



FEBRUARY, 2019 VOLUME XXXVI, # II

Friday, February 15, 2019 - 6:00 PM

CROSSING & CRUISING: THE QE2 & THE GREAT CUNARDERS By Bill Miller

The National Opera Center, 330 7th Avenue at 29th Street, 7th Floor, Manhattan

2019 is the 50th anniversary of the maiden voyage of the beloved, iconic QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 -- the QE2. While that extraordinary ship, the most successful liner ever, lives on in Dubai, it is the perfect occasion to celebrate both the ship and its owners. No other company has the grand history that belongs to Cunard.

Tonight, Bill Miller will take us on a "voyage," a voyage of recollection and remembrance, beginning with the first Queens, the immortal QUEEN MARY & QUEEN ELIZABETH. While we will "travel" to the current age of three modern QUEENS (and a fourth expected in 2022), other Company liners make "guest appearances" -- the AQUITANIA, MAURETANIA, CARONIA, BRITANNIC and others.

The whistle is sounding -- all aboard for a voyage of Cunard history and 50 years for the QE2!



The FRANCE, QE2 AND MICHELANGELO docked at New York in February 1973. Within 30 months, only the QE2 would remain in service. (Bill Miller Collection)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings: Friday, March 22 – Fred Olsen's BLACK WATCH by Karl Zimmermann; Friday, April 26 – The Port of Miami Since the 1960's by Alan Jordan; Friday May 31 & Friday, June 28 – Program TBD; Group Cruise on the INSIGNIA: August 18

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Holland America's Line's PRINSENDAM at sea, November 2018.

(Tom Cassidy)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
AMERICAN STAR	Jacksonville, FL	Jacksonville, FL	St. John's River	Marge Dovman	12/18

HOLIDAY IN PARIS

By Marjorie Dovman

December and its celebrations rolled around again and among the festivities, of course, was the PONY Branch's holiday party. This time the place chosen for our revels was the old Paris Café, on the corner of South Street and Peck Slip. It was originally a part of the historic and luxurious Meyer's Hotel, which over the years played host to celebrities good and bad, from Thomas Edison to Annie Oakley (not together) to Albert Anastasia. The café, dating from 1873, is now on the Federal Registry of Historic Buildings. With its large mirrors and the enhancement of traditional holiday decorations, the cozy and elegant Paris Café still hints at its historic background.

47 members and guests attended the festivities, including one member so anxious to be there that she arrived straight from a cruise, luggage and all. A three-course lunch plus tea or coffee awaited us, along with "additional beverages" available at our own expense. The choices for each course could have had us poring over the menu for most of the afternoon. For appetizers we could pick from a mixed green salad, chicken vegetable soup, a vegetable spring roll or crispy fried chicken fingers. Entrees consisted of roasted chicken breast, shepherd's pie with ground beef, sautéed vegetable bowl with quinoa, fish and chips, wild Scottish salmon or Angus beef sliders. Whipped potatoes and sautéed vegetables accompanied each. Something for every taste! Desserts were easier to choose – either Meyer lemon tart or chocolate brownie. While the service was a little disorganized at first, the food was definitely worth waiting for.

During a brief intermission of sorts, outgoing chairman Marjorieann Matuszek thanked the other outgoing officers and board, and introduced the incoming group. Then the entertainment commenced – Part 4 of the Great Liners series, this one "The Great Cunarders," documenting those historic ships. The film, provided by Snowbow, had no soundtrack, but this was a technicality. Some spectators kept their eyes and attention on the film, while others created their own soundtrack, some of which may actually have had something to do with the film. Occasional other noise was provided by revelers (nobody we knew) in the adjoining bar.

Having been well fed and entertained, we wished one another happy holidays and a Happy New Year of cruising and ship programs. We thank Pat Dacey for his excellent planning, and thanks also the Paris Café personnel.

SHIP'S LOG – JANUARY

By Bob Allen

Our first meeting of the New Year on January 25 began when our newly elected chairman Pat Dacey introduced the other elected officers for 2019-2020. He then turned to Ted Scull to introduce the evening's speaker, Christian T. Roden, and his program "Post-War Ships of the American Export Lines: The Genius Behind the INDEPENDENCE, CONSTITUTION & the Four Aces." A first-time speaker at the PONY Branch, Christian is the Assistant Director of Data Management and Prospect Research for the University of Pennsylvania Library, and a passionate ocean liner historian.

