

THE Porthole

December, 2014

VOLUME XXXI, # 11



Saturday, December 13, 2014 – 12:30 to 4:00 PM
Piccolo Fiore, 230 East 44th Street, Manhattan (between 2nd & 3rd Ave.)

HOLIDAY PARTY AND PRESENTATION OF THE COLOR FILM “DECOR: AGE OF GLAMOR”

Introduction by Bill Miller

Join fellow members for a 3-course lunch and a color film presentation on the magnificent French liner NORMANDIE. Entitled Deco: Age of Glamour, this 57-minute film was produced in 1999 by the BBC for the Victoria and Albert Museum. It has the only color footage of the remarkable ship, taken from a test run in August, 1939. Normandie's westbound crossing was her final sailing before being laid up in New York prior to the outbreak of World War II.

Branch member and noted maritime author Bill Miller will introduce the film.

Location: Piccolo Fiore, 230 East 44th Street, New York, New York 10017 (between 2nd Ave. and 3rd Ave.)

Price: \$40 per person for members; \$50 per person for non-member guests. Lunch will include an appetizer, choice of hot entrées, dessert and coffee or tea. Additional beverages are available at your own expense.

Reservations & Payment: Return the slip enclosed with this edition of The Porthole to: David G. Hume, 74 Underhill Avenue, West Harrison, NY 10604. Please enclose a check made payable to World Ship Society.



The pinnacles of Art Deco: the NORMANDIE, outbound for England and France, sails past the spires of lower Manhattan in 1935. (French Line / Bob Allen collection)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership Meetings, January 30, February 27, March 27; programs TBD

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THE Porthole, published by the Port of New York Branch, World Ship Society, welcomes original material for publication. Address to the editor, Bob Allen, at oceanvoyag@aol.com or via the PONY mailing address.



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



CARNIVAL SPLENDOR departing New York on October 24, 2014.

(Bob Allen)

MUSEUMS, LECTURES AND HARBOR CRUISES

CONTACT THESE INSTITUTIONS BY EMAIL OR PHONE FOR CURRENT EVENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org or 917-492-3379.

MYSTIC SEAPORT www.mysticseaport.org or 860-572-0711.

VANCOUVER WSS & VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM www.worldshipsocietyvan.ca for information or if you visit, contact Glenn Smith: 604-684-1240, email glenn.smith@worldshipsocietyvan.ca. The next meeting is on Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

NEW SOUTH WALES WSS: Meetings are held at the Uniting Church Complex in Lord Street, Roseville at 8:00 PM. Contact the branch at PO Box 215, Strathfield, New South Wales 2135, Australia. The next meetings are January 15, 2015 – Pictures from the Basil Jenkinson Collection; February 19, 2015 – Cruising PNG and the Solomons by Peter Plowman.

THE NATIONAL LIBERTY SHIP MEMORIAL, INC. www.ssjeremiahobrien.org or liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org or 415-544-0100. 1275 Columbus Avenue, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94133-1315.

PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP www.liberty-ship.com or 410-558-0164

NEW YORK WATER TAXI, www.nywatertaxi.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises departing from both South Street Seaport Pier 17 and Pier 84 at West 44th Street. Hop on – hop off service throughout New York Harbor is offered as well. Contact via website or telephone for departure times and prices.

CIRCLE LINE DOWNTOWN, www.circledlinedowntown.com or 866-989-2542. Harbor cruises on the ZEPHYR from April to December, and aboard New York Water Taxi from January to March, departing from Pier 17, South Street Seaport.

CIRCLE LINE, www.circleline42.com or 877-731-0064. Circle Manhattan and other harbor cruises, departing from pier 84 at West 44th Street.

NEW YORK WATERWAY, www.nywaterway.com or 800-533-3779. Trans-Hudson ferry service and special-event cruises.

THE NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM www.lighthousemuseum.org or 855-656-7469. Contact for upcoming schedule of cruises and events.

THE WORKING HARBOR COMMITTEE www.workingharbor.com or 212-757-1600. Cruises to both remote and well-travelled parts of New York Harbor, such as the Hudson River to view tugboat races, Gowanus Bay and Erie Basin in Brooklyn, and a circumnavigation of Staten Island.

