

Our 2012 Cruise “Terre sacre e isole nel blu”

By Dino Fioravanti



Saturday, 2 June

When we leave from Genoa, our group is made up of 40 adults and 2 youngsters (Alessia e Francesco), who are under 16. Their presence lowers the average age level of the group to ... 67. Three more people will join us in Trieste and two in Ancona. At 6:30 sharp we leave from Piazza della Vittoria bound to Trieste on a Costa coach (with Vilma by Costa sitting in the front row).

At about 2:00 pm (after stopping at two service stations) we reach Miramare Castle in Trieste where a young guide (the fastest ever) manages to lose us during the visit to the castle reaching the way out all alone.

Slowly, the group gets together again. We go to San Giusto and then to Piazza dell'Unità. With a bit of luck, no one gets lost and, at about 4:00 o'clock, we board Costa Classica.

At 5:45 we take part in a brief abandon ship drill (duly wearing our lifejackets).

At 6:00 the ship leaves Trieste for Ancona. We all rush to unpack and, after a quick shower, we go to the theatre to see the performance of a good ventriloquist. At dinner, a gentleman (the Briatore type) and two ladies change tables creating a bit of disarray. There is a birthday cake for Gabriella.

After dinner, the most generous, go to squander their money in the casino (to provide some extra financial support to Costa after their losses - remember the Concordia?) while others, sleepy-eyes, roam around and then go to bed early after the long tiring day.

Sunday, 3 June

The vessel calls at Ancona before 9:00 o'clock and we are immediately off. The holiest ones go to Loreto but most of us visit Ancona and the Conero Riviera. We start from Guasco hill with the gorgeous San Ciriaco Cathedral and go on to visit the Conero Riviera and the small town of Sirolo.

The town and the panorama are a pleasant surprise for the ones who haven't been there before.

At 5:00 the vessel leaves bound to Dubrovnik and we all dress up for the Master's Welcoming Party (the master is Marco Denn, a Nautico former student who got his diploma in 1984 and who was an excellent rugby player when he was at school) and make ready for the first gala night.

Monday, 4 June

At 8:00 we call at Gruz near Dubrovnik. It's surprising because no long ago the vessels used to call at Dubrovnik and people got ashore by tender.

Some of us go to Medjugorje with Aurelio while most visit Dubrovnik

After a tour of the hill to admire the view of the coastline and of the old town encircled by walls, we visit the Franciscan and the Dominican monasteries, we lose Ida (luckily we have another one) but we get her back on the way out from the Cathedral.

Having some time at our disposal we walk down the streets parallel to the *stradun*, full of boutiques and restaurants and crowded by tourists.

After dinner and the show, we go dancing or go to the casino. One of our ladies seems to have a reserved seat there and plays at supersonic speed, others try to beat the slot machines but are inevitably beaten.

At 7:00 pm the vessel leaves bound to Corfu. The decks are crowded by the passengers wishing to admire the fantastic view. After dinner Pino launches himself in the dances while two ladies from Elio's entourage take part in Miss Costa Classica beauty contest and win.

Tuesday, 5 June

Bad weather: it rains and thunders.

When the vessel moors at Corfu, the sun is shining (possibly by Aurelio's intercession?)

At 2:15 we get ashore and visit Achillion, the magnificent Sissi's mansion, then Kanoni and finally Corfu town centre.

We dress up for the cocktail offered by the Master to our Association. Aurelio gives our crest to Capt. Denn and Dino gives our book on Ninio Bixio to the Master and to the Hotel Manager, Attilio Sissa. We receive a beautiful Costa Classica model and two books on Costa Atlantica.

The rest of the evening goes on as usual.

Wednesday, 6 June

At 8.00 we call at Argostoli and soon after that we board the lifeboats to get ashore. We are taken by coach, to the village of Assos, a really enchanting place. The sea has fantastic shades of colour.

After a short stop in the village, we visit the underground lake of Melissani and the Memorial Monument to the dead of the Acqui Division. We get back on board by boat to have lunch.

Cefalonia is a fantastic island with fantastic views.

The ship leaves at 2.00pm. It's a beautiful day but the wind is strong and many of us go to their cabins and fall asleep forgetting about the cocktail organized for the members of our Association and about the photos with the Ship's Master (without the Master). After the evening show featuring a magician, there is the Farewell Gala.

As usual, after a coffee or a *grappino*, people go to the casino, or the dancing halls and (Alessia) to the disco Alessia manages to take Antonio, too..

This year Vil-Ang prefer the casino to the dancing floor.

Thursday, 7 June

In the morning, to remind us that the end of the cruise is approaching, there is a meeting to give us all information about the passengers' disembarkation procedure.

The vessel sails through Cattaro straits with its wonderful fjords and calls at Kotor at 1.30pm.

At 2.15 we get ashore. Our guide, Nicola, devoid of any notion whatsoever of the passing of time, takes us to visit the coast and Budva, a nice town with a maze of narrow streets and small squares encircled by XV century walls. The guide's talks are too long and we are thirty minutes late for our meeting with the other groups.

Back in Kotor, we rush through the old town and visit San Tripun Cathedral.

This year, Angela is perfect and we never lose her during the excursions.

The vessel leaves at 7.00 pm and many remain on deck to admire the Cattaro fjord and its magnificent view.

Friday, 8 June

At 8.00, the vessel calls at Spalato. The weather is hot and beautiful. At 9.00 we get ashore for the trip.

The visit starts from the house of Ivan Mestrovic - one of the most famous Croatian sculptors - now a museum, surrounded by a beautiful park, and we discover and admire his works.

Back in Spalato, we visit the magnificent Roman palace of Diocletian in the old part of the town dating back to the 4th century A.D. From there we go to the Cathedral of San Doimo, the town patron saint, built on the remains of one of the oldest sanctuaries in the world. After that, we go to Jupiter's Temple and, then, see the main sights in town (the Porta Aurea for one). After a short visit to a street market, we walk back to the ship to have lunch.

In the afternoon, a number of husbands, sadly walk on the decks under the scorching sun while their wives are packing (I wonder why the suitcases seem to have shrunk and cannot accommodate everything....is it due to the salt air?)

At dinner we have a pleasant surprise: there is a special cake for our group. After losing our last tokens in the slot machines, we go to our cabins and put our suitcases in the passageways.

Saturday, 9 June

The vessel calls at Trieste before 9:00.

At 9.30, we get ashore, collect our luggage and start a quest for our coach that is nowhere to be seen. Two of our friends, trusting their suitcase would get on the coach by themselves, leave them at the deposit and have to rush back to collect them.

We finally manage to leave. At the first stop for a snack, we lose Elio and his friends in the self-service restaurant

At 8:00pm we arrive in Genova, in Piazza della Vittoria. The participants thank prof Aurelio Banchetti and the Association for organizing this fantastic cruise.