



Friday, MAY 31, 2019 – 6:15 PM

ROTTERDAM AND OTHER DELIGHTS; SHIP SPOTTING IN NORTHERN EUROPE

By Tom Rinaldi

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

Last summer, PONY Branch member Tom Rinaldi plotted a course across Northern Europe involving as many interesting passenger ships as could be squeezed into one week, including the retired Holland America liner S.S. ROTTERDAM. Europe's complex geography has sustained large-scale passenger shipping of a kind that New York harbor hasn't seen in decades. Some of Europe's modern ferries are larger than the transatlantic liners that once frequented Manhattan's west side piers, even though these ships seldom cover distances greater than a few hundred miles. Tom's course traversed more than 2,000 miles by rail and sea, and included one of Europe's longest ferry crossings, from Germany to Finland, and a transit of one of the world's most heavily trafficked sea lanes, between Finland and Sweden. Stops along the way included an overnight stay at the preserved ferry BORE (ex-KRISTINA REGINA, 1960) before wrapping up with a long-anticipated visit to the S.S. ROTTERDAM (1959), now preserved as a hotel ship at her former home port in the Netherlands. Please join us for an evening of great ships old and new.



The legendary transatlantic liner and cruise ship ROTTERDAM (1959) is a museum, conference center and hotel docked permanently in her namesake city. (Tom Rinaldi)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership meetings: Friday, June 28 – Chandris Lines by Doug Newman. Royal Tea aboard the QUEEN MARY 2, June 7;
Group Cruise to Bermuda on the INSIGNIA, August 18

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MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Oceania Cruises' RIVIERA at Malaga, Spain, on September 12, 2018.

(Larry Levine)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
AZURA	Southampton	Southampton	Norway Cruise	Charles & Catherine Crawford	04/19
QUEEN MARY 2	Southampton	New York	Transatlantic	Charles & Catherine Crawford	04/19
VIKING KARA	Basel	Amsterdam	Rhine River	David Hume & Marjorieann Matuszek	04/19
QUEEN ELIZABETH	Yokohama	Yokohama	Circle Japan Cruise	Pat & Denise Dacey	04/19
MAJESTY OF THE SEAS	Miami	Miami	Cuba Cruise	David Hume & Marjorieann Matuszek	05/19

SHIP'S LOG - MARCH

By Bob Allen

For our March meeting, we were fortunate to have long-time member Karl Zimmermann talk about his delightful summer cruise on Fred. Olsen's BLACK WATCH. One of our most popular and interesting speakers, Karl is a travel writer, a superb photographer, and a train and ship buff as well.

Karl began his talk by summarizing Fred. Olsen's history, since the company is not very well known in the USA. Fred. Olsen dates back to 1848, when Fredrik, Christian and Petter Olsen started a shipping company with the purchase of two schooners, the JOHANNE CHRISTINE and the ELIZABETH. They operated out of the brothers' hometown of Hvitsten, Norway on the Oslo Fjord, trading to ports on the North Sea. The business rapidly expanded with service to the Mediterranean, and the fleet consisted of 22 vessels by the time eldest brother Fredrik died in 1875. Petter's son Thomas Fredrik became a driving force in the company, ordering the BAYARD, its first steam vessel, in 1897 and moving the growing company's headquarters to Oslo in 1898. In the early 20th Century, Fred. Olsen continued expanding through acquisitions of other lines and routes. It took advantage of the newly opened Panama Canal to expand service to South America and the US West Coast in 1914. Despite huge losses during World War I, Fred. Olsen rebuilt the fleet through the 1920's. Thomas Fredrik died in 1933, and his sons Rudolph and Thomas led the firm during the 1930's. They introduced the elegant 5,000-ton motor ships BLACK PRINCE and BLACK WATCH in 1938, for passenger service between Oslo and Newcastle, UK. Karl told us that Fred. Olsen also revived the tradition of adding figureheads to their vessels during the 1930's, which he referenced again later in the talk. Once again, World War II decimated the Fred. Olsen Line, but the newly built, ultra-modern 4,800-ton BLENHEIM (1951) and BRAEMAR (1953) revitalized the passenger fleet. Unfortunately, Rudolph Olsen died shortly before the maiden voyage of BLENHEIM; Thomas continued leading the company until he became ill in 1955, when his son Fredrik III took over. Karl told us that the company introduced new vessels in 1966 (the 9,500-ton BLACK WATCH and BLACK PRINCE) and 1970 (the 10,400-ton BLENHEIM). Unlike the earlier vessels, they featured car decks, and could therefore carry passengers and their vehicles from Norway to the UK and on to Spain's Canary Islands. This became a very profitable winter cruise business, and opened the way for Fred. Olsen to become a major player in the British cruise market. BLACK PRINCE was modernized (her car deck removed) to become a full-time cruise ship in 1986. The modern cruise era for Fred Olsen began in 1996 under the leadership of Fredrik III's daughter, Anette Olsen. The company, needing significant expansion to stay competitive in the cruise business, purchased and rebuilt the 1972-built, 28,000-ton STAR ODYSSEY, originally the deluxe ROYAL VIKING STAR. The following decade saw

