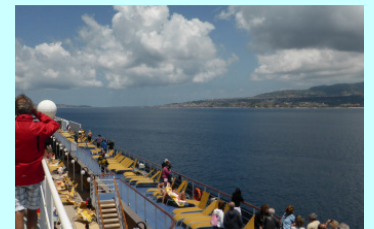
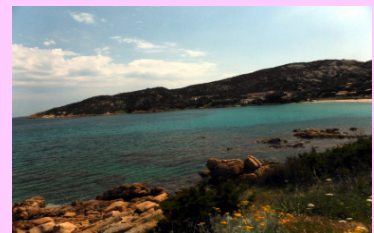


Our 2015 Cruise

“Le isole gioiello del mediterraneo”

Dino Fioravanti's Report



Day 1 - Saturday, May 23

The group, 24 from 63 to 83 years old (5 others will join us in Savona) is very punctual. We were supposed to be 27 but three, Manuela, Francesca e Guido, couldn't make it at the very last moment.

At 1.00 pm the vessel leaves for Savona and at 2pm all 27 are onboard.

After eating at the cafeteria, while waiting for our cases to be delivered to our cabins, many of us walk around the ship and notice that it is the very vessel we sailed on for our Brazil cruise. The cabins, however, seem to have shrunk a bit!

At 5.00pm there is the usual abandon ship drill. Once, at least, they showed us the lifeboats, now they only explain where the torch lights and the whistles are. However, they do it in over 10 different languages.....

At 6.00pm, the ship leaves the port bound for Toulon. It is drizzling. Pino and Dino are sure it will be fine during the rest of the cruise (and they were right)

At 8.15pm, theatre for almost everyone and then, at 9.00pm, dinner. As promised, we have a reserved sector in the dining hall. After dinner some go to the casino to start squandering their money.

Day 2 - Sunday, May 24

The ship calls at Toulon before 9.00am. The bay is fantastic and the weather is beautiful.

We split: some go on a Costa trip, others prefer to go ashore on their own.

The promenade by the sea is very nice. Some take a sightsee train through the town.

At 6.30pm the ship leaves Toulon. Gala night for everybody, evening dresses, suits etc. (Pino and Anna excluded: 'cause they didn't read *Today*, (where, for the first time, there is also our association logo). 'Littlecock', in his white smoking, stands out (maybe he was told that there are 640 women and only 529 men onboard).

After dinner, we disperse (music, shops, casino).

Day 3 - Monday, May 25

At 9.00am we get to Propriano. Some of us go to Bonifacio, others walk round the town and admire the beautiful Valico gulf.

The stop in Priano being fairly long, it is possible to get back on board for lunch and then go back ashore.

The ship leaves at 11.00 pm.

Day 4 - Tuesday, May 26

The ship calls at Olbia at 7.00am. Possible excursions: Maddalena and Caprera, Gallura or Costa Smeralda. Many choose Costa Smeralda and Baia Sardinia by coach.

Back on board there is time to take a walk on deck (Sergio is always there) and watch the ship leave port at 5.30pm

At 7.00, the usual cocktail for Costa Club members. Some ladies dance with young officers and *Littlecock*, still in his white smoking, dances with a handsome hostess (he is envied by Roberto: on the previous cruise he had been the lucky one).

Dino and Mariella celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a cake, flowers presented by their friends and tears of the *bride*. After that, many go to the casino. Vilma, Angela and Mariella try various slot machines.

Day 5 - Wednesday, May 27

We are in Trapani at 9.00am. Possible trips: Erice and Favignana.

The ones going to Erice are as unlucky as Fantozzi: the weather is bad. While in Trapani the weather is fairly fine, in Erice it is cloudy and foggy and the clouds seem to follow us around.

After lunch, some explore Trapani and find out that it's a town really worth visiting.

The ship leaves at 7.00pm and many watch the panorama from the decks.

Day 6 - Thursday, May 28

We reach La Valletta at 9.00 am and we get ashore to take part in the excursions or to wander on our own. The daring Rosanna and Maria Rosa choose the trip by jeep.

