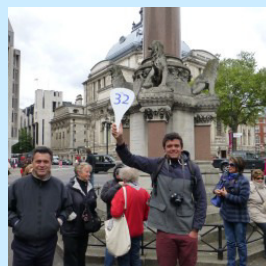
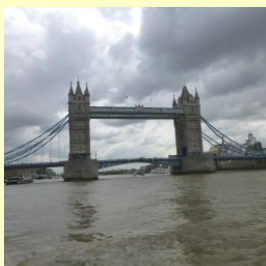
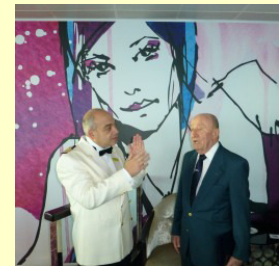
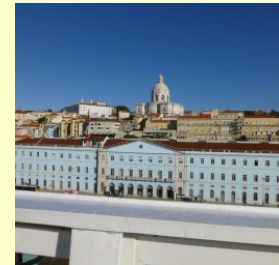
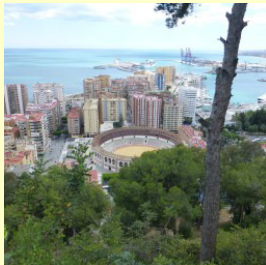
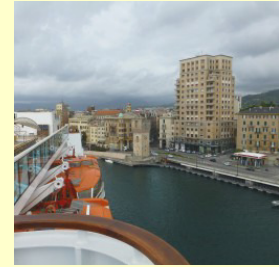


Our 2013 Cruise

“Grandi Capitali dell’Atlantico”

Dino Fioravanti's Report



Day 1 - Wednesday, May 15

The group made up of 38 not so young and of an odd-one out, i.e. one under 18 (four others will join us in Savona) is extremely punctual but the Costa coach is not. We leave at 1:00pm and, in spite of all the traffic, at 3:00pm we are on board.

After grabbing some food at the self-serve restaurant, many of us go exploring the vessel while waiting for their baggage to be delivered to their cabins and we notice that there is no longer a theatre hall.

At 16:45 we take part in the usual abandon ship drill. We don't even get a glimpse of the lifeboats but are given a description of the lifejacket equipment in no less than 10 (or possibly 12?) languages. Great!

The ship leaves for Barcelona at 5:00 pm. At dinner, we realize that we have not been given the right places at table but places at random. Guido e Pino make things even messier by moving to another table. As usual, Aurelio manages to put things right.

There is a cake for Eddy's birthday.

After dinner, some go to happily squander their money in the casino, some others go dancing while many others go to bed. There is a slight sea.

Day 2 - Thursday 16 May

The morning is wet and windy. They say that in Barcelona it is pouring with rain. But Aurelio probably performs one of his usual miracles and, when we land, there is some sunshine. Most of us go to Monserrat to visit its fascinating abbey and enjoy the panorama.

Back on board, we watch the departure and, after that, a show in Vienna cabaret (the pseudo theatre), then we have dinner.

We were supposed to celebrate Gianmario's birthday but he and Cinzia are nowhere to be seen. Gianmario gets the cake at the Samsara restaurant thanks to Aurelio.

Day 3 - Friday 17 May

The ship calls at Palma at 8:00am. Some of us go on a Costa trip, others go on a 'do-it –yourself' tour. Anyway, we all visit the Cathedral, the Castillo Bellver and the Plaza de Toros.

Costa NeoRomantica leaves at 2:00pm.

In the afternoon, before dressing up for the evening gala, some try to get some suntan in spite of the wind

At 8:15pm, there is the cocktail with the ship's master Salvatore Donato and at 9:00pm, all dressed up, we have dinner. There is a slight sea and there are some defections.

After a coffee or a digestive, we scatter around the ship.

Day 4 - Saturday, 18 May

The ship is 2 hours late because of the sea conditions and calls at Malaga at 3:00pm. In Malaga we visit the Cathedral, the Alcazaba and the fort of Gibralfaro.

Back on board, there is time to watch the Latin Dance Group performance before having dinner.

Many spend the rest of the evening in the casino. Rosanna wins lots of tokens, Rita plays for the first time and wins, Vilma, Angela and Mariella try different machines with more or less success.

Day 5 - Sunday, 19 May

The ship calls at Cadiz at 7:00am

The group splits: some go to Seville, most visit Cadiz.