Christian began by introducing us to the subject of his talk. Henry Dreyfuss, the renowned mid-20th Century industrial designer, became intimately involved with ocean liner design during the 1940's and 1950's. Dreyfuss began his career as an apprentice to another legendary industrial and theatrical designer, Norman Bel Geddes, after graduating from high school in 1922. By 1929, the ambitious Brooklyn-born Dreyfuss opened his own industrial design firm at the age of 25. He was particularly interested in anthropometry – the study of the measurements and proportions of the human body, and how to apply that knowledge to create better industrial products – or, as we call it today, ergonomics. Within ten years, Henry Dreyfuss & Associates was a fast-growing firm with an impressive roster of clients, including the Bell Telephone Company, Hoover Vacuum Cleaners, John Deere, Royal Typewriters and the New York Central Railroad. His work became well known around the world. For the railroad he redesigned the famous 20th Century Limited's plush yet highly functional interiors, as well as streamlined casings for the Hudson and Mercury series locomotives in the late 1930's. His Hoovers and Bell Telephone designs were used for decades, and his circular Honeywell thermostat may be in your home today. Henry Dreyfuss believed that the rapid growth and success of the firm was attributable to the five guiding principals that the company followed in all its design work: safety, convenience, ease of maintenance, facility of manufacture and appearance. As his commissions became more complex, these five principals became essential, and were clearly followed on his ocean liner design projects.

His expertise in transportation design caught the attention of John Slater, vice president of the American Export Lines, which ran passenger and cargo services from the east coast of the United States to the Mediterranean and beyond. Slater believed the future of long-distance travel would be by air, so in the late 1930's he developed American Export Airlines, a subsidiary of the steamship line. In 1939, he hired Dreyfuss to design the interiors of the four "Flying Boat" Vought-Sikorsky VS-44A aircraft that comprised the fleet. Christian surprised the audience (there was an audible gasp!) by letting us know that one of the aircraft still exists, and can be seen at the New England Air Museum at Bradley International Airport in East Granby, Connecticut. Slater knew it would be years before commercial aviation captured the bulk of the passenger trade, and the advent of World War II made the timeline even more uncertain. In 1944, as the end of World War II approached, he met Dreyfuss for dinner. He wrote a question on the back of an envelope and passed it across the table: "Will you design a fleet of post-war ocean liners for AEL?" Dreyfuss answered, "Yes."

Much of American Export's pre-war fleet of small passenger-cargo liners was destroyed during the war. Slater worked with the US government to subsidize construction of a pair of mid-sized liners to accommodate projected passenger traffic; they could be called up for troopship service in a future conflict if necessary. Four passenger-cargo liners were planned as well. Dreyfuss went to work, employing his five principals and the tremendous experience he had on earlier transportation projects. However, the integration of industrial design principals with a shipbuilding project had never been done before. Top designers had worked on many ocean liner projects since the early 20th century, but primarily as space planners, interior architects and decorators. With the new AEL ships, Dreyfuss' five design principals and ergonomics affected all aspects of the project. There was much resistance from the selected shipyard, Bethlehem Steel Company of Quincy, Massachusetts. Christian relayed the story of a particularly uncomfortable disagreement that came up early in the design process. Construction workers typically connected fire-resistant Marinite wall panels with battens – strips of the same material applied over the joint. This was a labor-intensive process that allowed imperfect sections to be joined, and created a decorative but fussy finished appearance to the bulkhead. Dreyfuss perfected a better system. He had the Marinite wall panels engineered precisely, and added a slightly chamfered edge. When butted to the adjacent panel, a pleasing "V" shaped joint was formed, and the wall could be built faster and without waste. Shipyard management was resentful, and came up with the nickname "No-batten Dreyfuss," but the idea worked and is still in use today.

