



Friday, January 29, 2021 – **VIA ZOOM at 6:00 PM**

PASSAGE TO PAPUA: 10 DAYS ACROSS SOUTHEAST ASIA

By Tom Rinaldi

The Indonesian State Shipping system — Pelni, as its passengers know it — is one of the world's very last operators of passenger liners in the traditional sense. In terms of distance covered and passengers carried, it has no equal among providers of point-to-point waterborne transport today, with a formidable fleet of nearly 30 vessels sailing scheduled routes that last a week or more from end to end. Late last year, PONY Branch member Tom Rinaldi set out to book passage by Pelni from Singapore to Papua, a trip that would cover some 3,000 miles in ten days aboard two vessels. But with the company's services declining in recent years as low-cost airlines capture an ever-greater share of its traffic, the challenge was to get there before it was too late. In our January program, Tom will offer an introduction to this living vestige of the world's vanished liner services, and relate how he fared getting from there to here.



The GUNUNG DEMPO is one of the Pelni vessels that Tom Rinaldi will discuss during his program.

(Tom Rinaldi)

NEXT EVENT: February 26, 2021 - "In the Eye of the Storm" by Captain Albert Schooderbeek. March 26, 2021 - "Fred & Ginger at Sea: Art Deco Liners" by Bill Miller

ADDRESS: PO Box 384, New York, NY 10185-0384

E-MAIL: wsspony@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.worldshipny.com



Costa Cruise Line's COSTA FORTUNA at Stavanger, Norway in 2013.

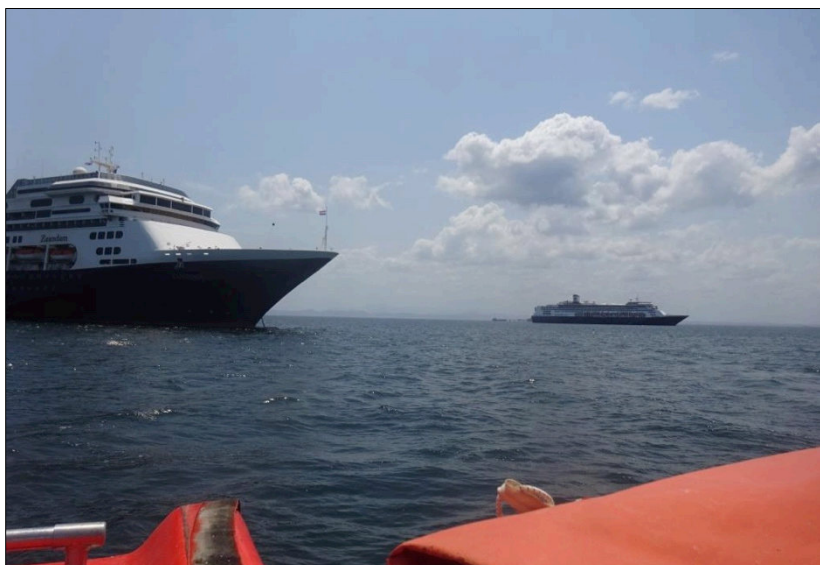
(Lawrence Levine)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

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

PREVIEW, FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2021- "IN THE EYE OF THE STORM", BY CAPTAIN ALBERT SCHOONDERBEEK

On February 26th, Captain Albert Schoonderbeek, current Fleet Master for Holland America Line, will present his program "In the Eye of the Storm". His presentation is a firsthand account of his time at sea while the COVID crisis was initially spreading throughout the world causing havoc, especially to the ships at sea. In addition to his personal account, he will talk about how Holland America Line responded to the COVID crisis including the repatriation of ship's crew, fleet reduction since the pandemic and more.



MS ZAANDAM AND MS ROTTERDAM AT ANCHOR AT BALBOA ANCHORAGE.

(Captain Albert Schoonderbeek)

RATIFICATION OF OFFICERS

Pursuant to Section VIII of the constitution of the World Ship Society-Port of New York Branch, an election of the slate of officers presented by the PONY Branch Election Committee was conducted in November 2020. As there were no write-in candidates, a ratification ballot was mailed to all members of record. One hundred two PONY Branch members voted and returned their ballots. The results are as follows:

Chairman:	Pat Dacey	102 votes
Vice Chairman:	Bob Allen	102 votes
Membership Secretary:	Stuart Gewirtzman	102 votes
Branch Secretary:	Doug Newman	102 votes
Treasurer:	Marjorieann Matuszek	102 votes

SHIP'S LOG

SHIP'S LOG will return in the February issue of The Porthole.

