

Day 31 – At Sea – Back Stage Queen’s Lounge – Captain’s Dinner - 27 Oct. 09: The day started with overcast sky and calm sea. We were sailing south along the East Coast of Australia towards Brisbane, our next port of call. We were often within sight of islands as the ship reentered the Great Barrier Reef at Palm Passage. We sailed past the Palm Islands, the Whitsunday Island group and the Cumberland Islands. We exited the Great Barrier Reef at Sandy Cape and continued the voyage towards Brisbane.

While sailing over the Great Barrier Reef the water surface was sometimes streaked with a yellow powder substance as shown in this photo. We assumed it was given off by plant life living in the reef.



The islands we passed were usually in the distance so details could not be discerned. Here are a couple examples of what we saw from time to time.



In the photo below it appeared that the mainland of Australia could have been behind the islands that were closer.



Early in the morning we worked on the blog entry for Day 30 in Cairns, Australia.

At 10am we went to the Queen's Lounge where Bruce, the Cruise Director, gave a presentation that included a tour of the backstage area. First Bruce made some introductory remarks where he introduced the technicians that run the sound and lighting and coordinate activity back stage.



Then he had us come up on the stage. The first thing we got was a view of the theater from the



viewpoint of a person making a presentation from the stage. This picture on the left is what an entertainer sees when the House Lights are turned on. When the House Lights are turned off only the people in the front row are visible.

embedded into the stage. The performers, such as the Amsterdam Singers and Dancers actually sing and dance as the turntable rotates with them on it.

Bruce wanted to demonstrate how difficult it is for a person to maintain balance while changing position on the turntable as is done during a normal performance. Barbara was chosen for one of the demonstrations where a line of people was formed across the center of the turntable. As shown on the right. Then as the turntable was rotated the line of people walked forward and backward to change location so that they could feel the forces

The next thing we did was gather around the turn table that is



that the performers would feel while walking or dancing around the moving stage. It took real effort to maintain balance. The people on the moving turntable got a new appreciation for what the performers must deal with as they smoothly perform the movements that are part of the show. We could also see that backstage, as shown in the photo on the right, the technicians were operating the controls that made the turntable move. In addition to the rotary motion a part of the turntable could be



shown on the right. One thing we learned was that the lead singers don't have to be accomplished dancers but the other cast members must be able to both sing and dance well. This young woman in the photo was on her first working contract since completing her formal education.



made to rise up to form a stair step arrangement that is used in some of the dance shows. That part of the stage was raised and we could see the complex hydraulic mechanism doing the lifting, as shown on the left

Bruce then interviewed a couple of the cast members from the Singers and Dancers as



After the interviews we were invited to tour the backstage dressing rooms. The stage of the Queen's Lounge is located very close to the front of the ship where the sides are tapered inward towards the sharp bow. We have always wondered how there was room to have dressing rooms behind the stage which already appeared to be as far forward on the ship as possible. We were shown the small compartment where many of the costumes are hung, as shown on the left.



Tapping into the spirit of the theater Barbara took a flight of fancy and checked out one of the costumes that she would like to try on.



Today we found out that it was possible to have a dressing room but it is small, about 8 feet wide and 15 feet long. The performers really have to be a friendly group to operate in this facility shown on the left.

After the tour of the dressing room there was an opportunity to pose for a picture with a couple of the show girls from the Singers and Dancers cast. In a cruel accident of timing, Orlin got stuck with the photography duty.

We thought the backstage tour Bruce had orchestrated was a real success. There were probably over a hundred passengers who participated and everyone seemed to be happy with what we learned.



In a time honored tradition, the Captain's Grand Voyage Dinner was held in the dining room this evening. The dress was formal and the dining room was decorated with Captain's four gold striped shoulder bars as shown in this photo on the right. The stewards were decked out in Captain's hats and shiny gold outfits.



Our table stewards, Romli and Didi looked spiffy, as usual.



Even we passengers looked pretty good in our formal finery. Captain Eversen picked up the tab for the wine tonight and that contributed to the festive atmosphere as the evening progressed. We got a group photo at our table. Left to right: George, Judy, Orlin, Barbara, Valerie and Karen.



As usual, Valerie managed to almost disappear for the group photograph. The photography frenzy almost got out of control when Valerie and Karen engaged in a session of “Dueling Cameras”.

The delicious Captain’s Dinner of lobster, steak and



other delicacies put everyone in a good mood. There was a nice ice sculpture of a swan at the entrance to the dining room. We stopped at the ice sculpture for a photograph to commemorate this happy occasion.

When we returned to our stateroom we found a nice surprise as a pillow gift that the stewards had left for us. We received two special Christmas tree ornaments. They were Royal Goedewaagen's authentic hand-painted Dutch ceramics as shown in the photo on the right.



This was a wonderful way to bring this day at sea to an end. Tomorrow will be another day at sea before we arrive at Brisbane, Australia.