

Travel Outlook

Demand is high for cruises on "mega-ships"



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The-Herald News Service

Before long, we'll be awash in predictions about the shape of the 1990s.

Here's one sure bet: It will be a decade in which travellers will see bigger ships than ever before.

It's a sure thing, because two of the mega-ships have come into service within the past year and construction is already under way on others.

The demand for space on sea-going cruises has never been healthier. As fast as big new ships have been built, eager passengers have been filling their cabins.

Little wonder, since no holiday is likely to be better than a voyage on a good-quality, well run cruise ship. (And, let it be added quickly, few are worse than those spent on a badly maintained ship with surly crew.)

CITY AT SEA

The term "city at sea" was coined to describe Cunard's luxurious Queen Elizabeth 2. The 67,139-ton liner carries 1,864 passengers, who can find almost any big-city attraction imaginable, and some - such as its top dining salons - that very few cities could rival.

During the 1990s, several equally large "cities" or larger, will be cruising the sunny seas of the Caribbean or edging up to the breath-taking glaciers of Alaska.

Currently, the largest passenger ship afloat is the 73,219-ton Sovereign of the Seas, launched last year and, since then, usually filled to its capacity of 2,282 passengers.

Her owners, Miami-based Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, have already commissioned two sister-ships from Chantiers de l'Atlantique, the French shipyard that created such famous ships as the France and the 82,792-ton Normandie.

Sovereigns II and III, as they are provisionally designated, will be slightly larger than their existing sister-ship, although passenger capacity will be increased to just over 3,000 by providing 650 third and fourth berths. Without them, double-occupancy capacity will be 2,354 passengers.

PRINCESS CRUISES

Earlier this year, Princess Cruises of Los Angeles launched the 63,254-ton Star Princess, with capacity of 1,470 passengers. That proved to be insufficient to meet the demand for space on this past summer's cruises to Alaska.

Reception of the new ship has been so favorable, in fact, that Princess Cruises has commissioned the Fincantieri Shipyard of Monfalcone, Italy, to construct a 70,000-ton luxury vessel, Crown Princess, to have capacity for 1,562.

Its design is the work of architect Renzo Piano, and one of its most striking features will be the large number of private balconies. Crown Princess is to be delivered next summer and will be based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Carnival Cruise Lines, whose ships are especially popular with first-time passengers, has recently added Celebration and Jubilee (both 18,000 tons, 1,486 passengers) and Holiday (46,052 tons, 1,452

passengers).

Now, Carnival has commissioned three much larger ships from a Finnish shipyard, all of them to be 70,000 tons with capacity for well over 2,000 passengers. Fantasy and Ecstasy will be delivered next year and Sensation in 1991.

STATE OF THE ART

Will these bigger ships necessarily be better ships?

In some respects - stabilization, for example, and sound-proofing - they certainly should be. Cabins in Sovereigns II and III will all be forward of the entertainment areas, to promote quiet.

But some of the existing ships of the 1980s are already at a high standard of comfort, and their pleasure factor is being further enhanced by adventurous new itineraries and new themes for cruises.

The superb Vistafjord, one of the most competently operated cruise ships in service today, will extend a 68-year-old Cunard tradition of carrying out an around-the-world cruise to start the new year.

On Jan. 7, the 736-passenger Vistafjord will undertake its "five-continent odyssey" - through the Panama Canal, cruising to Sydney, Australia, by way of Los Angeles, Honolulu, the Gilbert Islands, and New Caledonia, with additional segments to the Philippines, Hong Kong, Mombassa, Cape Town, Bahia (Brazil) and the Caribbean, before returning to Fort Lauderdale April 23.

CRUISE IN EUROPE

Princess Cruises' Royal Princess (the Love Boat of TV fame) will operate a 10-day "Golden Age of TV" theme sailing with celebrity guests Carol Burnett, Steve Allen and Jayne Meadows, departing from Barcelona Nov. 8 and crossing the Atlantic to San Juan, Puerto Rico,

for a winter of Caribbean cruising. After six months there, she will lift anchor in San Juan April 16 for a 10-day return transatlantic crossing to Barcelona, to start a six-month season of 15 cruises in European waters - surely the most

relaxed way to "tour" that often hectic continent.

Travel agents have details of these and dozens of other cruising options. When you discuss the possibilities, remember that shipping lines are keenly competitive.

Tasty Recipes

It's "APPLE PIE" Time!

Filling:

Combine: 1 c. sugar
2 tbsp. Flour
1/2 tsp. Cinnamon

Blend In: 3/4 c. Sour Cream
1 tsp. Vanilla

Add: 7 c. Apples (peeled, cored, sliced)

- Mix thoroughly to coat all slices and transfer to 10 inch unbaked pastry shell.

Topping:

Combine: 1/2 c. All-purpose Flour
1/2 c. Firmly packed Brown Sugar
1 tsp. Cinnamon

Cut In: 1/3 c. Cold Butter
(To make coarse crumble)

- Sprinkle evenly over apples.

- Bake at 425° for 15 minutes, then 30-35 minutes at 350° F until apples are tender & crust browned.

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