Design of the unnamed sister ships continued until mid-1945, when two-thirds of the drawings were completed. However, the subsidy negotiations with the US government collapsed, so the project was put on hold. Slater and Dreyfuss turned their attention to the design and construction of the four smaller passenger-cargo sister ships for which funding was in place. The "Four Aces," as the ships (as well as their pre-war counterparts) were known, were built on the hulls of surplus troop transports. Dreyfuss used the next two years to learn the shipbuilding business in depth, which would be very beneficial when building the larger liners; he was also able to experiment with and perfect ideas on the smaller vessels. When completed in 1948, the Four Aces – EXCALIBUR, EXETER, EXOCHORDA and EXCAMBION – were very well received. They featured design ideas that were generated for Dreyfuss' 1930's transportation projects and reached fruition here. Most impressive was the living room to bedroom conversion of the standard passenger cabin. When a passenger arrived at his cabin, he was greeted with a cheerful living room with a large sofa, several chairs, built-in bureaus, desks and lamps. In the evening, a steward would fold down the back of the sofa, revealing a large bed made up for sleep; a second bed (and a third bunk, if required) would fold out of a wall. A handle attached to counter-balanced weights shifted the furniture components at the touch of a finger. A steward would not even be required for the transition! The beds flipped into wall alcoves that provided a flush surface by day, and behind the bed was a chase or cavity in which ran electrical wiring and utility piping. Christian pointed out that this system meant fewer stewards were required – a huge financial benefit, since union rules changed in the late 1940's, reducing crew shift lengths. The Dreyfuss studio also designed the ships' furniture, making sure that edges were rounded, to prevent injury during rough seas; the same principal was applied to bulkhead corners. Christian told us that this was a sensitive issue with Dreyfuss, who had been injured in rough seas on a transatlantic crossing in the 1920's.

By the time the Four Aces were in service the government subsidy issues for the larger sister ships were resolved, so work was able to proceed. The keel of the first liner was laid in late March 1949, the second in mid-June. Slater was very pleased with Dreyfuss & Associates' work on the Four Aces, and wanted to expand their involvement during the construction of the larger

liners. In an odd twist of fate, AEL president William Cloverdale passed away in August, 1949 and John Slater assumed his role. Under the leadership of new president and chairman of the board Slater, Henry Dreyfuss & Associates established a field office at Bethlehem Steel, and oversaw virtually all aspects of the ships' design and decoration. The Dreyfuss team spared no effort as they delved into the design process. Full-scale cabin mock-ups were built, and filled with passenger belongings. Intricate scale models were constructed, allowing the designers to study and perfect the details of public rooms and stair towers. Innovation was built into the ships' structure, layout and mechanical systems. Being the first fully air conditioned transatlantic liners, huge ventilation cowls and corresponding vertical shafts were no longer needed to bring fresh sea air into the ship. Dreyfuss used the vacated space to develop utility shafts in which to run air conditioning ducts, plumbing chases and electrical conduit. He effectively distributed these services to maximize ceiling heights and create the most convenient access points for system maintenance. Cove lights in corridors hugged bulkheads, which created a clean modern look; separating light fixtures from duct locations also saved space and eased maintenance. Bathrooms were prefabricated, and circular shower stalls used less space and lacked corners that collected dirt. Cabin locations and access routes were strategically planned so that a few sliding corridor walls could create great flexibility in passenger capacity in each of the three classes (First, Cabin and Tourist). This arrangement also meant that the ship could easily be reconfigured for cruise versus transatlantic service as required. From key fobs color-coded by deck for passenger orientation, to the placement of light switches, door handles and grab bars, no detail for passenger comfort was overlooked by the Dreyfuss team.

American Export Lines chose the patriotic names INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION for their new flagships, launched a few months apart in 1950. The ships that emerged from the Quincy, Massachusetts yards were sleek and elegant, featuring streamlined rounded bridge fronts, tapered masts and kingposts, and twin tapered funnels, smartly raked and perfectly balanced amidships. The funnels had fresh, Dreyfuss-designed markings, creamy buff with red, white and blue bands, replacing the heavy black funnels with a bold letter "E" that appeared on earlier AEL ships. The liners were instantly recognizable due to their historical counter sterns – the last liners built with this feature, which had appeared on most earlier AEL vessels. A bold gamble, the traditional stern on an otherwise ultra-modern ship, was a stunning success. The Dreyfuss team created interiors that were mid-century modern, stripped of heavy decoration, emphasizing the simplicity of the furniture and construction materials and the abundant natural light that flooded the public spaces. The sisters featured a subtle American Colonial decorative theme, manifested mostly through artworks and some furniture pieces. AEL's advertising summed up the look and feel of the new ships quite succinctly: "Modern American Living Goes to Sea."



