



Welcome to Rott's Manor

Pete & Mary Clukey

Cruise 2000 Trip Report

www.celebrity-cruises.com

Our itinerary was called "The Ultimate Caribbean", our Ship, the Horizon.

Day 1 – We wake up before the sun to get our flight to Ft. Lauderdale. We arrive in Florida with time to spare. Our taxi delivers us to the dock (with a quick stop at a convenience store for diet coke, it's very expensive on board). As we stand in line to get aboard, we look around and realize that we are among the youngest in line. This is a good thing (no obnoxious unsupervised children running up and down the hallways) or is it... we choose to dine with two other couples and now we were beginning to wonder what we will have in common with our table mates.

Once on board, we are pleased at the size of our stateroom, having cruised twice before, we were anticipating the usually tiny closet sized room but this room actually wasn't bad. After exploring our stateroom, it was time to find the buffet (there is always a buffet on the ship somewhere!). Of course we take our time getting to the buffet by making sure we investigate the other decks, staterooms, and suites. After getting our fill of the "Welcome-Aboard Buffet", our next order of business is to select the shore excursion that we want (it is best to do this early, as the excursions have limited availability and the more popular ones fill up quickly). Of course, we go up on deck for all of the festivities that go along with departing the pier (and the real world; work; laundry; cooking; etc.). With all of that done, we turn our attention to unpacking and preparing for dinner. There is this weird thing that occurs on cruises, you become hungry every few hours (and fortunately food is plentiful).

Dress for dinner is casual, but of course, we meet our dinner companions tonight, so we dress a bit more spiffier than usual. What a relief, our dinner companions are wonderful. We won't have to slip the maitre'd any cash to find

us a different table. At dinner we all notice that the seas are a bit rough, in hind sight I wish I had taken Dramamine immediately...

After dinner, we attend the nightly show. Tonight, we are entertained by Mario D'Andrea. He is a very talented singer/guitarist/comedian. He starts his show by explaining his unique accent. He was born in Italy and then move to Australia... so you see he is an Australian Italian. Just imagine Crocodile Dundee with an Italian accent... makes you just smile thinking about it.

Day 2 – The first full day at sea, we wake up well rested. We have an inside stateroom that does not allow the sun to disturb the sleep of weary travelers. Soon we realize it is close to 10:00 am. And shortly after that Mary realizes the seas are still rough and she turns green. She reaches for her Dramamine and the water, but unfortunately it should have been taken earlier. Pete goes up to sit and read on the pool deck while Mary waits for the Dramamine to take effect. Pete enjoys the lunch buffet... Mary sleeps. Finally, Mary struggles up the stairs to a lounge chair next to Pete and waits for her stomach to settle again. The cruise staff has games going on at the pool that brings a smile and a laugh even from Mary. Around 4:00 p.m., Mary realizes she's beginning to get hungry. Pete finds the "Afternoon Tea" buffet and gets some light sandwiches for her (isn't he sweet)... she nibbles but still doesn't trust her stomach. Mary reads the "Daily", the onboard news letter that details the daily activities, so much to do and no will to do them... oh well, tomorrow is another day!

But first, dress for dinner tonight is formal! Mary, after a day at the pool with very little food and an adequate dosage of Dramamine, is famished. But one look at her wind blown hair style she realizes that there is no way she can get herself together for a formal occasion and talks to Pete about ordering room service... Pete is now feeling the effects of the rough seas and does not eat anything other than Dramamine. We skip the show and the midnight buffet.

Day 3 – Pete's birthday and the second day at sea (rough seas at that). We both begin the day with a dose of Dramamine. We finally have our sea legs, and go right to the breakfast buffet. We enjoyed the pool games much more today. Mary falls victim to the cruise curse of always being hungry... so we go to the lunch buffet and a few hours later the afternoon tea buffet and we discover the pizzeria. All day we do nothing but read our books by the pool, and we loved it! We had good intentions of attending some of the classes

offered such as ballroom dancing and the ever popular napkin folding but some how doing nothing seemed like the perfect thing to do.

