Small cruise ship offers perfect Riviera vacation

Have you noticed how much bigger cruise ships are getting? Is is not at all uncommon for a vessel to accommodate 2,000 or more passengers. My husband and I have discovered, however, that there are times when smaller is better?

and I have discovered, however, that there are times when smaller is better!

The Wind Star Cruise line with its four and five mast saling vessels are a wonderfully different cruise experience.

The four ships in the fleet range from 148 to 310 passengers with plenty of crew to pamper the guests. Daining is open seating and room service to the comfortable, well-appointed staterooms is available 24 hours andy. The atmosphere and dress are casually elegant, and there are no annoying public address anouncements. Each ship offers the luxurious intimacy of a private yacht for those of us and ing the French and Italian Riverss in June on the newest fleet member — the Wind Surf. We met the ship in Nice, France, and our itinevary included three Italian and four French ports on

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Star at 800-258-7245. To book
a cruise, contact your local
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the beautiful Mediterranean Sea. During the trip we had time to restore body and soul, and freedom to do whatever we

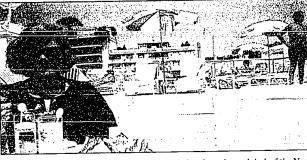
to restore body and soul, and freedom to do whatever we wished. The first morning we awoke to experience Wind Suff arriving at the tiny Italian village of Portolino set in a small bay surrounded by hills and luscious vegetation. This tranquil and serene portional its character unspoiled even though it is now one of the most important centers for international jet-set tourism. delighted in viewing the opulent yearths which lim the harbor and browsing in the quality boutiques. That afternoon we took the local bus to the nearby larger

town of Santa Margharita.

On the Island of Elba we visited Portoferroin, which has much to offer Napoleonic history enthuciants, picturesque Porto Azuro and a local winery. In addition, we were able to view some of the fine minerals which are found on Elba. As in all of the ports we visited, there was lots of uphil walking. This was probably good since it helped halance the fine food served on the Wind Surfl

The day the ship docked at Portowenere, we opted to take an all-day excursion to Florence. Florence, or Firenze if you are Italian, is a magnificent city which can easily be explored on foot. We only had five hours to do our exploring which meant that had to be selective. Florence really deserves several days. We visited the Church of St. Croce, which contains the graves of Michelangelo, Leonardo and Marconi, the Piazza Della Signorint oview the statues of David and Neptune, and the picturesque Pont Vecchio Bridge with its dozens of jewelry shops. After a delightful lunch as La Grotta Guelfa, we did a little shopping at the street market called Mercato Nuovo. There was just enough time for a tiramisu ice cream before rejoining the group to return to the ship.

Monaco was trip to a fairy tale land. I couldn't help imagnining what it must have been like for the young Grace Kelly to have arrived there so many years ago knowing that the timy principality built on a rock was to be her home. Monaco is only 473 acres with just 5,000 citizens. It has been under control of the Grimaldi family since 1308. A visit to the State Apartments of the Princes Palance was one of the high points of our trip. Prince Rainier and his son. Albert, were in residence the day we were there but did not invite us to stay for lunch. The entire area surrounding the palace, including the eathedral, Oceanagraphie Museum and private



unch in Cannes: Pat Ritner of Troy enjoys a light lunch on the pool deck of the Noga Hilton in Cannes, France.

residences, has a very stately air with magnificent, beautifully kept grounds. This was one hill I didn't mind climbing, but Monaco also has an excellent public transit system which enables visitors to explore the entire principality.

That same evening we returned to visit the elegant shops and the gold leaf splendor or the Grand Casino. It was fun view the luxury cars, designer

shops and the good test spicular or the Grand Casino. It was fun to view the luxury cars, designed clothes and fabulous jewels. Elevators from the port made for easy access to the casino and the magnificent surroundings and world-class people watching kept us occupied for hours.

Small vessels can enter ports which cannot handle large cruis which cannot handle large cruis. The tenders in many locations. The tenders ran very frequently and the rides were usually only about 10 minutes so it did not present a problem. The normal routine was for the ship to anchor at a new port each merring and to set sail early evening. That schedule was adjusted to a

2 a.m. sailing from Monaco and an early evening arrival at Saint Tropez so passengers could fully enjoy the night life in both ports.

Tiny Saint Tropez has a year-round population of 6,000 inhabitants which swells to 20,000 in the summer. We were there during the sailing of the Saint Tropez Rolex Cup so were able to see some of the fastest and most efficient boats ever designed as well as enjoy the beautiful city with a magical atmosphere of cafes, restaurants, galleries and boutiques. Many of our fellow passengers chose to do some serious shopping in Saint Tropez, while we lounged away the afternoon at the well-known Tahiti Beach. the afternoon Tahiti Beach.

Our favorite port of the entire week was Cannes, home of the Cannes Film Festivals. Not only did we enjoy a great day explor-ing the open air morning market

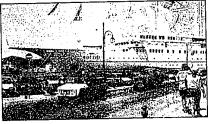
and the medieval old town, we were able to experience the city at leisure since we stayed an extra two days there when the cruise ended. On the way to the nirport, our driver asked us how we liked Cannes. When we replied, "It was perfect," he said, "You must come back in the spring or fall, it is even better then!"

Some vacations are rood. Ours.

Some vacations are good. Ours on the Wind Surf was 180 degrees from ordinary just like the brochure promised!

In addition to the French and Italian Rivieras, Wind Stur offers cruises to the Caribbean, Costa Riea, Greek Islex and Turkey and several special voyages. Additional information may be obtained through your travel agent.

Pat Ritner lives in Troy.



Luxury ship: The Wind Surf docks in Nice for initial passenger embarkation for the French and Italian Riviera cruise.

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