INDEPENDENCE is launched at Bethlehem Steel Company's Fore River Yard, Quincy, MA on June 3, 1950. (Bethlehem Steel / Bob Allen Collection)

Christian took us on a stroll through the First Class Promenade Deck, utilizing the lavish three-dimensional (isometric) plans that AEL included in early brochures. Facing forward over the bow, the First Class Observation Lounge/Ballroom was one of the most dramatic venues afloat in the 1950's. Circular in shape, the room offered a 270-degree panorama of compelling views through full-height glazing. It was decorated in subtle shades of gray and blue, furnished with wine, oyster and gray club chairs and sofas on a gray carpet, part of which concealed a parquet dance floor. The central portion of the room was highlighted by an indirectly lit dome and gold surround, which rested on four rectangular columns clad in Texas shell stone. Just aft was the Map Corridor, featuring a large globe, which was a copy of those supplied by the Dreyfuss office to Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin during World War II. Proceeding aft, the next room was the Main Lounge, with full-height windows port and starboard overlooking the glass-enclosed promenade decks. Seating consisted of connected serpentine sofas covered in a solid hunter green fabric; three smaller sofas near the room's center stood out with their Audubon-inspired print fabric. Christian let us know that the striking fabric with its overscaled birds was not exactly his taste. The room featured a niche containing (naturally) a framed reproduction of the Declaration of Independence on the INDEPENDENCE and the Constitution on the CONSTITUTION. A large breakfront on the aft bulkhead displayed colonial era antiques on a rotating display supplied by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Heading aft, the Tattoo Room was an intimate private dining or clubroom decorated with brilliant red and blue renderings of tattoos. Next was the main venue for pre-dinner cocktails, the Boat N' Bottle Bar. This room featured C-shaped interlocking booths in front of a long, curving cocktail bar. In an interesting expression of the ship's structure, the bulkhead behind the bar concealed the swimming pool tank, its graceful curve following the tank's outline. The dark paneled bulkhead was decorated with a collection of sailing ships in bottles. The aftermost room on the Promenade Deck, the Commodore's Terrace, dramatically overlooked the stern decks through a 180-degree arc of full-height glass.

Entering service in February, 1951 the INDEPENDENCE was an instant sensation, as was the CONSTITUTION when she debuted in June. Christian informed us that they were highly praised by the maritime press and the travelling public. American shipbuilding design reached a new level of sophistication and utility, matching the stiff competition on the North Atlantic from British, French, Italian, Dutch and Scandinavian flag carriers of the 1950's. Christian noted that the true success of the INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION was proven by their decades of successful service under challenging financial conditions. As John Slater and Henry Dreyfuss predicted, the airlines took more than 90 percent of transatlantic customers by the mid-1960's. But the sister ships remained viable until 1968 due to their continued popularity and flexibility to operate as true cruise ships. They were even expanded to meet demand in 1959, although unfortunately not under the guidance of Henry Dreyfuss & Associates. That year John Slater's tenure as American Export Lines president ended, which also signaled the conclusion of Dreyfuss' contract with AEL. Despite suffering long lay-ups during the oil-crisis years of the 1970's, both ships were rejuvenated for service in the Hawaiian Islands in the early 1980's, operating for C.Y. Tung's subsidiary American Hawaii Cruises. Their original design was remarkably well suited for year-round tropical cruising, with only a cosmetic refresh and minimal reconfiguration required before reentering service. The CONSTITUTION sailed until her retirement at the age of 43 in 1994. Christian observed that the INDEPENDENCE concluded her service after reaching her milestone 50th birthday in 2001, following the terrorist attacks that year which devastated the travel industry and contributed to the collapse of American Hawaii Cruises.

We thank Christian for this fascinating and unique program, looking in detail at the intricacies of ocean liner design. We hope it is the first of many voyages he shares with us at World Ship Society – PONY Branch.



INDEPENDENCE arrives in New York after her delivery voyage from Bethlehem Steel in Quincy, MA, January 1951.