CRUISING ON THE FRANCE

By JOHN MAXTONE-GRAHAM

Reprinted from the summer 1973 issue of P.O.N.Y. Express

Cruising, happily for those of us who love the sea, is on the increase. The demand for space seems never-ending and, if this is the only way that passenger liners survive, then so be it. Since my favorite ocean passage, now sadly diminished, lies between Europe and America, it is not surprising that we book on the FRANCE whenever possible, or for the same reason the QE2. In fact, my first introduction to the delights of the FRANCE was during a cruise over the Christmas holidays in 1968. These two giant transatlantic hulls, the last to sustain that ancient route in the summer months, turn to Caribbean cruising in the winter.

First, of particular interest to New Yorkers, both these ships still sail from the port of New York. One is ensconced comfortably on board within an hour of leaving home. There is none of the frantic logistical shuffle of flying to an island or to a Florida port, wrestling with the heat and lack of facilities to board. The North River piers are hardly Nirvana, God knows, but I have heard that the almost non-existent facilities in Florida defy belief. Two years ago, I was on board QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 for another Christmas cruise and watched eight hundred anxious Floridians board the vessel under the most appallingly primitive conditions. The "terminal" at Port Everglades is little more than an open-ended pier shed with no facilities for storing luggage, scant refreshment or waiting rooms and a hopelessly understaffed customs and immigration force. Those inexperienced passengers, most of them first-time cruisers, will think twice, I am afraid, about re-booking through that port. Florida, take note – you may embark more passengers than New York these days, but you don't do it as well.

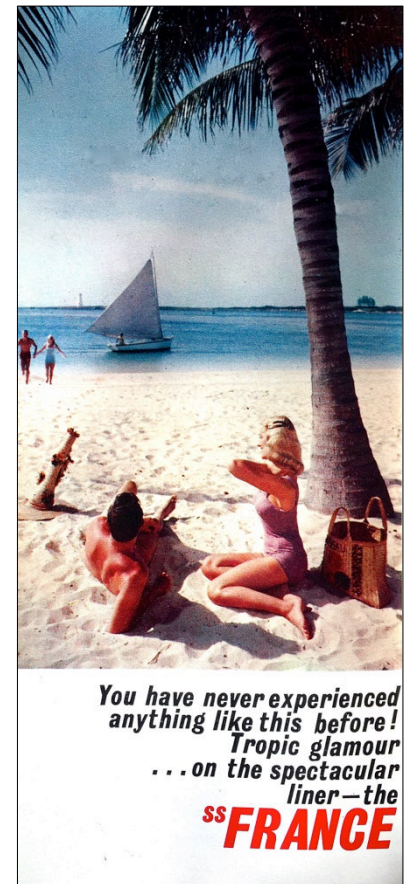
I am told that some cruise passengers prefer the Florida embarkation because it guarantees them glass-like sea conditions for the duration of their time on board. The possibility of a rough passage between New York and the Caribbean is very real; treacherous weather off Cape Hatteras can make those first and last thirty-six hours a nightmare for poor sailors like myself. But I am willing to take that risk if only for the selfish reason that one has the advantage of an additional seventy-two hours on board that most comfortable means of transportation. Then too, if the New York weather is appropriately gloomy, there is a very real pleasure in making the transitional state of sea and sky as the ship ploughs southward.

The FRANCE's interior designers chose a palette that was as much cruising as crossing. Even so, I find there is a marked if subtle difference in the ship's mood. I have crossed in her enough times to think she seems more at home in the debatable aesthetics of the North Atlantic: fog, spray, wind and, most pervasive, a sense of urgent purpose. The FRANCE thudding through a slate gray sea at 28½ knots service speed is not the same as the FRANCE gliding at half that rate from island to island in the Caribbean. There, one drifts, so to speak, bound for nowhere in particular. Enjoyable, yes; but a fragile sense of community is missing. One's fellow passengers are on vacation rather than traveling.