tremendous expansion with the addition of the BRAEMAR (ex-CROWN DYNASTY of 1993); BOUDICCA (ex-ROYAL VIKING SKY of 1973) and BALMORAL (ex-CROWN ODYSSEY of 1988). Karl informed us that Fred. Olsen is now a major UK shipping and industrial company, also deeply involved in oil exploration.

In search of a traditional, rock-climbing-wall-free voyage, Karl and his wife Laurel joined BLACK WATCH's 5-night "Scottish Lochs, Highlands and Islands" cruise from Liverpool last July. Curious British passengers were intrigued by the American couple with their exotic accents, and wondered how they found their way to the modest 46-year-old ship (only one other of the 695 passengers was from the US). Karl and Laurel cheerfully explained that the size and style of the ship was exactly what they desired for a summer maritime adventure. When ROYAL VIKING STAR was completed in 1972, she was one of the world's largest and most deluxe purpose-built cruise vessels. Yet today her size, even after a 1981 enlargement to 28,000-tons, would qualify as merely "mega-yacht." Sailing from Liverpool Pier Head on a rainy afternoon, Karl and Laurel saw a century's maritime heritage on River Mersey. The "Three Graces" – the Royal Liver Building, Cunard Building and Port of Liverpool Building – dominated the skyline. Karl and Laurel spent the first evening exploring the ship and were delighted by her intimacy and charm, although Karl pointed out that those accustomed to the almost endless diversions on American-market mega ships would likely be disappointed. They were particularly fond of The Observatory, described by Karl as a "hypnotizing cocktail venue," set high above the ship's bridge with stunning 270-degree views, live piano music and soothing blue, gold and cream décor. Another favorite venue was the Bookmark Café with its mouth-watering chocolate and cappuccino bar and "small but well-chosen library." The Lido Lounge terrace, overlooking the ship's pool deck and stern decks, various secluded nooks, and the wide teak walk-around promenade deck were highlights of the ship's outdoor spaces that Karl and Laurel thoroughly enjoyed. Karl showed us how, despite the regrettable addition of private balconies intruding on the promenade deck, there was still sufficient space for strolling and sea viewing. Another wonderful on deck feature was a figurehead from an earlier BLACK WATCH (1966) installed as an art piece, serenely gazing over the swimming pool.



Laurel Zimmermann (right) chats with fellow BLACK WATCH passengers on the wide promenade deck at sunset. The keen eye will spot the deck's balcony additions to the right of the clock. (Karl Zimmermann)

As on cruise ships worldwide, dining is an important activity. Karl showed us photos of the beautiful Glentinar Restaurant, the ship's main dining room, little changed from Royal Viking Line days. A brilliantly lit coffered ceiling, full-height windows port and starboard, plush furnishings and well-spaced tables conjured up the elegance of yesterday's cruise ships. Karl and Laurel enjoyed a centrally located table for two, but were close enough to an adjoining table to strike up a shipboard friendship with another couple. Breakfast and lunch offered both menu and buffet options; the more formal dinners (two seatings) featured traditional table service. For those wishing less formal dining, the intimate Brigadoon Room, with muralled bulkheads and a small circular buffet, was open for three meals a day plus a midnight buffet. One small extra tariff restaurant, the lovely Black Watch Room, was available for those seeking an intimate atmosphere and an upscale menu. Karl and Laurel reported that their five evening meals in the Glentinar "ranged from disappointing (only one) to superb, and the stewards for our table were skilled and gracious."

