

## CRUISE NEWS

### February 2006



No. 9 on our Top 10 List: the waterslide!

### TOP 10 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT *CARNIVAL CONQUEST*

If you think that cruising on a megaliner with over 3,000 other guests plus crew members is a recipe for long lines and lackluster service, you may want to reconsider. As cruise lines add more choices and enhancements, the big ships take on a more intimate feel and truly offer something for everyone. On a recent cruise on the 110,000-ton *Carnival Conquest*—the newest and largest ship sailing from Galveston-- here are The Top 10 Things We Liked Best:

1. *Embarkation*: Carnival was well-prepared for the 3,196 passengers boarding that day. There were plenty of smiling agents helping to expedite the check-in process. In fact, within an hour from leaving our home on the West End, we were on board the ship.

2. *The Decor*: *Conquest's* striking interiors pay homage to famous Impressionist and post Impressionist painters. The result is a beautiful art-themed vessel with eye-pleasing colors, shapes and patterns everywhere you look. You've got to love the massive 4 foot long by 3 feet high sunflower sculpture inspired by the famous Van Gogh painting at the entry to the Monet Restaurant.

3. *Dining Options*: Besides the traditional dining in the Monet and Renoir Dining Rooms, *Carnival Conquest* offers an incredible array of dining options. For casual dining at breakfast, lunch and dinner, there's Restaurant Cezanne on Deck 9 (Lido). Consider these choices: Oriental fare from *P.C.'s Wok*, fresh sandwiches from *Paul's Deli*, steaks, burgers, hot dogs from *The Grille*, *Sur Mer Seafood Delights* (located on the upper level of Lido) offers a respectable fish 'n chips, spicy bouillabaisse, seared tuna, and ceviche, *The Rotisserie* and the 24-hour *Pizzeria*. Non-stop desserts, fresh fruits and salads complete the picture. We had no problem finding seating anywhere. Dieters take heart: the dining room menus offer low carb selections and spa cuisine with items changing daily. There's also 24-hour room service.

(more)

4. *The Supper Club*: *Conquest's* exclusive reservations-only supper club, ***The Point***, offers extraordinary cuisine from award winning chefs and exceptional service. Be prepared to spend at least two hours for this dining experience at a cost of \$30 per person. Every course—from the Caesar salad prepared tableside, French onion soup, escargot, filet mignon and veal chop--was beautifully presented and was every bit as delicious as it looked. Some guests stopped to photograph dishes as they were served. A stunning arrangement of chocolate specialties completed the sumptuous meal.

5. *Entertainment*: Shipboard entertainment for us has always left much to be desired. Showtime in the three-level ***Toulouse Lautrec Lounge*** may have changed all that. Las Vegas-style shows with dazzling sets, fabulous costumes and state of the art lighting almost made you wish the productions were longer. Thoughtfully arranged cocktail tables meant more space and legroom throughout the lounge. With 1400-seats, the lounge never seemed crowded and the stage was always visible.

6. *The Beds*: Imagine a restful night's sleep away from home and no morning backache! The best surprise of the entire cruise was the Carnival Comfort Bed Sleep System. Of all the cruises we've taken on many different lines, this new bed was by far the most comfortable we've ever slept on. Manufactured exclusively for Carnival, the Carnival Comfort Bed includes: an extra-durable 8-inch spring mattress and box springs; duvet of 100% hypoallergenic down; new generation down-like pillows and high-quality, cotton-blend satin-striped sheets and pillowcases. Guests have been asking how they could purchase their own systems and Carnival now makes them available at [carnivalcomfortbed.com](http://carnivalcomfortbed.com).

7. *Camp Carnival and Youth Programs*: There were over 600 children on board and we rarely saw any of them.

8. *Silly Games*: Carnival seems to excel when it comes to fun activities. Example: the Men's Hairy Chest Contest poolside. Enough said.

9. *The Water Slide*: True, it's a far cry from Schlitterbahn, but there's something very cool about sliding down a 214-foot spiral slide 14 decks about the sparkling blue Caribbean waters.

10. *Towel Animals*: Not just for kids, we looked forward to returning to our cabin after dinner to see what creature would be waiting for us. The cabin stewards are really skilled at creating these animals. Even after purchasing the book *Carnival Towel Creations* onboard, our versions did not quite measure up.

Maybe we should've added another item to this list: the unassisted debarkation. If guests aren't on a scheduled flight and if they can carry their luggage off the ship without help, they can participate in early debarkation provided they have settled their ship's

(more)

**Cruise News**  
**February 2006**  
**Page 3**

account. We were able to leave the ship at 6:30 am, complete our Customs and Immigration inspection and arrive at home by 7:15 am. What a great way to cruise.

*Carnival Conquest* offers a 7-day Western Caribbean itinerary to Grand Cayman, Montego Bay and Cozumel departing every Sunday from Galveston.

\* \* \*

At the Past Passenger Party, we received some great news. *Carnival Freedom*, now under construction and set to debut in February 2007, will be calling Galveston home. No further details were available, so stay tuned.

\* \* \* \* \*