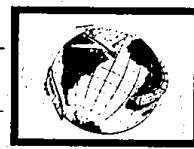


Travel Scene



Thursday, February 21, 1991/DE

**70



crossroads
Iris Jones

Locals get 2 cents in on Fantasy cruise ship

I found John and Edie Fuller on the dock at Port of Miami just after I disembarked from the cruise ship Fantasy. I was standing in the Florida sun waiting for my husband to bring the car around when I looked down and saw the luggage tag, "Farrington Hills." John lives in the Hills and works at The Travel Authority in Southfield.

I had already spent several hours looking for Colleen Flynn on board the ship. I didn't make contact with her until after we both got home. Colleen, who lives in Wolverine Village, north of Novi, is the southeast Michigan director of sales for Carnival Cruise Lines.

I was looking for these people because I wanted a "Michigan opinion" on what Carnival Cruise Lines calls the SuperLiner Fantasy. But first I wanted to know how the ship fits into the overall cruise picture and why you, my reader, would like it.

There are several ships doing three- and four-day itineraries. Out Fantasy is the first new ship built specifically for that market. Royal Caribbean followed with their ship, Nordic Empress. Apparently these three- and four-day cruises are particularly popular in southeast Michigan.

In 1990, one out of two cruise travelers in southeast Michigan picked a three- or four-day trip. Colleen said Las Vegas is always a very popular destination from here and I think that many travelers find the short cruise an alternative to Las Vegas.

We have the largest shipboard casino in the world, although we don't focus on it.

A lot of different people choose short cruises. We're heavy in business travelers and two-some families that don't have time for a long vacation. The Fantasy also suits people on a limited budget, because they can't afford a longer vacation.

Colleen does a lot of seminars with travel agencies to reinforce the basic truth of cruising. Travelers should pick the ship that suits their style and a good travel agent can help them do it.

If people want a formal experience, look for dinner, they should choose another ship. If they love casual, and don't want to wear a suit and tie for dinner, they love the Fantasy.

John Fuller agrees.

There is a cruise ship to fit every traveler. The Fantasy is glitzy, Royal Caribbean's Nordic Empress does the same three- and four-day itinerary and is more upscale.

These ships share more or less the same itinerary. They all have casinos. Most of them have pretty good food. So you pick for style, price and maybe ports of call.

John says that short cruises are also great for honeymooners or those who want to try cruising before they commit to a longer cruise.

These all offer packages that include Walt Disney World. Number one in that category is from Fantasy Lines, which sails out of Fort Lauderdale.

An alternative is the Chandra Ship Bahamas, which does a five-day, budget cruise to Key West, Ft. Myers, St. Petersburg and Panama City, Fla., and back to Miami.

John says that the Fantasy is quite a ship and riding it is a great way to see the cruise market in all its glory.

John says that you ask your travel agent about cruise discounts. He also wants to remind travelers that it does not cost any money to be a travel agent. But commissions are paid by the hotel, airline or other relevant member of the travel industry.

BIG BOAT

70,000-ton 'SuperLiner' plows the seas

By Iris Sanderson Jones
special writer

When you board the cruise ship Fantasy, officially called the SuperLiner Fantasy, your first impression is light, glitter and color. If you have met Joe Farcus, or have been to the Crystal Palace Resort & Casino in Nassau, you'll understand why. Joe is the architect and interior designer for Carnival Cruise Lines, which owns both the Palace and the Fantasy, and he loves to paint the world with colored lights.

