



SEPTEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING EXPLORING THE QUARANTINE ISLANDS

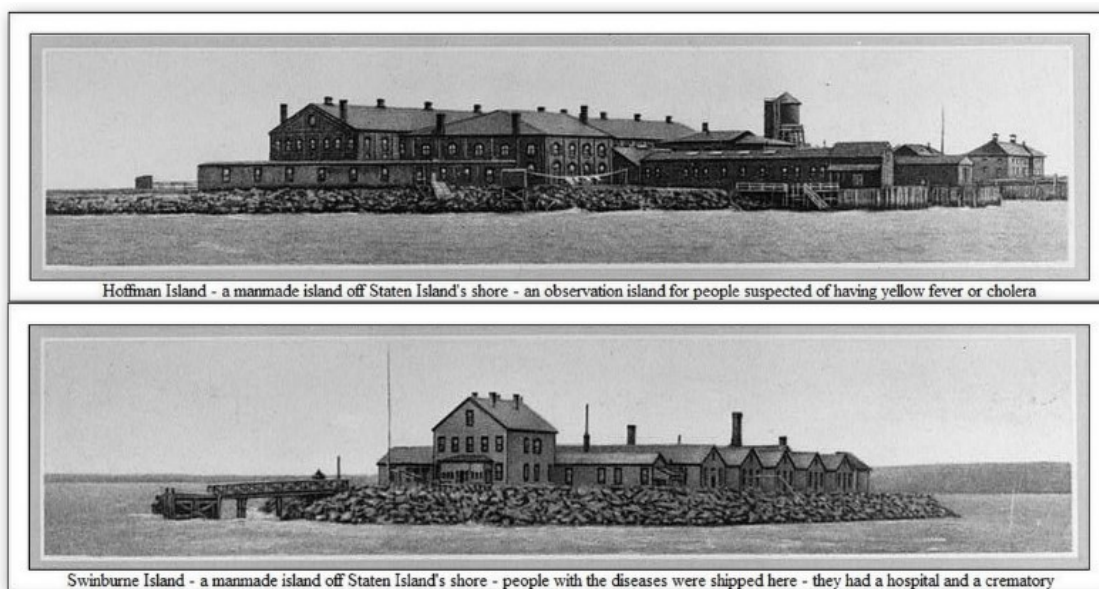
By author and noted historian Pat Salmon

Sunday, September 24, 2023, 10 AM - 11 AM (Doors open at 9:45 AM)
In-Person and Live Streamed via ZOOM from the National Lighthouse Museum

200 the Promenade at Lighthouse Point, Staten Island, NY

NOTE: The post-meeting 11 AM – 3 PM boat cruise to the Quarantine Islands is pending US Coast Guard inspection of the vessel. For this reason, the planned boat cruise with luncheon may need to be rescheduled or cancelled. Those who reserved spots for this cruise with luncheon will be contacted with updates.

After the famous burning of the Quarantine Hospital at Tompkinsville, Staten Island in September 1858, something had to be done to accommodate the thousands of arriving immigrants with contagious diseases. The historic Hoffman and Swinburne Islands played a key role in our immigration history for decades. They were the first and sometimes the only stop for immigrants entering the United States.



Hoffman Island - a manmade island off Staten Island's shore - an observation island for people suspected of having yellow fever or cholera

Swinburne Island - a manmade island off Staten Island's shore - people with the diseases were shipped here - they had a hospital and a crematory

Photos from www.nps.gov/places/quarantine-islands.htm

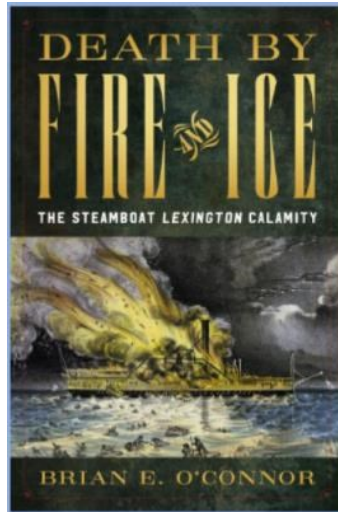
Join WSS PONY Branch members for a 10 AM -11 AM presentation at the National Lighthouse Museum by noted historian Pat Salmon on the Quarantine Islands of New York.