THE NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION, www.noblemaritime.org or 718-447-6490. Maritime lectures and art exhibits at the Sailor's Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island, NY

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
PRINSENDAM	Civitavecchia	Ft. Lauderdale	Transatlantic/repositioning	Karl & Laurel Zimmermann	11/14

SHIP'S LOG - OCTOBER

In October we were whisked off to France by the one and only Bill Miller, with a Power Point program devoted to the one and only NORMANDIE. Bill eased us gently into this parallel world with an account of his visit to the French Line archives, where everything from furniture to photo files were stored, and where "touching NORMANDIE items was like touching holy objects."

He then took us through the high points of French Line history, noting their vessels' glamor, their famed food and décor, and their reputation for being so French, it was like being in France. In addition, CGT (to give the line its French initials) introduced the Art Deco style (also known as Art Moderne) on the ILE DE FRANCE, which was soon copied by other ships and eventually made its way ashore.

The ship that became the NORMANDIE, designed by a Russian architect, Vladimir Yourkevich, differed from most other vessels of the time in having a modern interior. Launched in 1932, after a yearlong pause in construction because of the Depression, she made her maiden voyage in May 1935. She crossed the Atlantic in three and a half days, making 32 knots and on the way winning the Blue Ribband from the REX. A fleet of 100 welcomed her on her arrival in New York.

We saw drawings and photos of NORMANDIE's luxurious interiors, and heard much NORMANDIE lore and history in Bill's customarily enthusiastic and knowledgeable presentation, including her tonnage rivalry with Cunard over the QUEEN MARY, and the tale of one Baroness Rothschild with 120 pieces of luggage. The usual celebrities to be found on such a spectacular ship were represented by Bill's quotes from interviews with Kitty Carlisle and Mari Riva, Marlene Dietrich's daughter.

In August 1939 the glamorous NORMANDIE collided head-on with world events. Arriving in New York two weeks before World War II broke out, her return trip to France was cancelled. Her crew was repatriated, and the vessel occupied only a small maintenance staff, plus six cats. After Pearl Harbor she was seized by the U.S. Government, to be converted into either a troopship or an aircraft carrier. Showing newspaper photos, Bill described her sad ending – a fire caused by spark that ignited highly flammable life preservers, and capsizing due to overenthusiastic hosing. Unwanted, she was sold for scrap. Bill truly brought this dramatic story to life for us.

In the audience were Mary Pelzer and Carol Rauscher, former executives of South Street Seaport, which put on a beautiful NORMANDIE exhibit several years ago. A celebrity of our own for the evening was long-time member Bernard Grandjany, who as a small child emigrated from France with his family on the NORMANDIE.

The steward's department of the NORMANDIE could not be reached for refreshments, but our own crew did quite well with some delicious local goodies.

Marge Dovman

SHIP'S LOG - NOVEMBER

Our November program was a slide presentation organized and moderated by board member Doug Newman, featuring the favorite ships of some of our PONY branch members who are avid photographers and opinionated ship buffs. First up was Doug, who recalled with great fondness some of the diverse liners with which he is very familiar. The REGAL EMPRESS, a 1953-built classic (ex-OLYMPIA of the Greek Line) never fails to charm, with her wood-lined, British-built interiors and teak outer decks. Her elegant dining room, originally for Tourist Class during her early years, featured etched mirrors, inlaid marquetry panels and oil paintings of harbor scenes. No wonder it is one of Doug's all-time favorite ocean liner public rooms! Originally built as a transatlantic liner, she retained many features of her early career while operating as a cruise ship; she was scrapped in 2009. MARCO POLO, ex-ALEKSANDR PUSHKIN (1965), was also a transatlantic liner before she became a full-time cruise ship. She remains one of the oldest passenger ships currently in service. Doug showed us photos of her well cared for teak decks and modest yet comfortable interiors. QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 (1969), a perennial favorite, was seen in her later years, with her widened funnel and somewhat altered but still plush interiors. Doug's final selection was a particularly interesting choice - the wonderful SKY PRINCESS, ex-FAIRSKY (1984), Sitmar Cruises' first newly-built ship. Doug explained how in the early 1980's, her owners were operating two ex-Cunard, 1950's-built steamships. Due to the familiarity they had with this antiquated propulsion system, they chose to use steam turbines for their new flagship. Unfortunately, the engines were extremely expensive and increasingly difficult to operate, and ultimately caused her premature demise at the age of 29. However, FAIRSKY was an intriguing and attractive ship, as we could see from Doug's brilliant photos.