Dress for dinner is informal. But first we watch the sun set. At dinner our tablemates said that the dining room was not so full last night (we were not the only "green ones" on board). Dinner is well prepared, presented, and quite delicious. We order a bottle of champagne for the table to celebrate Pete's birthday. For desert, our waiter brings a birthday cake (with lighted candles) and all of the dining room staff sing happy birthday, remarkably this will not be the only celebration this cruise. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme oriental. To keep us entertained, Naki Ataman, a very talented pianist, performed tonight. Exhausted by our strenuous day at the pool and knowing that we have to get up early tomorrow (we will be arriving in St. Maarten at 9:30 a.m.), we go to sleep early. Missing yet again another midnight buffet.

Day 4 – St. Maarten

We will be racing in a regatta on an "America's cup racing yacht" this afternoon. But first, shopping! We walked up and down Front Street looking for the irresistible bargain, but found none. So onto the race, after a quick stop at Burger King for lunch. The large group was divided into two teams. Then we were told that this is no pleasure cruise, as each one of use was given a work title... that's right we actually paid to go to work on this boat. The two boats were from the 1987 race. Our boat was "True North 4" and we won! Shortly after finishing the race, we boarded our ship and departed for the island of St. Lucia. We watch us leave port and the sun set.

Dress for dinner is casual. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme fisherman. To keep us entertained the show this evening is two comedy acts. We both love a good laugh, so we go to the show. The first on stage is "Charlie Frye & Co." a cleverly entertaining juggler, we laugh a lot... the second on stage a comedian who's jokes were not targeted for our age group. So we go to bed, skipping the midnight buffet.

Day 5 – St. Lucia

The isle that Mary has been waiting to see. We have a shore excursion that lasts all day. After getting our fill at the breakfast buffet, we find our way to our departure point for our shore excursion. It starts with a nice sail on a

catamaran to a quiet cove for a swim. On the way the staff offers drinks and dancing. We settle back in our chairs, pull out the binoculars, cameras, and enjoy the scenery that we came so far to see. Others on board enjoy the rum punch (something that they will regret later)! The second part of the tour includes a stop at a local restaurant for lunch, a visit to the sulfur springs, Diamond Botanical Gardens and Mineral Baths. Then a scenic tour by air-conditioned bus back to our ship. This bus tour was across very windy roads that went up and down hills... Mary was glad she did not partake in the rum punch (she was feeling queasy enough without being under the influence of alcohol).

We boarded our ship and departed for Barbados. We watch us leave port and the sun set.

Dress for dinner is formal. We dress for dinner and go pose for some portraits. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme something special and different. Tonight's show Vegas-Broadway type show... we are exhausted by our long day. So we go to bed, skipping the midnight buffet.

Day 6 – Barbados

Today we will visit Harrison's Cave and a flower forest, but first, the breakfast buffet and a little bit of shopping at the port stores. Since Barbados is known for it's rum, we sample the local rum cakes but find none that come close to the one's that we really liked in Grand Cayman a few years ago. The cave was a neat stop but the real gem here was the flower forest... it would have been nicer to have more time there.

We boarded our ship and departed for Antigua. We watch us leave port and the sun set.

Dress for dinner is casual. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's Fruits and ice carvings by the pool. Tonight's show was early (before dinner). Still the best entertainment yet! Mario D'Andrea, the Australian Italian, entertained us with his amazing guitar skills. We stay up to view the carved fruit and ice... it is amazing to see sculptures from fruit and ice being created.

Day 7 – Antigua

Today we will go on a jeep safari, but first the breakfast buffet. On our jeep tour we visit Fort George, where we have a spectacular view of Falmouth and English Harbour. After visiting Fort George, we stop by a "fruit stand" for refreshments and bathroom break... we had the sweetest pineapple we've ever tasted! The last stop before returning us to our dock was a swim break at a beach in front of OJ's Bar. From this beach we have a nice view of the distant, still smoking, volcanic mountain, Mount Soufriere, on Montserrat.

Dress for dinner is informal. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme pasta and pizza. Tonight's show another Vegas-Broadway type show named Jump, Jive and Rock & Roll. We thought the show was OK but nothing spectacular. Still full from dinner, we skip the midnight buffet.