ADDITIONAL UPCOMING MEMBER EVENTS

NEW DATE: Saturday, September 23, 10 AM - 11 AM: **ENCORE** presentation via ZOOM
"When the East Went West" by WSS member and historian William Roka

UPCOMING OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING
“DEATH BY FIRE & ICE, THE STEAMBOAT LEXINGTON CLAMITY”
By Brian E. O'Connor, JD, Author

Friday, October 27, 6:30pm (Doors Open at 6 PM)
In-Person and Live Streamed Via ZOOM from the National Opera Center Rehearsal Hall
330 7th Avenue at 29th Street, 7th Floor, Manhattan



(Book Cover: Naval Institute Press)

Books signed by the author will be available for cash only purchase.

Death by Fire and Ice tells the little-known story of the sinking of the steamboat *Lexington* on Long Island Sound in January 1840. Built in 1835 by Cornelius Vanderbilt, the *Lexington* left Manhattan bound for Stonington, Connecticut, on a bitterly cold day carrying an estimated one hundred forty-seven passengers and crew and a cargo of, among other things, baled cotton. After making her way up an ice-encrusted East River into Long Island Sound, she caught fire on Long Island's north shore. With the crew unable to extinguish the fire, the blaze burned through the ship's wheel and tiller ropes, the engine died, and the ship floundered in the prevailing wind and current.

As the night wore on, the temperature plummeted well below zero. With no hope of rescue on the dark horizon, the forlorn passengers and crew faced a dreadful decision: remain onboard and perish in the searing flames or jump overboard and succumb within minutes to the Sound's icy waters. By early morning all but one passenger and three members of the crew perished. The tragedy remains the worst maritime disaster in the history of Long Island Sound.

Within days, the New York City Coroner convened an inquest to determine the cause of the disaster and after two weeks of testimony it concluded that if the crew had acted appropriately the fire could have been extinguished and a large portion, if not all, onboard could have been saved.

The public's reaction to the verdict was scathing. Calls for criminal charges and improved passenger safety legislation were made. The Congressional solution balanced the need to insulate the nation's shipping industry from ruinous liability for lost cargo, while at the same time greatly enhancing passenger safety on the nation's steamboats.

MEMBER NEWS



CANADIAN EMPRESS, Morrisburg, Ontario, Sept 30, 2023 (Pat Dacey Photo)

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Pat and Denise Dacey, CANADIAN EMPRESS

Upper River Expedition Cruise, Kingston, Ontario to Kingston, Ontario, August 2023

MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Marella Cruises' 1995-built MARELLA DISCOVERY (Formerly SPLENDOR OF THE SEAS) departing New York (Justin Zizes Photo)

CONGRATULATIONS!

WSS PONY recognizes our long-time member and former long-time editor of The Porthole, Marjorie Dovman, on her recent anniversary celebrating 75 years of membership with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of New York. We wish Marge a happy anniversary and many more years of happy membership!

SHIP'S LOG: JULY 2023 MEMBERSHIP MEETING
A REVIEW OF WILLIAM ROKA'S "WHEN THE EAST WENT WEST"
by Pat Dacey

On Friday, July 28th, WSS PONY Branch welcomed historian William Roka to the National Opera Center for an in-person and live streamed presentation, "When the East Went West". We were fortunate to have William once again present to us. At our January 2018 meeting, William led us on a journey of millionaires aboard the great liners between 1900-1914, an extraordinary period in the history of travel, with his presentation, "Sailing in Two Directions in the Age of the TITANIC." In William's current presentation, his focus moved from the millionaires to the migrants by documenting the momentum of immigration to the United States as it shifted from Western and Northern Europe to Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century. William also shared how the new business environment of moving so many immigrants evolved.