The next presenter was Tom Rinaldi, who took us on an eclectic, worldwide tour of both well and lesser-known passenger vessels. Lloyd Triestino was represented by the lovely AUSONIA (1957), which Tom sailed on late in her career when she was part of the Louis Cruises fleet. German East Africa Line's PRETORIA (1936), which was renamed EMPIRE WELL under British ownership post-World War II, had a surprisingly long career. She survived until 1982, although in a static role as an Indonesian accommodation ship during her last years. ENRICO C. (1950) was originally Societe Generale de Maritime's PROVENCE, and sailed for Costa until 1994; her career continued until 2001. Tom showed us an extremely beautiful brochure cover from her early days. Costa ships were also represented in Tom's favorites by FEDERICO C. (1958) and EUGENIO C. (1966). CABO SAN VINCENTE, owned by the Spanish Ybarra y Cia, Seville, was a handsome, smaller liner that plied the Genoa – Buenos Aires route from 1959 to 1975, and was broken up ten years later. Tom was fortunate to have sailed on the last transatlantic world cruise segment of the ROTTERDAM (1959) while still in high school, and on the OCEANIC (1965) decades later when she was serving the Spanish cruise market for Pullmantur. His first cruise was on another Holland America favorite, NIEUW AMSTERDAM (1983). Tantalizing shots of Italia's AUGUSTUS (1951) showed her as the stationary

MS PHILLIPINES in Manila; Tom toured her just before she was sold for scrap a few years ago. And then there were the ships that Tom only wished he could have visited, but still counted as favorites: NIEUW AMSTERDAM (1938), and LIBERTE, ex-EUROPA (1930).



The cover of a gorgeous 1951 SGTM brochure.

(Tom Rinaldi)

Bob Allen approached his presentation by offering a favorite or two from each decade of the 20th Century, and highlighted the design and/or historical importance of the ship that qualified it to join the list. The early decades included Hamburg-America's KAISERIN AUGUSTA VICTORIA (1906) and VATERLAND (1914), famous for their lavish First Class accommodations, which included a Ritz-Carlton restaurant. VATERLAND had the added innovation of divided funnel uptakes, allowing for an especially spacious interior layout. Bob assessed the ILE DE FRANCE as "unsurpassed" in the 1920's due to her radical Art Deco interiors and superb on board ambiance. Swedish America Line's KUNGSHOLM (1928) and her smaller sister GRIPSHOLM (1925) were credited with establishing the luxurious "White Viking Fleet," renowned for deluxe cruising. The 1930's was a decade of many favorites, and Bob paid tribute to the great Italian designer Gustavo Pulitzer Finali by selecting two of his earliest and most successful commissions – Lloyd Triestino's VICTORIA (1931) and Italia's CONTE DI SAVOIA (1932). American liners dominated his choices for the 1940's and 1950's with two pairs of sister-ships that have been somewhat forgotten over the decades. PRESIDENT CLEVELAND (1947) and PRESIDENT WILSON (1948) were cleverly built from the hulls of surplus P-2 troop transports by the naval architect George Sharp for the American President Line; they connected San Francisco with Japan and other Far Eastern ports. Legendary industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss was the creative genius behind American Export Line's INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION (1951), competitors to Italia's fleet on the New York – Genoa run. Bob was of the opinion that these ships, with their expansive sun decks, outdoor pools, semi-circular glazed superstructure bulkheads fore and aft, and sleek interiors were superior in overall design to their American contemporary, the UNITED STATES. Bob felt that the 1960s was the decade of Home Line's OCEANIC (1965), one of the most successful cruise ships ever built, and a real favorite of New Yorkers during her first 20 years of service while based in the port.

Stuart Gewirtzman was next, and counted modern Holland America and Princess cruise liners among his favorites, in part because of the spectacular adventures he enjoyed on these ships. A cruise around Cape Horn on the AMSTERDAM (2000) was memorable for its spectacular scenery, but that was just the beginning. Upgraded to the ship's most lavish suite, Stuart and his family were surrounded by real 17th Century antiques, enjoyed an 8-seat dining room and spacious living room where they could gaze at passing icebergs through bulkheads of full-height glass. The AMSTERDAM's atrium featured a huge astrolabe clock, enlarged many times from the original antique, that filled the vast space – it is one of Stuart's all-time favorite works of shipboard art. Also on the AMSTERDAM are bas-relief sculptures that once graced the First Class Entrance Foyer on the NIEUW AMSTERDAM (1938). EURODAM (2008) was another favorite. Like her earlier fleet-mate AMSTERDAM, she features traditional interiors filled with authentic Dutch antiques, vast murals, brass table lamps, and lavishly upholstered furniture. QUEEN MARY 2, looking absolutely regal, was seen in New York under the fireworks of a Cunard celebration in one of Stuart's stunning photographs. Finally, Stuart explained his fondness for Princess Cruises' DIAMOND PRINCESS (2004) comes in part from her wealth of forward-facing decks, allowing for perfect viewing of port arrivals, and thrilling photography. Passengers are allowed on top of the huge bridge wings, and the wrap-around promenade deck extends all the way to the very peak of the forecastle.

