Cunard has released few details of the changes planned for Queen Mary 2, other than announcing the addition of 15 single cabins and 30 Britannia Club balcony cabins.

A carefully-choreographed series of statements is no doubt planned between now and next May, and passengers during the 2016 World Voyage may see some initial preparations being made.

Experienced consultancy SMC Design – who recently worked on the much-admired cool Scandinavian interiors of Viking Star, has been brought in to lead the development.

The company was involved with QM2's initial design, taking inspiration from the art deco interiors of the classic Queen Mary.

Passengers are also helping to shape the new designs – the present-day Cunard has never knowingly been shy of conducting market research.

Praising "the most important ship in the world," Cunard director Angus Struthers said: "It is essential [we] keep her in excellent condition and ensure that what she offers is continually ahead of the rest."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The Todd English speciality restaurant which faces big changes; afternoon tea is a Cunard tradition; Golden Gate welcome for QM2; finest cuisine for Grills passengers; how a Grills-class suite will look; the new-Olook Queens Grill restaurant





‘Warm salad of rabbit saddle

with confit of leg and poached rhubarb

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 rabbit, divided as below

Confit of leg

- ◆ Rabbit legs
- ◆ 120g white oyster mushrooms
- ◆ 120g fresh shitake mushrooms
- ◆ 1 garlic clove
- ◆ 40g shallot
- ◆ 16g duck fat
- ◆ 80g unsalted butter
- ◆ 80ml Madeira
- ◆ 8ml sherry vinegar
- ◆ Salt, black pepper, five spice, tarragon, mustard powder

METHOD

1. Lightly season the rabbit legs with salt, pepper and five spice and leave to marinate for 4 hours. Wash off and dry with a cloth.
2. Preheat the oven to 130°C (Gas 1/2). Place the legs in an ovenproof pan, cover with duck fat and bring to a slow simmer for 15 minutes, then cover with foil and cook in the oven for 4 hours.
3. Allow the legs to cool in the fat before finely shredding and adding a little duck fat to moisten if desired.
4. Sauté the mushrooms with garlic and onion in butter.
5. Add Madeira wine and reduce until dry.

6. Add the mushrooms, tarragon, mustard and vinegar to the leg meat.
7. Roll out between two sheets of greaseproof paper to about 5mm thick and leave in the fridge for about 1 hour to set.

Rabbit saddle

- ◆ Rabbit saddle
- ◆ 120g Serrano or Parma ham
- ◆ White ground pepper, olive oil, butter

METHOD

1. Put a piece of cling film onto the work surface. Place the ham slices on the cling film, overlapping each other to make a single sheet.
2. Lay one of the rabbit loins on the ham and season with pepper. Then tightly roll the rabbit in the cling film and tie the ends.
3. Repeat with the remaining ham and other loin.
4. Bring a pan of water to a gentle simmer, place the rolled loins in the water and cook for 20 minutes. Drain the rolls and carefully remove the cling film.
5. Heat the oil in a pan, add the rolled loins and colour evenly all over, adding the knob of butter to finish cooking.

Rabbit kidney

- ◆ Rabbit kidneys
- ◆ 1 small egg

- ◆ 8g strong white flour
- ◆ 16g breadcrumbs
- ◆ Flat leaf parsley

METHOD

1. Using the kidneys from the whole rabbit, coat in flour, dip in egg then coat in the breadcrumbs before deep-frying.

Rhubarb compote

- ◆ 320g rhubarb
- ◆ 320ml Grenadine syrup
- ◆ 40g granulated sugar

1. Place the ingredients in a pan and cook until rhubarb starts to break down.
2. Strain off and cool. The liquid can be reduced and added to the rhubarb.

Garnish

- ◆ 120g radish
- ◆ Chicory
- ◆ Silverskin onion
- ◆ 80g raisins
- ◆ 40g caster sugar

1. Garnish with radish slice, endive and baby onions.
2. Cook the raisins in sugar stock until soft then blend to a fine puree.

From Cunard Executive Chef, NICK OLDROYD



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HAVE SOME MADEIRA, M'DEAR

...it's charming any time of year

By GARY BUCHANAN



Somewhere in the mists of time, a volcano erupted and the archipelago of Madeira was formed. Rising from the floor of the Atlantic to a height of 6,108 feet at Pico Ruivo, rugged peaks cut through the clouds, while ravines plunge dramatically to the sea. It was discovered by Portuguese explorer João Gonçalves Zarco five centuries ago; the will and dedication of the settlers transformed this savage wilderness

into 'the pearl of the Atlantic'.