Karl and Laurel tore themselves away from the delights of shipboard life to explore some fascinating Scottish coastal towns. The first day included a cruise around Fingal's Cave on uninhabited Staffa, an island of the Inner Hebrides. The next day,

BLACK WATCH docked in Kirkwall, in northern Scotland's Orkney Islands. Karl and Laurel explored the town on foot, visiting Saint Magnus Cathedral and the ruins of the Earl's and Bishop's palaces. Their favorite port was next – Tobermory, on the Isle of Mull. Tenders brought them ashore to the center of the charming town, its harbor ringed with buildings brilliantly painted in a rainbow of colors. A tour of the Tobermory Distillery was followed by a hearty lunch of cullenspink, a smoked haddock chowder that's a local specialty. Walking off lunch, Karl and Laurel discovered a wooded path with a dazzling view of the harbor and the BLACK WATCH at anchor against a backdrop of lush green hills. The lovely lines of the ship seemed to beckon them back on board! The final port of call was Greenock on the River Clyde, gateway to Glasgow. On the last evening of their cruise, sailing along the gorgeous Firth of Clyde under sunny summer skies, Karl and Laurel toasted both Fred. Olsens – the line's founder in 1848 and the current chairman – with an enthusiastic "skoal!"

We thank Karl for this intriguing program. Those fortunate enough to have attended were treated to a unique style of cruising and a remarkably beautiful destination.



The Observatory is a delightful piano bar and lounge with 270-degree ocean views.

(Karl Zimmermann)



A coffee bar, chocolate shop and library all add to the appeal of the cozy Bookmark Café.

(Karl Zimmermann)



The figurehead from the BLACK WATCH of 1966 now presides over the pool and stern decks.

(Karl Zimmermann)



The sleek lines of the BLACK WATCH anchored at Tobermory define great liner design of an earlier era.

(Karl Zimmermann)

LIMITED SPACE IS STILL AVAILABLE ON THE PONY BRANCH'S SUMMER BERMUDA CRUISE!

On August 18, 2019, World Ship Society PONY members will depart 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 TravelEdge, 212-265-8420, x 222, or 800-729-7472 x 222, or email brad.hatry@traveledge.com.

SHIPS IN PORT: PAINTED IN GREEN – THE MAURETANIA

By Bill Miller

Life on the liners, especially below deck, was a different world. Liverpool-born John Gubson was making \$120 a month as a galley chef on Cunard by the mid-Sixties. "As a child, I lived in a tiny bungalow with one cold tap. We queued for everything, even firewood. The toilet was out back and shared. Going to sea on the liners seemed better, a different world. But there was also harsh reality. For me, the old MAURETANIA was the hardest ship to work. She was all up-and-down and had no easy or straight access. She was also a very hot ship. Sometimes she was all but glowing." He added, "On Cunard, we called the passengers 'bloods.' The staff and crew wanted to suck them dry for tips. There was also lots of waste. Dishes by the thousand were tossed from portholes. Sometimes, the dishes were stacked and then the whole stack would be pushed over & out the porthole. And sometimes even silver items including those big trolleys were pushed out. After second seating, the boys down in the galley were hot, tired and often half drunk. They were tired of washing and polishing. Meats and other goods were regularly stolen and sent home to families. Passenger portions were sometimes cut back. There was also great waste of food before we returned to Liverpool or Southampton. Twelve miles out, we dumped all unused foodstuffs – including whole sides of beefs, freshly baked cakes and untouched long loaves of bread. These could not be used in port or on the next voyage. It was a great shame, I always felt, that these could not be given to orphanages and the needy. There were also great working systems between waiters and cooks & the galley crews. The waiters would pass say \$10 to the cooks for the better meats and best cuts. Some waiters had hard jobs. Some had 6 tables with 8 people at each, which meant 48 meals to be served at breakfast, lunch & dinner. Some of the chefs were very snobbish, very superior, and quite grand. I remember one was with Cunard for 44 years. Another wore diamond cufflinks while cooking. Some of the captains were nice, but some were mean and some like gods. One captain sent his 'tiger' [personal steward] down each day to collect his favorite dessert, a custard tart. We even made our own after-dinner chocolates. But we were never, ever allowed to make Jam Tarts. They were considered 'common' by Cunard. Cunard was also doily mad – everything had to have a white paper doily underneath."



MAURETANIA (1939) docked in Southampton. She was painted several shades of green for cruise service in 1962.