It is possible to catch a bus near the port and go on a long sightseeing tour of the island. The tour includes Mdina, Mosta and a long stretch of coast. Unfortunately, on the guided tour, a pickpocket takes Ida's wallet, credit cards and documents but she manages to get almost everything back.

La Valletta is a fascinating town and St John's Cathedral is beautiful. Souvenirs are less expensive than in other ports.

The ship leaves at 9.00 pm. The ones who decide to see the ship leave the port, are late for dinner.

Day 7 - Friday, May 29

Underway and relax. The weather is fairly nice and the decks are crowded with sunbathers. In Pino and Dino's opinion, considering the colour of his kin, Giorgio, should take a stay in Salerno into consideration.

Around 1.00pm the pilot for the passage through the Messina Strait climbs onboard. Almost everybody watches the passage from the highest decks.

Before dinner, the traditional photo with the (not present) Master for the Costa Club members. It is interesting to note how this 'rite' has changed over the years. In the beginning, the Master was present, later there was just his poster. Now there are only two photographers.

Day 8 - Saturday, May 30

We are in Salerno by 7.00am. There are several trips to choose from, so we split up.

Some of us decide to go ashore on their own. Rosanna asks a traffic warden for help and he very kindly stops a bus and lets us get on. We have no tickets but the driver tells us not to bother.

Lella runs to get us tickets for the Amalfi boat. At 9.00, we are ready to go. It's a fairly short crossing. We see Salerno, Vietri, Capo d'Orso, Maiori, Minori and Amalfi from the sea. We visit the Cathedral and walk around Amalfi.

Back on board, we learn that Cinzia and Gianmario, who had gone to visit Pompei, had to leave the cruise because of a sudden death in their family.

Rita, Caterina and Silvana finally find Ines they had lost track of.

Day 9 - Sunday, May 31

The ship sails at 2.00am and is in Capri's roadstead at around 7,00am. As usual, there are several trips and we split up.

We board the local tenders to get ashore. Getting off is a rather difficult activity for elderly people like us..

Capri is beautiful and very busy because it is a holiday (*Festa della Repubblica*).

The weather is really fine. We visit Capri, Anacapri, Marina Grande, Marina Piccola and San Michele's and Jovis's villas.

We get back to the tenders. Vilma, frightened by the wind, clings to the mast.

There is still time to sunbathe and look at the panorama.

After dinner, Vilma tries her luck at the slot machines and at the roulette. Mariella continues to try her luck at the slot machines

Now, if you win, you do no longer get the coins: what you win is credited to your credit cards.

Day 10 - Monday, June 1

We are still in Capri and many people go ashore again The island is always very crowded.

Virgilio eats all the prawns at the cafeteria.

The ship sails at 2.00pm. The cruise is nearly over. So, in the afternoon, many go to the meeting for the disembarking procedures. Others remain on deck to sunbathe.

In the evening, Vilma, the dealer's nightmare, scoops the roulette while Angela and Mariella, lose as much. Costa will be pleased....

Day 11 – June 2

The ship is in Portoferraio before 8.00am and we see the town surrounded by Cosimo de' Medici's strong walls.

Most of us go on the island tour. We are divided into 3 groups. The tour includes an unexpected long walk in Portoferraio, from the port to the top of the hills to visit Villa dei Mulini, Napoleon's home in 1814-1815.

After a two hours' walk we are at the port and we get on a coach that takes us to Porto Azzurro. We briefly see Lacona and Stella gulfs from the coach.

At around 1.35, after a long walk, we are back on board and have lunch at the cafeteria.

It's now time for packing and discovering that gifts and souvenirs have made it so difficult to close our suitcases that an extra bag is really needed.

At dinner we are offered the usual farewell cake by Costa.

Vilma wins a lot of money at a slot machine! Angela helps her collect her winnings.

By 1.00 am our suitcases are outside our cabins ready to be unloaded.



Day 12 – Wednesday, June 3

The ship arrives in Savona at 8.00am.

We have breakfast and wait for our turn to disembark.

At 9.00 we get our cases back and get on a Costa coach after saying goodbye to Claudio, Rita and Ines.

Everyone enjoyed the cruise and thanked the Association for its organisation.