

Mediterranean Cruise

On April 7th, 2018 Marilyn and myself along with our eldest daughter and her husband Rick left for a 20 day Mediterranean Cruise.

We flew out of Vancouver on April 7th, 2018 and stayed in Rome, Italy for a few days sightseeing prior to boarding the ship – Holland America Line – “ Koningsdam “ on April 11th departing from the port of Civitavecchia, Rome. This was the first of their largest and newest ships for the Pinnacle Class, two more are to be launched in the near future.

April 12th – At sea – we were able to view the amenities on the ship.

April 13th – Cartagena, Spain – “ Highlights on Foot “ – Originally settled in 223 BC. The city has flourished under Roman, Muslim and Arab rule, and today offers a vast cultural legacy. Visited Concepcion Castle where we could view the city and harbor to the 18th century seawall. Then visited the archeological site of Muralla Punica – the remains of the old wall that protected the city during the period of Carthaginian occupation.

April 14th – Gibraltar, British Territory – “ A Stroll on the Upper Rock and Cable Car “ – By cable car on a panoramic ride to the top of the mountain. Viewed the huge catchment area and Catalan Bay and walked to St Michael’s Cave. En route were surrounded by the Barbary Apes. (Watch your valuables as they are very adept pick pockets). Visited Princess Caroline’s Battery and the entrance to the upper galleries, a labyrinth of tunnels inside the rock includes the Great Siege Tunnels, excavated in 1779/1783, the most impressive defensive system ever devised by man. The walk down was easy, coming back was a little more difficult.

April 15th - Cadiz (Seville), Spain – “ White Villages & Countryside “ –Drove through Cadiz and stopped in the beautiful village of Vejer de la Frontera with time to explore the hilly cobblestone streets, hidden patios and typical houses. Returned to the ship via the Atlantic route passing La Brena Nature Park, Cape Trafalger Lighthouse and Conil de la Frontera a village between forests of Pine Groves and the sea. A typical Andalusian town where Arabian influence is evident in the narrow streets and low white houses.

April 16th - At sea

April 17th – Barcelona, Spain – “ Easy Barcelona “ – A panoramic drive past the Columbus Monument to the bottom of the famous promenades of La Rambla and via Laitana, passing Passeig de Gracia, the best known boulevard in town, towards Le Sagrada Familia Cathedral a stunning and truly enormous modernistic-style church – Gaudi’s most unusual construction.

April 18th – Marseille (Provence), France – “ Aix-En-Provence Highlights “ – Left the harbor of Marseille, drove to Aix-En-Provence passing scenery of southern France. A walking tour along the Cours Mirabeau a wide avenue shaded by trees and was built in the 1600’s on the site of the city’s medieval ramparts. Viewed a fountain dating back to 1743, noteworthy for producing 93 degrees F water which the Romans believed had healing properties.

April 19th – Monte Carlo, Monaco – “ Panoramic Riviera “ – Leaving the port we drove past the Formula One pole position (The bleachers were being set up for the Grand Prix race to be held the next week). Drove through the famous tunnel of the Hotel Fairmont, climbed uphill to the middle Corniche Road enjoying the views and the Principality of Monaco. Next stop was Nice – capital of the French Riviera, returning to the port via the lower Corniche. Note: Monaco does not have an airport.

April 20th – Livorno (Florence/Pisa), Italy – “ Tuscon Countryside & Wine Tasting “ – Drove through the Tuscon Countryside to MonteCarlo di Lucca and to a wine cellar – enjoyed tasting the wine with some local delicacies before returning to the ship. (Purchased a few bottles to savour in our state rooms once back onboard).

April 21st - Civitavecchia, Rome – stayed on the ship while in port.

April 22nd – At sea.

April 23rd – Dubrovnik, Croatia – “ Dubrovnik Cable Car Ride and Stroll Through the Old Town “ – Drove to the lower car station to board the newly restored Dubrovnik Cable Car – Rode to the top of SROJ Hill to enjoy the magnificent view of the City of Dubrovnik at the foot of the hill. Once back down we toured the Old Town of Dubrovnik starting at the Pile Gate Entrance. Spent several hours going up and down the narrow streets viewing the merchandise offered from the numerous shops. We returned by bus to the ship. (Definitely a city that we would like to return to).

