

TRAVEL

Couple treasures memories of cruise to Tahiti

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Sometimes a snap decision turns out to be the best one you ever made.

While surfing the Internet, Gerry Myers learned about a cruise to Tahiti offered by Renaissance Cruises. He called his parents, Loleta and Evert in Garden City, and said, "You've got two hours to make up your mind."

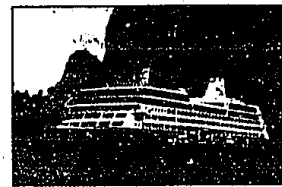
"Gerry had always wanted to go on a cruise," said Loleta. She and her husband said yes, and made plans to cruise to Tahiti and the Society Islands of French Polynesia with Gerry and his wife Marti who live in Palm Springs.

"I would highly recommend it," said Evert, whose friends call him EJ. "It was an absolutely fabulous cruise. The food was exceptional - lobster, roast duck, steak. No tipping was allowed, and I felt very awkward. It was the most pleasant crew you'd ever want to meet. Everything was yes sir, no ma'am."

With only 760 people on board, the Myers said it felt like the ship was almost empty. They liked that you could eat whenever you felt like it, and that there

Planning your trip

What: Cruise to Tahiti and the Society Islands of French Polynesia, offered by Renaissance Cruises.



Length: Ten days, departure from Los Angeles.
Cost: Prices start at \$1,999 per person. Call Renaissance Cruises (800) 590-8863, or visit www.RenaissanceCruises.com on the Internet.

were four different places on board to eat including an Italian restaurant and a buffet.

Their accommodations "were exceptionally nice," said Loleta. "We had a suite with an outside balcony. My son had never been on a cruise. To just sit there and have people wait on you - he thought it was the greatest thing. We had such a lovely room, and that helped."

At sea, the Myers tried their luck at the casino or bingo, and enjoyed dancing. There was a floor show almost every night.

When they weren't on the ship, the Myers took side trips to the islands. There was lots to do - swimming, boating and snorkeling. "The pool on the ship was humongous," said Evert.

After a couple of trips, they decided to rent a car in Bora Bora and explore the island on their own.

"It was more fun when we rented a car and explored on our own," said Loleta. "The people were friendly, and the scenery was gorgeous. It was all green - the flowers were just beautiful."

One of their favorite stops was Bloody Mary's. "It's a fabulous place," said Evert about the popular bar and grill. "The floor is all sand and you sit on tree stumps. They cook your dinner outside."

If you're thinking about cruising to Tahiti, the Myers recommend learning a little French.

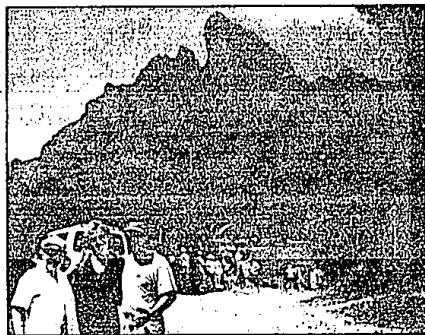
"On shore a lot of people spoke French," said Loleta. "A lot of times you couldn't carry on a conversation. They didn't understand you."

She'd also pack more dresses to take on the trip. Although dress on board was casual, at night the women got dressed up. "Almost everyone wore a dress for dinner," she said. "My daughter-in-law wore her sun dresses."

Sitting in their cozy living room, looking at pictures and talking about why this cruise to Tahiti with their son and daughter-in-law truly was the trip of a



Cruising: Evert and Loleta Myers on Renaissance Cruises' R3, their home away from home while touring Tahiti and the Society Islands of French Polynesia.



Lush landscape: Loleta, (left to right), Marti, and Gerry Myers in Bora Bora.

lifetime, Loleta and Evert smile.

"You have the pictures," they said, graciously offering to share some of their treasured snapshots with readers, "but we have the memories."

Tell us about your "trip of a lifetime." Send your stories to Keely Wygonik, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or call (734) 953-2105. You can e-mail your stories to kwygonik@homecomm.net. Be sure to include a daytime telephone number where you can be reached.

Loveliest islands on Earth

Described as being "some of the loveliest islands on earth," Tahiti and the Society Islands of French Polynesia are a tropical paradise of lush greenery, volcanic mountains and waterfalls.

The islands have inspired many writers and artists, including Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London, Herman Melville and Paul Gauguin.

What to buy on the islands

Black pearls - which are a deep metallic blue-green-gray. A smooth, flawless black pearl can sell for more than \$1,000. A whole necklace can cost as much as \$50,000.

Source: Renaissance Cruise Journal, April 2000

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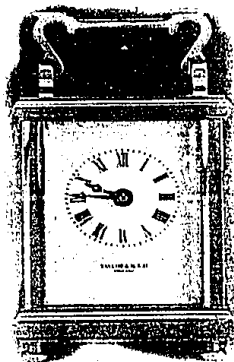
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