(William Roka Collection)

Setting the stage about the years prior to the "Great War," William introduced an excerpt from an 1868 issue of Putnam's Monthly which described this time as the "Nomadic Period" in which over one-half of the world's inhabitants were on the move due to an increase in railway and steamship travel. In fact, between 1840 and 1940 over 60 million Europeans, predominately from Western Europe immigrated to North and South America with the United States as the primary destination. Then, a change occurred, starting in the 1880's through 1930, there was a significant immigration shift with over 90% (18 million) of those now immigrating coming from Russia, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian empire. With one ticket and no passport needed for travel, William began to explore how the "great transatlantic corporate juggernauts, Cunard, and Hamburg America Line, pursued various transit models to stretch their tendrils into Eastern Europe."



Cunarder LACONIA at Fiume

(William Roka Collection)

In his presentation, William focused on one region, the Austro-Hungarian Empire which was responsible for 25% of all immigration between 1890 and 1914. He educated the assembled audience on the history of the empire including the many immigration policies of the time and some of the ships and company rivalries plying the waters between East and West. A further explanation of the various early Atlantic [steamship] Conferences that were established in the late 1890's to regulate competition provided an overview of the business relationships between the British and Continental shipping lines that were then involved in immigration.



PANNONIA of Cunard Line (left)



(William Roka Collection)

By the early 1900's, a "Rate of War" was conceived by J.P. Morgan in an effort to control the shipping lines and the routes that were being used in the immigrant trade resulting in Cunard Line leaving the conference and striking a deal with Hungary to be its sole immigrant carrier with eleven dedicated ships. Significant among those Cunard ships was the CARPATHIA, which was on a regularly scheduled immigrant voyage on the Cunard-Hungarian route, when she was called into action to rescue the survivors of the TITANIC on April 15, 1912. An interesting note shared by William was that of the 240-crew on-board CARPATHIA at that time, over one-quarter were Croatian who were multi-lingual and assigned to all departments because of their ability to communicate with the immigrants.

After many insights into the Hungarian immigrant trade, William further discussed the second half of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the immigrant trade from Austria. With the conglomerate formed by Albert Ballin, Hamburg-America Line became the single largest shipping line on earth and the primary immigrant line for Austria. In addition, William discussed some lesser-known shipping lines such as the Austro-Americana S.S. Company which was a key player in the immigrant trade from Austria, at one point responsible for carrying over 50% of migrants from Austria.



KAISER FRANZ JOSEF I of the Austro-Americana S.S. Company
(William Roka Collection)

With the end of World War One, the Austro-Hungarian Empire would be broken up into multiple successor states and the mass immigration from Europe would soon come to an end. In 1924, the United States passed its' most stringent immigration laws which instituted a 2% immigration rate based upon the 1890 census as a quota system for immigrating from Europe, thus ending mass transatlantic immigration from Europe and many of the shipping lines that supported the trade.

An excellent question-and-answer session followed with additional discussion on the immigration process and the historical significance that it played on the evolution of passenger shipping. The WSS PONY Branch thanks William for his insightful presentation and looks forward to his next program.

Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in The Porthole: member photos, member arrival and departure details, and articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to wsspony@gmail.com. Please note published materials are subject to editing and are not necessarily the opinion of the PONY branch.

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THANK YOU, GUEST EDITOR!

Special thanks to WSS PONY Branch Chairperson Denise Dacey for guest editing the September 2023 issue of The Porthole. – Bob Allen

SHIPS IN PORT: CROSSINGS ON THE ITALIAN LINE

by Bill Miller

The late Lewis & Ruth Gordon sailed to Europe every summer for over thirty years. They loved ocean travel, the onboard lifestyle and preferred the mid-Atlantic route to the sunny Mediterranean. Almost always, they booked on the Italian Line. Their first Italian Line crossing was onboard the veteran VULCANIA, which dated from 1928 and still, after World War II, retained its pre-war, richly ornate, and heavily wooded décor.

