

THE *Cruise People*

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CUNARD GIVES 30TH BIRTHDAY GIFT TO QUEEN ELIZABETH 2

Cunard Line has announced that its flagship *Queen Elizabeth 2* will undergo a major £19.5 million refit and refurbishment next November. This figure gives a clear signal that Carnival Corporation, Cunard's new owner, intends to make a major investment in the ship. During these first 30 years, the *QE2* has sailed 4,648,050 nautical miles, more than the combined total distances travelled by both the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*. Public rooms, passenger areas and all cabins throughout the vessel will be refurbished.

Plans for the work were unveiled at a special 30th birthday party which was held to mark the ship's first 1999 transatlantic crossing and to which *Cruise People* managing director Kevin Griffin and *Cruise People News* editor Robin Liston were invited.

In total, £12 million is being spent on refurbishment with the remaining £7.5 million being spent on technical work.

Work planned includes refurbishment of the restaurants and the *QE2*'s main lounge, a new



QE2 Captains post and present cut the centenary cake

stage, chairs, carpet and curtains in the Grand Lounge, various improvements to the Queen's Grill Bar, Crystal Bar, Yacht Club, Theatre and Balcony, Chart Room, Golden Lion and Boardroom.

Two new grand suites will be constructed. The 777-square foot suite on Two Deck will be

named the Aquitania while the 575-square foot suite on Boat Deck will be named the Caledonia. Both suites will be decorated in rich materials and each will feature separate bedrooms, guest toilet, bars and dining facilities.

Quarter and upper deck promenades will have new blue carpets, re-covered walls and new chairs, while Four and Five Deck corridors will be completely refurbished with new wall coverings and carpeting. New carpets will be placed throughout all corridors and stairwells, and teak wood steamer chairs will replace existing deck furniture.

Says Cunard Chief Executive Larry Pimentel: "This refit is the first stage of an overall master plan we are developing for *QE2*. The ship has a long life ahead of her and we are committed to maintaining and improving even further the already high standards for which she is known".

Marine Expeditions has chartered the *Aegon 1*, a mid-size cruise ship that carries 630 passengers. Her amenities include five bars/lounges, bright, well-lit public areas with high ceilings, a large lecture hall with comfortable seating, a medical centre staffed by a doctor, a cinema showing recent releases and relevant documentaries, a gift shop, a hair/massage salon, a fitness centre, a photography studio and a library/games room. There is elevator access throughout the ship. *Continued page 2*

MILLENNIUM CRUISE TO ANTARCTICA

Marine Expeditions is offering a Millennium cruise to Antarctica lasting nine days with fares starting from £2,765 per person, including the airfare from Miami.

"Wild and inaccessible places have always proved fascinating and Antarctica captures the true sense of wilderness through its isolation and by being completely encircled by the Southern Ocean" according to Marine Expeditions' sales director Nancy Jackson.

News

EDITORIAL

Recent figures published by the Passenger Shipping Association show that the average age of UK cruise passengers last year was 55 although more under 35s than ever before took to the seas. Interestingly, a third of all UK cruise passengers last year lived in the North of England.

Although the average cruise price in 1998 was £1,236 - an increase of 7 per cent on the previous year - you will see from the contents of this second issue of *Cruise People News* that there is still a rich variety of voyages on offer within a very wide price range. The heavy competition that is currently prevailing in the cruise market is due to excess capacity, the uncertainty in the Mediterranean due to the recent Balkans conflict, and the fact that several very large ships are due to come on stream over the next couple of years. However the refurbishment of the *QE2* and new builds from Royal Olympic, Silversea, Celebrity, Radisson and Royal Caribbean show that operators still have confidence in the future of the cruise market and several cargo ship operators also see a good future in passenger travel.

We hope you are continuing to enjoy receiving our newsletter and do remember to let us know if you would like to add your family, friends or colleagues to our mailing list.

EVERY VOYAGE MENTIONED IN THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE BOOKED THROUGH THE CRUISE PEOPLE. YOU SHOULD RING OUR FREEPHONE NUMBER - 0800 526 313

Robin Liston

Robin Liston - Editor.

All editorial and advertising inquiries to:
Tel: 0181 883 7314 or Fax: 0181 444 8834 or
Email: 106276.2574@compuserve.com

For all bookings & inquiries ring
Freephone 0800 526 313

Isn't it High Time you were on the High Seas?