

2008 Grand Asia & Australia Voyage (Sept. 18 – Nov. 23, 2008)

Journal of Orlin and Barbara Stansfield

Introduction: (7/23/08 & 8/3/08)

This is a journal of Orlin and Barbara Stansfield describing the preparation and personal experiences during the 65-Day Grand Asia & Australia Voyage on the Holland America ms Amsterdam in 2008.

Cruise Itinerary: Early in 2008 we learned about the 65 Day Asia & Australia Grand Voyage on the Holland America ship ms Amsterdam ("ms" means "motor ship" - diesel engines drive the ship instead of steam turbines found on other ships). We had been on the 105 day Holland America 2007 Grand World Voyage (GWV) on board the ms Amsterdam and we liked the ship. The itinerary for this 65 day cruise included some of the ports we had visited previously on the GWV but also many that were new to us so we decided to take this voyage. Here is a map that shows the ports we will be visiting.



The dates for visiting each of the ports are shown in the table below.

Itinerary for the 2008 Asia & Australia Grand Voyage on the ms Amsterdam

Day	Port
FRI 19 Sept.	Seattle, Washington
THU 25 Sept.	Cross International Dateline
SAT 27 Sept.	Petropavlovsk, Russia ^{TR VX} Cancelled on 9/10/08
MON 29 Sept.	Hakodate, Japan Changed from 30 Sept. on 9/10/08
TUE 30 Sept.	Aomori, Japan Added to Itinerary on 9/10/08
WED 01 Oct.	Miyako, Japan ^{TR}
FRI 03 Oct.	Kobe/Osaka, Japan
SAT 04 Oct.	Kobe/Osaka, Japan
TUE 07 Oct.	Shanghai, China ^{VX}
WED 08 Oct.	Shanghai, China ^{VX}
SAT 11 Oct.	Hong Kong, China
SUN 12 Oct.	Hong Kong, China
TUE 14 Oct.	Da Nang, Vietnam ^{VX}
THU 16 Oct.	Phu My, Vietnam ^{VX}
SAT 18 Oct.	Bangkok, Thailand
SUN 19 Oct.	Bangkok, Thailand
MON 20 Oct.	Koh Samui, Thailand ^{TR}
WED 22 Oct.	Singapore
THU 23 Oct.	Crossing the Equator
SAT 25 Oct.	Padang Bai, Bali, Indonesia ^{TR VX}
WED 29 Oct.	Perth (Fremantle), Australia ^{VX}
SUN 02 Oct.	Melbourne, Australia ^{VX}
TUE 04 Oct.	Sydney, Australia ^{VX}
WED 05 Oct.	Sydney, Australia ^{VX}
SAT 08 Oct.	Noumea, New Caledonia
MON 10 Oct.	Suva, Fiji
TUE 11 Oct.	Cross International Dateline
TUE 11 Nov	Apia, Western Samoa
THU 13 Nov	Crossing the Equator
SUN 16 Nov.	Honolulu, Oahu, United States
MON 17 Nov.	Honolulu, Oahu, United States
TUE 18 Nov.	Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii ^{TR}
SUN 23 Nov.	San Diego, California

Port Notes:
^{TR} TENDER REQUIRED
^{VX} VISA REQUIRED

The cancellation of the visit to Petropavlovsk, Russia that took place on September 10, 2008 was probably the result of stress between the US and Russia over the conflict in the nation of Georgia. The visit to Hakodate, Japan was moved up one day and Aomori, Japan was added to the itinerary to compensate for the cancellation of the Petropavlovsk visit.

Journal as a Blog: A journal on the Internet is frequently called a "blog" where the word is derived from "weB LOG". We had considered publishing the journal using the Google Blogspot blogging service that is offered free. However, we abandoned that idea because of the expensive Internet on-line time required to upload pictures. We consider the photographs in the journal to be more interesting than the text and we tend to load up the blog with pictures so we needed a less expensive option for posting our journal on the Internet. Our son, Steven, came up with the solution we adopted. Here he is supervising Orlin in a trial run of the new blog technique.



During the cruise we will prepare our daily journal entry off-line with lots of pictures and then upload the information to our website with (hopefully) the use of minimum on-line time. When viewers go to our website, which has the address of www.2008AsiaAucruise.thestansfields.com , they will find a listing of individual files labeled to identify the day that each file describes. The blog format will be retained in that the most recent entry will be first on the list and easy to find and open. Similar to a normal blog a viewer wanting to read an earlier entry will have to scroll down the list to the desired time but then mouse click to open and read the file. Although this is not exactly blog format, we think it is close enough so we will refer to our effort here as a blog. We took part in the 2007 Grand World Voyage around the world on the ms Amsterdam and recorded that venture in a real blog as events unfolded. The original blog has now been removed from the Internet but we recreated the 2007 blog in the format we intend to use for this 2008 65-Day Grand Asia & Australia Voyage. The 2007 Grand World Voyage journal can be found on the Internet at www.2007gww.thestansfields.com .

Cruise Critic Message Board: We have found the Cruise Critic message board (www.cruise critic.com) to be a wonderful aid in preparing for cruises we have taken. In the countdown to this cruise Barbara has been a frequent reader and contributor to the communication that takes place on the Cruise Critic message board thread that is devoted to just the 2008 65 Day Grand Asia & Australia voyage. The moderator/leader on the board is MaryAnn (WOWZO). In addition to useful technical information on visas, passports, inoculations and much more, the message board reunites us with prior cruising comrades and provides an introduction to people we will be meeting on the cruise. During the spring of 2008 this happy group of Cruise Critic participants collaborated in the creation of a lapel pin containing icons of several countries we will visit. Nick (foxpaw) took on the job of getting the pins made and then selling them to eager cruisers wanting a nice memento. We purchased two pins that we plan to wear on our hats.



We liked the lapel pin so much we took the liberty of using the image in the heading for this blog. Another popular contribution to Cruise Critic readers was made by Lyle (70+), who gave detailed descriptions of most of the ports we will visit. Ken (Tab K) and Lois (Slotl) coordinated the design and production of golf shirts decorated with the lapel pin image that were purchased by many of the Cruise Critic fans. Other people, too numerous to mention, have offered their

travel wisdom and anecdotes that helped us prepare to enjoy this cruise to the maximum.