(Bob Allen Collection)



The Observation Lounge, which doubled as the Ballroom. (above)



The Main Lounge; the niche on the right holds a copy of the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. (above)

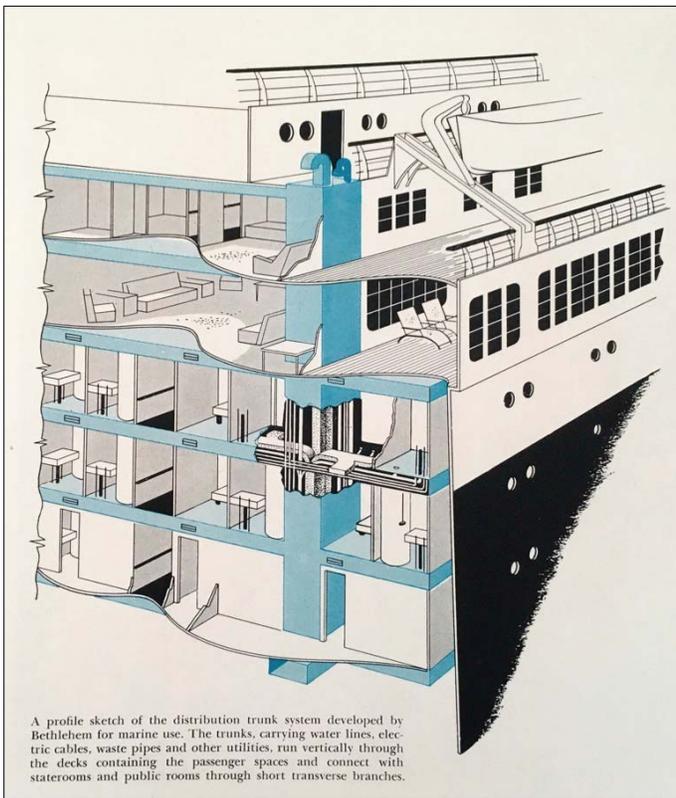


Living room by day, bedroom by night: the brilliant convertible cabins. (above, right)



The Boat N' Bottle Bar, with the full-height windows of the Commodore's Terrace in the background. (above)

(all photos AEL/Bob Allen Collection)



A profile sketch of the distribution trunk system developed by Bethlehem for marine use. The trunks, carrying water lines, electric cables, waste pipes and other utilities, run vertically through the decks containing the passenger spaces and connect with staterooms and public rooms through short transverse branches.



Bethlehem Steel's brochure on the building of the INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION illustrates the ingenious utilities distribution system designed for the sister ships (above, left). "Modern American Living at Sea" made its bow with the February 10, 1951 maiden voyage of the INDEPENDENCE, cruising "The Sun-Lane to Europe." (above, right) (Bethlehem Steel and American Export Lines / Bob Allen Collection)



More than 40 years after their introduction, the INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION were still operating as successful Hawaiian Islands cruise ships, with only minimal structural and mechanical changes. (American Hawaii Cruises / Bob Allen Collection)

MINI REVIEW: ELEGANCE AT SEA - THE CRYSTAL SYMPHONY

By Bill Miller

The worldwide cruise industry is growing by huge leaps. Over 110 passenger ships were being built or on order as of last summer. And the high-end, total luxury, six-star market is very much included. Well-heeled clients want well-run products, amenities and services – and newer, finer, perhaps even more sumptuous ships.

Los Angeles-based Crystal Cruises has long been on the top of this gold-plated list. Now owned by mighty Genting-Hong Kong (itself running not only Asian-based cruise ships, but hotels, casinos, even complete resorts), Crystal itself has expanded in recent years: expedition cruise ships, river cruising, even luxury travel by private jet. Last summer, we were aboard the 50,000-ton, 848-passenger CRYSTAL SYMPHONY, making a 21-night cruise from San Francisco all the way home to New York – with stops along the way in Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica & of course passage through the Panama Canal. On the last leg, the ship called in at Colombia, Bimini in the Bahamas and at Charleston. We were full up, with over 50% Crystal repeaters.