From the coach, we see the most interesting places of Cadiz and of its bay. We see the "Caleta", once a Phoenician port, San Sebastian y Santa Catalina walls which, in the past, encircled the town and the Parque of the Genoves.

At the end of the tour, some stay behind and meet the 'Spanish Pimiento' and Cinzia who had been reported missing since Thursday.

Onboard the decks are crowded because the weather is really fine and people try to get suntanned.

One of us, who is eightish, goes to the gym, jumps on the running belt of a treadmill and crashes to the floor, luckily without any serious consequences. He takes it with phlegm.

The ship leaves at 5:00pm. At 8:30pm the Master gives cocktail party for the members of Costa Club. Photos are obviously a must.

At dinner two couples (Maria Vittoria and Sergio, Bruna and Pietro) celebrate their 50th marriage anniversary with two cakes ordered by our 'Hotel Director' Aurelio.

Day 6 - Monday, 20 April

Those who had hoped to sleep till late are badly disappointed because the ship, which was expected to call at Lisboa at 1:30, arrives at 8:00.

We immediately get ashore to visit the town. Lisboa is really beautiful but we have little time to see it. We see Plaza de el Comercio, el Rocio, el Parke Edoardo VII and the characteristic borough of Belem.

The ship leaves at 5:00 and the decks are crowded by people wishing to see the statue of Christ the King and the passage under the 25th April Bridge on the river Tago.

Before dinner, Gabriele, Maria, Teresa, Roberto and Tina are seen dancing. Rosanna goes on winning at the roulette. Mary and Riccardo only try to....

Day 7 - Tuesday, 21 May

The ship calls at Vigo, located inside a fantastic “rias”, before 9:00 and we go on the excursion to Santiago de Compostela, one of the most famous places of pilgrimage since the Middle Ages.

Travelling among green hills, we get there in less than 2 hours by coach. We walk to the Obradoiro Plaza. There are lots of tourists and of pilgrims who got there walking along the ‘camino’. After visiting the Cathedral and other churches we have lunch in a ‘cosy’ room that can accommodate up to 300 people.

In the afternoon we have some free time to go shopping for souvenirs!

A coach takes us to La Coruña where we arrive before the ship so we have time for a tour of the town by coach and see the ancient lighthouse.

The ship leaves at 7:30. Also this fjord is beautiful.

Day 8 - Wednesday, 22 May

The ship is underway and we have time to relax. The weather is not so fine and the wind blows on the weather decks.

The Master give a cocktail party for our group before the second gala evening. Aurelio presents the Master with our crest and the Master, in his turn, gives us a model ship.

Before dinner, Roberto, envied by all male members, dances with a beautiful Costa dancer in a white dress. J. Castle goes on courting all the single ladies in the group and accompanies several of them to the restaurant. After dinner some continue squandering their money at the slot machines while others play cards.

Day 9 - Thursday, 23 May

The ship calls at Dover at 8:am and we can see the White Cliffs.

We are going on the excursion to London which is 120 km far away.

J. Castle, possibly to meet other single ladies, gets on another coach.

In London ,we go on a short trip by boat on the Thames. The weather is unstable: sunshine, rain and even hail in the early afternoon. After getting off the boat, we rush to Buckingham Palace, Parliament Square for the Changing of the Guard and Westminster Abbey (we just see the outside). We stop only for a quick lunch.

By 6:00pm we are back onboard and start packing. Amazingly, our luggage has grown in size. The ship leaves Dover at 7:00pm. At dinner we have a surprise: a cake especially made for our group.

Before going to bed we leave our cases outside our cabins.

Day 10 - Friday, 24 May

The ship calls at Amsterdam at 9:00am.

At 10:00, we get ashore, retrieve our cases and get on a coach to the airport. Overweight, even minimal, is a serious problem since it is very expensive. So many shift items from one case to another. We go through the customs usual 'striptease'

At 1:00 we board the plane and land in Milan Linate at 3:00pm.

J. Castle takes a suitcase which is not his own and puts it on the Costa coach that is waiting for us. Antonio and Giovanni who are leaving the group to go to Parma by train, detect the mistake and put things right. And so, we finally leave for Genoa where we arrive before 6:00 pm

We all thank Aurelio Banchetti who made it possible for us to enjoy this fantastic experience.

