

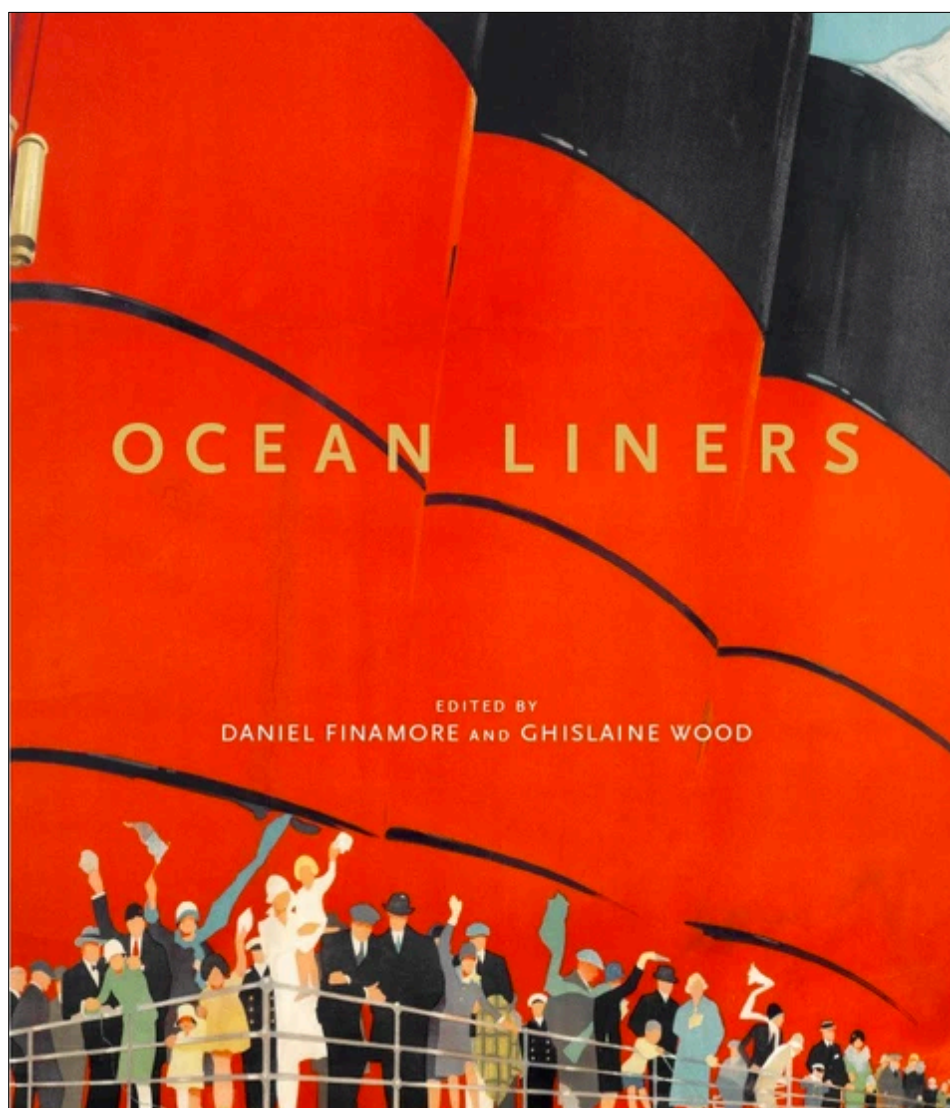


Friday, April 30, 2021 – **VIA ZOOM at 6:00 PM**

OCEAN LINERS: GLAMOUR, SPEED AND STYLE THE VICTORIA & ALBERT AND PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM EXHIBIT

By **STEPHEN LASH**

At our April meeting, we will hear the observations of a noted collector of ocean liner memorabilia - Stephen Lash, Chairman Emeritus of the venerable auction house Christie's. Stephen originated the idea for an international exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Portions of the Lash collection remain on view, confirming that today's interest in ocean liners transcends nostalgia and extends to art, architecture and social history.