The final presenter was Paul Immerman, who focused on the QUEEN MARY 2. He wittily compared life onboard her today to that on the great liners of the mid-20th Century. He juxtaposed photos of his own travels on QM2 with photos of ocean liner life in earlier days. From Paul's cleverly assembled presentation, it looked like things have not changed all that much in the past 50 or 75 years! To prove the point, Paul's wife, Ellen Meshnick Immerman, rewrote Cole Porter's lyric to the classic "You're the Top" which he wrote for his Broadway musical Anything Goes, set on an ocean liner in 1934. Board member Marjorieann Matuszek led us in a delightfully operatic sing-along of the number to conclude the evening. The new title is "Ocean Liner Song" – and here it is:

Bob Allen

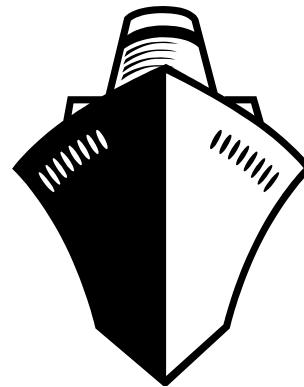
Ocean Liner Song

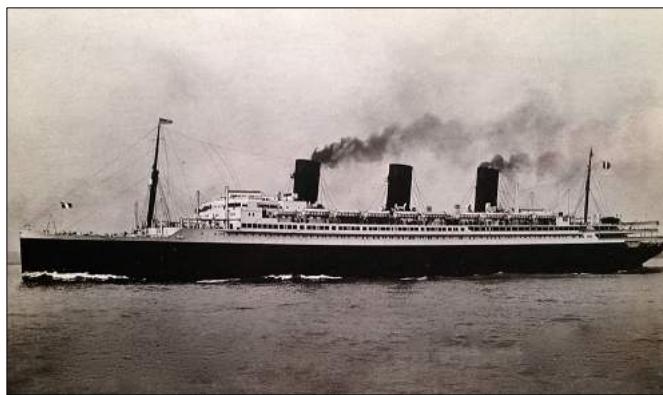
lyrics by Ellen Meshnick Immerman

You're the top.
You're an ocean liner.
You're the top.
Nothing could be finer.
You're the Mauretania,
The Aquitania, the France.
You're the Rotterdam, you're the Statendam,
You're the Ile de France.
A green goddess,
RMS Caronia.
Was not modest,
Might cause pandemonia.
We are just some blips, next to the great ships, full stop.
Cause if, baby, we're the bottom, they're the top.

You're the top.
You are the Queen Lizzie.
You're the top.
You are very busy.
O'er the pond you sail,
Carrying guests and mail and freight.
So does the Queen Mary,
She does not tarry,
She's your running mate.
She went far,
RMS Olympic.
Her fittings are,
In a hotel in Alnwick.
We are just some blips, next to the great ships, full stop.
Cause if, baby, we're the bottom, they're the top.

You're the top.
You're the SS Rex.
You're the top.
You earned our respects.
Won the Blue Riband,
Fastest land to land by sea.
You are heaven sent,
Like the "grande descente,"
on the Normandie.
We belong,
To the World Ship Society.
This swan song's,
For liners of all variety.
We are just some blips, next to the great ships, full stop.
Cause if, baby, we're the bottom, they're the top.





Some of our presenter's favorite ships, clockwise from top left: REGAL EMPRESS at Nassau (Doug Newman); AUSONIA at Venice (Lloyd Triestino /Tom Rinaldi); AMSTERDAM at Valparaiso, Chile (Stuart Gewirtzman); ILE DE FRANCE (CGT/Bob Allen);

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's time to renew your annual membership to the World Ship Society, Port of New York Branch. Enclosed with this issue is the renewal application; please complete and mail back to WSS at your earliest convenience.