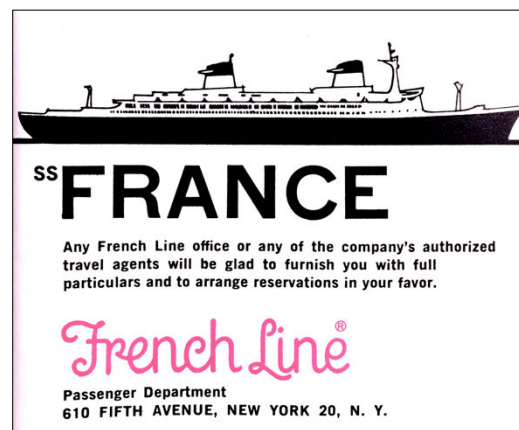
Then too, the islands are essentially disappointing. They are similar to each other with few exceptions and ill equipped, in the main, to care for the hordes that descend in increasing numbers from November to May or, indeed for most of the year. An over-abundance of tourists, despite the cash flow, spoils the gentle equanimity of those islands. They seem a day-long pursuit of elusive bargains (all but the liquor and cigarettes are cheaper in New York, I think), insolent and rascally cab-drivers, indifferent cuisine and under-staffed and over-abused hotels. The best part of the day ashore, for me, is that return to the cool, well-kept elegance of the FRANCE, time in the late-afternoon sun for a sand-free swim in the aft pool, and indolently, time for a drink outside the Riviera Lounge as the sun goes down. (Incidentally, in defense of those islands, there is a marvelous hotel and beach on Barbados whose kitchen is run, naturally, by a chef retired from the second MAURETANIA!) Without question, the grandest island in the Caribbean is the FRANCE.

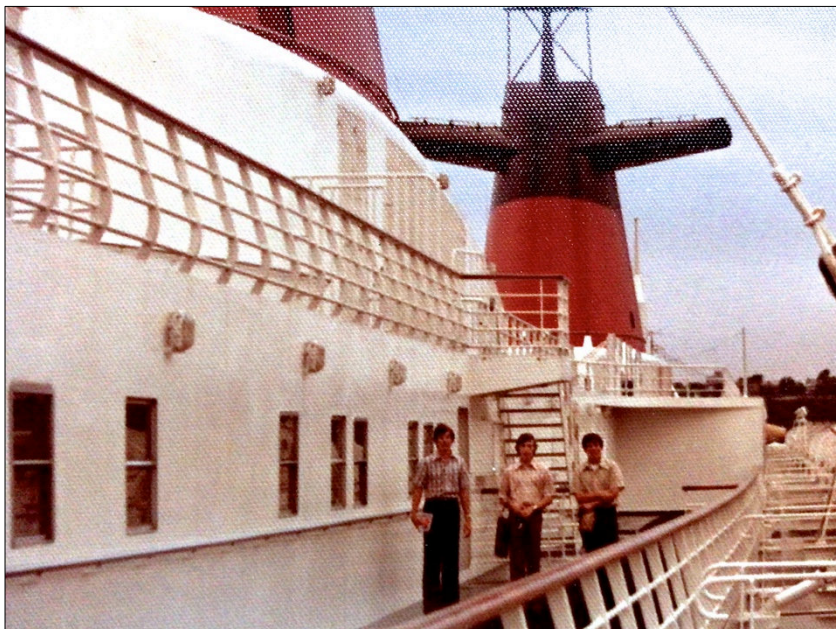
She is too big to tie up at all but special ports – Aruba is, I believe, one of the few. There are those who find the tender ride ashore an irritant; for me it never is and the advantages of an off-shore anchorage as opposed to the heat of a pierside berth more than outweighs the supposed convenience. Then too, the tender pier at St. Thomas means that one debarks in the center of town. Those passengers who walk ashore from one of the half dozen or so smaller vessels tied up at the pier have the delay of an arduous and bumper-to-bumper taxi ride from ship to town.

Finally, there is no substitute for the exquisite comforts of a great ship and the FRANCE is eminently, if not uniquely, qualified to fulfill all expectations of what comfortable cruising can be. The Caribbean is full of ships these days, lofty, white, twenty-thousand tonners, upper works tortured into aerofoils, unreal pieces of floating Las Vegas. They seem less ships, some-how than hotels where service is expendable and a brand of dollar hustle seems more important than satisfaction given. There is to me, even in that unreal, sun-struck expanse of incredibly blue water, a comfort in the enormous and reliable profile of the FRANCE, her massive bow and her pride of graceful length. Long may she sail!



Breathless descriptions and sun-splashed photos of the glamorous life on the FRANCE filled the 1960's brochure for a season of South America and West Indies cruises from New York. The ship's smoking room, glass-domed swimming pool and dining room (above, left to right) were three of the FRANCE's many venues that offered sophisticated service and nonstop activities. (Bob Allen Collection)





Not John Maxtone-Graham, but your Porthole editor (and buddies) on the FRANCE in New York, August 17, 1972.