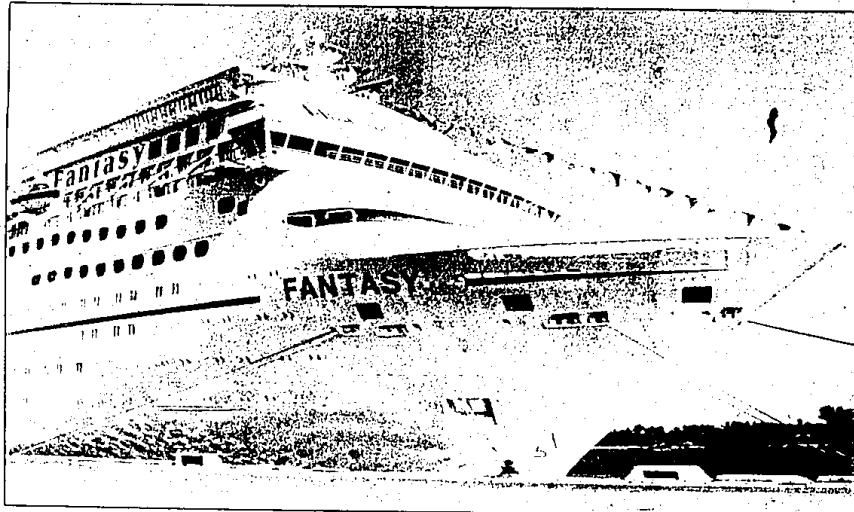
You board the Fantasy on the Empress deck, where you follow the lights into the Grand Spectrum, an atrium that gleams and glows and blinks with light. The two elevators, going up six decks and down again, are painted in red neon. The 20-foot-high kinetic sculpture is a rotating cylinder of changing colors.

Tiny light bulbs follow the spiral staircase to the second floor where various shipboard facilities that surround the mezzanine are signed in light. You have to climb the Grand Staircase to see ancient Egypt at work in Cleopatra's Bar and Pavilion, but that's Joe Farcus all over.

In case you missed it, the Fantasy is a very large cruise ship launched in 1990 to make three- and four-day cruises from Miami to Nassau and back. It is 855 feet long, weighs 70,367 tons and could carry 2,634 passengers if every bed and bunk was full.

I took an overnight "Cruise to Nowhere" offered to travel agents and travel writers, which means we boarded one afternoon and disembarked early the next morning. The coastal lights of Florida were already in view.

That brief experience gave me a good look at the ship and its facilities, including cabins, bars, restaurants, etc. It gave me a good taste of



The new cruise ship SuperLiner Fantasy is a hefty fellow, weighing in at a robust 70,000 tons. With stage shows, theme

bars, gift shops, a casino, meals galore and more, this 855-foot-long boat has enough room for 2,634 passengers.

the ship's style. Carnival aims at a fast-paced younger crowd for its fun ships, although I have cruised with people of all ages on their ships.

My overall response to the ship was that it gives you a lot of glitz and glamor for a reasonable price,

with comfortable staterooms, good food, interesting and innovative bar and entertainment areas. It is easy to get around in, in spite of its size.

You can have a lot of fun in a very busy, 21st century movie-scene setting. If you prefer a quiet, more ele-

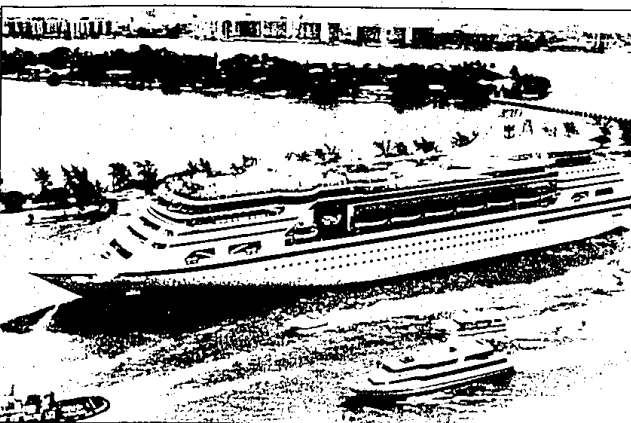
gant atmosphere, you might try another new ship in the three- and four-day market, the more upscale Nordic Empress. (See related story.)

When you board any ship, your first moves are to check out the cabin, read the day's activity list, sign

up for the early or late dinner seating and find your way among the entertainment facilities.

As in most of the new ships, the 54 outside suites and demi-suites on the

Please turn to Page 6



Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's Nordic Empress, the first cruise ship designed specifically for the three- and four-night market, arrives in Miami escorted by more than 150 boats.

Nordic Empress

Lavish cruise ship plays host to 37 area guests

By Iris Sanderson Jones
special writer

I asked Dallas Phillips of Phillips Travel Service Inc. in South Lyon if he could find me somebody who has sailed on the Nordic Empress, one of the two new cruise ships that entered the three- and four-day cruise market in 1990.