Day 8 – St. Thomas

(our last island, boo hoo). SHOPPING and snorkeling!!! Today we spent the morning shopping (lots of shops in St. Thomas). The cruise director, Rob, said that St. Thomas can cause credit card melt down... we resist many temptations. The morning is over quickly and we return to the ship to catch a quick bite at the buffet before our afternoon of snorkeling at Buck Island. We board the 33ft sailboat with Captain Dennis at the helm... he's ex-military and the way he runs the ship, it shows. Everything is done with efficiency and safety in mind. On the way out, non-alcoholic beverages are served, as we are briefed on snorkeling safely. We get into the water and almost immediately spot a stingray. Soon we see other fish, then Pete dives and discovers worms sticking out of the sand which as soon as he comes close the retreat back into the sandy bottom. All too soon, it is time to board the sailboat to return. Once back on board we soon hear the shouts of the few last people still in the water, they are watching a sea turtle. We literally missed spotting it by just minutes... well, there is always next year. After the excitement of the sea turtle settles, Pete quizzes Captain Dennis about the worms. Captain Dennis says that they are actually a species of eel. On the return the first mate kept the drink glasses filled (with rum n Coke)... Pete and I enjoyed the first real cold Diet Coke we've had the whole trip. On the ship they do not store the soda's in a refrigerator, they serve the warm can with a cup of ice... the result a very watered down soda. We enjoyed our trip so much that we asked Captain Dennis how we can find him the next time we're in St. Thomas. He

tells us that Underwater Safari, a dive shop in the town of Charlotte Amalie will know where to find him... we hope to return soon.

We boarded our ship and departed. We watch us leave port and the sun set. Dress for dinner is casual. The ship changed the order of events... usually dinner first then the show, but tonight the show is first. Again, we enjoy Charlie Frye & Co., however the highlight of this evening's entertainment is Paul Boland, "the man with 1,000 voices". Paul really works the crowd. He won us over with his impression of Kermit the Frog. Paul is very talented, if you ever get the chance to see him, do so. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme Tex-Mex. Yet again, we skip the midnight buffet.

Day 9 – at sea. Taking no chances Mary wakes and reaches for the Dramamine. However, today's seas are much calmer. We eat at the breakfast buffet, the lunch buffet, and then the afternoon tea buffet. The nice thing about cruising is the entertainment and endless activities to do, if you choose. We could have learned how to make Caribbean cocktails, had golf lessons, watch a movie, won (or lost) money in the casino, attended an art auction, played bridge, or relaxed with a massage at the spa... we choose to relax by the pool. Today's pool game (and our entertainment) is something called "pillow pole pool party"... close your eyes and picture a slippery wet PVC pipe straddling the pool on which two opponents sit facing each other with one hand behind their backs and a pillow case filled with balloons in the other hand. The object of course is to knock your opponent of the pole... the women can really become quite competitive.

Dress for dinner is formal. We dress for dinner and go pose for some portraits. Dinner last from 8:30 'til 10:00... only two more hours until the midnight buffet, tonight's theme Le Grand Magnifique. We have been told that this is a can't miss buffet. As a matter of fact, the buffet is open for a photo session for 15 minutes before anyone is allowed to sample any of the delights... we make plans to stay awake just to see it. Tonight's show another Vegas-Broadway type show named Broadway Classics. Though we weren't extremely interested we stayed to watch it. We thought the show was OK but staying up for the midnight buffet was worth it. We weren't hungry again but it certainly was a feast for our eyes... you'll just have to see the pictures.

Day 10 – at sea (our last day of vacation). We eat at the breakfast buffet, the lunch buffet, and then the afternoon tea buffet. We pack, relax by the pool, and watch our last sunset on this vacation.

Dress for dinner is casual. Before dinner, all bags (except our overnight bag) have to be out to be picked up by our cabin stewards... they place them in a special area where US customs will inspect and detect them before we get them back tomorrow. Tonight's entertainment features Paul Boland, the man with 1,000 voices. We enjoyed his last performance so we decide not to miss this one. Unfortunately, the other comedian is the opening act. We skip the midnight buffet... tomorrow starts early (breakfast is served at 7:30am).

Day 11 – Ft. Lauderdale. They kick us off the ship... the end of our vacation.