(Bob Allen Collection)

SHIPS IN PORT: LOW FARES AND THE LITTLE GROOTE BEER

By Bill Miller

One of the Port of New York's best-known members, the late Vince Messina, led a Saturday "expedition". It was another ship visit, the date September 1966, and this time we headed downtown, to Pier 40 at West Houston Street. Pier 40 was leased to the Holland-America Line, but we were not visiting a Holland-America ship – well, not quite. The veteran GROOTE BEER, a converted World War II-built Victory ship, was chartered to Holland-America for a low-fare, student crossing to Europe. It was, in fact, the 455-ft long ship's very last visit to New York. The day itself was notably sad – both the BERLIN and the OCEAN MONARCH were on their very final calls as well. Three passenger ships vanishing forever and all in the same day!

After the Second World War ended in 1945, America gave a number of ships to hard-pressed, ship-depleted allies. Three of them, each mass-constructed Victory Ships, went to the Dutch. They were the CRANSTON VICTORY, which became the ZUIDERKRUIS; the COSTA RICA VICTORY, changed to GROOTE BEER, and LA GRANDE VICTORY to WATERMAN. Each was named for a constellation: Southern Cross, Great Bear and Aquarius. First used as troop transports, these 9,600-grt ships were later transformed into low-fare passenger ships.

"At first, beginning in 1947, the three ships were used as troop carriers," according to Laurence van der Laan, who was employed by Holland America at its New York offices from 1959 until 1971. "There was even a Government Ships Division at Holland America's Rotterdam headquarters. The three ships also carried immigrants, prisoners of war, evacuees from Indonesia and even medical patients. They were very, very basic ships originally. Each ship was actually managed by a different Dutch ship owner and so had a different Company crew: the GROOTE BEER by Holland America, the WATERMAN by Royal Rotterdam Lloyd and the ZUIDERKRUIS by Nederland Line. They were owned, however, by the Dutch Government and so registered in The Hague. Later, in 1951, they were renovated and slightly upgraded for budget passengers. There was a lounge, a bar and a cinema. Cabins had 3-10 berths while dormitories held as many as 55. In total, each could carry as many as 800 passengers. The three ships sailed the North Atlantic from Rotterdam (sometimes stopping at Le Havre and Southampton), often to New York, but also to Halifax, Quebec and Montreal. They frequently carried government-subsidy passengers, but also many, many students for American Field Service. In 1959, it was \$125 for a one-way, 9-day student passage between New York and Rotterdam. Earlier, until 1951, Holland America itself had carried large numbers of European-bound students on the VOLENDAM. The GROOTE BEER and her two sisters were a continuation."

In 1960, these three ships were transferred to the Trans-Ocean Steamship Company, a creation of the Dutch Government but with strong links to Holland America Line. The accommodations onboard were improved: some twin-berth cabins were created, some dormitories reduced in size and a small outdoor pool added. Trans-Ocean continued with its student and education business and was linked with the American Field Service, the Council for Student Travel and the Netherlands Society for Foreign Student Relations. But with the onset of cheaper airline fares as well as air charters, it all soon became less and less profitable. In an August 1963 edition of the New York Times, an advertisement offered the sale of the three ships.

The 455-ft long GROOTE BEER and WATERMAN were bought by Greek tanker billionaire John S Latsis and soon renamed MARIANNA IV and MARGARITA respectively. Their new role was quite different – periodically, they would transport Moslem pilgrims from north and west African ports to Arabia. The former GROOTE BEER built for as many as 900 passengers reportedly was carrying as many as 2,200 passengers. More than half slept on deck using their own mattresses. But in the summer of 1965 and then in 1966, the ship was temporarily renamed GROOTE BEER and chartered to Holland America for summer season student crossings, usually between Rotterdam, Le Havre, Southampton and New York. She retained her Greek colors, had a Greek captain and officers, but carried some Holland America staff.



The GROOTE BEER at Pier 40, September 1966.

(Bill Miller Collection)

WSS member Michael von Kirvan-Prichette was aboard a late summer westbound crossing in 1966. "I remembered the ship from her Dutch days, but now we had a Greek captain and mixed crew. She was a small ship, but a very happy ship. It was a very inexpensive crossing – less than \$125 for 9 days. We were 8 to a cabin – and, of course, the showers and the toilets were down the corridor. One added memory: The little GROOTE BEER passed the big, far faster UNITED STATES in the Lower Bay in New York harbor and actually docked first!"