HOLIDAY PARTY TIME!

The reservation form for the holiday luncheon and viewing of the Normandie film is enclosed. If you wish to attend this event, please complete the form and mail your payment to WSS, which are due by December 9.

A BAZAAR MORNING

If it's time for our Ocean Liner Bazaar, can some holiday or other be far behind? The bazaar took place on Saturday, October 18th, letting us guess which – er, which holiday would be coming along. Oh, never mind! Anyway, attendees enjoyed eying, buying and discussing the nautical wares on display, ranging from paintings to china, glassware, ashtrays, silver, books, T-shirts and more. If there had been a popularity contest among sale items, Cunard would have taken the Blue Ribband. The vendors were Dick Faber, David Hume and Marjorieann Matuszek, Michael Jedd, Don Levit, Pisa Brothers, Ian Robertson, and Albert Wilhelmi and Chris Bialecki – members all! Thanks to them for vending, and to all others for attending and shopping.

Marge Dovman

A VISIT TO ROYALTY

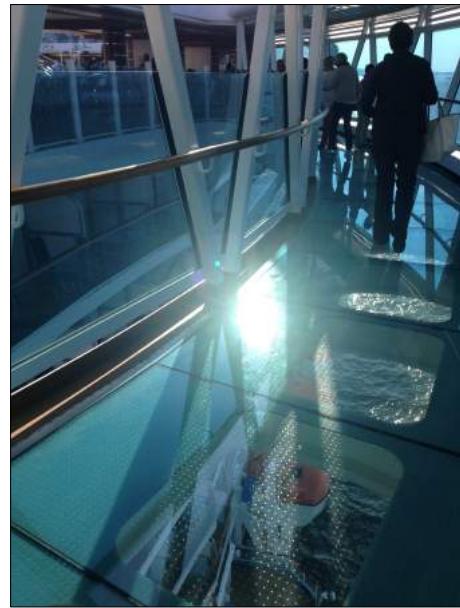
October 25th, the day after our October meeting, was a beautiful fall day, just perfect for the schlep out to the Brooklyn Cruise Pier for a visit aboard the 141,000-ton, 1,083-foot-long, 19-deck-high ROYAL PRINCESS. In service since last year, the ship is bright, modern and sleek without being gaudy. The 4,500-or-so passengers have their choice of 14 places to eat, from regular dining rooms (three of them) to buffets and snack spots; 10 or so bars, various venues for entertainment, and more. One amusing feature of the ship is the Seawalk, a short, curving glass walkway projecting over the side of the ship. On deck 16! It was entertaining to watch people walk gingerly along it. Among the several deck-14 cabins open for inspection, the suite was particularly impressive, with its two rooms, L-shaped two-door bathroom, and wrap-around balcony.

After half an hour or so of wandering time, we headed for the Symphony Dining Room (the others are the Concerto and the Allegra) for a delicious and well-served four-course meal. We (130 or so of us) had a choice of a salmon-and-crabfish dish or fettuccine Alfredo as an appetizer, and entrée choice of cod or Chateaubriand, a chocolate soufflé for dessert (ice cream was also available) and the usual beverages, plus red or white wine. Then came exploration time, on our own, with some taking advantage of the lack of an "all ashore" announcement.

Our thanks to David Hume for arranging this fun visit.



ROYAL PRINCESS Atrium – illuminated glass birds in flight rise through the spiral staircase.



A stroll on the Skywalk – gimmick or good idea? (Bob Allen)

Quantum of the Seas: Maiden Transatlantic Voyage **November 2 to November 10, 2014**

By Mary A. Brennan

Royal Caribbean has promised that the 167,800-ton, 4,900-passenger (at maximum capacity) Quantum of the Seas is the world's first smart ship, with technology changing the cruising experience from check-in through disembarkation. Technology glitches, not unexpected on the first revenue voyage, limited delivery on that promise, but what was delivered was enough to make me want to come back for more.

The ship is a design departure for RCI, with the elimination of the circular Viking Crown Lounge, a signature for several decades. The design and decoration of the public spaces is edgier, cooler, hipper than other Royal Caribbean ships. The other major change is the elimination of the main dining room, replaced with 18 different dining destinations. Ten of these are complimentary (including the Windjammer Café, the buffet venue, and snack, sandwich and pizza options). The remaining options carry a (usually) small charge, and include restaurants sponsored by Jamie Oliver, Michael Schwartz and Devin Alexander.

