

# Travel Outlook

## QE2 sails Atlantic for anniversary celebration



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Travel

Thomson News Service

Back in 1840, Samuel Cunard of Halifax took a risky plunge into transatlantic passenger shipping.

He revolutionized transportation and communication by sending his paddlewheel steamer Britannia out on a crossing of the unforgiving Atlantic at the breakneck speed of 8.5 knots. That cut the voyage to two weeks, from six on the sailing ships of those days.

Today, a century and a half after the Nova Scotia-bred Cunard first offered regular scheduled Atlantic steamship crossings, the company he founded is the last to maintain such a transportation service.

The majestic Queen Elizabeth 2 is the only transatlantic liner dedicated to the North Atlantic route - although, since her \$200-million refit with diesel engines three years ago, QE2 is no longer a steamship.

Built in Clydebank, Scotland, in the late 1960s, QE2 can carry as many as 1,858 passengers plus a ship's company of 908, at speeds of up to 32.46 knots - and in levels of comfort and luxury that not even

Samuel Cunard could have imagined in 1840.

### GALA SAILINGS

Major anniversaries, such as the 150th, call for a big celebration (especially when the hundredth anniversary had to be ignored because of the Second World War).

That's exactly what will be taking place aboard two of the most notable ships of the Cunard fleet this summer. July 4 is the precise anniversary of the start of Britannia's maiden voyage from Boston to Liverpool; three other paddlewheelers - Acadia, Columbia and Caledonia - joined Cunard's fleet during the second half of 1840.

And so QE2 is scheduled to operate three anniversary sailings this July, as well as a fourth in September. Vistafjord, one of Cunard's most elegant cruise ships, will have her own anniversary sailing in July, with a unique circumnavigation of the British Isles, including a voyage up the Thames River.

Vistafjord's cruise of the British Isles will commence July 21. Fares for the 14-day trip begin at \$3,880

(U.S.) per person, based on double occupancy.

### WHAT IT COSTS

On QE2, fares start at \$4,755 for the round-trip Atlantic crossing plus British Isles cruise, July 17 to Aug. 1; at \$3,665 for the one-way crossing from New York commencing July 17, plus cruise; and at \$2,190 for the July 17-22 eastbound crossing alone, or for the westbound crossing from Southampton, July 28 to Aug. 1.

The fares for one-way transatlantic voyages include one-way British Airways economy airfare in the opposite direction, between London and major Canadian and U.S. cities. As an alternative to the economy-class flight, a special fare of \$995 U.S. for BA's super-sonic Concorde is offered.

As a kind of encore to the July celebrations, QE2 will set sail Sept. 1 from New York on a round-trip four-day cruise calling at Boston and at Halifax, home of Samuel Cunard.

Each passenger on any of the anniversary voyages is to receive a commemorative piece of Waterford crystal from Cunard.

### TOP ENTERTAINERS

Both QE2 and Vistafjord are noted for their top-flight entertainment, but the anniversary sailings will apparently set a new high. Festivities will include:

-Gala concerts by the Royal Philharmonic, with conductor Andre Previn and pianist Cristina Ortiz.

-Performances by the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, directed by Iona Brown.

-Grand balls, with music by the society orchestras of Peter Duchin and the ageless Lester Lanin.

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