

Friday, NOVEMBER 20, 2020 – VIA ZOOM at 6:00 PM

SHIPS OF STATE, PACIFIC STYLE: THE PRESIDENT JACKSON CLASS OF 1940

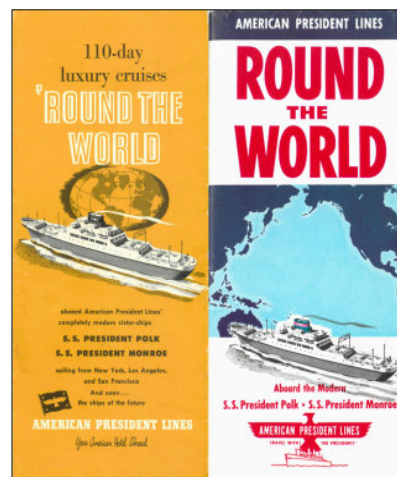
By WAYNE YANDA

Eighty years ago, November 1940, marked the debut of the PRESIDENT JACKSON. It was the first of seven round-the-world passenger-cargo liners designed to help American President Lines rise from the ashes of the Dollar Line. The JACKSON class was also tasked with stemming the resurgence of the Japanese Merchant Marine represented by the NYK Line and OSK Line.

Wayne Yanda will review the transpacific rivalry of the United States and Japan during the interwar years that led to the creation of the PRESIDENT JACKSON class of 1940. Wayne will discuss a nationwide mural competition, fraught with conflict, held to decorate these little liners. He will share rarely seen images of ships from both sides of the Pacific. Wayne will present the case for the PRESIDENT JACKSON class, weighing just 9,500 gross tons, claiming the moniker "ship of state."

A few years ago, Wayne Yanda combined his interests in ocean liners and the arts and launched a website dedicated to the artworks created for American-built passenger ships: www.muralsonthehighseas.com. Every other Monday, on the website's Facebook page, he publishes Mural Monday, a brief look at an artist's life and work for an American liner. He currently works at the National Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa, Iowa.

Check your preconceived notions on Pacific liners at the door for this informative presentation.



Despite modest size and passenger-cargo liner status, the PRESIDENT JACKSON class liners qualify as "Ships of State," according to Wayne Yanda. Learn why and much more at the November Zoom membership meeting. (APL / Wayne Yanda Collection)

NEXT EVENTS: December 18, A Virtual Holiday Party – "Winter Holidays at Sea"

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Transocean's ASTOR (1987) at Amsterdam in 2013. See this month's Ship News for an update on her fate.

(Lawrence Levine)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Arrivals and Departures will return once both the cruise lines and governmental agencies lift the cruising ban.

PREVIEW, DECEMBER 18, 2020: A VIRTUAL HOLIDAY PARTY VIA ZOOM – “WINTER HOLIDAYS AT SEA”

On December 18th, in lieu of our usual holiday gathering, we will offer a winter holiday-themed Zoom presentation and have you, our members contribute. We would like you to share some of your most memorable photographs from winter holidays at sea. Please email your digital photos along with a description of each photo. We will assemble and share them with our entire PONY Branch family and friends.

You can also send some of your favorite winter ship scenes to us as well, as long as you provide some detail on the photographs, including who took the images. Please do not mail any original material to us; only digital submissions can be used.

Please do not email any original material. Please email all submissions by November 30, 2020 to wsspony@gmail.com.



From frosty to frothy: docked in Brooklyn prior to a holiday cruise, QUEEN MARY 2 is seen beyond shoreside snow banks.

(Pat Dacey)

SHIP'S LOG, OCTOBER 2020
REVIEW OF "ICON OF IDENTITY – THE ILE DE FRANCE ON THE WORLD STAGE"

By Ted Scull

On Friday, October 30th, the PONY Branch welcomed the return of speaker Christian Rodin, introduced by branch chair Patrick Dacey.

Christian currently works as the Assistant Director of Prospect Research for the University of Pennsylvania Libraries and has previously held positions at the Decorative Arts Trust, SS United States Conservancy, and the Delaware County District Library in Ohio.

His topic, the ILE DE FRANCE, was portrayed and recognized around the world as an extension of French society. The ship was conceived as a way of proclaiming the nation's political influence and cultural achievements through her groundbreaking Art Deco interiors. Over the course of her thirty-two-year career, the vessel found herself playing the role of trendsetter, cinema muse, troopship, and rescue vessel. Historian Christian Roden shared with us the story of the ILE DE FRANCE, referencing useful material he uncovered at the Association of French Lines' archives.

