

Day 64, (Friday, 11/21/08) At Sea, Cruise Critic Farewell, Packing, Baked Alaska

This was the third day at sea since leaving Lahaina. Wind and sea were fairly calm with air temperature in the mid 60s. In the noon navigation report the captain said we had 9700 feet of water under the keel.

We started the dreaded job of packing up our stuff so we could move off the ship on Sunday when we dock in San Diego. On a long cruise it's easy to forget what we did and bought a month ago so as we dug through our accumulation it was cabin archeology to be sure. The didgeridoo surfaced and had to be tested to see if it still played that one bass note. Then it was time to slide it into the FedEx box as shown below for the trip home.



We decided to pull out all the luggage from under the bed so that we could easily pick and chose the nesting spot for our treasures. We had made an inventory list for each bag for the trip to the Amsterdam and we attempted with fair success to create one for the trip back home. In spite of our best efforts the scene was one of chaos as shown below.

After a while we were able to close up a couple suitcases and clear the bed. Although the job wasn't complete we had to take a break at 10am and go to the farewell meeting of the Cruise Critic friends that MaryAnn had set up in the Crow's Nest Lounge.



At the meeting there was coffee and cookies for refreshments and since we are all pretty good friends by now the conversations flowed easily. MaryAnn (wowzo) finally had to rein us in and the meeting got underway. She expressed thanks for the participants and urged us all to make the effort to contact the Holland America Line management with positive or negative comments that we may have about our cruise experience.



For those planning to take MaryAnn's suggestion, here is the info for contacting Stein Kruse, President/CEO of Holland America Line:

Email – steinkruse@hollandamerica.com

US Postal Service – Stein Kruse,
President/CEO
Holland America Line
300 Elliott Ave. West
Seattle WA
USA 98119

MaryAnn also handed out a list of addresses for 6 blogs or threads that have covered the 2008 Asia & Australia Grand Voyage. Here is her list:

1. www.2008asiaaucruise.thestansfields.com by Orlin & Barbara Stansfield (tenncruisers)
2. www.boyd-carbertfamily.blogspot.com by Chet & Ann Boyd (travelinggg)
3. www.cruise critic.com/HollandAmerica/Cruising Grand.....a thread by Roxanne & Ed (arzz)
4. www.cwstravelnotes.blogspot.com by Craig & Julie (stormalong)
5. www.amazingvoyages.blogspot.com by Jeff (tanningpro)
6. <http://cruisingtocambodia.blogspot.com> by Dave (brainchild)

Barbara (tenncruisers) said that if anyone wanted higher quality photos than could be copied from the blog, www.2008asiaaucruise.thestansfields.com , they could email us and we would send a larger file of the desired photo

(our email address is orlinbarbara at thestansfields.com at=@) .

After some general discussion MaryAnn thanked the bloggers and the people at the meeting for participating in the Cruise Critic functions during the cruise. She then closed the meeting.

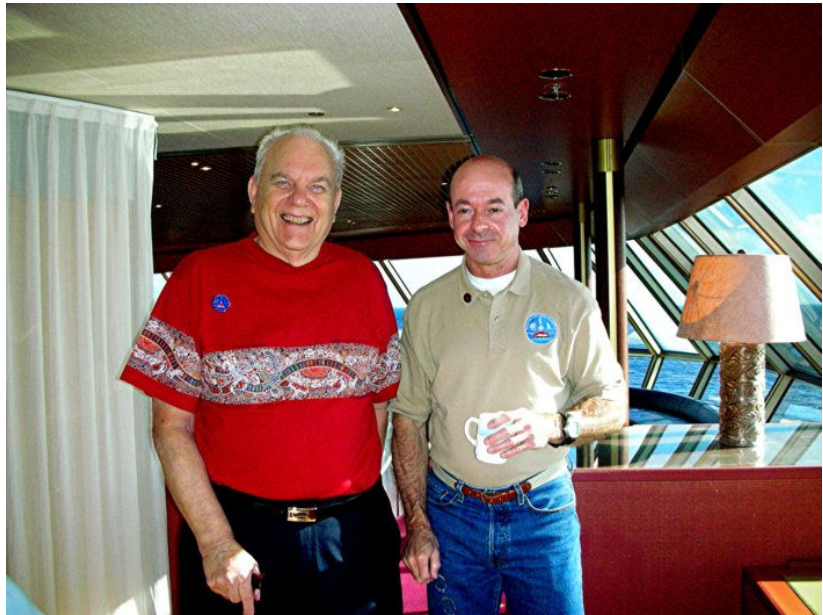
In the process of meeting and greeting people we were able to get a few pictures of these Cruise Critic contributors as shown below.

Left to right: Sylvia (boompa), Carol (webecruisinnow), Lois (sotl), Darrel & Karen (cruisertwo), Sue (landandwater), Doug & Jean (aussieoz), Barbara (tenncruisers)



Front row: Scott & Karen (cavediving), Back row: Nick (foxpaw), MaryLou (lusyrsgirl), Trudy & Hennie –friends of Cruise Critic

Left to right:
Lyle (70 +), Nick (foxpaw)



Left to right: Back row - Sally (croozer), Chet (travelinggg), Orlin (tenncruisers),
Sue (landandwater), Dick (ansalberg), Anne (travelinggg),
Front row – Valerie (sdhalfan), Diana (lusyrsgirl)

During the cruise the Amsterdam organized a contest to determine which passenger could construct the best model of an icon that would represent the 2008 Asia & Australia Grand Voyage. The entries were judged today and were on display in the Atrium on deck five. We visited the display and took this picture of the winning entry which we agreed was the best one. This icon entry on the right was a model of the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto that many of us had seen while the Amsterdam was docked in Kobe, Japan. The model builder had ingeniously used wine bottle corks on the roof to effectively create the appearance of a tile roof.



Another icon entry we liked was a fanciful dragon shown in the picture below.



In the evening we all donned our best formal clothes for dinner. The highlight of the meal was the traditional baked Alaska parade through the dining area. About 15 stewards carrying baked Alaska with sparklers giving off colorful sparks gave us a great show. The lights in the dining room were lowered and the parade began. Unfortunately, our camera has difficulty getting a good picture under those conditions but the picture on the right gives some idea of what the parade looked like. Three stewards with sparklers glowing are marching from right to left across the dining room as the diners clap and urge them on.



Of course, the best part was in the eating. Gde can be seen in this picture giving Barbara a generous serving of this classic dish.



We had a great meal on this, our next to last day on the Amsterdam. Tomorrow we must complete the packing of our stuff. In the evening the stewards will take the luggage away in preparation for rapid unloading into the passenger terminal in San Diego on November 23rd. We won't be able to put off our return to reality much longer sniff sniff.