The catalogue cover for "Ocean Liners: Glamour, Speed and Style," an evocative image of a Cunarder's funnels.

(Stephen Lash)

NEXT EVENTS: Membership Programs via Zoom: May 21 - "Torn Castle," by Peter Knego; June 25 - "Union Castle Purserette," by Ann Haynes; August 27 - "The Italian Line from The Wolfsonian Collection," by Sylvia Barisione

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

E-MAIL: wsspony@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.worldshipny.com



Royal Caribbean's ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS passing through the Strait of Messina, April 2021.

(Concetta Destefano)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

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

PREVIEW, FRIDAY MAY 21, 2021 – TORN CASTLE, BY PETER KNEGO

Zooming in from California, Peter Knego will present "Torn Castle," the title of his latest DVD documenting the life and times of the 1960-built Union-Castle Line flagship r.m.s. WINDSOR CASTLE. The hour-long film includes vintage footage of her building, launch, maiden voyage and final departure from Capetown. It is interwoven with Knego's rare scenes of the laid up ship in Greece as the MARGARITA L, and on the beach in India, where the viewer literally walks through the ship with Knego during the demolition process.



Peter Knego's presentation "Torn Castle" documents the career and demise of Union-Castle Line's WINDSOR CASTLE. (Peter Knego Collection)

By Pat Dacey

On Friday, March 26th, the WSS - PONY Branch welcomed Bill Miller, "Mr. Ocean Liner," who took us on a virtual voyage spanning the decade from 1930 to 1940 featuring some of the world's greatest and most distinctive liners of all time. Although not currently lecturing at sea due to the pandemic, Bill presented live from Florida: a night of glamour and Art Deco on the high seas.

The title of the presentation was particularly fitting. The 1930's were the high point of the movie partnership between Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, who made nine films together for RKO Pictures from 1933 to 1939. Six of the films were the highest grossing films for RKO Pictures. The duo's popularity during this period was enormous, as they revolutionized dance on film. Just the mention of their names conjured the style and glamour of the times. The period between 1930 and 1940 has been referred to as a glittering age of fashion that never went out of style. To emphasize the reference, Bill opened with a period image of Marlene Dietrich, shipboard with 38 pieces of luggage, signaling the luxuriousness of ocean travel for those who could afford it.

After World War I and the Great Depression, style emerged as sophisticated and elegant. Ocean liner interiors followed suit. Prior to the 1930's, most ocean liners were decorated in period styles such as Victorian or Edwardian; Art Nouveau themes were seen in a few ships as well. Interior design was greatly influenced by the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held in Paris in 1925, resulting in the Art Deco style. Its influence rapidly spread worldwide, encompassing all aspects of art, architecture and industrial design. The first ocean liner to incorporate the Art Deco style was the French Line's ÎLE DE FRANCE of 1927. She introduced this new style of interior design rather than recreating more traditional styles of the past. Due to her stunning interiors, superb service and cuisine, and evocative "Jazz Age" atmosphere, the ÎLE DE FRANCE was an instant sensation.

Interior design of ships was not the only thing changing during this period. The exterior form of ocean liners evolved through technology; ships were built with streamlined profiles, lower funnels and bulbous bows. Bill discussed two exemplars of this new technology: North German Lloyd's BREMEN and EUROPA of 1929-1930. These sister ships were built using advanced high speed steam turbines, allowing both to capture the Blue Riband during their respective careers. With the growing interest in aviation, North German Lloyd mounted a small seaplane on each ship. It was launched by catapult to ferry both passengers and mail - a public relations campaign to emphasize the speed and safety of both ship and seaplane. It was a forward-thinking example of innovation by design; however, the seaplane service only lasted a few years.

Using classic images, Bill paralleled ocean liner design during this period with the architectural design of famous buildings. Most notably incorporating Art Deco design were well-known New York City landmarks such as the Chrysler Building, Empire State Building and Radio City Music Hall. As Bill noted, this was a time when "Art Deco went ashore." Its design elements were incorporated into theaters, hotels, railroad stations and other monumental public buildings, as well as private residences.

