



**Friday, April 28, 2023, 6:30PM (6:00PM doors open)**

**April Member Meeting, LIVE and VIA ZOOM from the National Opera Center  
330 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. at 29<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Manhattan**

## **SHIPS OF SPLENDOR: 100 YEARS OF OCEAN LINERS**

**Presented By Bill Miller**

They were the floating palaces, castles of the sea, ocean-going resorts. Bill Miller has recently written an all-color book titled SHIPS OF SPLENDOR. His selected passenger ships range from the likes of the MAURETANIA and MAJESTIC a century ago, in the 1920s, to the age of the UNITED STATES and QE2 in 1950s & 1960s.

Tonight, in something of a grand review, Bill will comment on some of these ships. In photos from the book, they will "sail by" in revived voyages.

So, the whistles will soon be sounding -- join us for SHIPS OF SPLENDOR: 100 YEARS OF OCEAN LINERS.



New York's Luxury Liner Row seen in March 1938 (from the left):  
EUROPA, REX, NORMANDIE, GEORGIC & BERENGARIA. (Bill Miller Collection)

### **NEXT-UP MEMBER EVENT – MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2:30PM (2:00PM Doors Open), LIVE National Opera Center, VIA ZOOM**

**Presented by Astrid Drew, SSHSA, Collections Archivist. See page 3 for details.**

## MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Holland America's ROTTERDAM VII in New York on April 6, 2023.

(Justin Zizes, Jr.)

Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in the Porthole: member photos, members' arrival and departure dates, and articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com). Please note published articles are subject to editing and are not necessarily the opinion of the WSS-PONY organization.

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**WEBSITE:** [www.worldshipny.com](http://www.worldshipny.com)

## ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

SHIP	FROM	TO	VOYAGE	PASSENGER(S)	DATE
SILVER WIND	Port Williams, Chile	Port Williams, Chile	Antarctica	Milton & Karen Taube	02/23
ANTHEM OF THE SEAS	Bayonne, NJ	Bayonne, NJ	Bahamas	Mr. & Mrs. Tom O'Reilly	03/23
ROTTERDAM VII	New York	Rotterdam	Transatlantic	Bill Miller	04/23

**Sunday, May 7, 2:30PM (2PM doors open)**  
**LIVE and VIA ZOOM from the National Opera Center**  
**330 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. at 29<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Manhattan**

**WSS-PONY MAY MEMBER MEETING**  
**Presented by ASTRID DREW**



A circa 1900 poster of a White Star liner at sea.

(Vincent M. Love Collection)

On May 7th, 2023, please join Astrid Drew, Collections Archivist for the Steamship Historical Society of America (SSHSA) as she presents in-person and available via Zoom, a visual program on the Vincent M. Love Collection, currently on loan to SSHSA.

The collection, with many items currently available online through the SSHSA Virtual Museum, comprises framed lithographs, prints, photographs, books, promotional ephemera, VHS tapes, and preserved newspapers and clippings documenting ocean liners and companies, with a special focus on United States Lines, the White Star Line and, in particular, the sinking of the steamship *Titanic* in 1912.

In addition, Astrid will provide an overview of the SSHSA collections as well as her role as archivist. The SSHSA collections comprise hundreds of thousands of images, artifacts, ephemera, memorabilia, and artwork, as well as a maritime reference library located at the Ship History Center in Warwick, RI.



**Sunday, May 7th, 4:30PM (following the May Member meeting)**  
**WALK from the National Opera Center May 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**or MEET at 526 6th Avenue, NYC**

## **TITANIC, THE EXHIBITION**

During the fall of 2022, “Titanic, The Exhibition” arrived in NYC after a run in London and is now centrally located at 526 6th Ave. On May 7th, following our May membership meeting at the National Opera Center, all are invited to join us on a short 15-minute walk to view this new exhibit created by the Spanish Company Musealia with contributions by Titanic historian Claes-Göran Wetterholm. The exhibition will be a “no host” event with all paying individually for the event. However, it will be a natural segue from our meeting topic on maritime collections with specific emphasis on Titanic and White Star related items.

Billed as far more than a display of historic items: “it is a unique narrative experience, a tale of the people aboard history’s most legendary ship on its maiden and final journey. Travel back to 1912 through photographs, handwritten letters, wayward keepsakes, and other personal belongings telling countless stories about the fates and heroic deeds on board.”

The exhibition contains over 200 original objects from Titanic and her sisters, in addition to life-size recreations of the ship’s interiors. The exhibition is narrated through an audio guide, which includes sound effects, music and testimonies from Titanic passengers and crew.