The ship is chock full of activities, including Royal's signature rock-climbing wall and surf-simulating flow rider. New to the Quantum are Ripcord by iFly (which simulates sky diving), circus school (trapeze anyone?) and bumper cars, among other things. But the defining attraction for the Quantum class is North Star, a London Eye-type viewing pod that climbs 300 feet above sea level and swings out over the ocean for pretty spectacular views.

Entertainment includes the usual singer/juggler/comedian performers, but also an un-abridged performance of Mamma Mia. Technology meets entertainment in two70, a mid-deck aft lounge with 270 degree views. Described as the "living room" of the ship, it is set up with comfortable seating and cozy conversation areas, but also features technology "closer to NASA than a cruise ship" according to the company. There are stages, which can raise and lower performers, or suspend them in the air. At night, screens cover the windows and provide an amazing backdrop to augment the live performances. A set of six screens, set high in the space, are attached to robot arms which can move separately or in unison to create art of their own.

An evening performance, called Starwater, took full advantage of this unique space, using the aisles as part of the performance space and employing the 270-degree screen quite effectively. It also showed some of the limitations of the space; I don't think all of the performance could be seen from anywhere in the lounge, and certainly not from most of the seats.

RCI promises to "10 minutes to check-in" with the new technology, which includes RSID tags on your luggage so you can trace its location. This clearly didn't happen in Southampton, but to be fair, Southampton won't be homeport to a Quantum class ship until April 2015. At that time, Quantum's sister ship Anthem of the Seas will enter service, where it will stay there until repositioning to Bayonne in November 2015. Disembarkation at Bayonne was much longer than usual, which just goes to show that technology can do only so much to speed up U.S. Customs.

Royal IQ is an app which in theory will enable you to check reservations, on-board activities, your ship charges, etc. Great idea, but the app wasn't released for IOS until a few days before sailing (I was already traveling at the point) and it was hard to download on ship, so I didn't get to test it out. An Android version is promised soon. If you don't use a smart phone, or choose not to pay for wi-fi onboard, there are tablets at strategic locations where you can log in and access much of the same information.

My balcony stateroom was quite spacious with lots of storage. The ship is dominated by balcony staterooms with suite options, large family suites that can be connected or not, interior rooms with a "virtual balcony" and a few single balcony and interior cabins.

And then there are the WOW bands. (Royal Caribbean is big on WOW.) In addition to the familiar card (room key, credit card, and ship access), each guest was issued a bracelet containing a chip. The band can also be used to open your cabin and pay for items. It can't be used for leaving or re-boarding the ship. Obviously not an issue on this crossing!

RCI also promises lightning-fast connectivity on board, for a price of course. My wi-fi experience was vastly superior to anything I have experienced previously on any cruise line, but still slower than on land. There were a few times when there was virtually no connectivity, and doing anything more complicated than checking email was hit-and-miss (downloading the Royal IQ app, for example). But it was definitely a big improvement.

In my opinion, "Dynamic Dining" (Royal's name for the multiple restaurants) is going to be the most controversial element of this class, and I suspect it may break down largely on new cruiser/experienced cruiser lines. I made a point of eating in as many venues as possible, and although some were better than others, I enjoyed them all. A lot will depend on how Royal handles the reservation process. Pre-boarding bookings were difficult, but hopefully that is a new-ship tech glitch that has been, or will be, resolved. But it can be difficult to know what you want to do when before you get on board, and without knowing the entertainment. It did not appear on that Royal held any reservations back for on-board booking, so a few restaurants were fully reserved from day one. People are not going to be happy if they can't get into one of the special dining venues.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Quantum and its innovations. The Quantum will be sailing from Bayonne through April 2015 when it repositions to Asia, but the Anthem will homeport in Bayonne as of November 2015. I hope to sail one of the ships again soon.



QUANTUM OF THE SEAS (top), passing the Statue of Liberty on her maiden arrival in New York Harbor, November 10, 2014 (RCCL). Silk Restaurant (above left) and Royal Esplanade (above right) are samples of the bright, colorful interiors on Royal Caribbean's innovative new 167,000-ton cruise ship. (Mary Brennan)

SHIP NEWS and SHIP OF THE MONTH

Ship News and Ship of the Month will return in the January issue of The Porthole.

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