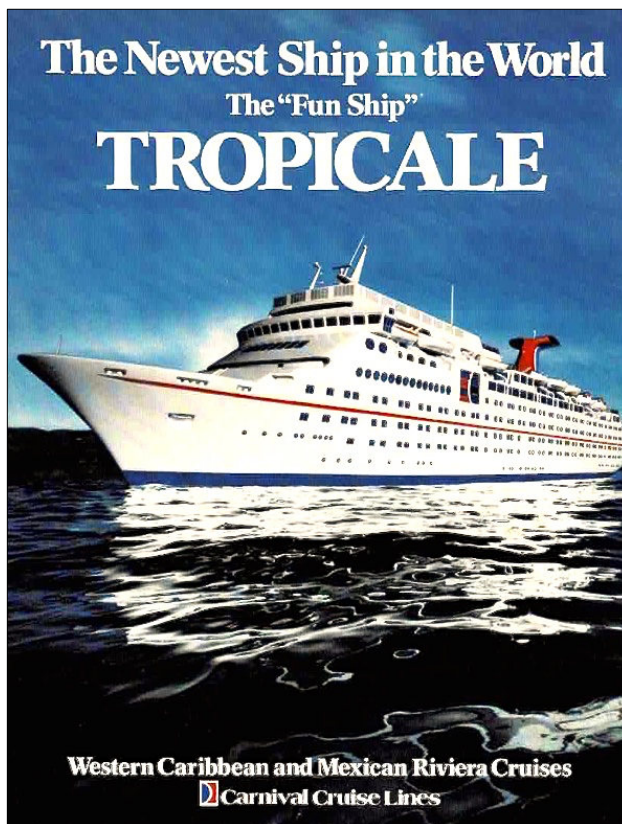
Beginning in 1967, Trans-Ocean's operation was transferred over to Holland America's RYNDAM, which for a short time was actually renamed WATERMAN. Holland America's interest in these student sailings (and also off-season, floating university voyages) ended in April 1971 when the RYNDAM was retired.

The ZUIDERKRUIS remained in Dutch hands and, in fall 1963, was transferred to the Dutch Navy for use as a permanently moored accommodation and stores ship at Den Helder. Years later, by great coincidence, these three ships were demolished within months of one another. The ex-ZUIDERKRUIS went to scrappers in Spain in late 1969 while the former GROOTE BEER and WATERMAN soon followed, but to Greek and Japanese scrap merchants respectively.

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

END OF THE LINE: January was another devastating month for the cruise industry, with confirmation of classic vessels and old favorites heading for scrapyards in India and Turkey. Many are or were members of the vast Carnival Corporation fleet, which is continuing to build mega-ships of the MARDI GRAS Class. Once cruising restarts, larger, more cost-effective vessels will offset the capacity reductions. TROPICALE (1982), Carnival's first newly constructed cruise ship, and the first with the line's signature winged funnel, was beached in Alang, India for scrapping on January 1. During her 38-year career, she also sailed as Costa's COSTA TROPICALE, P&O Australia's PACIFIC STAR, and OCEAN DREAM for both Spanish market Pullmantur Cruises and Japan's "PEACEBOAT" student ship program. HOLIDAY (1985) and CELEBRATION (1987), enlarged and improved versions of TROPICALE, are both now confirmed scrap victims of the pandemic. HOLIDAY last sailed as MAGELLAN for now-bankrupt CMV cruises, while Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line most recently employed the CELEBRATION. Bahamas Paradise is still in business, hoping to return to service in 2021 with its GRAND CLASSICA, formerly COSTA CLASSICA (1992). The third member of the HOLIDAY Class, JUBILEE (1986) was scrapped as the Chinese-flagged HENNA in 2017, so the entire groundbreaking fleet of Carnival new-builds is now gone. Carnival's next generation, the FANTASY Class (1990-1998) may also be nearing extinction. Although some of these vessels remain, Carnival will soon reveal the names of four additional ships to be divested, so the remainder of the class is in danger. COSTA VICTORIA, the super-stylish one-off vessel built by Costa in 1997, is also confirmed to be heading for the scrapyard. A proposed sister ship, COSTA OLYMPIA was never completed. Her unfinished hull was sold to Norwegian Cruise Line, redesigned, and completed as NORWEGIAN SKY in 1999. Most shocking to ship lovers worldwide was the announcement that MARCO POLO, ex-ALEKSANDR PUSHKIN (1965) was sold for scrap in January. Unfortunately, rumored plans of her use for charter or as an accommodation ship did not materialize. There is now only one remaining liner built during the transatlantic era with the possibility of resuming service – the former CMV ASTORIA, ex-STOCKHOLM (1948). However, due to her age, it is most likely that a scrap merchant will purchase her when she is auctioned on January 29.