The ILE DE FRANCE was a pacesetter ship for the French Line. From her very beginning she captured the awe and loyalty of the traveling public, especially those Atlantic travelers who, in the post-WWI period, had dozens of ships from which to choose. Serious journalists, scholars and political leaders understood the ship's impact on maritime and interior design.

Christian, a recognized maritime historian, won a Fulbright full research grant to delve into the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique's vast collection at the Association of French Lines' Archives located in Le Havre, a major port on Le Manche/English Channel. His talk, in a Zoom format, deftly presented what generated all the excitement with his own comments and backed by widely varied illustrated materials.

At the dawn of the 20th Century, the CGT was as a medium-size player, and its most notable ship had been the four-stacker SS FRANCE of 1912, often referred to as "Chateau of the North Atlantic" because of its grand period interiors as shown in accompanying photos and CGT publicity posters.

Christian described the changes that would occur after WWI, when GCT leadership latched onto the idea of building a radically new liner without being encumbered by the architectural interiors of the past. France itself sought to evolve in art and industry and to be truly creative with more modern and contemporary designs.

We saw some photos from the Paris Exposition of 1925 that became the place to show off what the nations of the world were producing.

Among France's contributions, displays that drew rapt attention were the future ILE'S first-class lounge, a vast and glorious open room created by placing the stanchions on either side, first-class suites and the two-story Roman Catholic chapel with its pair of rose windows. Then, two years later in late May, the liner now dubbed Art Deco Style appeared and established itself as a winner.

The restrictive immigration laws of 1924 greatly reduced the numbers crossing the North Atlantic. The Great Depression followed, yet the ILE DE FRANCE continued to attract enough patronage from the arts and entertainment world, what immigrant passengers were left, and regular travelers seeking a suitable ship, that she remained profitable throughout this period.

On September 2, 1939 the ILE was the last westbound liner to leave Europe before World War II would interrupt all regular travel. We saw her laid up in New York alongside her larger fleet mate NORMANDIE.

Christian outlined the multifaceted nature of the ship's illustrious wartime service. With a Vichy France government in power, the liner headed to Southeast Asia via Suez (photo included) and, as French Saigon's port was too small to handle her, she backtracked to Singapore. There, to some dismay, the British seized her, and with a new crew turned her into a prison ship, then troopship to shuttle troops all over the world. In hot climates the non-air-conditioned ILE carried up to 4,000 troops, and on the North Atlantic up to 7,000. Her North Atlantic peacetime complement numbered about 2,580 in three classes and the crew.

In 1945, with the war over, she was handed back to France and continued to repatriate troops who would eventually ratchet up to a grand total one-half million. After the French Line got her back, she spent more than two years being refitted, an incredibly costly venture, but as Christian remarked, there was little choice as post-war materials were simply not available to build a brand-new ship. With supporting photos Christian described the work, such as adding a movie theater, and refitting and rearranging the spaces the original three classes occupied.

The ILE's post-war career started in earnest in July 1949. Following a gala arrival in New York, the newspapers immediately took to her all over again, and straight away she recovered her popularity.

We heard about the ILE DE FRANCE'S rescue of 753 passengers from the sinking ANDREA DORIA off Nantucket in July 1956. As a result, the ILE received the U.S.'s Gallant Ship Award. She was the first foreign ship to be awarded this accolade.

By 1958, the ILE was simply worn out, something easily understood given Christian's excellent and detailed presentation. We saw some images from the film *Paris Holiday* featuring the ship. And then briefly, thank goodness, we heard about her end as a real ocean liner prop in *THE LAST VOYAGE*, an MGM decision to create a true to life sinking in Japanese waters. Enough said on that subject.

One of the most poignant moments came when Christian showed a letter from Ernest Hemingway that signed off with "ILE DE FRANCE - Yesterday, Today and Always."

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The reviewer's addendum: I understand that the French public expressed outrage at this wanton act of destruction. Then, truth be told, the ship did not completely sink as, by design, the ship settled part way in the shallow waters of Tokyo Bay, since anything more than that might have busted the budget. Hence the final scenes were faked.