This new design style was not limited to ships on the express run to New York. Canadian Pacific Line's EMPRESS OF BRITAIN (1931) was innovative in both design and technology. The EMPRESS OF BRITAIN was the largest, fastest, and most luxurious ship operating between the United Kingdom and Canada. She was the largest ship in the Canadian Pacific fleet and reportedly the most fuel-efficient steamship in the world. The first truly dual-purpose liner, she could also be easily transformed into a cruise ship for the winter season.

Next, Bill discussed the Italian Line's response to the success of the BREMEN and EUROPA: the 1932-built REX (which briefly held the Westbound Blue Riband) and CONTE DI SAVOIA. While the CONTE DI SAVOIA was considered a triumph of Art Deco design, the REX had a more traditional appeal. Both were advertised as "The Riviera Afloat."

No more glamorous example of Art Deco afloat can be found than the French Line's NORMANDIE. She is often referred to as "the greatest liner ever built." With vintage images and poster art, Bill described both the interior and exterior of the NORMANDIE. He shared reflections documented during his first hand interviews with former passengers. Although it was apparent that the NORMANDIE was much loved during her short-lived career, she was not profitable, however, possibly because her reputation for glamour may have intimidated the average 1930's traveller. The descriptive imagery of her passengers all looking like William Powell and Myrna Loy (aka Nick and Nora Charles) lent credence to the splendor of the era. Bill reminded us of the brilliant 2010 exhibit at South Street Seaport "DECODENCE, Legendary Interiors and Illustrious Travelers Aboard the SS NORMANDIE," which also celebrated her fame. For the exhibit, Bill curated the exquisite NORMANDIE collection of Mario Pulice. Attendees could encounter NORMANDIE in a manner that never had been visualized before in a museum: an experience of the great liner eclipsed only by those fortunate enough to have sailed in her. It should also be noted that the World Ship Society - Port of New York Branch as well as many of our members supported this historic exhibit.

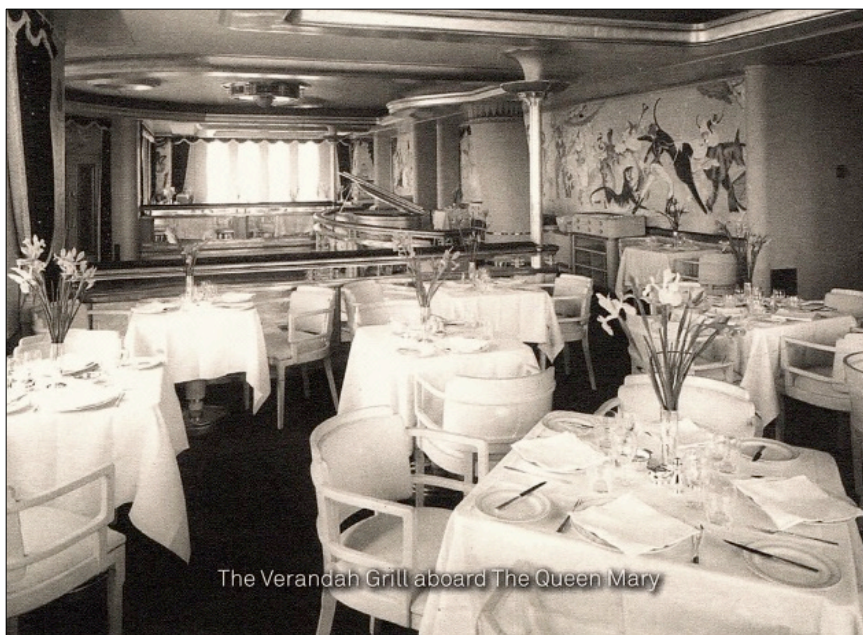
Moving to one of my personal favorites, Bill discussed the influence Art Deco design had on the ships of the Cunard Line, with specific emphasis on the QUEEN MARY. With beautiful color images, Bill compared her to the NORMANDIE, noting that between 1936 and 1939, the QUEEN MARY sailed at 95% occupancy while the NORMANDIE sailed at 59%. Bill pointed this out as a sign of brand loyalty in addition to other factors. For instance, the late John Maxtone-Graham commented that on the NORMANDIE, "tourist class was a cruel disappointment, and third class was even worse." Archival to the NORMANDIE, the QUEEN MARY was designed with strong Art Deco influences, yet she possessed the warmth, soft furnishings and colors associated with majestic country homes of Great Britain. Her interiors were a bit more welcoming and less formal than the grand public spaces aboard NORMANDIE.