The island is home to a quarter of a million Madeirans, whose most famous son these days is footballer Cristiano Ronaldo. Lying in the path of the trade winds, some 500 miles west of Casablanca, temperate Madeira has played host to voyagers passing between the Old and New Worlds. Now it is a popular port of call for cruise ships and a perennial favourite when Britain shivers





PREVIOUS PAGE Madeira panorama
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Botanical garden; Reid's Palace Hotel; tobogganing downhill; record-breaking fireworks

→ during winter chills. For such a small island there's a surprising variety of excursions for the active traveller as well as more staid pursuits.

No visit is complete without an exploration of the Zona Velha do Funchal – the cradle of the capital where baroque green-shuttered buildings are edged with black and white mosaic pavements littered with jacaranda blossoms.

Visitors amble along bougainvillea-festooned lanes to the Sé - the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption - with its Moorish-inspired ceiling of carved cedarwood and ivory. Not to be missed are the emblematic Museu Quinta das Cruzes; the Museu de Arte Sacra, home to a priceless collection of Flemish Renaissance paintings; and the Colégio dos Jesuítas with its carvings, tiles and paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Villages on the outskirts of Funchal bask in a more bucolic lifestyle. In Câmara de Lobos, where Winston Churchill painted in the 1950s, craggy fishermen put out to sea in red, yellow and blue-striped boats that dot the horseshoe beach. In Camacha, the wicker capital of the island, craftsmen bend, braid, and twist willow into every shape and purpose imaginable.

The 10-minute toboggan ride from the steps of the Nossa Senhora do Monte Church is a time-honoured tradition for tourist, sliding down steep and winding roads to the Funchal suburb of Livramento at speeds up to 30 mph. White-suited drivers in natty straw hats run alongside, pushing and steering the two-seater wicker sleds known as Carros de Cesto.

Funchal's lush Jardim Botânico is laid out on terraces with views of the Ribeira de João Gomes Gorge. Flower lovers can also sign up for tours to the 18th century Quinta

do Palheiro Gardens – famous not only for the variety of plants but for the beauty of the setting in the hills to the east of the city.

Many tours also visit the levadas - a network of man-made irrigation channels carved into the hillsides. These peaceful paths make for easy walking and provide a tranquil opportunity to appreciate the contrasts of this island.

Rising to 1,900 feet, Cabo Girão is the second-highest sea cliff in the world. Tours take guests to a new transparent glass walkway - similar to that at Arizona's Grand Canyon - affording an unforgettable experience and stunning views over the cliff.

In contrast to exploration and exertion, there's no finer way to leave the 21st century behind than by taking afternoon tea at the Belmond Reid's Palace. Built in 1891 by William Reid, a Scottish immigrant who arrived in Madeira with just £5 in his pocket, the hotel quickly acquired a reputation as a roosting place for well-heeled Brits. George Bernard Shaw took a spin around the dance floor, and in uncharacteristic modesty wrote to the hotel's dance instructor, addressed, "to the only man who ever taught me anything".

Reid's elegant tea terrace has a marvellous view over Funchal to the ships waiting at the dockside far below. Cruise passengers who appreciate the finer things in life can revel in nostalgia while enjoying tea, cakes and sandwiches before a guided tour of the hotel's lush gardens – recalling the days when Churchill retreated here to write his war memoirs. At €35.50 a head, it might cost more than tea back on board ship, but it's worth every penny (www.belmond.com/reids-palace-madeira.com).

As Flanders and Swann almost wrote in their saucy little song: Have some Madeira, m'dear, it's charming any time of the year. ↴



New Year's eve in Funchal



One of the most impressive fireworks displays in the world greets each New Year in Funchal. The 10-minute extravaganza, launched from barges in the bay, is accompanied by stirring music, and in 2006/7 was awarded a Guinness World Record.

Passengers on visiting cruise ships get an unrivalled view, with the reflections of the fireworks in the water adding to the magic. This year there will be no fewer than nine ships in port - Queen Elizabeth, Oceana, Black Watch, Saga Pearl II, Thomson Majesty, Mein Schiff 4, AidaBlu, AidaSol, and Magellan.