Admission is \$39.00 pp with a \$5.00 surcharge if bought online. There is a special senior rate of \$30.00 for those who qualify.

Further information and advance ticket purchase can be found at: Titanic. The Exhibition in New York City  
<https://titanicexhibition.com/nyc>



A rendering of an event that never took place: the TITANIC and OLYMPIC passing at sea. (SSHSA Collection)

**Sunday Afternoon, April 30th, 4:00PM**  
**Sponsored by and held at the Hoboken Historical Museum**  
**1301 Hudson Street, Hoboken**

**THE FIFTH STREET PIER: HOBOKEN & THE HOLLAND AMERICA LINE**  
**Presented by Bill Miller**

This year, the Holland America Line, one of the world's most historic shipping companies, turned 150. Bill Miller, a longtime Museum member, was aboard the Company's newest luxury liner, the \$1 billion ROTTERDAM, to help celebrate. As the guest speaker onboard, Bill reminded audiences of Holland America's long association with Hoboken -- from the 1890s until 1963. Their fine ships berthed at the foot of Fifth Street & the Hudson River. Indeed, those Dutch ships were a fixture of the City's waterfront.

The author of over 100 books on ocean liners, Bill will talk about at Holland America's long and diverse history. Their passenger ships carried the rich and famous, immigrants down in steerage, soldiers in two world wars and summertime tourists to Europe; all while their freighters delivered the likes of Dutch cheeses, tulip bulbs, beer and the first load of Volkswagens to come to America (1949). This all happened in Hoboken!

The whistles are sounding! Join us for a grand time as we set sail once more from the Fifth Street pier on the great Holland America Line!



Holland America Line's NIEUW AMSTERDAM (II) of 1938 docked at Hoboken's Fifth Street pier in the 1950's.  
(Bill Miller Collection)

# **SHIP'S LOG, FEBRUARY 2023, REVIEW OF "50 YEARS OF CRUISE SHIP DESIGN" BY JOE FARCUS**

**by Bob Allen**

Our February membership meeting provided an intensive look into the design of modern cruise ships, as well as the history of Carnival Cruises, the world's largest cruise company. Our special guest, live from Miami via ZOOM, was world-renowned architect Joe Farcus. The lavishly illustrated program was replete with remarkable behind-the-scenes videos, design sketches, shipyard photos and intriguing recollections of the origins of the Carnival Cruise Line design aesthetic.

Joe started his program by explaining he had always been fascinated by architecture and design, was "born an architect" and "wanted to be an architect even before I know what architecture really was." Joe's family moved to Miami Beach in 1953 when he was 9 years old, and the young boy became enamored of the "town devoted to tourism" and its carefree vibe. After architecture school in the mid-1960's at the University of Florida, Joe joined the prestigious Miami firm of Morris Lapidus, prolific designer of hotels and apartment buildings. Lapidus buildings were well known for brilliant color, architectural playfulness, and unique flair, which made him less than appreciated by serious architecture critics of the day. However, the public loved his work – it was "fun" architecture of the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. The Fontainebleau and Eden Roc Hotels in Miami Beach and the Americana in New York are notable Lapidus-designed hotels. It took decades for these and other Lapidus building to be reevaluated and appreciated as mid-century design achievements.



Tropical design inspiration: architect Morris Lapidus – Joe's future employer - was building the elegant Fontainebleau hotel on Miami Beach in 1953. That was the year Joe and his family moved there from Pennsylvania, and the beach paradise became Joe's backyard. (left) The reception lobby of the Fontainebleau Hotel could easily be mistaken for that of a chic ocean liner. (right) (Both Fontainebleau photos: Myrna and Seth Bramson Collection)

The well-connected Lapidus knew Carnival Chairman Ted Arison and won the commission to renovate the second Carnival cruise ship CARNIVALE, in late 1975. She was the former 1956-built transatlantic liner EMPRESS OF BRITAIN, later QUEEN ANNA MARIA. Naturally, Lapidus' young star architect, Joe Farcus - a lover of all not only ships but all forms of transportation - was the project manager for the team that converted the 20-year-old transatlantic liner into a modern cruise ship. Joe traveled to Piraeus, Greece (his first overseas trip) to visit the laid-up liner in the fall of 1975. On New Year's Eve of that year, the listing, rust-streaked liner limped into the Port of Miami for reconditioning. Master designer Lapidus lavished her with bright wall coverings, carpeting and colorful furnishings, while Joe as project manager had to convince vendors to extend credit – or pay by check – for the supplies! In early 1976, Carnival was a fledgling operation, not yet the powerhouse purveyor of dream holidays it would become a few years later. Besides paying bills and keeping the lightning-paced project moving, Joe also had a stroke of genius, which Carnival Cruise lines capitalized on for decades to follow. When she was Greek Line's QUEEN ANNA MARIA, her owners built a vast lounge on her far-aft deck, surrounded by full height windows. Due