Crystal has been described as the “Rolls Royce of cruising” – and being like “Rodeo Drive gone to sea.” Indeed, it remains a most wonderful cruise line. I myself have been a guest speaker on Crystal for some twenty-seven years, making over 80 trips with them in total (Africa, Australia, Antarctica, the Amazon, etc.). But this latest trip had an added attraction: the 23-year-old Symphony had just had a multi-million-dollar refit and restyling. Yes, the ship glistens, shines, has even finer decorative styles, and certainly defies its true age.

The fresh changes on the 12-deck ship were impressive: The Crystal Dining Room, for example, has become Waterside and gone to open seating and now offers far more tables for two and four; the acclaimed Nobu-run Silk Road & Sushi Bar is now Umi Uma (but still offering tantalizing Asian-Latin America fusion cuisine); the Lido Restaurant is now the Marketplace for breakfast & lunch but by night now changes into a Brazilian-themed Churrascaria (serving the likes of tapas, ceviche, salads, grilled seafood and varied meats presented by “Crystal gauchos” on sword-like skewers); and then there’s Silk, offering Chinese comfort food family style – and including a soup and a noodle bar. The big Galaxy and Starlite showrooms have been redecorated as well, the Crystal Cove & Lobby enhanced, more suites created, and the staterooms upgraded.

But like myself, many guests feel that the true jewel in Crystal’s crown is the 600 or so staff: all well trained, very, very friendly and with a great sense of continuity (one deck steward has been with the line for an amazing 26 years while the hotel director has logged 28 years). “It is like being part of a family, the Crystal family,” commented one longtime guest. “Coming aboard is like coming home!”

Until recently, two ladies have been “living” aboard the two Crystal ships (one of them for almost ten years) while another lady can count 450 Crystal cruises over the past fifteen years. And some 400 repeat guests can count 100 or more cruises with Crystal. Crystal also excels in entertainment – by day, some of the best daily programs including some of the best speakers on all the seas; by night, first-rate, Broadway-quality shows plus top-notch cabaret performers (and recently, “real” Broadway stars have been coming aboard as well).

Crystal has two liners (the other being the slightly larger, 980-bed CRYSTAL SERENITY) and together they cruise the world – from one-week itineraries to, say, 100-day circumnavigations of the globe. And while the Company is currently building new yacht-like explorer cruise ships as well as luxury riverboats, they are very much looking to the future. In Genting-owned shipyards in northern Germany, Crystal is planning to build a trio of 70,000-ton, 900-passenger luxury cruise liners, the first due out in 2022. Like many Crystal travelers, I’m excited and looking forward. But for now, Crystal Cruises and the CRYSTAL SYMPHONY unquestionably remain six-star.



CRYSTAL SYMPHONY docked in Charleston, SC.

(Bill Miller)

LIMITED SPACE IS STILL AVAILABLE ON WORLD SHIP SOCIETY - PONY'S SUMMER BERMUDA CRUISE!

On August 18, 2019, World Ship Society PONY members will be departing on a very exciting cruise. For the first time, upscale operator Oceania Cruises will be sailing 7-day round-trip cruises from New York to St. George's and Hamilton, Bermuda. We will be cruising on the luxurious, intimate 684-passenger INSIGNIA. 53 branch members and friends have already signed up, making this one of the largest groups we have had in many years. There is still limited space available. For more information, call Brad Hatry at Worldview Travel, 212-265-8420, x 222, or 800-729-7472 x 222, or email brad@worldviewtravel.com.



Clockwise from top left: Oceania's INSIGNIA; The main dining room, Martini Bar and a balcony stateroom as they will appear after completion of the "Oceania NEXT" renovation program, which will cosmetically refresh the existing fleet. (Oceania Cruises)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

