

Long Beach Arrival – Getty Museum – Rodeo Drive – 2 Dec. 09: The day started with broken clouds, calm sea and temperature in the low 70s. We were approaching the Harbor at Long Beach, California and the lights of the city could be seen on the horizon.- At about 7am we were making the final approach to the dock and the cruise terminal in Long Beach as shown on the right. The white dome of the terminal and the stern of the Queen Mary cruise ship, which is now a hotel and museum could be seen beyond our dock.



The location of the Long Beach and Los Angeles in California is shown on the map to the right.



The street map of Los Angeles and the Long Beach area shows the location of the Amsterdam this morning at the dock in Long Beach.



Also shown on the street map is the location of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills where we toured later in the day. The direction to the Getty Museum and the LA Airport is also shown relative to other sites shown on the map.

The Amsterdam was tied up with the starboard side next to the dock so we had an excellent view of the hurried activity taking place below our verandah. We were ready to get off the ship so, after a good-bye with the staff and passengers friends over breakfast there wasn't much to do except watch the dock and the orchestration of moving about 1300 people off the ship with their luggage and restocking the Amsterdam for the start of the next cruise which was scheduled to start at 5pm this afternoon. In addition to food and supplies this port visit was the site of a significant change in ship's crew as part of the normal rotation of personnel.

We got busy taking photographs of the precise placement of trailers used to haul the containers filled with luggage of departing passengers, as shown on the right.



Ooops! Let's hope the porcelain pillow gifts weren't in those boxes.

Eventually trains loaded with luggage were headed for the terminal while empty ones returned for a reload.





Gede, one of the stewards in the Lido, had said he would be leaving early this morning on rotation and a lot of new people would be joining the crew. Shown on the left and below are some of the new crew people lined up on the dock being processed in to the Amsterdam.

For most of them this step marks the end of a long journey from Indonesia or the Philippine Islands. All are probably anxious about meeting their new boss and living companions in this new home-away-from-home.



Some nearby pelicans were more concerned with a school of fish under the dock than the noisy human activity going on above them.





We were sure glad to see the FedEx truck parked and ready to receive luggage from us and other passengers going home. Soon a second FedEx truck arrived on the scene as shown below and the well choreographed dance of emptying and refilling the Amsterdam continued.



About 9:15, right on schedule, our Pink #2 number was called so we could leave. With all the good times still fresh in our minds we walked off the ship for the last time (sniff – sniff). We had signed up for a tour of the Getty Museum and Rodeo Drive in Los Angeles during the day and we were staying tonight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel - Los Angeles Airport. After picking up our one piece of luggage from the well arranged luggage room we found our tour bus. Our Tour Guide, Abe, and driver, Nathan, got us on our way for about a 5 hour tour. We said goodbye to the skyline of Long Beach as we headed north through Los Angeles to the Getty Museum.



The Getty Museum of Art is part of the Getty Center which is located on 750 acres of land in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains in the northern part of Los Angeles. Our guide, Abe, said the Getty Center is loaded with cash from the late J. Paul Getty (1892-1997) oil fortune and subsequent investments by the Getty Foundation. When they want a piece of art they buy it at any price so competing art collectors hate to see that Getty is involved in any auction. The Museum is housed in the Getty Center which was designed by the architect, Richard Meier who did brilliant things with the project. The Getty Center was opened to the public in December 1997. The Getty Art Museum houses the extensive collection acquired by Getty when he was alive with additions since his death.

Our bus took us through the ticket gate and then into the parking garage which is perched on the side of a steep hill. Abe guided us through the garage and up an elevator to the top floor where we found the lower terminal of the tram, shown on the right. The tram is a cable driven people mover with several cars running on rubber wheels in a concrete channel. The tram stopped and after exiting passengers got off on the right side the doors on the left side opened and we all filed in. The tram was pulled silently up the steep winding concrete channel and we got a good view of Los Angeles on the way up. We arrived at Getty Center on top of the hill after about a 10 minute ride.