The Italian Line began adding new liners, each of them fast, more comfortable, and notably modern, in the 1950s. There were the sisters AUGUSTUS and GIULIO CESARE (1951-52), then the ANDREA DORIA and CRISTOFORO COLOMBO (1953-54), and then LEONARDO DA VINCI (1960). “We came home on the AUGUSTUS and also on the GIULIO CESARE,” added Mr. Gordon. “They were very modern ships, very different from the old VULCANIA. Typically, there were lots of families with children on those late August sailings [both Mr. & Mrs. Gordon were teachers in the New York City public school system] from Naples, Genoa, Cannes, and Gibraltar to New York. There was great competition with the American Export Lines and their twin sister ships, the INDEPENDENCE and CONSTITUTION. These American ships were very modern, with all sorts of novel features, and were very American in style and ambiance. Always to us, the Italian Line had superior food and very gracious, very charming waiters. The Italians were also very generous with their portions – and even suggested filet mignon for breakfast!”



The handsome CRISTOFORO COLOMBO seen at Genoa
with the French BRETAGNE and the GIULIO CESARE on the right. *(Bill Miller Collection)*

Lewis Gordon and his wife also sailed from New York to Casablanca on the ANDREA DORIA and later crossed on her sister, the CRISTOFORO COLOMBO. “I recall the DORIA, then almost brand new, as being a very beautiful ship. Altogether, there were four or five outdoor swimming pools. One or two were purposely shallow and just for children. The décor was the most modern yet on the Italian Line. Onboard life was simpler then – movies, horse-racing, a masquerade party, and a dance couple. On the COLOMBO, we stopped at Boston on the day after sailing from New York and we were able to have my son come aboard for lunch. He was then at M. I. T. as a student and so this was an added bonus. I also recall the local boys in small boats that surrounded us at anchor off Gibraltar. They swam, dove, and did tricks for coins. They also displayed handicrafts from their open boats. From on deck, the passengers would send money wrapped in paper, which was placed in wicker baskets that were lifted and lowered with string. The purchases were then hoisted aboard.”

In 1965, the Italian Line added its biggest and grandest liners yet, the 45,000-ton, 1,775-passenger sisterships MICHELANGELO and RAFFAELLO to its mid-Atlantic service. However, they proved to be too

late, great money-losers. In fact, in the face of increasing airline competition they were decommissioned within ten years. Italian

Line itself withdrew altogether from Atlantic liner service a year later, in 1976. "The MICHELANGELO and RAFFAELLO were big, but too fast. We never liked them as much," concluded Lewis Gordon. "Their crossings were fast, almost hurried, and so we had even less time to enjoy the food, service and the pure style of the great Italian Line."



A busy day!

The 700-ft long CRISTOFORO COLOMBO at the bottom, at Pier 84, in this view from Sep 1957.

The QUEEN MARY, UNITED STATES, AMERICA, and INDEPENDENCE are above.

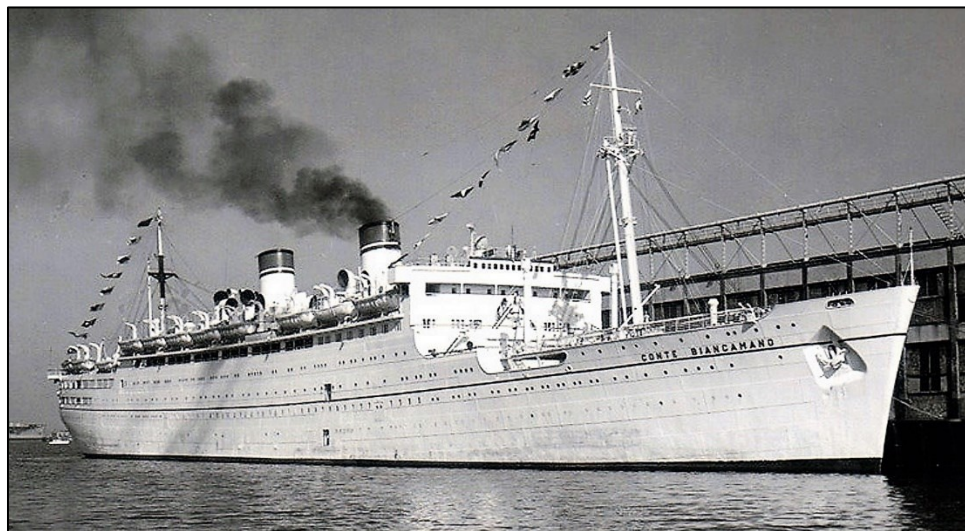
(Port Authority of New York & New Jersey Photo)



