

Day 38 – At Sea – Cruise Critic Meeting – 3 Nov. 09: The day started overcast and stormy looking. There were white capped waves all around and the ship had a slight pitching motion. The rolling was apparently cancelled out by the stabilizers. The only special activity today was a Cruise Critic Meeting.

At 10am we went to the Crow's Nest for a Cruise Critic Meeting that Karen (kweenkaren) had organized. Karen opened the meeting and welcomed the new people who joined the cruise in Sydney. Both Henk Mensink the Hotel Manager and Bruce Scudder the Cruise Director were at the meeting. Here are some photos taken as the meeting progressed.



Karen opened the meeting.

Henk Minsink and Bruce Scudder (1st and 3rd from the left, standing)



Henk and Bruce complimented the Cruise Critic group for promptly meeting in the Explorer's Lounge when getting the escort service to the tender. Bruce said that we were always ready to go when he came by to pick up the group to catch the early tenders going ashore.

In response to a question about the lack of "Dam Dollars" activities Bruce explained that in response to passenger surveys, the Dam Dollar program was terminated and replaced by more emphasis on tournaments, Exploration speakers and craft projects. The experience with Dam Dollars was that the purpose of some activities, like walking the deck, was defeated by people who would show up just to collect Dam Dollars and then disappear without actually participating in the activity. However, Bruce offered to redeem for prizes any Dam Dollars that people may have brought on board with them.

Henk responded to a question about the lack of trays in the Lido Buffet. He said that the trays were eliminated in response to passenger surveys that expressed dissatisfaction with the very slow lines in the buffet that were caused by people slowly loading up their trays. There was also a lot of food waste as people would take more than they could eat while they were in the buffet line. Now the buffet line is broken into several different food types so there is not a single line but several lines and although you may have to make several trips from your table to the buffet, you find that there are no long lines for any one food type.

The Cruise Critic group seemed to agree that what Bruce and Henk said made sense. At least there was no rebuttal to the logic offered by Henk and Bruce.

There were several announcements by Cruise Critic people who had organized private tours in upcoming ports. The only time that it is absolutely necessary to meet in the Explorer's Lounge prior to leaving on a tour is when we have tender service. When we are docked the tour organizer can have their group meet on the ship or on the dock.







In the informal discussion period after the meeting we met Bob and Pat (bobpatj) and Nicole (nicoleonthesea) who joined the cruise in Sydney. Bob and Pat were interested in some of details about starting a blog. Nicole was also interested in the blog and she brought some messages from the Cruise Critic people who have been following the blogs for this cruise.

Later in the day, as shown on the right, we met with Nicole and showed her how we upload each of our blog entries to the server on the Internet.



At the dinner tonight Barbara had an Australian rack of lamb dish. A picture of the rack of lamb is shown in the picture below.



Tomorrow we arrive in Melbourne, Australia about 7am. We have an all day tour that Pauline organized and we are looking forward to it.