HOW SUITE IT IS: Luxury suites and reimagined cruise ship cabins are big news. Virgin Voyages has revealed a new concept in bed layout for their SCARLET LADY. The Sebed, designed by Walter Knoll in Germany, allows half of the bed to rotate 90 degrees, creating daytime sofa seating. The rest of the bed remains in position, forming a chaise lounge. According to Virgin, this arrangement "eliminates the unspoken awkwardness of inviting new friends over with no place for them to sit but on the bed." The standard balcony cabins will also feature a hammock, allowing sailors (as Virgin refers to passengers) to hang out. SCARLET LADY will also feature 78 "RockStar" Suites, including the Massive Suite, Posh Suite, and Seriously Suite. Virgin also announced that they will operate their new ship on a series of four and five-night cruises from Miami during the inaugural year, with Cuba, Mexico and the Dominican Republic as primary destinations. Ritz Carlton Yacht Collection is planning a wide variety of suites aboard their 298-passenger vessels, set to debut in February 2020. The two-deck Loft Suite will be ideal for entertaining, according to the line. Other suites will feature folding walls, allowing transformation to open plan spaces. Tillberg Design of Sweden owner Frederik Johansson stated that the deluxe vessels are being designed "to make guests feel as though they are onboard their own private yacht." New renderings of public areas have also been released, along with an online brochure. Not to be outdone, Regent Seven Seas Cruises CEO Jason Montague has announced that their latest ship, the SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR, will "astonish luxury travelers with an unrivaled experience, and it reflects the superior detail you'll uncover throughout this stunning ship." The ship's 4,443-square-foot Regent Suite, the largest ever constructed on a passenger ship, will offer a 1,300 SF wrap-around terrace above the ship's bridge, and will include a spa with a sauna, steam room and treatment area. Set for a maiden voyage in 2020, SPLENDOR will be joined by a sister ship in 2023. Proving that size isn't everything, Saga Cruises, the UK company dedicated to the over-50 traveler, has released details about the suites on the new SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY. Saga CEO Nigel Banks stated "Our suites will enjoy butler service and will be among the finest afloat – each with its own character and personality, sumptuous furnishings, fabrics and fittings as well as bespoke artwork. At 730 SF, the Sidney de Haan Suite and the Joseph Meyer feature separate living rooms plus bathrooms to impress with twin sinks, a shower and separate bathtub." The names of these suites are quite interesting. De Hann was Saga's founder, and Joseph Meyer the founder of the shipyard building the new liner. Eight other suites are being named for Shipping Forecast areas around the British Isles: Bailey, Fair Isle, FitzRoy, Hebrides, Humber, Lundy, Thames and Trafalgar. According to Banks, "naming the suites with an original, British maritime theme was one goal but we wanted to recognize our heritage and the important names in Saga's own history." SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY will arrive in July 2019, and be joined by SPIRIT OF ADEVENTURE, which will receive a different decorative and design theme, in 2020. Book your suite, and away we go!



Style and history: the suites on Saga's SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY have British maritime-themed names.

(Saga Cruises)



SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR (above left) and the Ritz Carlton Yacht Collection vessels (above right) both feature lavish, sprawling suites.

(Regent Seven Seas Cruises and Ritz Carlton Yacht Collection)



Just hanging out! A bed rotates to create a seating area, and a bright red hammock dangles on the balcony (above, left). By night, the SCARLET LADY cabin takes on a more traditional appearance (above, right).

(Virgin Voyages)



Appropriately, one of the “RockStar” Suites on the SCARLET LADY is decorated with guitars (above, left); the Posh Suite is definitely posh for stuffed animals (above, right). (Virgin Voyages)

GOLDEN ERA IS OVER: Sea Sky Cruises, a Chinese-based joint venture with Ctrip and Royal Caribbean Cruises, ended operations in September, 2018. Their single vessel, the GOLDEN ERA, was completed in 1995 for Celebrity Cruises as the 70,000-ton, 1,800-passenger CENTURY. The first of three CENTURY-Class vessels was somewhat unique in late 20th Century cruising. She represented a tremendous advancement for Celebrity Cruises, which started as an upscale version of budget operator Chandris Cruises in 1989. Although Celebrity produced two notable new vessels – HORIZON in 1990 and ZENITH in 1992 – nothing prepared the cruise industry for the spectacular CENTURY. Her rakish exterior by yacht designer Jon Bannenberg was eye-catching, while her sumptuous interiors by leading hospitality designer Birch Coffey & Associates contained references to the great Art Deco liners of the 1930’s. A magnificent “Grand Descent,” with a Lalique table and huge floral bouquet at its base, led to a stunning two-level dining room overlooking the ship’s wake. The rest of the ship featured elegant public areas furnished with fine materials, sophisticated lighting, spacious cabins and suites, and to the delight of passengers, superb cuisine from morning until midnight. With the introduction of slightly enlarged sister ships GALAXY (1996) and MERCURY (1997), Celebrity cruises became the leader of the upper mass market. Before the year was over, Royal Caribbean purchased Celebrity in a successful move to penetrate a more upscale cruise market. GOLDEN ERA has been sold to the giant German company TUI, where she will join the Marella Cruises fleet as MARELLA EXPLORER 2. She is currently at Navantia Shipyard in Cadiz, Spain, undergoing a thorough, four-month conversion into a more modern cruise ship. In keeping with the latest industry trends, she will feature nine restaurants, ten bars, and will be cosmetically refreshed inside and out. Plans are for MARELLA EXPLORER 2 to be based in Palma beginning in April for a series of spring and summer Mediterranean cruises. Hopefully, this historic ship will embark on a long and successful third career.