to its position, the ship's sheer lifted the after end of the room substantially higher than its forward entrance. Joe reconceived the space as a show lounge, resulting in one of the first – and best – on a cruise ship. Joe took advantage of the sheer, configuring the room's seating and bar to allow all seats to have enhanced sightlines. In the forward (lower) part of the room, he built a stage and removed portions of the ceiling to allow the performers to have more headroom for their acts. The result was "the first real purpose built-theatre that Carnival Cruise Lines had." It was "an ersatz theatre with stage lighting....it was a success!" The venue supported Carnival's "Fun Ship" program that became key to its industry dominance. Joe told us that the theatre design "got me in the door with Carnival and Ted Arison," with whom he became better acquainted after CARNIVALE's 1976 maiden voyage.



The QUEEN ANNA MARIA (foreground) had a spacious Tourist Class Night Club wrapping her stern (left). Joe Farcus reconceived the room as the cruise industry's first show lounge, with a raised stage, theatrical lighting, and fine sight lines, due to the ship's sheer (right). (Bob Allen Collection; Joe Farcus Collection)

The next year, there was talk of Carnival acquiring a third ship. At the same time, Joe, although still working for Morris Lapidus, wished to start his own company - but an architectural firm needs clients! Would Carnival and Ted Arison be the answer? Joe approached Ted and was soon working all night ("on Charette" in architectural parlance) to create a design concept proving the CARNIVALE experience was not a fluke. Within weeks, Joe had the commission to rebuild Union Castle Line's former TRANSVAAL CASTLE / S.A. VAAL into Carnival's third liner FESTIVALE, which was completed in early 1978. The conversion featured more design innovations, and Joe and Carnival Cruises were well on their way to creating the modern cruise ship. In 1979, Joe was preparing plans for Carnival's first purpose-built cruise ship, the TROPICALE. She was launched in Alborg, Denmark in 1980 and made her maiden voyage in January 1982. For the TROPICALE, Ted Arison asked Joe to design a special funnel that would disperse tar-laden exhaust fumes as far from the ship as possible. Joe's winged design, based on aerodynamic principals of airplane wings, was a resounding success. It has been repeated on every subsequent Carnival ship and is an unmistakable symbol of the company.

Within a year, Joe was at work designing Carnival's "Superliners," the trio of HOLIDAY Class vessels that would revolutionize the cruise industry. This class was a larger, improved version of the TROPICALE. It featured a café and retail-lined promenade deck connecting most public venues, a multi-deck show lounge, and dining rooms set high in the ship with expansive sea views. Joe's interior designs for these vessels continued to develop his "entertainment architecture" concept using brilliant colors, lighting, sculpture, murals, and décor themed to history, heroes, artists, nature, and a myriad of subjects. Once the third unit of the trio was completed in 1987, Joe worked with Carnival on the eight-ship FANTASY Class of 1990-1998. These vessels were an improved and much larger version of the HOLIDAY Class, with more spectacular theatres, five-level atria, and a dizzying array of facilities. Joe also designed the observation lounges and theatres on Holland America Line's STATENDAM Class in



The COSTA ATLANTICA Atrium, with its glass icicle pendant light fixtures, was one of Joe's favorite interiors. He was delighted that it greatly impressed a Costa executive skeptical of his design abilities.(left) The CARNIVAL VALOR's Paris Hot Bar featured statues of legendary artist Josephine Baker. Joe said that her status as a pioneering entertainer made her an appropriate figure to be represented on a ship themed to valor. (right)  
(left: Costa Cruises; right: Carnival Cruises)

1993 and took responsibility for Costa Cruises fleet design starting in 2000 with the COSTA ATLANTICA. By then, both lines were units of the massive Carnival Corporation. Although Joe was designing a tremendous number of vessels in the 1990's and 2000's, he kept his firm a small family business, working with his wife and a few trusted assistants. There were also many interesting cruise ship concepts that Joe worked on, including one featuring a tram to move about the vessel. Much to Joe's dismay, some of his fantastic design ideas were not funded, and remain intriguing "what-ifs." The CARNIVAL DESTINY Class was his next realized project in 1996 and yielded the largest passenger ship ever built at 101,000-gross tons. The design platform was used on many Carnival and Costa ships, including the ill-fated COSTA CONCORDIA, which sank in a tragic accident with the loss of 32 lives in 2012. It was around this time, Joe noted, "that the company had changed," with accountants having more influence in the cruise industry than innovative design concepts.