We left the tram and followed Abe uphill across a broad plaza leading to stairs that took us to the entrance of the Getty Art Museum. Along the way we got this photo on the left of the sculpture called "Air" that shows a woman who appears to be floating on air. The steps and all exterior surfaces of the Museum buildings are made of Italian Travertine limestone. It is absolutely beautiful but the cost must have been staggering.



We attended a short introductory TV movie that gave us some idea of where different kinds of art were located in the museum. Abe had told us the most famous painting in the museum was by Vincent van Gogh and was called Irises. Of course, we wanted to see that painting and were expecting to see mobs of people around it like we had seen last year when taking a look at the Mona Lisa painting at the Louvre in Paris. All paintings are located on the 2nd floors of the Getty Museum buildings so we were directed to the 2nd floor of the West Pavilion building. When we arrived we thought there must have been a mistake because only 2 or 3 other people were in the room looking at an array of 20 or so paintings. However, after a quick look around the room we spotted "Irises" without a single person near it. We gave it a close look and it looked beautiful but to our untrained eyes it was hard to imagine that this was the most wonderful piece of art in the museum. We were not allowed to take pictures inside the buildings so we were handicapped in using our camera to record the scene. Not to try to capture the spirit or detail of Irises but just to record the general features of it, a copy obtained from Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louvre> is shown below.



We were more impressed with the architecture of the West Pavilion which was decorated by a poster advertising the exhibit of Irises, as shown on the right.



We decided to take a look at a photography exhibit being shown on the ground floor of the West Pavilion. The theme of the photographs on display was "The Worker". There were hundreds of photographs from the earliest days of photography to the present arranged on the wall in many rooms. Most of the photographs were of people doing menial but essential tasks.

The work of Irving Penn (1917-2009) was especially featured with his gallery of photos showing trades people carrying the tools of their trade. This photo on the right of a poster outside the building contains a Penn photograph of a street sweeper.



We only had 1.5 hours to see the whole museum so after looking at the photographs for 10 or 15 minutes we decided to go outside and tour the Central Garden. It was designed by the artist Robert Irwin and we had heard that it was magnificent. We were not disappointed.

On the way to the garden we walked across the Museum Courtyard. We took a picture to illustrate the wonderful combination of architecture, reflecting pool and plant life, as shown on the left. The photo also illustrates that the museum was relatively uncrowded when we



visited today. Abe said this was an unusually small crowd today and the weekends are not so good for viewing the artwork because of the large number of people.

We continued on towards the Central Garden and passed by some trees nearing their peak in fall leaf color, as shown on the right.



We approached the Central Garden and got our first full view which is shown below.



We were fortunate to be visiting on a bright fall day so the colors of the flowers and texture of the shrubbery made a scene so beautiful it was hard for us to describe. Luckily we had our trusty camera and there were no rules against photography out here. In this picture above the two large sprays of flowers near the middle were supported by hundreds of iron reinforcing bars (rebar) normally used to reinforce concrete. The rebar was bent with just the right contour and then the bars were welded together to make the circular "vases" on which bougainvillea grew.

We walked across the Central Garden to a spot that gave this stupendous view of the garden as shown below.



This scene rivaled any landscape we have ever had the pleasure to observe. This was the masterpiece of artist, Robert Irwin. A museum Docent who had just finished giving a tour through the gardens happened by and said we were standing at what they call the "Power Spot" of the Central Garden. We believe her!

Our luck held and a couple of friends, Bob and Pat, from the Amsterdam also came by at just that time. We managed to get a picture of the four of us in this glorious garden, as shown on the right.



We then spent some time just taking photos of flowers that we saw blooming all around us. Some examples are shown below.



We had never seen pomegranates on the tree until we saw these, on the left, in the Central Garden today.

On our way out of the Central Garden we passed a lively group of school children, shown



on the left, who were visiting the Museum today. They were well behaved but from the tenor of the snippets of conversation we heard they were more interested in what other kids were doing than in the beauty of this place. However, this would seem to be an ideal field trip to start the process of appreciation for the arts in children.