I attended a showing of THE LAST VOYAGE in a movie theater at the time of its release in 1960. My mother, brother and I had sailed aboard two French Line ships in summer 1958 just two years before the screening, but sadly the ILE DE FRANCE was not one of them, as her schedule did not fit ours. However, that summer I fell in love with the French Line via crossings aboard the LIBERTÉ and FLANDRE and several subsequent CGT sailings. The officers and crews knew how to give passengers a good time, helped along with fine French food, wine and a well-trained staff.

The loss of the ILE DE FRANCE and some years later, Le Transat (as the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique was often called), marked the disappearance of one of the greatest national flag carriers, and in my mind, the best of them all. ILE DE FRANCE easily qualified as the principal factor that defined the French Line. Recalling slogans that arose: France Afloat and Bon Voyage is Always French.

Merci mille fois to Christian for bringing the ILE's design and amazing career back to life.



Although he doesn't quite know what to make of the bold diagonal checkerboard carpet, Christian Roden considers the ILE DE FRANCE's First Class Lounge (top) one of her most significant interior spaces. He is also impressed by the liner's lofty Chapel and its stunning rose windows (bottom).

(CGT / Christian Roden Collection)

OCEAN LINER MURALS AT THE NEW YORK CITY CUSTOMS HOUSE

By Richard Wagner

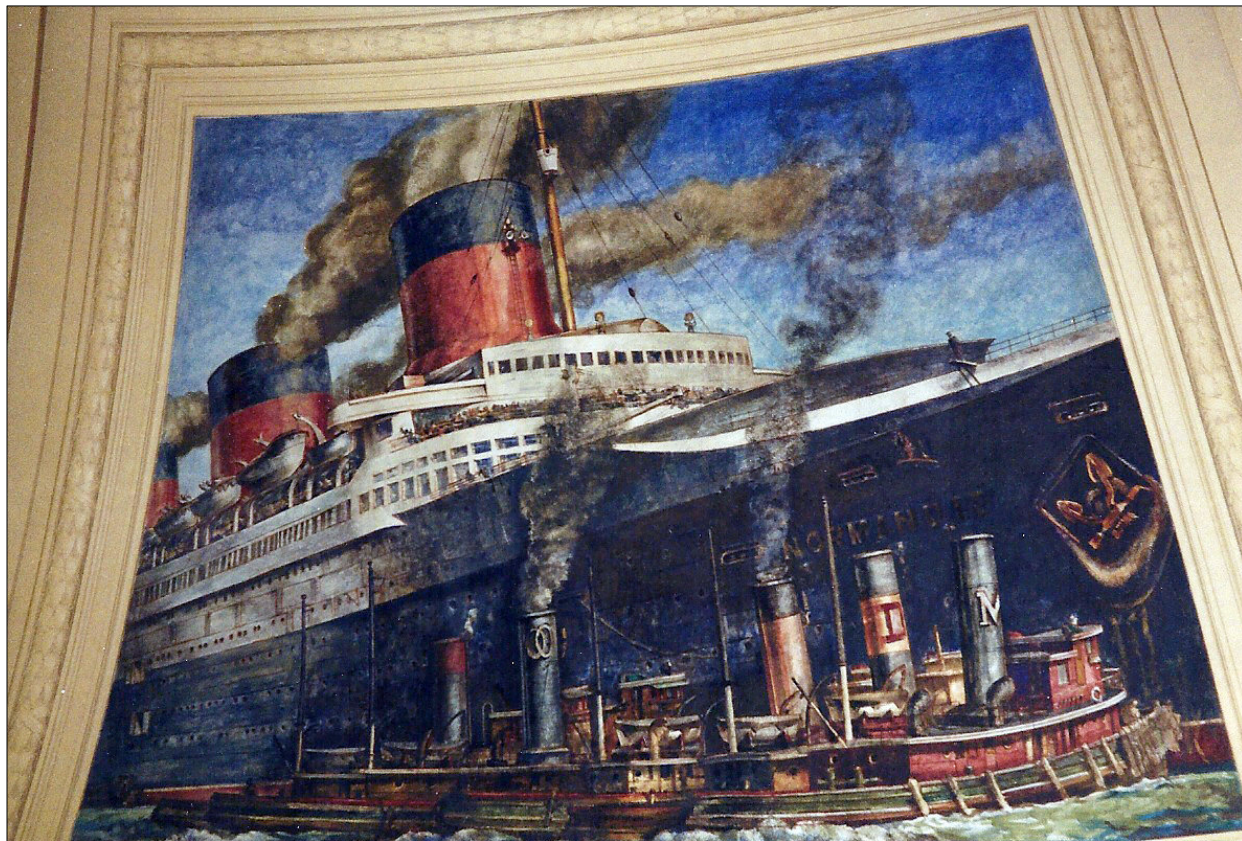
One of the hidden gems of maritime New York is a series of eight frescos of ocean liners in the rotunda of the Alexander Hamilton Customs House. Located at Bowling Green in Manhattan, the Customs House is also the home of George Gustav Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian. It is also the site of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. Prior to the ratification in 1913 of the Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving the federal government the power to levy an income tax, most of the federal government's revenue came from customs duties. Thus, a customs house was an important place and nowhere more so than in the nation's busiest port. Furthermore, the existing customs house was inadequate to meet the needs of the customs service. Therefore, at the turn of the 20th century, the federal government authorized the construction of a new customs house in New York City. After a competition, Cass Gilbert was selected as the architect. He would go on to design the Woolworth Building and the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington. The United States was now recognized a world power, and public sentiment was very much in favor of flaunting this status. Accordingly, Gilbert designed a Beaux Arts palace with Corinthian columns and temple-like steps leading up to the main entrance. Allegorical statues by Daniel Chester French sit by the entrance. Inside the building was no less elaborately decorated, including panels by the Tiffany Studio. In the cavernous rotunda, Gilbert left space for 16 murals that would be some 50 feet above the floor. However, the cost of the elaborate building exceeded the amount the government had appropriated for its construction and so the 16 spaces were left empty when the building opened in 1907.

