

Day 27–At Sea–Deck Chairs - Australian Immigration – Formal Night – 23 Oct. 09:

The day started with overcast sky. There wasn't much wind but the sea was rocking and rolling a bit. There were whitecaps visible all around. The Amsterdam was not rolling much, thanks to the stabilizers, so we didn't get sea sick. It was comfortable out on the lower promenade deck so we took an early morning walk of a couple miles (7 laps) before breakfast.

The Lower Promenade Deck (#4) has the nice teak decking that extends all the way around the ship. It takes 3.5 laps around the deck to equal a mile. Wooden deck chairs are arranged along part of the deck, up against the inner wall, for people to lounge in and look out to sea, sleep, read or whatever they want to do. Every morning foam pads are brought out of storage and carefully put on each of the deck chairs as this deck steward on the right is doing. This represents a lot of work each day but it provides an enjoyable convenience for people to get the fresh ocean air and view as they cruise.



On this cruise we noticed for the first time that a different kind of deck chair appeared on the promenade deck as shown on the left. The few blue chairs lined up with the old dark wooden chairs looked disturbingly like an invasive species and we became suspicious.

These new, blue and white, chairs are made with plastic webbing, instead of a foam cushion, and the frame is of aluminum instead of varnished hardwood like the rest of the deck chairs. These new chairs look comfortable and, without the pad and varnished hardwood require much less daily attention. They probably represent a logical trend away from the traditional wooden deck chair. Like the teakwood deck, we probably better enjoy the wooden deck chairs while they last because their days are numbered.

While walking we met Carol and Grace, two lovely ladies we have shared tours with in Nuka Hiva and in Suva, Fiji. We took advantage of the occasion by snapping this photo



on the left. Carol and Grace are interested in climbing the bridge with us in Sydney so we made arrangements today to coordinate that adventure with them.

There had been several announcements since leaving Port Vila about preparation for our arrival in Australia. Some Australian immigration officials had boarded the Amsterdam in Port Vila. Their purpose was to

carry out all the immigration procedures for passengers and crew before we arrived in Australia so that there would be no delay in going ashore when we arrive at the first port-of-call in Cairns.

They set up a station to check each person's passport photograph against the actual face as we filed by their table. We lined up alphabetically at assigned times and went through the process. Although the actual "face check" took less than a minute, the whole process of conducting a check of all 1300 passengers took most of the morning and the lines of people wrapped around the ship's Explorer Lounge area on Deck #5. A sample of the line is shown in this picture on the right. Everyone was a bit miffed by the inconvenience of having to wait in line for about an hour to complete the immigration check. In order to smooth our ruffled feathers the Captain had a clever little poem about the immigration check put on each table at dinner tonight and we were all given a complimentary glass of champagne with our dessert.



Speaking of dinner, it was a formal night so we all showed up in our finery. This is always a good occasion to have a picture taken of our table. Sandy was missing tonight and Valerie hid her head (of course) but otherwise we got this good photo of our happy group. Going clockwise from the front we have Karen, Valerie, Orlin, Barbara, Wanda, George and Judy. We have to enjoy Wanda's company while we can because she will be leaving the cruise in Sydney.



We always enjoy the flower arrangements put out by the Amsterdam staff. While passing through the Explorer's Lounge-Library area tonight Barbara got this picture of an interesting new arrangement shown on the left.



Apparently, a whole collection of beautiful flowers was picked up in Port Vila and the flowers were on display around the Deck #5, Explorer Lounge and Ocean Bar area. The following is a sample of some of the ones we liked.



With this visual treat we bring the description of today's activity to an end. There will be another restful day at sea tomorrow and then late the next day we arrive in Cairns, Australia.