April 24th – Kotor, Montenegro – “ Montenegro Highlights “ – Went by bus en route to Njegusi, then to Cetinje, the former Montenegrin Capital where the Montenegrin Bishops ruled the small country. We visited the National Museum – once the palace of King Petrovic I. On our way back down the switchback road (25 switchbacks), we met an entourage of people heading up to the village. As the road was only wide enough for one vehicle, someone had to back up to very few wide spots. We met 10 vehicles coming up and they were not prepared to do so. Our bus driver finally backed to the nearest wide turn and had to jockey back and forth while the cars passed one at a time. A very interesting tour and the scenery was spectacular.

April 25th – Kerkira, Nisos Kerkira (Corfu), Greece – “ The Best of Corfu “ – A wonderful blend of natural beauty, traditional villages and archaeological sites. We rode by coach passing Olive, Lemon, Orange and Cypress Groves, and an old fortress en route to the Paleokastritsa area. We then visited Achillion Palace designed and built for Empress Elizabeth of Austria. The Monastery of the Virgin Mary and then on to the Corfu’s Old Town prior to returning to our ship.

April 26th - Katakolon (Olympia), Greece – “ Ancient Olympia & the Village “ – Ancient Olympia is a Unesco World Heritage Site, the ruins of the temple of Zeus is one of the Seven Wonders. Olympia Village has the appearance of a park and as you step back 2000 years into the past you can imagine that they are crowded with athletes, orators, merchants, and philosophers surrounding the temple of Zeus with its forty foot statue of the God in the ruins of which you see today. We then stopped at Mercouri Estate, known for not only its wine of supreme quality but

also for its magnificent location. We were able to taste the locally produced wines and purchase some bottles again to return to the ship for further sampling in our state rooms.

April 27th – Piraeus (Athens), Greece – “ Ancient Agora, Plaka and Greek Mezedes “ – The ancient Agora, or market place in Athens was once a mix of private housing and public spaces, until it was thoroughly organized by Peisistratus in the 6th Century BC. The historical Athens – Old Town known as the Plaka, its labyrinthine streets are full of endless fascination. Stepping inside a local restaurant gives you a chance to sample Greek Mezedes (appetizers) and the licorice – flavoured ouzo liqueur.

April 28th – Thira (Santorini), Greece – “ Hidden Villages of Santorini “ – Just 15 minutes from Athinios lies Megalochori, the largest village on the Santorini Plain, known as the village of intellectuals, characterized by hundreds of small white houses, as well as vineyards and beautiful churches. The next stop was to the volcanic beach of Perissa, an endless stretch of intriguing black sand. This is the most popular beach on the island. We had an opportunity to swim and enjoy this famous beach.

April 29th – At Sea

April 30th – Naples (Pompeii), Italy – “ Insiders Pompeii & Naples Archeological Museum “ – Pompeii – the worlds finest example of an ancient Roman town. A walking tour, led by a professional historian guide. Admire the luxurious mansions and fabulous art of wealthy patricians who came to escape the turmoil in Rome, their houses were designed around an inner garden with few windows on the exteriors, so residents could forget the outside world and enjoy the sunlight from their own courtyard. The tour then went to the Archeological Museum of Naples, one of the most important museums in the world with its priceless collections of sculptures, bronzes, ceramics, paintings, mosaics, old jewellery and other works of art representing this ancient civilization. This would be our last tour for this voyage.

May 1st - Civitavecchia (Rome), Italy – This was our final stop on the 20 day Collector's Voyage. We arrived in port at 7:00am, were off the ship by 8:45am and on a bus heading for Rome's Fiumicino Airport. Our flight left Rome at 1:30pm bound for Toronto, Ontario arriving at 4:40pm. We left Toronto at 8:15pm and arrived in Vancouver at 10:08pm (All in the same day).

This was a very enjoyable trip and it's lucky we have cameras to record items viewed as we certainly could not remember everything seen.

Bill and Marilyn Rose / Rick and Mary-Anne Teubner