I was lucky. Dallas has worked more than once with Linda Gasparoff of Plymouth, who calls herself a frustrated travel person who would like to be in the travel business but never had the chance.

Dallas Phillips organized a trip for Linda when she took the Plymouth-Canton Marching Band to Orlando to march in the electric parade at Walt Disney World and then

'One of our group won the hula hoop contest and another came in second for the twist contest!'

— Linda Gasparoff

on to march in the Orange Bowl on New Year's Day 1989.

There were 254 people on that trip, including band members, families and friends. Not bad for somebody who doesn't think of herself as being in the travel business.

Last February I took a group to

Please turn to Page 6

Organization has information about 35 different cruise lines

Cruise Lines International Association, which represents 35 cruise lines worldwide, is a great source of information about cruising. For information on where to go, whether to take the kids, what to pack, etc., send for a free booklet called "Cruising: Answers to Your Questions" from CLIA, 500 Fifth Ave., Suite 1407, New York, N.Y. 10110.

Ask for charts showing services and facilities that might influence your choice of a ship. For example:

• The typical cruise passenger moved from one big meal to another, starting on the deck before breakfast, and ending on the deck for the mid-night buffet. Many passengers still do.

But more and more cruisers are asking for fresh fruit and muffins, turkey breast and cottage cheese, as well as a jogging track and gym to work those calories off. More and more cruise ships are responding to this demand by offering low-fat, low-cholesterol items on their menus.

and special diets by request. Ask for a chart.

• You can't take your kids on all cruise lines, because it isn't always worth the price or the hassle of childhood boredom. But family cruising has grown by 50 percent during the last two years, according to a "Better Homes and Gardens" poll. Encouraging cruise lines to add toddler rooms, teen discos, children's videos and special shore excursions. Ask for a chart.

• If your idea of cruising is to stretch out beside the pool all day, you may be a little behind the times. Some people still do nothing but work on their tans, but many cruise ships have added weight rooms, exercise bikes and Nautilus equipment as well as treadmills and rowing machines. Some even have saunas and basketball courts. Ask for a chart.

• If you shop at Twelve Oaks, you probably won't fall overboard into the warm waters of the Carib-

bean. If you shop on a cruise ship, you probably won't fall overboard either, but you will be a lot closer to that blue-green tropical water.

Once upon a time, cruise "shops" were tucked between the book rack and the drug store. Now they are beginning to look like malls. Shop carefully. Duty-free savings are not always terrific. But bring enough money to explore the porcelains and other things that may be good buys on a cruise ship in specific settings.

• And if you are one of those much-maligned "single" travelers, forced to pay a single supplement in order to lodge alone in a double room, ask CLIA for charts showing ships that have single rooms. You might be interested to know that the only two lines that don't charge a single supplement are the Premiere Cruise Lines and World Explorer Cruises. Some lines will help you find a compatible roommate. Ask for a chart.

Celebrate!

Lilacs, fireworks, balloons highlight Michigan festivals

The Michigan Travel Commission has designated 16 of the 100 or more festivals and events celebrated in Michigan this summer as "Celebrate! The Great Lakes Festivals."

The festivals reflect the great diversity bestowed on Michigan by the lakes, our greatest single resource," said Michigan Travel Bureau Director John Savich. From the blush of the season's first blossoms in Benton Harbor St. Joseph during the Blossomtime Festival, to the fireworks extravaganza of the Detroit Windsor International Freedom Festival, to the sights, smells and sounds of the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Escanaba, Michigan has a festival to complement any vacation itinerary.

Following is a list of Michigan's 1991 festivals:

- April 28-May 6, Blossomtime Festival, Benton Harbor St. Joseph
- May 8-18, Tulip Time Festival, Holland
- May 25-26, Alma Highland Festival and Games, Alma
- May 25-27, Fort Michilimackinac Pageant, Mackinaw City
- June 7-16, Lilac Festival, Mackinac Island
- June 8-18, Frankenmuth Bavarian Festival, Frankenmuth
- June 21-July 4, International Freedom Festival, Detroit/Windsor
- June 29-July 6, Battle Creek International Balloon Festival, Battle Creek
- July 4-6, Fireworks Festival, Bay City
- July 6-13, National Cherry Festival, Montmorency

Please turn to Page 6