Normally on the Italy-South America run, the AUGUSTUS and its sister GIULIO CESARE were temporarily swung onto the New York route beginning in 1956. *(Bill Miller Collection)*



By the early 1970s, the Italian Line turned more and more to cruises. *(Bill Miller Collection)*



The pre-war CONTE BIANCAMANO also assisted during the peak summer season. *(Bill Miller Collection)*



When introduced in June 1960, the LEONARDO DA VINCI immediately became the sensation on the mid-Atlantic liner run. Seen on the right, the Union-Castle liner RHODESIA CASTLE is on the left. *(Paolo Piccione Collection)*



Larger and more luxurious, the sisters MICHELANGELO and RAFFAELLO were introduced in 1965. The 45,900-ton RAFFAELLO is seen departing from Pier 90.
(Bill Miller Collection)



Distinctive design: A comparative of the funnels on the LEONARDO DA VINCI and MICHELANGELO. (Bill Miller Collection)



Seen together with the stately QUEEN MARY, the MICHELANGELO & RAFFAELLO were prematurely retired in 1975 and Italian Line service ended a year later.
(Port Authority of New York & New Jersey Photo)

SHIP NEWS

By Bob Allen

A SUMMER OF NEWBUILDS: Summer 2023 saw the introduction of three new vessels for the luxury cruise market, for operators Oceania, Explora and Silversea. Oceania's new ship is a revised version of the MARINA Class of 2011, while the latter two are entirely new platforms. At 67,817-tons, the OCEANIA VISTA is first of the new ALLURA-Class, slightly bigger than the MARINA. She carries 1,200 passengers, down from 1,250 on the earlier vessel. It's quite rare for an updated ship to have a greater space ratio, but this is the case here. Oceania has added expanded spa facilities and more suites to VISTA, which accounts for the increased spaciousness. Otherwise, the facilities, including a wide range of specialty restaurants, mostly parallel those on MARINA. VISTA's ambiance is also similar to MARINA, yet her interior designs and funnel are distinctive and clearly separate the vessels. Most striking is the change in the main dining room, which on MARINA Class features a wide-open room with a massive circular central chandelier. The same venue on VISTA is broken up by large glass-filled arches, creating a central gallery and intimate alcoves along the room's perimeter. Lighting, furniture, artwork, and color schemes throughout VISTA avoid repetition of the MARINA Class and create a unique look and feel for the new vessel. OCEANIA ALLURA will follow VISTA in 2025.



OCEANIA VISTA's exterior is distinguished from her MARINA-Class fleet mates by the angled, ribbed funnel enclosure and the expanded glass of the health spa above the bridge. The arches and glass dividers in the dining room (below left) and the Scandinavian-inspired furnishings of the observation lounge (below, right) are also quite different from the aesthetics of the MARINA-C. (Oceania Cruises)