ANDY *Harmer*

UK AND IRELAND DIRECTOR
CLIA

A GREAT 2015, BUT YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET

What a busy year it's been - but without wishing my life away, it's fair to say I'm now looking forward with anticipation to what's in store for 2016.

Luxury, innovation and destination will be next year's buzzwords with amazing cruise itineraries to the four corners of the earth and on-board amenities that will rival the UK's most opulent hotels.

In my experience, service has always been exceptional across

all styles of cruise ship. However, 2016 will see something rather different with the launch of the ultra luxury Seven Seas Explorer from Regent Seven Seas with large designer suites up to 2,917 square feet – that's 10 times larger than a superior king suite at the Ritz Hotel in London!

Thrill seekers will be pleased to hear that Royal Caribbean's Harmony of the Seas will be home to the tallest slide at sea, keeping children and no doubt adults entertained for hours. It is amazing to think what ships can now offer in terms of activities – sky diving simulators and a ropes course with views of the sea nearly 150 feet

below. If you had told me 10 years ago that all of these experiences would be available on the high seas, I would have stared at you in disbelief – but not now!

We have also seen an increased interest in visiting off the beaten track places. Holidaymakers are now choosing to explore untamed shores for the chance to encounter rare wildlife and try their hand at activities such as kayaking, arctic expeditions, hiking and deep sea diving. This will continue in 2016, simply because one of the most wonderful things about cruise holidays is that you can reach destinations inaccessible by other means.

Cruise down the powerful Mekong River in Asia exploring China, Thailand and Vietnam or follow in the footsteps of Charles Darwin to the beautiful Galápagos Islands for a selfie with giant tortoises.

Overnight stays are also becoming more popular for total immersion in local culture – you can even try camping in Antarctica for a night to remember!

Whatever cruise you choose, you're bound to return home with wonderful experiences and memories to last a lifetime – so make 2016 the year for something different.

Andy Harmer is the UK and Ireland director of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) which represents the cruise industry.



EDWINA *Lonsdale*

MANAGING DIRECTOR
MUNDY CRUISING

BLANK GENERATION IS SLOWING DOWN TIME

I am intrigued by the ability of psychologists to create a huge study out of something that appears to us naïve lay people to be self-evident, but I have to admit I enjoy reading their many theories about why time appears to pass faster as you get older. The one I like best is that as our early years are packed with new and exciting first-time events, the memories we create are more detailed and lasting, whilst later on, when our years pass in a blur

of repetition, everything speeds up as we whizz through life with nothing ever happening.

So all of a sudden, although I just celebrated my 21st the other day, I find that I am squarely in the prime target age group for cruise buyers. But let me check the brochures, the websites and the ads... Are they aimed at me, these pictures of glamorously dressed couples resting their heads on each other's shoulders, watching the sunset, glass of Champagne in hand?

Are the zappy young marketeers who are trying to get

their heads round the late baby boomer/early Generation X mindset finding my age group hard to understand? Have they forgotten that when we were growing up, the sexual revolution was already a done deal, and as Richard Hell and the Voidoids said, 'We belong to the blank generation and we can take it or leave it each time.'

When I begin to think about this age group, which after all I know intimately and should understand back to front, I realise that it's not that simple. Even in my own friendship group (in fact even in my own marriage!) our tastes and interests differ wildly.

I think we all agree, though, that as we catch a glimpse of Time's Winged Chariot bearing down on us with disturbing speed, we need to slow down those racing years, and the great thing is that those ponderous psychologists have the answer. They say that if we create new and unique experiences, live more in the present, and hold a positive perception of the future, we will manage to slow time back down to those days when it seemed like Christmas was a lifetime away. In short, we need to go on a cruise! It's not self-indulgence, it's essential to our wellbeing.

Edwina Lonsdale is managing director of Mundy Cruising, the UK's oldest cruise-only retailer, selling luxury cruises since 1970.



IT'S TIME FOR THE CRUISE LINE BOSSES TO COME CLEAN

PS: It's OK Arnold, I don't mean you

Let's face it, we all love the world of cruising. If I wasn't such an admirer, I wouldn't be sitting here writing this. If you, the reader, weren't a devotee, you wouldn't have this magazine in your hands right now.

It doesn't take long for holidaymakers to become a fans of cruising, and when they do, they can get pretty obsessed.