When Franklin Roosevelt became President in 1933, the federal government launched a number of programs to combat the Great Depression. One of the areas of concern was the arts and a number of projects were undertaken to help artists. Perhaps the best known of these is the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) hiring of artists to create murals in public buildings. A lesser known project was the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP). Under this program, the Treasury Department hired struggling artists to work as assistants to established artists in creating murals for select federal buildings. The first TRAP project involved the new Post Office and Justice Department buildings in Washington. A committee of museum directors, artists and art experts was asked to select the established artists who would create the murals for these buildings. Eleven artists were selected including New York-based artist Reginald Marsh. Marsh was born in Paris, France in 1900. His parents were American artists and they took him back to the United States early in his life. Interested in drawing from an early age, Marsh attended the Yale Art School and then became an illustrator doing work for the *Daily News* and a number of magazines including *The New Yorker*. During a trip to Europe in 1925, he studied the works of the Old Masters and decided to become a painter. Incorporating the techniques of the Old Masters into scenes of New York City, Marsh's social realism caught on and his work was often exhibited. He also was an instructor at the Art Students League of New York. For the first TRAP project, Marsh produced two murals both of which were for the Post Office building. One of these was of workers transferring mail from an ocean liner.

The next major TRAP project was to decorate the empty spaces left in the rotunda of the Customs House in New York. Marsh appears to have been the only artist considered for the project. The reason for this is not recorded but it could have been Marsh's close association with New York City. Armed with a sketch book and/or a camera, Marsh would prowls the streets of the city to find subjects for paintings that he would later develop in the studio. One of his favorite beats was the busy waterfront. Another factor that may have led to his selection for the Customs House project was that he had finished the murals for the first TRAP project ahead of schedule. For the Customs House project, Marsh had eight assistants. Whereas painters traditionally have used assistants to paint backgrounds and lesser parts of a painting, Marsh used his assistants to collect information. Interested in accuracy, he would dispatch them out to capture details about the waterfront or a particular ship such as the lifeboats and davits. When the federal government reduced appropriations for art projects, Marsh volunteered to reduce his salary so that he received 90 cents an hour while his assistants received \$1.60 an hour. The 16 spaces in the rotunda included eight that were large enough to paint a scene alternating with eight narrower spaces. For the eight scenes, Marsh produced eight studies showing the steps an ocean liner progresses through when arriving in New York. The narrower spaces would be occupied by portraits of figures from the Age of Exploration. The artist made over 200 drawings and watercolors in preparation for painting the murals. Despite the Treasury Department's objections about the cost, Marsh insisted that the murals be done as frescos. Cheaper alternatives would have been to paint canvases and then attach them to the walls or to paint directly on the existing plaster of the walls. However, Marsh felt that a better result could be achieved by following in the footsteps of the Old Masters and paint into new fresh plaster while it was still wet. Consequently, the existing plaster had to be removed before painting could begin. After obtaining a special order from the President, Marsh and his assistants re-did the plaster work. Not everything was done as in the Renaissance. Marsh projected his preliminary studies onto the empty spaces in the rotunda. He then traced the outlines onto the plaster.