Many ships of notable design were sailing during this exciting period. Bill could only briefly highlight some for their unique elements and contribution to the Art Deco decor of the time. When World War II erupted, too many of these ships along with countless lives tragically became casualties of the war. NORMANDIE, EMPRESS OF BRITAIN, BREMEN, REX and CONTE DI SAVOIA were among the higher profile victims. Bill detailed this destruction, including the loss and eventual scrapping of the NORMANDIE. She burned and capsized at her New York pier while being converted to a troopship in February 1942. On a positive post-war note, Bill spoke of the ships still sailing today that are a link to that era.

Bill's vast knowledge of ocean liner history and the current cruise industry were on display in the question-and-answer period after the program. He offered some encouraging words about the future of the industry.

Finally, a quote from Cathie Arquilla, a fashion stylist who contributed to the DECODENCE exhibit program with her article The Great Escape - Transatlantic Fashion in the Deco Period: "Life was glamorous, the mood gregarious, and Art Deco was divine."

We thank Bill for his wonderful presentation and for his more than 55 years of service to the PONY Branch. We very much look forward to his future presentations.



Clockwise from top left: Fred Astaire on the QUEEN MARY; The Verandah Grill, the First Class a la carte restaurant on the QUEEN MARY; Italian Line's CONTE DI SAVOIA in New York; North German Lloyd's EUROPA in New York. (Pat Dacey Collection)

SHIPS IN PORT: SPANISH STYLE – THE COVADONGA AND GUADALUPE

By Bill Miller

On a dark, rainy November day in 1966 and under the guidance of the late Vincent Messina, a small group of World Ship members including myself traveled to the “wilds” of downtown Jersey City, to Harborside Terminal. We were bound for Pier F to visit a rather unique passenger ship then calling at the Port of New York – the Spanish passenger-cargo liner GUADALUPE. After boarding, we found the little liner to be a throwback to another age – with dark, wooded, quite cramped interiors, small cabins, almost quaint Spanish décor and the novelty of some statues of Catholic saints but surrounded by rows of lighted candles. But overall, the ship was also tired – a faded, dusty atmosphere, a sad solitude and a small swimming pool filled not with water but with trash. As we stood on the stern of the 487-ft long ship, the mood was deepened as we watched – in the sentimental mist – as the beloved QUEEN OF BERMUDA slipped past, outbound for shipbreakers in Scotland.

The Spanish never quite invested in big passenger ships for the otherwise obvious passenger link to North America, but instead relied on smaller, often older tonnage. At the end of the Second World War, the Compañía Transatlántica Española (the Spanish Line to Americans) ran three, pre-war-built passenger ships on the New York run: the HABANA, MAGALLANES and MARQUES DE COMILLAS.

In 1952, to bolster as well as improve its North Atlantic operations, the state-owned firm bought two cargo ships, the MONASTERIO DE LA RABIDA and MONASTERIO DE GUADALUPE, then fitting out for another Spanish shipowner, the Empresa Nacional Elcano. Both ships were redesigned and converted to combination liners and became the COVADONGA and GUADALUPE respectively. The cargo areas were reduced and reworked, and passenger quarters with 349 berths were added (105 in first class and 244 in tourist class). These new sisters were commissioned in 1953, put on the New York run and rather abruptly replaced all of the earlier Spanish tonnage. They proved, in fact, to be the very last new passenger ships for their owners. In the late 1950s, twin 20,000 tonners, to be named SAMOS and SILOS, were proposed. They would have offered far greater accommodations aiming for a bigger share of the mid-Atlantic tourist trade with sixty in first class and 800 in tourist. However, the Spanish government refused to finance the project, particularly in view of intruding and increasing airline competition.

