

Day 60 – At Sea –the Lido Buffet – Beth Foggin - 24 Nov. 09: Today began with the sea calmer than yesterday, broken clouds and temperatures in the low 80s. Yesterday we finally got caught up on posting of the blog after 6 consecutive days of fantastic port visits in New Zealand. This was our last day at sea before arriving in Honolulu, Hawaii.

We thought that this would be a good time to describe the Lido Buffet where we eat most of our meals. The restaurant is really well designed and managed. The stewards who offer their services day after day are especially appreciated for making the Lido Restaurant a pleasant experience. You can hear the occasional complaint but in our experience this restaurant meets and exceeds the challenge of any other mass meal serving venue we have experienced.

The Lido Restaurant is divided into two identical port and starboard buffet lines amidships on Deck 8 of the Amsterdam.

As you approach the restaurant from any direction the ever- present Purell dispenser is available. A dollop of alcohol based gel from one of these will cleanse your hands of any bacteria they may have picked up.



When you enter the port or starboard restaurant the first thing you may see is this empty shelf. If you are a cruiser from a year ago you would have been surprised that the place where trays were normally stacked is now empty as shown on the left.

This is a typical view of the buffet line that a person gets when first entering the starboard side restaurant. If the stewards behind the counter see you taking pictures you may get some high signs like we are getting here. Along the tile pathway in front of the counter

some stanchions with blue ropes have been put in place to separate the different food types (salads, meat, bread, omelets, etc.). This innovation goes along with the fact that trays are now missing from the buffet.



Thinking back to the last time you stood in a buffet line with trays,

perhaps you remember how the person ahead of you was taking their sweet time in deciding which leaf of lettuce or roll of bread to take for their tray. Since the food is all “free” they may also take two or more entrees just to be sure they got something they liked. Meanwhile you and everyone else in line waited for their turn. The delay in your passing through the buffet can be irritating and if that person doesn’t eat the two entrees they may have taken on a whim there is significant waste.

There has been a lot of grumbling about the missing trays in the Lido. At the last Cruise Critic meeting Henk Mensink, the Hotel Manager, gave the rationale for this change. The new approach, without trays and with the rope barriers, has addressed the frustrating delay in line and the food waste. Now you select a plate and enter the buffet line at whatever food type you may want. Usually the line for that item will be short and you can get what you want quickly. In addition, if you want a second selection of food you can simply return to the buffet line. Walking back and forth to the buffet line is increased a bit and that is the main complaint. However, the delay in getting what you want and the number of full plates of food left on the tables has definitely been reduced. We have not found the new system to be a real burden and we love the fact that the lines are shorter.

At the different food stations you can order what you want and the cheerful staff behind the counter will produce it in short order. These guys shown here may be a little more animated than usual but everyone seems to be in a good mood.



The Deli Counter guys can make just about any sandwich you can imagine. Here on the left Barbara's favorite deli steward is taking her order for a, non-challenging, tuna salad sandwich today.



In the mornings we usually like a glass of juice and there is a good selection. These guys on the left keep the juice poured into glasses sitting on a refrigerated shelf.

Speaking of juice, there is a marvelous machine in the juice bar that crushes oranges one by one and collects the juice minutes before you pick up your glass. Here on the right is the orange juice machine in action. Oranges come down the wire chute and are picked up by the



constantly turning wheels that crush the orange and squeeze out the juice. This is a fascinating process to watch, particularly if you like orange juice.





Dry cereal in single serving boxes is available at the breakfast food counter. Freshly sliced fruit, along with cottage cheese and Swiss muesli containing low fat yogurt, raisins, milk, oatmeal, and honey, is also displayed every morning at the breakfast bar.

The pastry counter is a tempting place anytime, but especially in the mornings.



Close to the pastry counter is the coffee dispenser where you can get a cup of hot coffee 24 hours a day. Barbara and Jean met this morning at this popular spot.



A wide variety of tea bags are available, as shown on the left, along with hot water from the coffee machines for those folks who prefer tea any time of day.

The bread counter is loaded down with a wide choice of rolls and muffins, as shown on the right.