The project involved two unusual challenges. First, the spaces where the murals were to be painted were some 50 feet above the floor. Special scaffolding had to be created so that Marsh could paint much in the way depicted in the film *'The Agony and the Ecstasy.'* Second, the walls of the rotunda were curved and so Marsh had to take that into account in rendering perspective. For the scenes, Marsh selected three ocean liners: the United States Line's WASHINGTON; Cunard's QUEEN MARY and the French Line's NORMANDIE. The studies were approved by the government. However, seven months into the project, Joseph P. Kennedy, then-chairman of the United States Maritime Commission, wrote to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., protesting the inclusion of two foreign-flag ships in U.S. government-sponsored murals. The murals should depict a U.S. superliner that Kennedy said was being planned. Marsh refused to change the murals to include the fictional liner. The two-foreign-flag liners were icons of New York harbor in the 1930s, part of what made this a golden age for the port. Marsh was interested depicting New York harbor as it was, not in producing propaganda. Morgenthau backed Marsh. Thus, Normandie and Queen Mary are featured in the murals. As a gesture to Kennedy, Marsh agreed to blur slightly the name Normandie in one of the murals but it is still legible even when viewed from the floor of the Customs House. Along the same lines, the same mural shows five tugboats pushing the Normandie into her berth. The companies that owned the tugs can be identified by their funnels. The Tracy Towing Company complained that it had not been included. However, Marsh refused to add Tracy Towing because its tugs did not do this type of work. Other scenes depicted in the murals include: Washington

passing the Ambrose light ship; an ocean liner picking up the pilot; the Coast Guard cutter Calumet meeting the Washington; Customs officials boarding Washington through a shell door; Queen Mary passing the Statue of Liberty with the New York skyline in the background; a celebrity being interviewed by the press on the deck of the Queen Mary; and unloading cargo from an ocean liner, probably Normandie. The project was completed in December 1937 and was well-received. All of the frescos are highly detailed, colorful and action-packed. Marsh clearly achieved his goal of "paint[ing] contemporary shipping with a rich and real power."



Reginald Marsh's frescoes of the NORMANDIE (top) and WASHINGTON (bottom) on the Customs House dome.

(Rich Wagner)

SHIPS IN PORT: \$20-A-DAY TO EUROPE ON THE RYNDAM AND MAASDAM

By Bill Miller

After World War II ended in the summer of 1945, trans-Atlantic passenger ship business reopened and became quite busy. Once again, travelers – the Hollywood stars, government officials, even royalty as well tourists, students and migrants – were sailing. Not only were there too few berths, but there was a rising demand for low-fare accommodation – and not basic, steerage-like quarters, but adequately comfortable space. With lower, more attractive fares, tourist class was on the rise. A few steamship line managers even saw it as an important part of the future for Atlantic liners. Along the Rotterdam waterfront, Holland America Line was one of them. So while in the early stages of building two passenger-cargo ships – with 60 first class berths only – there was a change of plans. The two ships would be re-designed and built as Atlantic liners with almost 900 berths each.

These ships would become the 15,000-ton RYNDAM AND MAASDAM of 1951-52. Handsome ships, they carried as few as 39 in a small, intimate, upper-deck first class and well over 800 in tourist class. Novel ships too, for it was the first time 90% of a ship's accommodation was given over to tourist class. There were nice amenities: comfortable public rooms, a movie theater and even an outdoor pool. And it was available for as little as \$20 per person per day – or \$140 for the 7 days from New York to Southampton.

As a young officer in 1958, Captain Willem J. Deijnen was assigned to his first passenger ship, the 875-passenger RYNDAM. "We sailed the North Atlantic between Rotterdam, Le Havre, Southampton, Cobh and New York (and sometimes stopping at Halifax). I remember that we took on lots of Irish immigrants at Cobh. All of them boarded by big tenders in the outer bay. Originally intended to be a combination passenger-cargo ship [the 60-passenger DIEMERDYK], THE RYNDAM was redesigned as a passenger liner while under construction. But some things did not change -- she had only one screw which made her very, very slow. She was listed as doing 16 knots at top speed, but actually she made only 14-15 knots at best. And because she was re-designed with more top decks than intended, she was top heavy – and so she was not a very good 'sea boat.' Actually, she was really terrible at sea – and was known by the officers and crew for her terrible pitching.