Further up in the Garden Plaza Cafe there were more school children, as shown on the right, but these seem to be an older and more sophisticated crowd.



When we arrived in the parking garage this morning there were rows and rows of yellow school buses and we knew there would be school kids out

on a field trip. We were worried that the place might seem over run with the kids but the layout of the Getty Center and the size of it simply swallowed them up. We noted their presence but it was not distracting.

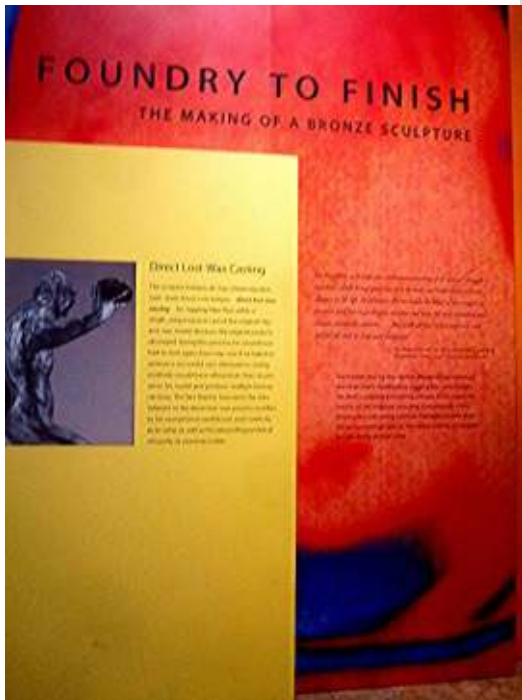


We passed by a plaza where the trees had been severely trimmed to give the trees an interesting shape and texture, as shown on the left. There were several little beauty spots like this to enjoy.

Our time was running out for the visit and we hadn't really checked out the sculptures around the museum. Here was one, on the right, that stimulated an artistic gene in Orlin's eye. It was entitled "Delusions of Grandeur". Unfortunately, with only one artistic gene to work with, Orlin couldn't come up with an interpretation of the meaning of the sculpture or the title.



We went to the North Pavilion where most of the sculptures were on display. We were overwhelmed by the range of



subjects and types of sculpture. The description on posters for an exhibit on the "Lost Wax Process", shown on the left and below looked more like something we might understand. We spent most of our time going through this excellent display which showed how a bronze sculpture was made by the "Lost Wax Process".



This exhibit showed how all the difficult physical problems in casting a bronze statue were overcome. They used a nude athlete as an example of a sculpture to be created by the Lost Wax Process. After working our way through all the complicated intermediate forms of the statue we could see the finished product as shown on the right. We ended up with some notion of how a relatively thin layer of bronze could be so accurately shaped around a clay figure to achieve the classic look of a bronze sculpture.



With our remaining minutes available for this part of the tour we raced out to a point between the South and East Pavilions where we were told there was a great view of Los Angeles. This was a relatively clear day and we were able to see the skyline of the downtown area fairly well, as shown in the photo below.



The view was good but the Central Garden was still our favorite spot in the Getty Museum.

Our 1.5 hour allotted time for the Getty Museum had nearly run out and we had to rejoin our tour group. However, we were able to take a minute to snap this photo documenting the visit of Barbara's library card to this important site for art and culture, as shown on the right.



Abe led us down to where we could catch the tram back to the parking garage. A lot of people had decided

to leave about this time (1:30 pm) so there was a line to get on the tram. We met up with some more school children on field trips, as shown on the left.



They were well behaved and some even gave deference to us "old folks" trying to get onto the tram.

We boarded the tram and it silently wound its way down the concrete channel along the hillside to the parking garage. Soon we were on the bus and Abe was describing points of interest as we made our way to Rodeo Drive and, as he exaggerated, a shopping opportunity of a lifetime.

As we made our way through Los Angeles towards Beverly Hills we saw a gas station with the price posted as shown on the right. The \$3.059 per gallon for regular gas used to seem expensive but after seeing gasoline as high as \$7 per gallon in some foreign ports on the cruise this price now looks like a bargain.



