

Star-Bulletin  
 Thursday, June 03, 2010

Home | News | Sports | Business | Editorial | Features | HiLife | Travel | Multimedia

Hawaii's Back Yard | Isle Hopping | Airfare Rates | Vegas Deals

**Search**

Google™ Custom Search

Search












**7-NIGHT SUMMER MEDITERRANEAN CRUISES** from  
 EUROPE'S #1 CRUISE LINE

CostaCruise.com

[www.starbulletin.com](http://www.starbulletin.com) > Travel >

**Blogs**

-  **Take a Bite**  
Big Island Fish Market
-  **Aperture Cafe**  
Lanterns
-  **Fashion Tribe**  
Luxury goes on sale
-  **Fighting Words**  
So I hear there's a UFC tonight
-  **Otaku Ohana**  
Hachi Maru Hachi: Signed, sealed, delivered...
-  **Political Radar**  
Where's the birth certificate?
-  **Quick Reads**  
1-on-1 with J-Rod ... Capuano responds...
-  **UH Sports Extra Football**  
UH Softball Extra-day 1
-  **UH Sports Extra Volleyball**  
Thanks for keeping this going while...

# Royal elegance

**Cunard Line's new vessel Queen Victoria offers a journey surrounded by old-world splendor**

By [Robert W. Bone](#) / Special to the Star-Bulletin

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 13, 2009

4 retweet  Share  3 0 Comments

(Single Page View) | [Return to Paginated View](#)

**Southampton, England** » A recent cruise to Norway on Cunard's new Queen Victoria brought back some pleasant memories.

Sara and I had some advance idea on what to expect on this trip. For one thing, we toured the Queen Victoria one day in February 2008, when it made a one-day maiden call in Honolulu. We wandered over the ship, admiring the tasteful and traditional interior decor of rich woods and shining marble.

But it was probably the comforting similarity to all the classic Cunard ships I had experienced in the past that particularly drew me to this one.

On my first trip across the Atlantic in 1957, I traveled on a 35-year-old Cunard Line vessel named the Scythia. I was booked in Tourist Class, which meant that I was limited to the rear third of the vessel. A sign on a closed gate blocked access to an area called Cabin (Second) Class.

There was also a First Class on the Scythia. I never saw it, but according to legend, it was populated by rich folks wearing tuxedos or tennis shorts who exclusively occupied the mysterious forward portion of the ship. Nevertheless, along with other young Third Class mates, I had a terrific time, enjoying the nine days it took to sail from New York to Liverpool.

### CUNARD'S QUEEN VICTORIA

Cunard's Queen Victoria will visit Norway again in July 2010, when both she and Cunard's Queen Mary 2 will offer a "Norwegian Wonders" itinerary. Several



iLIFE ONLINE

HiLife Online

the **BIG**

Give us YOUR Weekly Opinion

Reader Poll

How would you rate the final episode of "Lost"?

[Vote Now!](#)

**Most Read**

24hrs 7 days

- ▶ 'Princess Kaiulani' actress arrested at White House
- ▶ Woman arrested at hospital after alleged stolen goods found
- ▶ Israel detains Hawaii activist
- ▶ Hawaiian displays Airbus
- ▶ Police officer in 'right place' nabs H-3 racers
- ▶ Freshman Brown leaves UH baseball team
- ▶ 2 panels to discuss homeless arriving in Hawaii
- ▶ Capuano: Homer call was not a 'homer' call
- ▶ 'Bowhawks' wake up Hawaii's bats
- ▶ Quiet life after prison ends for convicted killer
- ▶ Alleged hit-and-run driver turns himself in

**Star Classifieds**  
 Star Bulletin MidWeek  
 Place Your Print Ad Online!

SearchYellowPages

Search



COURTESY ROBERT W. BONE  
 Three-deck Grand Lobby is the centerpiece of Cunard's Queen Victoria.

[View more photos >>](#)

vessel, designed and decorated with a firm devotion to the historical roots of the 170-year-old company. There is even a maritime museum on board, called the Cunardia. And the two-deck mahogany library, with its spiral staircase, gives further evidence of its heritage.

Currently, there are just two ships in the Cunard Line. Besides the "Queen Vic," there is the Queen Mary 2, a larger and especially magnificent vessel, designed to make regular crossings between Southampton and New York City.

The QM2 took the place of the Queen Elizabeth 2, which was recently retired after a long and illustrious sea career. A new Queen Elizabeth is under construction and will slide into the waves in 2010.

Some cruisers maintain that you can immediately discern the more dignified cruise ships by the color of their hulls. The world's oceans today are home to many cruise ships that old salts often call the "white bottoms," and some of which have been unkindly described as floating amusement parks.

In contrast, ships from the traditionally elegant Cunard Line have always had dark hulls. Officially called "Federal Gray," the shade often looks completely black or navy blue, depending on the light and reflections from the water. Other dark-hulled cruise vessels include those of the Holland-America Line, also known for its old-world sense of dignity.

Some of Queen Victoria's public rooms duplicate the rich decor of Osborne House, the 19th-century summer home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on the Isle of Wight.

Since that date, I have traveled perhaps 30 times on passenger liners and cruise ships. Over the years, class restrictions on board began to disappear, and I was able to roam everywhere from bow to stern.

The venerable Cunard Line, too, gradually began to foster a greater sense of freedom and equality among its passengers who began to explore nearly all decks, lounges and other public spaces.

Nevertheless, the British company still continued to harbor a soft spot for its more well-heeled customers, those who pay more to live in luxurious staterooms with private verandahs. Today they are entitled to dine in one of two specific upper-crust restaurants, which Cunard calls "grills," and enjoy some exclusive deck areas immediately adjacent to the grills.