You join Facebook groups sharing a common interest with other fans. After travelling on a couple of voyages, you begin to form a collection of your favourite ship, your favourite destination, and of course, your favourite cruise people.

The cabin steward who went out of his way to make sure a shirt was laundered and pressed in time for formal night. The waitress who remembered – after just one night on board – that you want no more than two ice cubes in your gin and tonic, lime rather than lemon, and it simply has to be Tanqueray. Accept no substitute!

You might have a favourite cruise director or spa therapist. You'll certainly be well on your way to having a favourite captain, and if you're a woman of a certain age who has travelled with one particular British cruise line – the one that has been painting giant Union Jacks on the bows of its ships – there's a good chance it might be Robert Camby.

Behind the scenes, there are lots of other unsung heroes. If it's someone like the pastry chef who toils to create those devilishly decadent desserts that do so much damage to your waistline, you might get an occasional chance to see them during the chefs' parade at the end

of your voyage. If it's the team in head office who make sure there's always enough flour and butter and sugar and chocolate and whatever other magical ingredients are required to put that plate in front of you, the chances are you'll never even think of them.

But if you ever did get the chance to meet them, you would waste no time showing your gratitude and telling them how much they were appreciated.

There's another group of important people in the cruise industry who seem determined to remain friendless – although they should be the ones for whom the highest praise is reserved.

I'm talking about the highly-paid cruise line executives who should be going out of their way to make friends and influence people, but in fact do the complete opposite.

Many of them were together in Hamburg last month for Seatrade Europe – a combination of trade show for cruise ports and ship suppliers, and high-flying conference for movers and shakers.

The opening State of the Industry session should have provided these masters of the maritime universe

Countdown to the Wave Awards

The judges are preparing to pass their verdicts in the very first Wave Awards, coming up in early 2016. World of Cruising, together with sister magazines Cruise Trade News and Cruise Ports & Destinations, has launched the awards to celebrate the very best in cruising and will have opportunities to recognise the best of everything from ships to shore excursions, from entertainment to the most helpful travel agents. YOU will have a chance to vote in some of the categories – look for the Wave Awards ad in this issue. Prizes will be presented at a lavish dinner at London's Royal Garden Hotel on February 18. The only thing missing is a star presenter. For some reason, Captain Greybeard has voted for Countdown's Rachel Riley (right). He must be spending too many afternoons at home watching the television.



caption

with an opportunity to show they were the good guys – bringing pleasure to millions of holidaymakers in an unimpeachable way.

Instead, they turned the event into a depressing monolith. No-one was safe from their barbed complaints.

Port authorities were criticised for being slow to adapt to provide the finest facilities for the visiting ships and passengers that bring welcome revenue.

International authorities were blamed for imposing onerous visa requirements that deter applicants from going through with their plans even after they have made the big decision to fly from, say, China to the Mediterranean. (Visa requirements which, in my experience, do nothing to deter queues of voracious Chinese shoppers at Bicester Village in Oxfordshire).

Governments across the continent came under fire for making life difficult for these cruise bosses – if it wasn't employment legislation they would prefer to ignore, it was restrictions on the heavy fuel which can be bought (relatively) cheaply and which help prevent fares from rising to unaffordable levels.

The fuel is problematic because it is dirty, and throws out some pretty obnoxious smoke and chemicals. Instead of vowing to do everything in their power to clean up their act – and their ships – the Hamburg mob could only bristle at the way different governments were inconsistent in their application of the European Union's clean air directives.

If there is a lesson for the cruise line executives to learn from the crisis that blew up in the face of car maker VW a few days later, it is that you ignore emissions at your peril, and that the public is almost wholly on the side of the clean-up brigade.

It's slightly ironic that the much-criticised Carnival Corporation – branded Carni-vore by some – is at the forefront of cleaning up the cruise lines' act. They are building the first ships to be powered by more environmentally-friendly LNG fuel – liquefied natural gas.

Unlike the grandees in Europe, their American-based CEO Arnold Donald was prepared to admit, a few days later, that the refugee crisis is having a harmful effect on cruise bookings – with some passengers even asking if their holiday could be disrupted if their ship had to be diverted in order to save lives.

Back in Hamburg, those executives entrusted with the stewardship of major cruise corporations had tried to ignore the refugee problem. Using their other complaints as a diversionary tactic, they even attempted to assure their audience that it was not something anyone needed to be concerned about.

Shame on them.

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