Our bus was soon taking us in to the city of Beverly Hills as we passed the sign shown on the left. Abe had explained earlier that most cities around here, like Long Beach and San Pedro were not incorporated cities but were really part of the city of Los Angeles. However, Beverly Hills had a lot of money and the citizens were successful in getting the city chartered with administration completely independent of the city of Los Angeles.

Within Beverly Hills the premier street for high-end goods and services is Rodeo Drive. The word "Rodeo" must be pronounced "Road – A – Oh" if you want to sound like someone who had actually been there. The exclusive section of Rodeo Drive is only two blocks long. We cruised down Rodeo Drive while Abe pointed out stores like Tiffany's, Versace, Juicy Couture, Giorgio Armani and others. The bus was parked on Dayton Way near the intersection with Rodeo Drive. We were turned loose with 20 minutes to spend strolling up and down Rodeo Drive checking out the styles and quality that were on display.



The first order of business was to get photographic evidence that Barbara's library card had arrived on Rodeo Drive. We used a convenient street sign for that job as shown on the left. The Van Cleef & Arpels store is on the corner behind Barbara.

We then proceeded to walk up and down the two block section of Rodeo Drive. We did some window shopping at Versage's as shown below.



We had counted on doing some Christmas shopping in the Bijan store on Rodeo Drive. When we arrived we were disappointed to find that an appointment was necessary, as shown on the right. It was probably just as well. This store has been called the most expensive in the world. A pair socks can cost \$50 and a suit \$50,000. Prices like those would stretch our Christmas shopping budget pretty thin.



While all the opulence of Rodeo Drive was impressive there were some signs that the current economic downturn may have had some impact even in this wealthy city. In just the two block stretch of Rodeo Drive that we walked, there were several stores that were closed with "For Lease" signs posted as shown below.





We had a lot of fun riding Hop-On – Hop-Off buses in some of the cities we visited on the cruise to Australia and New Zealand. We were happy to see that even here in Beverly Hills and Rodeo Drive you could find a Hop-On – Hop-Off bus, as shown on the left.

Our allotted time on Rodeo Drive ran out and everyone got back on the bus. We moved slowly through the Beverly Hills traffic.

Our guide, Abe, was a man of many talents. In addition to being a tour guide he also worked as an actor. At one point he got very engrossed in a conversation on his cell phone. Afterwards he said that he had a conversation with his agent and he was just booked to play a part in a TV commercial for the Smart Car by Mercedes. He was quite happy about that.

Abe's interest in cars covered the spectrum from the economical Smart Car to the Ferrari and Maserati sport cars. He took the bus by the Ferrari and Maserati dealership, shown on the right. He said that an oil change in that dealership would cost about \$800 but there were lots of "customer care" perks like a high priced loaner car or valet service that went along with the oil change.



As we approached the boundary of Beverly Hills, Abe said that pawn shops were banned in Beverly Hills because they were considered a low class seedy kind of business. An enterprising pawn shop owner found a way to go around the regulations and got his pawn shop approved by calling it "Collateral Lender Inc." As our bus rolled by we got a photo of his storefront in Beverly Hills, as shown on the left.



Abe said some high class jewelry could be found in the Collateral Lender shop for about 30% of the retail price.

Our tour of the Getty Museum and Rodeo Drive was completed and our bus headed for the Los Angeles Airport. Most of us would get off at the Airport but there was one lady on the tour who needed to return to the Amsterdam where she would cruise from Long Beach to Mexico and the Panama Canal before returning to Los Angeles. Our friends Lyle and Marjorie were also taking that cruise but the logistics of us getting off the Amsterdam on the same day they board the ship ruled out a meeting today.

At the Los Angeles Airport we said goodbye to Abe and caught a shuttle bus to the Crowne Plaza Hotel at the airport. We checked in and after dinner settled down for the night. Tomorrow we face the post-cruise reality of getting ourselves back home via Delta Airline.