THE QUEEN VICTORIA, which was put into service only last year, is a beautiful

other European cruises will be offered along with its annual World Cruise.

More information on these ships and the new Queen Elizabeth is available from Cunard Lines' Web site at [www.cunard.com](http://www.cunard.com).

Popular Searches  
Powered by Local.com



And the three-deck, 800-seat theater is perhaps the only one afloat that includes box seats.

As a general guide to Cunard's pricing, official fares for this one-week Norway cruise began at a low of around \$1,700 per person for an inside (windowless) cabin. Princess Grill cruisers paid at least \$5,000, and the basic Queen's Grill passage began at about a thousand more.

Activities on board are also considerably reserved as compared to some other cruises. While the world's white bottoms and party boats continue to promote activities like rock-wall climbing and wave-machine surfing, Cunard's Queen Victoria has inaugurated such urbane pastimes as fencing classes.

Cunard is no longer strictly British, having been bought by America's Carnival Corporation more than a decade ago. Nevertheless, the classic Cunarders have kept true to their Britannic heritage and are consequently still well-loved by citizens of the United Kingdom.

"MY GOODNESS. You flew all the way from America to take this cruise?" an English gentleman said to me. "And I took it because I didn't want to fly!"

The Norway cruise was a round-trip out of Southampton, a seaport reached by car in about two hours from London. My wife and I spent some time in the U.K. before and after the cruise. In London, we stayed at the historic Stafford Hotel, within walking distance of Piccadilly, and will probably stay there again.

Our balcony-equipped stateroom on the Queen Victoria qualified us as "grills" guests, and so we were issued an electronic key that not only opened our cabin but also allowed us elevator access to Deck 11. The small, uppermost level is the location of two restaurants: the Princess Grill, where our dinners were served, and the top-drawer Queen's Grill next door.

Tables in the Queen's Grill are reserved for those who occupy the ship's most expensive suites and who, theoretically at least, prefer the mealtime company of others in the same economic or social category. I can't speak for the Queen's Grill, but our meals in the Princess Grill were excellent.

One evening, however, we dined with a thousand shipmates in the cavernous, two-deck Britannia Restaurant, designed for non-grill guests, and we were also satisfied with that experience. There are also other dining possibilities on board, notably the noisy but efficient self-service Lido restaurant, where we often had breakfast and lunch. (There you could choose between British or American bacon, incidentally.)

There is also the cozy Golden Lion, which specializes in "pub lunches," and then -- for an extra charge -- an intimate evening dining room called Todd English, named after the celebrity chef well-known in the New England states.

We had visited some Norway coastal areas several years ago and were impressed with the beauty of the scenery. We knew we would be happy to experience the fjords and other seaside scenes passing by outside our balcony.

With only four ports offered, on four separate days, we took a ship-sponsored shore excursion in each. (Most prices varied between about \$35 and \$85 per person.)

The ports were Stavanger, where we learned about the life of Iron Age Vikings; Alesund, known for its own distinctive city architecture; Geiranger, surrounded by seemingly impossibly tall and steep cliffs; and Bergen, the second largest city in the country after Oslo.

Our local guides were mostly excellent, giving us capsule histories and often relating tales of Vikings and other Norwegians who had influenced American and British heritage.

I was already vaguely familiar with Leif Erikson, who, despite the Columbus story, was arguably the first European to land in America. And then, of course, there is Hagar the Horrible.

The Norwegian guide to whom I dropped that name confessed that she was unfamiliar with the exploits of Hagar, Helga, Lucky Eddy, Honi and Hamlet. However she was

pleased when I told her that these comic page characters were inspired by a play written by Norway's Henrik Ibsen.

My wife and I always enjoy cruising, and Norway will remain a favorite destination. And there was certainly nothing on the Queen Victoria experience to dampen our enthusiasm.

Moreover, despite our disinclination to learn the fine art of fencing, we disembarked after the week feeling much richer, at least culturally speaking.

Travel writer **Robert W. Bone**, author of several guidebooks, including the "Maverick guide to Hawaii," moved last year to California after 38 years in Kailua. More of his Queen Victoria photos may be seen at [robertbone.com/queenvictoria](http://robertbone.com/queenvictoria).

(Single Page View) | [Return to Paginated View](#)

#### Story tools

 [Email](#)  [Print](#)  [Save](#)  [Most Popular](#)  [Subscribe](#)

#### Share this story

 [ADD THIS](#) 

## COMMENTS

**COMMENTING ETIQUETTE:** To encourage open exchange of ideas in the starbulletin.com community, we ask that you post with aloha, follow our guidelines and respect your fellow posters. Don't say anything you wouldn't want your mother to read. **Please note that there is no "Dislike" voting option, and that is not the purpose of the "Flag" link. Flagged posts are reviewed for their adherence to the following principles.** [More on etiquette...](#)

### Add New Comment

Required: Please login below to comment.



Type your comment here.

Name

Website (Optional)

Email

[Subscribe to all comments by email](#)

[Login and Post](#)

### Showing 0 comments

Sort by [Newest first](#)



[Subscribe by email](#)



[Subscribe by RSS](#)

▶ [insideStarBulletin.com](#)

**Frank Fasi**



[Read »](#)

**Merrie Monarch**



[Read »](#)

**Young at Heart**



[Read »](#)

**Hawaii's Homeless**



[Read »](#)

Copyright © 2010 starbulletin.com. All rights reserved.

[News](#) | [Business](#) | [Features](#) | [Sports](#) | [Editorials](#) | [Calendars](#)

[Comics](#) | [Political Cartoons](#) | [Oddities](#)

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Classifieds](#)

[About](#) | [Letter to Editor](#) | [Contact](#) | [To Freelancers](#) | [Feedback](#)

500 Ala Moana Blvd. #7-210, Honolulu, HI 96813 808-529-4747