The 487-ft long COVADONGA and GUADALUPE worked a rather extensive service from Bilbao, Santander, Gijon, Vigo and Lisbon across to New York and then southward to Havana (or San Juan) and Vera Cruz. Julio Del Valle, who was traffic manager at Garcia & Diaz, the ships' New York agents, recalled these ships as being quite pleasant and profitable: “They differed only in decor – the COVADONGA being very Spanish in style whereas the GUADALUPE was more European modern. They served excellent continental cuisine in their first class restaurants and ethnic menus in tourist class. In 1962–63, they carried the last groups of Catholic priests and nuns out of Communist Cuba. These two ships also provided a valuable cargo service.”

“Each ship had space for 6,000 tons of freight,” added Del Valle. “To America, they often carried mail, tinned fish, squid, octopus, wine, mercury, cork, lead, Spanish canned goods, olives and olive oil. Homeward, they carried coffee and tobacco from Mexico, sugar and more tobacco from Cuba and finally machinery, tin plate, steel and agricultural machinery from New York.”

After two decades, by the early 1970s, however, these Spanish sisters had become unprofitable. Their routing had been altered somewhat in later years to include calls at Norfolk and Miami, and occasionally US Gulf ports such as New Orleans. Their complements were sensibly reduced to seventy-five first-class passengers only. The passenger trade eventually vanished, however, and the cargo went instead aboard new, more efficient container ships. The COVADONGA was retired in December 1972 and was quickly sold off to breakers at Castellon, Spain. The GUADALUPE – at first thought to be sold for conversion to an Indian Ocean pilgrim ship – followed three months later. She terminated completely the North Atlantic passenger services for the Spanish Line.



The GUADALUPE at Pier F, Jersey City, in 1970.

(Bill Miller Collection)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A SHIP: Disney Cruise Line's DISNEY WISH will incorporate a theme of enchantment throughout the ship, which will debut in 2022. According to Walt Disney Imagineering portfolio creative executive Laura Cabo, "Enchantment is about unlocking the wonder in everything we do and experience. For the DISNEY WISH, we are creating a signature design language that exudes this emotional magic like only Disney can, by infusing every inch of this enchanted ship with more Disney stories and characters than ever before. The DISNEY WISH will be a place where families really do get to wish upon a star." Enchantment will be expressed by design featuring fairytale castles; forests, animals and the natural world; and the world beneath the oceans. The Grand Hall, the WISH's entrance venue, will be inspired by castle architecture, complete with Rococo, Baroque and Gothic flourishes. A Cinderella statue at the base of the Grand Hall's interconnecting stair will preside over the space.



Disney Cruise Line describes DISNEY WISH's Grand Hall as an enchanting, castle-themed atrium.

(Disney Cruise Line)

COVID-FREE CRUISING: More cruise lines are planning to restart operations in the western hemisphere this summer. Due to the CDC's ongoing restrictions, homeports outside of the United States have been announced. Seabourn Cruises will base the SEABOURN ODYSSEY in Barbados, beginning on July 18. She will sail two 7-day itineraries, which will be combinable as a 14-day cruise. Viking Ocean Cruises will deploy the VIKING ORION on 7-day cruises round trip from Hamilton, Bermuda in June and July. These cruises will visit St. George and the King's Wharf in Bermuda, and also feature two sea days. Both lines will only board passengers who have been fully vaccinated.



SEABOURN ODYSSEY (above, left) and VIKING ORION (above, right) will offer deluxe cruises for fully vaccinated passengers this summer.

(Seabourn Cruise Line / Viking Ocean Cruises)

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