MSC Cruises, the rapidly growing, family-owned Italian cruise line, introduced Explora Journeys over the summer. Marketed as an upscale product under the MSC umbrella, the first vessel of the fleet is the unimaginatively named, 64,000-ton EXPLORA I. With her navy-blue hull, sharply raked bow and winged funnel, the 922-passenger ship has a rakish appearance compared to her competitors. MSC's "Yacht Club" has offered the "ship-within-a-ship" concept for several years, so Explora Journeys seems a logical extension to the deluxe market. Although similarly sized to ALLURA, she has a much lower passenger count and is therefore well positioned to compete in the luxury market. From the images released to date, EXPLORA I has the look and feel of MSC Yacht Club, but with the advantage of expanding the ultra-modern Italian aesthetic throughout the vessel. Like ALLURA, her layout is traditional, but with a few twists. There is no show lounge or main restaurant. The largest lounge is relatively intimate, with a single deck height and a capacity of 210. It is configured for cabaret-style performances and multiple activities, with clustered rather than theatre seating. A large bar dominates the port side of the room. A selection of smaller dining venues replaces the main restaurant. A bonus is the aft pool, located just three decks above the waterline, enabling passengers to sunbathe and swim in close proximity to the ocean. Most cruise ships of this size have pools and open decks at much higher levels. Two decks below the pool at water's edge is sunbathing platform, a pleasant surprise on a vessel of this size. Five additional EXPLORA-Class vessels (EXPLORA II-IV) are planned through 2027.



EXPLORA I's profile is a refreshing change from the box-like cruise ships that have proliferated during the past few decades (above). Her aft pool and water level sunbathing platforms are close to sea level and contribute to the terraced configuration of the aft decks (below). (Explora Journeys)





With the exception of the cherry blossom-draped Japanese eatery, EXPLORA I's interiors recall the great mid-20th Century ocean liners of the Italian Line. Geometric light fixtures, bulkhead paneling and deck head designs as well as the furniture are reminiscent of their style. Fittingly, on the restaurant buffet in the lower left photo is a model of Italia's AUSUSTUS or sister-ship GIULIO CESARE of 1951. (Explora Journeys)

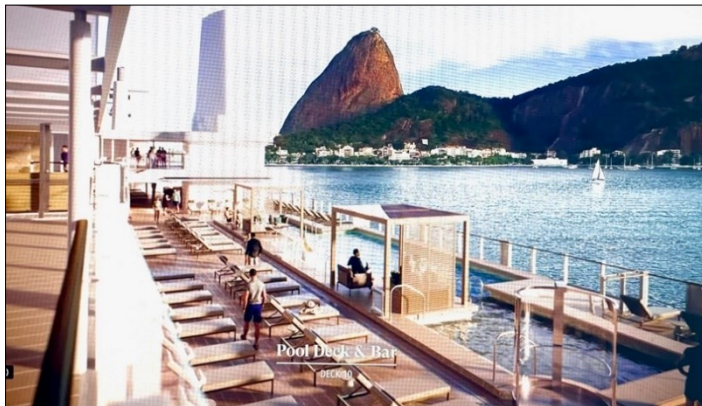


EXPLORA I's largest lounge features a prominent bar and seating groups for cabaret viewing, conversation and assorted activities, rather than typical cruise ship stage shows. (Explora Journeys)