The 1982 inaugural season brochure for Carnival Cruise Line's innovative TROPICALE.

(Bob Allen Collection)

HVA-SEA TO THE RESCUE: Heating, ventilating and air conditioning is not the most glamorous aspect of liner design, but is critical in the post COVID-19 world. Cruise lines are spending a great deal of time and resources to determine which HVAC solutions will minimize COVID risk once passenger ships are sailing the oceans again. Filtration systems, Ultraviolet (UV) lighting and bipolar ionization are among the options to trap or destroy the virus before it can infect passengers. Increasing the frequency of air changes is another option, but it comes with higher maintenance and energy costs, especially in warm, humid climates. New cruise line Virgin Voyages, which has yet to sail due to the pandemic, chose a dual strategy. Its SCARLET

LADY has separate HVAC for each public space, and sensors will determine the frequency of air changes, depending on the venue's occupancy. Each passenger cabin has a separate HVAC unit as well. In addition, the entire vessel's HVAC system will include bipolar ionization. According to Virgin's chief of marine and technology, Andy Schwalb, this will kill 99.2% of airborne pathogens. He explained that air is ionized with positively and negatively charged ions, which attach to and increase the weight of particulate matter. This causes the particles to be easily trapped in filters, fall to the floor, and reduces its ability to attach to the lungs.

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES SOLD: Royal Caribbean International will sell its small-ship, luxury brand Azamara to private equity firm Sycamore Partners for \$201 million; closing is expected by spring, 2021. This major fleet reduction follows the announcement that MAJESTY OF THE SEAS, EMPRESS OF THE SEAS and HORIZON have also been sold, downsizing the fleet by six vessels. Sycamore plans to operate the 13-year-old Azamara brand without changes to the current product, and stated a desire grow the company. For Royal Caribbean, the divestiture was a goal even before the pandemic, since it recently acquired another deluxe line, Silversea Cruises. The operation of two luxury brands under the RCI umbrella was not a realistic long-term strategy. The company will now focus on its return to cruising with three distinct brands: mass-market and mega-ship operator Royal Caribbean Cruises, upper-middle market Celebrity Cruises, and luxury operator Silversea Cruises. New vessels are currently under construction for each of the brands.

QUEEN MARY OPERATOR DECLARES BANKRUPTCY: Singapore-based Eagle Hospitality Trust, the entity that operates the QUEEN MARY in Long Beach, CA, filed for bankruptcy protection in mid-January. Eagle Hospitality was created by the QUEEN MARY's current leaseholder, Urban Commons, to operate the 85-year-old former Cunard flagship. Its portfolio includes ownership of 26 hotels, also now in bankruptcy. The severe downturn of the hospitality business during the pandemic is unsurprising; the QUEEN MARY's hotel and attractions have been shuttered since May 7, 2020. In 2016, Urban Commons entered a 66-year lease to operate the QUEEN MARY and develop 65 acres of surrounding property, tentatively named Queen Mary Island. This latest setback in the restoration of the fabled ocean liner and related development of her environs is nothing new. Previous QUEEN MARY hotel operators and lease holders since 1970 included Diners Club Credit Card Co., PSA Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, Wrather Port Properties, The Walt Disney Company, RMS Foundation with Joseph Prevratil, Save the Queen, LLC / Hostmark Hospitality Group, Delaware North Companies and Garrison Investment Group / Evolution Hospitality, LLC. In addition to her current management struggles, a multitude of repairs are required to keep the QUEEN MARY viable. The financials and progress of these repairs are being audited by the City of Long Beach, the legendary ship's owner since 1967.





Established 1870

FUGAZY TRAVEL BUREAU Inc.

A Division of

THE DINERS CLUB Inc.

OFFERS

The R.M.S.

Queen Mary

ON A

FINAL FABULOUS CRUISE

AROUND SOUTH AMERICA
AND CAPE HORN



Sponsored by

The City of LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA U.S.A.

Sailing From
SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND

Embarkation OCT. 30, 1967

The QUEEN MARY's final cruise ended at her retirement location, the Port of Long Beach, CA on December 9, 1967.

(Bob Allen Collection)

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