Joe told us that like a good athlete, he decided to retire while at the peak of his craft. So, with great appreciation for the opportunities he has had designing some of the 20th Century's most iconic cruise ships, he has been retired for fourteen years, happily enjoying life with his friends and family in South Florida. As Carnival's Mickey Arison stated in Joe's beautiful coffee-table book "Design on the High Seas," "there is no individual who has had a more profound impact on cruise ship design."

We thank Joe Farcus for a fascinating program illuminating the history of a trend-setting cruise corporation and showing us how an architect's love of design and passion for creativity made it all possible.



## **SHIPS IN PORT: RARE VISITOR – THE LISMORIA**

**By Bill Miller**

Sometimes ships would visit New York only once or twice. They were what I might call “faraway” ships – ships that sailed on other routes and were not expected to be seen. They would be known only from the pages of books about ships and often from the pages of the brilliant PASSENGER LINERS, first published in England in 1961 with a second edition in 1965 by that great shipping author and expert Laurence Dunn. One of these ships was little passenger-cargo liner LISMORIA. In the winter of 1966-67, she made an otherwise unnoticed appearance here at New York. Operating by then as a pure cargo ship, she was under short-term charter to Cunard and ran several trips from Glasgow over to the US East Coast and called at Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. I recall seeing her at Cunard’s freight pier down in Greenwich Village, Pier 51 at the foot of Jane Street.

The 455-foot long LISMORIA and her sister ship, the LAURENTIA, were owned by the Glasgow-based Donaldson Line. Both 8,300-ton ships had actually been built as standardized Victory Ships and were fitted with added wartime troop accommodation. The LISMORIA built as the TAOS VICTORY came first, in January 1945, from the long-defunct California Shipbuilding Yard at Los Angeles; the LISMORIA was delivered two months later, as the MEDINA VICTORY, by the Permanente Shipyard at Richmond, also in California and also long since closed. They were only two of a large class of ships (over five hundred Victory ships were built), but the MEDINA VICTORY was distinctive as the first American merchant ship to be fitted with radar. The two ships went on the US Government’s surplus lists in 1946 and soon passed to the British, to the Ministry of Transport in London. Shortly thereafter, they were transferred to Donaldson, no doubt in reparation for war losses. The first ship lost in World War II, in September 1939, the liner ATHENIA, was a Donaldson vessel.



The very basic look of the 455-ft long LISMORIA.

(Bill Miller Collection)



The LISMORIA was a very practical conversion from a standardized, wartime-built Victory ship.

(Alex Duncan Collection)

These ships seem to have retained their American names, for whatever odd reason, until they went to the Barclay Curle shipyard at Glasgow in 1948 for thorough refitting. At the prompt of Scotland's Ministry of Tourism, the process included extension of the superstructures and the creation of 55 first class passenger berths in each vessel. The passenger spaces were arranged on two decks. The Promenade Deck consisted of cabins and a forward lounge which overlooked the bow area and had twin verandas, each quite small, along each side. Below, on the Main Deck, there were more cabins, a dining room and a hairdresser's shop. All the cabins were outside, all were single or double and yet only two had private bathrooms. It was a different era with different demands and conditions. Captain Harvey Smith, who served aboard the LISMORIA before joining Cunard, recalled, "There were tartans everywhere. It was the first time I'd seen tartan rugs."



A typical twin-berth cabin aboard the 55-passenger LISMORIA.  
(Bill Miller Collection)

The former TAOS VICTORY came into service in October 1948 as the LISMORIA (although the name CABOTIA had originally been considered); the former MEDINA VICTORY followed the next May as the LAURENTIA. Between April and November, the pair worked in direct service between Glasgow and Montreal, taking 9-10 days in each direction. For the remainder of the year, they sailed a long-haul service between Britain and the North American West Coast (including Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Vancouver) via the Panama Canal. Not until 1955 was the winter schedule altered and replaced with a far shorter Atlantic schedule to Saint John, New Brunswick, and Halifax. Revenues came from both passengers and freight. Captain Smith added, "Aside from our first-class passenger business, we carried considerable cargo in five holds. Outwards to Canada, we took general cargo including whiskies and cars. Homebound, we carried wheat, timber, and apples."