All in all, both the RYNDAM AND MAASDAM were popular as well as profitable ships. They paved the way for other largely tourist class ships. Both also did cruises and later made sailings to Montreal and around-the-world itineraries. The RYNDAM also later served as a "floating university," cruising the world as students took courses linked to the ports of call.

The RYNDAM was sold off in 1971, becoming the Greek cruise ship ATLAS and later had other names (when used as a floating casino) before sinking in the Eastern Caribbean while empty and being towed to India for scrapping on March 16, 2003. As for the MAASDAM, she was sold by Holland America in 1968, going to the Polish Ocean Lines and being made over as its STEFAN BATORY. Continuing in Atlantic service for another twenty or so years, she finished her days in Greek ownership before going to scrappers in Turkey in March, 2000.



The RYNDAM (left) and MAASDAM at the 5th Street pier in Hoboken, June 1955.

(Bill Miller Collection)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

OCEAN LINER AUCTIONED: Cruise and Maritime Voyage's MARCO POLO, completed in 1965 as ALEXANDR PUSHKIN, has been auctioned following the demise of British line. Although initial reports indicated that she would be scrapped, there are also reports that she will enter a static role in Dubai, followed by a possible return to post-pandemic cruise service. One of the last transatlantic ocean liners afloat, she has had an illustrious 55-year career. If she evades the scrapyards, it will be a remarkable development. MARCO POLO's fleet mate ASTOR, built for German owners in 1987, was sold for scrap and is now headed for Alang, India where she will be demolished. Other CMV ships were auctioned as well, presumably for continued service. COLUMBUS, ex-STAR PRINCESS (1989) will go to the Greek Seajets, as will MAGELLAN, ex-HOLIDAY (1985). HOLIDAY was a milestone ship for owner Carnival Cruises – the first of a class of three "SuperLiners." Sadly, she may be the last to survive. Although denied by owner Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line, multiple sources report that her sister ship GRAND CELEBRATION, ex-CELEBRATION (1987), had been sold for scrap in India. Sister ship JUBILEE (1986) was scrapped as Chinese-owned HENNA in 2017. An innovative trio, each was decorated in overtly flamboyant style by Carnival's architect, Joe Farcus. Of note was the welcome return of the glass-enclosed promenade deck to passenger liners. Situated on the ships' starboard side, it also functioned as a series of small lounges, bars and entrance areas to other venues. Hugely successful, it continuously evolved and was used on many Carnival Corporation vessels over the following decades. The show lounge was one of the first in the industry to be double height, with terraced seating affording unobstructed stage views. Intimate by today's standards, the 47,000-gross ton, 1,800 passenger vessels were the largest newly constructed cruise ships of the mid-1980's, exceeded in size only by QE2 and NORWAY, ex-FRANCE.



Should reports of GRAND CELEBRATION's demise prove accurate, only the former HOLIDAY will remain of the innovative Carnival "SuperLiners" of the mid-1980's. HOLIDAY is seen above departing Miami on her maiden voyage, July 13, 1985. (Carnival Cruises)

COVID UPDATE: The CDC has put forth a very strict set of guidelines for cruise lines that wish to restart operations from the US. As a result, major lines are waiting until 2021 to cruise again. Cruise lines operating in Europe – Aida, Costa, Hapag Lloyd, Hurtigruten, MSC, Ponant, SeaDream – are doing so on an extremely limited basis. Operators are restricting passengers to country of embarkation, or those from the Schengen area. Itineraries remain restricted to a limited number of ports, and independent touring ashore is prohibited. Following a successful series of Norway cruises during the summer months, SeaDream became the first in the Covid-era to sail in the Caribbean. Operating at 50% capacity with 53 passengers, SEADREAM I departed Barbados on November 7, with enhanced health protocols and regular passenger and crew testing. Unfortunately, one passenger fell ill with Covid, and within days there were a total of nine positive cases among passengers and crew. The ship returned to Barbados, where passengers disembarked for isolation and/or private flights home. The following week, SeaDream cancelled the remainder of the 2020 cruise season.

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