When it comes time for dessert there is plenty to be had as shown on the right and below.



The ever favorite, ice cream, is also available in multiple flavors at lunchtime. You can get a bowl or carry away an ice cream cone, as shown on the right.



While the cooks behind the buffet counter are doing their thing, the stewards out in front serving at the tables keep us happy. These guys



are all from Indonesia and they show a work ethic and concern for us passengers that is extraordinary.

Rudy, shown on the left, comes by regularly with hot coffee in the morning and ice tea at lunchtime.



Pas, another one of our helpful friends in the Lido, is shown on the right. We were recently lamenting the end of the cruise. Pas offered this wise bit of life philosophy, “The end of the cruise comes but the journey of life goes on.” We’ll need to keep that in mind on the way home.

Whenever you drop by the Lido you can count on these happy guys shown below, to give you a hand.



Gede, (pronounced G'day, as in Australian for "Good-Day") shown on the left, is often present to bring drinks or help in other ways.

Gede also works in the Lido's special Canaletto Italian Restaurant during the evening.

In the evening the Lido is transformed into a slightly more elegant dining room by the addition of white tablecloths to the tables. It is still a buffet restaurant but, unlike the main dining room, you can come at anytime and on those nights when formal clothes are recommended for the main dining room, you don't have to wear them in the Lido. If you want to dine with friends who are not your regular table mates in the main dining room this is a great alternative that can be used on the spur of the moment. A view of the Lido with people dining in the evening is shown on the right.



The Canaletto Restaurant is part of the Lido but is partially partitioned off from the rest of the Lido by frosted glass and half walls. It was opened earlier this year to provide Italian cuisine to passengers who wanted an alternative to the buffet style of dining. Unlike the fine dining in the Pinnacle Restaurant on deck 3, there is no charge for the meals at the Canaletto. For breakfast and lunch the Canaletto Restaurant seating space is open to people using the Lido Buffet just like any other part of the Lido. However, in the evening it is restricted to passengers who want complete table service and meals ordered from the menu. Reservations are recommended. Shown on the right is the Canaletto manager standing ready when open for guests in the evening.



This classy permanent display in the Lido is in front of the entrance to the Canaletto Restaurant.

There have been good reports about dining in Canaletto's. We have not yet dined there but have reservations soon for dinner with friends, Ann and Dick (ANSalberg).

The entrance to Canaletto's is shown on the right. It is near large glass doorway to the Lido Pool Deck.



That's all we have to say about the Lido Restaurant on the Amsterdam. It may sound like a sales pitch but we really like the place and think the staff does a great job there.

At 11am we went to hear the last presentation by Beth Foggin who is the Explorations speaker concentrating on subjects related to Australia and the South Pacific. Today her subject was an "Epilogue to Captain Bligh's Mis-Adventures in the South Pacific". She gave a perspective on Captain Bligh that was different from the tyrannical demon portrayed in popular movies for the captain who was set adrift during the mutiny on the Bounty. It was consistent with other speakers we have heard on this cruise and painted the picture of Bligh as a perfectionist who was basically a good captain and superb navigator but suffered from a lack of charisma. He had the bad luck of having several of the mutineers on the Bounty being part of powerful families in England. When the mutineers were brought to trial, the families defended their errant sons and brothers by defaming poor old Captain Bligh. It's a pretty convincing story and a sad commentary on how politics and bad human behavior can end up punishing the innocent.

After dinner we went to the entertainment in the Queen's Lounge. Tonight there was a variety show featuring stars from three recent shows in the Lounge. First was Marty Brill, the comedian. He kept us laughing from start to finish of his act. He was followed by the brother and sister dance team called the Kent Dancers. They did a couple spectacular rhumba, samba and foxtrot routines, with lots of lifts and spins. It is no wonder that they have won many dance titles around the world. The final act was a guitar player and female singer couple called Kimika. They did a combination of comedy monologue and rock music. All of these acts leave in Honolulu tomorrow and we will get a new set of entertainers for the trip back to Los Angeles.

The Amsterdam plowed on through rough seas all day. We have escaped being sea sick but a few people on board are suffering ill effects.