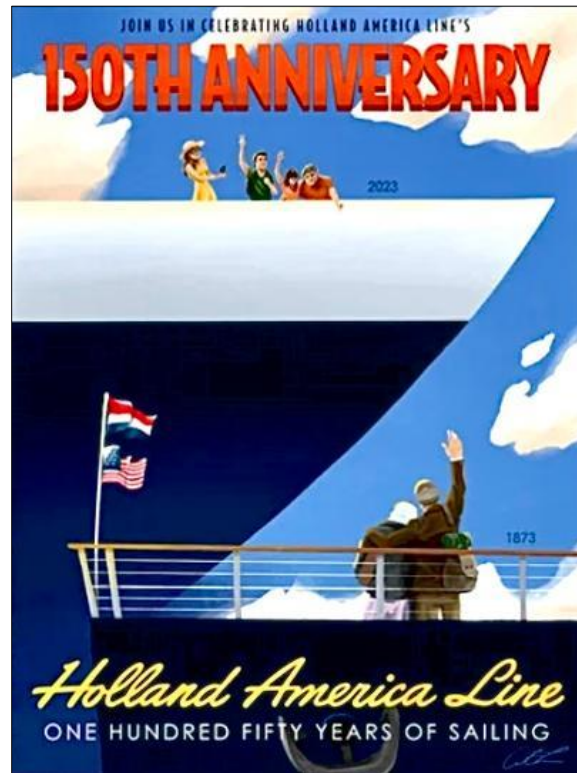
The pair was sturdy and dependable; two little-noticed "hard workers" in their line's operation. Then, as passenger numbers began to decline, the 55 berths were closed off during the winter voyages from 1961. At the end of 1966, Donaldson voted to discontinue its North Atlantic passenger-cargo run altogether. Both ships finished out the year's schedules and then went on the sales lists.

The LISMORIA was, after the charter to Cunard, purchased by Greek-flag Astorguarda Compania Navigacion, a small firm specializing in buying older ships just prior to their last voyages to the scrapheap. Such was certainly the case with the LISMORIA. She was renamed NEON, loaded with a cargo of scrap metal and sailed outward to Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Her demise came in May 1967. The LAURENTIA, like her sister, an elderly and hardly competitive freighter in the fast-approaching container age, also went to scrap. She was broken-up at Valencia, Spain, also in 1967. Shortly thereafter, the entire Donaldson Company went into liquidation.



## SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen



A Holland America anniversary poster sits on a West 50th Street rooftop facing the Passenger Ship Terminal; the HAL poster competition yielded a colorful winner.

(left: Bob Allen Collection, right: HAL-Austin Thomas Collection)

**HOLLAND AMERICA AT 150:** Holland America Line celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the maiden voyage of its first ship, ROTTERDAM I, on April 18, 1873. The festivities included a special transatlantic crossing on the current flagship, ROTTERDAM VII, which arrives in Rotterdam on April 18, 2023. HAL sponsored a design competition for an anniversary poster, which was won by Seattle resident Austin Thomas. The poster will be on display in the Rotterdam cruise terminal when the ROTTERDAM VII arrives. Another anniversary poster can be seen on a West 50th Street rooftop billboard opposite the New York Passenger Ship Terminal. Holland America is proud of its heritage as one of the few cruise lines that can trace its history back to the era of steamships as transportation from “point A to point B.” During the commemorative voyage on the ROTTERDAM VII, a fascinating display of historical Holland America Line artifacts are currently on view for passengers’ enjoyment.



A ROTTERDAM V model surrounded by HAL memorabilia, and a delft tile presented to passengers on ROTTERDAM V's final voyage are on display on board ROTTERDAM VII.

(Bob Allen)



**MSC IN MIA:** Rapidly growing MSC Cruises will continue its expansion in the US when the new 215,000-ton MSC WORLD AMERICA begins cruising from the Port of Miami in 2025. This second WORLD EUROPA Class vessel will incorporate changes to restaurants and bars, tailoring her appeal to a US-based passengers. For example, both a sports bar and a comedy club will debut on the WORLD AMERICA. In addition, a new area on Deck 20 called The Harbor will cater to families. It will feature an aqua park, a zip line, and food trucks for the inevitable snacking.



MSC WORLD AMERICA will be the second vessel of the WORLD EUROPA Class.

(MSC Cruises)



MSC vessels are known for interesting, modern interiors. Swarovski crystal treads are embedded on the atrium stairs on most of the fleet (top, left). The WORLD EUROPA Class features a multi-deck slide in the aft open-air atrium. (top, right) Lighting on MSC vessels is often unusual in design and quite varied. (bottom)

(MSC Cruises)

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