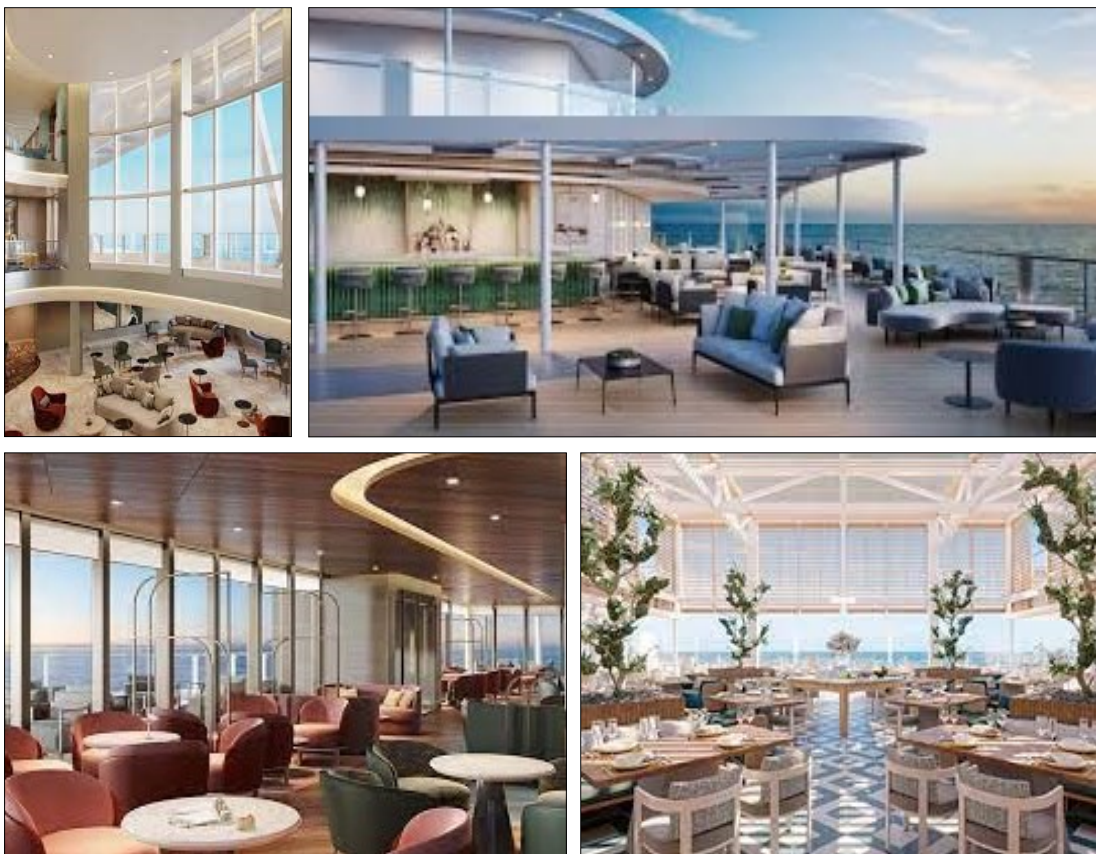
Silversea Cruises, now a division of Royal Caribbean Group, took delivery of a unique new ship in July. The 54,700-ton SILVER NOVA a first glance seems to be a typical upmarket cruise ship. Her designers took a very different approach, however, in developing an asymmetric plan for the 728-passenger vessel. Several major venues, including the Shelter Atrium Bar, Venetian Lounge, Marquee Café and the three largest restaurants have been shifted away from the centerline of the hull to be closer to full-height glass bulkheads. The ship's two elevator banks have been placed on the exterior of the vessel as well, and feature glass doors and elevator shaft walls. This allows passengers a view of the sea or port while waiting for the elevators, instead of looking at solid doors. Most unusual is the placement of the main pool along the starboard side of the ship, with no deck or terrace above the area. This permits unobstructed views from within the pool and the surrounding sunbathing deck. The naval architects needed to counteract the enormous weight of a filled swimming pool by shifting the funnel to the port side. SILVER NOVA will be followed by sister ship SILVER RAY in 2024.



SILVER NOVA's funnel and amidships ventilation tower are not on the ship's centerline but are offset for structural and layout reasons. A glass enclosed elevator is visible adjacent to the funnel. (Silversea Cruises)



The large pool on SILVER NOVA is set along the ship's starboard side, opening up ocean and harbor vistas, but required structural compensation. (Silversea Cruises)



As with the pool, most SILVER NOVA interior and exterior public spaces are biased to one side of the vessel or the other, enhancing passengers' views of the ocean and ports-of-call. Clockwise from top left: the Shelter at the base of the Atrium; the Dusk Bar; The Marquee (a trellis-covered upper deck café) and the Panorama Lounge. (Silversea Cruises)

WORLD SHIP SOCIETY

Regular meetings with speakers on maritime topics, local outings, group cruises, friends, and more. Join us!



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