(Bill Miller)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

DAWN IN NEW YORK: At her 2002 introduction, Norwegian Cruise Line's NORWEGIAN DAWN was committed to year-round service from the Port of New York. Her hull art included images of the Statue of Liberty and other landmarks. Despite developing a local following, changing needs in fleet deployment shifted NORWEGIAN DAWN from her homeport in 2010. In 2016, she was thoroughly renovated as part of the "Norwegian Edge" program, bringing her in line with facilities offered on the newer BREAKAWAY-Class vessels. The DAWN lost her New York centric hull art as well, instead being adorned with only some colorful ribbon-like images. After a nine-year absence, NORWEGIAN DAWN returned to New York on May 18 for a series of cruises to Florida and the Bahamas, as well Canada and New England. Next winter she will cruise from Tampa before returning to New York in April 2020 for one Florida-Bahamas-Bermuda Cruise. On April 19 2020, she will cross the Atlantic to Barcelona, and then continue to her new base in Venice, Italy. She is scheduled to operate from there through fall, 2021.



The 92,250-ton NORWEGIAN DAWN was based in New York from 2002-2010. She returned to the port for the summer season in May. (NCL)

FLORA OF CELEBRITY: Celebrity Cruises took delivery in mid-May of its first vessel custom designed for Galapagos Islands cruising. The 110-passenger “Mega-yacht” CELEBRITY FLORA will be based year-round in Baltra, Ecuador. She will offer passengers many ways to be close to nature during their voyage, including glamping, a stargazing platform, “Infinite Verandahs” in many suites, custom-designed Novurania tenders, and the industry’s highest ratio (1:9) of naturalists certified by the Galapagos National Park.



CELEBRITY FLORA will begin her maiden voyage from Baltra in the Galapagos Islands on June 30. (Celebrity Cruises)

SAGA’S DISCOVERY: Saga Cruises’ first newly built ship, the 58,000-ton, 999-passenger SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY, was floated out of the builder’s hall at Jos. L. Meyer Shipyard in Papenburg, Germany on May 12. Under brilliant blue skies, the vessel’s funnel was attached shortly thereafter, revealing a sharply raked bow and Saga’s traditional livery. Modestly sized and designed for the upscale British market, the eagerly anticipated SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY will begin her maiden voyage from Dover, UK on July 13. A sister ship, SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE, will debut in 2020. Although identical externally, the ships will have very different interior design features, avoiding the “cookie-cutter” feeling of many other modern cruise fleets.



Their first newly constructed vessel, *SPRIT OF DISCOVERY* represents the beginning of a new era for Saga Cruises. (Jos. L. Meyer/Saga Cruises)

INNOVATION FOR SEADREAM: Luxury operator SeaDream Yacht Club will also introduce their first newly built vessel in September 2021. The all-suite, 15,600-ton SEADREAM INNOVATION will accommodate 220 passengers. Although certainly intimate, she represents a major size increase from the existing fleet, the 4,235-ton, 112-passenger SEADREAM I and II. They were built in 1984-85 for Sea Goddess Cruises. SeaDream’s owner, chairman and CEO Atle Brynestad started the company in 2001, when he purchased the two small ships. He was also the founder of Seabourn Cruises in 1987, along with another industry veteran, Larry Pimentel. For Brynestad, SEADREAM INNOVATION will be his “ultimate ship.” SeaDream focuses on impeccable service, cuisine and exploration opportunities; the larger vessel is designed to expand on all of these. An *al fresco* restaurant will span three aft decks, while the main dining room will be a “great indoor restaurant,” according to Brynestad. In contrast to industry trends, specialty restaurants and guest chefs will not appear on the ship. The quality, selection and service in the main restaurant will be designed to offer passengers consistently superb cuisine. “*Al fresco*” will apply to sleeping options as well. As on the current fleet, Balinese beds situated on the top deck are available for daytime relaxation or sleeping under the stars. At water level, three marinas will be available for passenger enjoyment: one each for motorized and non-motorized water sports, and a third transforms into a protected ocean pool. SEADREAM INNOVATION will be christened in London on September 18, 2021, after which she will sail on a 70-day maiden voyage to the Azores, Central and South America, and Antarctica, ending at Ushuaia, Argentina; fares start at \$44,800. In case you miss the maiden voyage, no need to worry; financing has recently been secured for a sister ship.



SEADREAM INNOVATION rendered in the foreground, with the existing fleet, SEADREAM I and SEADREAM II. (SeaDream Cruises)

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