CENTURY anchored off of Georgetown Grand Cayman, on December 14, 2006.

(Bob Allen)

CPTM EXPANDING: Compagnie Polynesienne de Transport Maritime operates in the South Pacific, with the cargo/passenger vessel ARANUI 5, completed in 2015. The newly contracted vessel, ARANUI 6, will accommodate between 200 and 300 passengers and will carry freight as well. She will sail between Tahiti and the Marquesas, Tuamotu and the Society Islands.

TALL VIEW ON ROALD AMUNDSEN: Hurtigruten’s new exploration cruise ship, the 530-passenger, 20,000-ton ROALD AMUNDSEN will have a unique feature for passenger enjoyment and education. Set in the ship’s atrium will be the tallest LED screen at sea, stretching more than 50 feet and spanning seven decks. The screen, utilizing the latest LED technology, will be able to live stream views of passing scenery, or project lectures and events taking place aboard ship. The AMUNDSEN, first of two sister ships under construction for Hurtigruten, will enter service in spring 2019.

A MARDI GRAS IN NEW YORK: Following a summer 2020 European debut, Carnival Cruises’ new MARDI GRAS will undertake a transatlantic crossing to New York. The 14-day cruise will depart Southampton, calling at Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife in Spain’s Canary Islands, and Funchal, Maderia and Ponte Delgada, Azores, Portugal before arriving in New York on September 23. One 6-day, round-trip New York cruise is next, departing on September 24 for Portland, ME and St. John, New Brunswick. MARDI GRAS will sail on September 30 for a leisurely, 15-day repositioning cruise to Port Canaveral, FL, with stops in Amber Cove, San Juan, St. Thomas, St. Maarten, St. Kitts, Curacao and Grand Turk. Her winter deployment will be a series of Eastern and Western Caribbean cruises. MARDI GRAS itineraries are tailored to ports that can service the needs of her Liquefied Natural Gas propulsion system. Carnival has also released information of MARDI GRAS interior design; she will feature several distinct neighborhoods, a concept pioneered by Royal Caribbean on the OASIS-Class vessels a decade ago. The neighborhoods are Grand Central, an atrium and restaurant/entertainment zone; French Quarter, unsurprisingly for jazz, food and drinks; La Piazza, for additional eating; Summer Landing, for even more eating; Lido, for “new concepts” in further eating; and The Ultimate Playground, home of the BOLT roller coaster, the one venue (thankfully) without food.



Entertainment and a variety of eateries will be the attractions in the Grand Central “neighborhood” on Carnival Cruises’ new MARDI GRAS, which will begin service in summer 2020, and visit New York in early fall. (Carnival Cruises)

PORT OF NEW YORK INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS: After years of minimal investment in cruise ship facilities in the port, the New York Economic Development Corporation has substantial new capital projects, which will commence soon. A \$15-million pier expansion at the Brooklyn terminal will be completed by late 2020. An additional berth in Brooklyn is a possibility as well, but a cruise line partner would be required to secure financing, which is unlikely at this time. Matthew Kwatinetz, an executive vice president at NYEDC, announced the renovation of Pier 90, which will include a new apron and boarding bridges, similar to those at Pier 88. This construction is necessary to accommodate today’s mega-ships with overhanging lifeboats. Pier 92, which is not slated for renovation at this time, is still used to accommodate the growing number of cruise ships calling at New York. According to Kwatinetz, “We didn’t think we’d run out of space five or six years ago, but we are filling up and looking to create additional berths.” The Pier 90 rebuild is tentatively scheduled for completion during 2021.

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