

NHShorty & Buffalobill's between Christmas & New Year's Cruise and Visit

Day 4, December 28, 2013

Trip Overview:

In case you've forgotten, this trip was a combination 3 day cruise on the Disney Dream, followed by 3 days/2 nights at the WL at WDW.

Day 4:

Our biggest complaint about our cabin was the tiny TV and its placement way across the room from the bed. As you can see in this picture from our first day on the Dream the screen is small and you need binoculars to see it.



TV

New Beach Bag given to NHShorty by DCL for being at the Gold Level in the Castaway Club (5+ DCL Cruises)

Bed

I only bring this up to show that life on the Dream is not all perfect with soft serve ice cream and adult beverages and great food. There were some real hardships that had to be endured. Oh the humanity.

Anyway, I got up early and, while NHShorty got some additional shut eye, I grabbed a cup of tea (Lipton) from the beverage station on Deck 11 and went roaming. Along the way I noticed these windows in the deck and also in the bottom of the hot tubs.



The yellow objects seen through these windows are the tops of the life boats (or yellow submarines) 7 decks below. Below is a shot looking up from deck 4 of one of the hot tub windows. The thing hanging over the side of the ship to the left of the window is a platform that travels on a track along the side of the ship so the crew can wash the sides of the ship and the porthole windows.



Eventually my wandering around took me the front of the ship and what did my wandering eye see?

Castaway Cay!!!!



OK, here's a close up of Castaway Cay.



Here are some additional points of interest I found at the front of the ship on Deck 12.



The shipbuilder's plaque and the reason I was warm and toasty (I love the feel of microwave radiation in the morning).

Moving on I took the nearest elevator down to deck 4. This is where the shuffleboard courts are, it's also where tragically demented people run around the ship. It's also the best place to observe the activities of docking the ship.





NHShorty joined me in watching the docking, and then we went up to the quick service area for some breakfast. We sat by a window overlooking the dock so we could watch the unloading operation.



The Christmas tree was still up and the unloading process was like a choreographed ballet of forklifts, tractors, and trucks. All of the manpower and matériel needed to support a day of fun in the sun at Castaway Cay comes off the ship. This includes the food, towels, beverages, and whatever else 2500+ people might need. Additionally, recyclables from the island like bottles, cans, plastics, paper, lubricants & batteries (from the island generators, boats, and vehicles), are loaded back on the ship for processing stateside.

Once everything was ready on the island they let us get off ship and we each posed with the “tanned” snow people.



We then grabbed the next available tram to the adults-only beach Serenity Bay.



In case you don't know about Castaway Cay, it is Disney's private island about 71 miles from Nassau. The most important thing to remember is that, “Cay” is pronounced like “Key”. How it would be pronounced in other languages is unknown.

Here is our first view of Serenity Bay.



What follows are some random pictures of Serenity Bay. As you can see, the place was packed.





We were sitting there in our lounge chairs, enjoying the sun and sand practically by ourselves when Captain Jack Sparrow came sauntering along the beach looking for more rum. Everyone wanted to get their picture taken with Jack.



Around 1:30 we sauntered about 20 yards from Serenity Bay to the Serenity Bay BBQ and pigged out.



For more information about this eatery, check out "disneyfoodblog.com/2011/01/28/castaway-cay-serenity-bay/"

During our lunch at the Serenity Bay BBQ, I spoke with Gunter Schmid, the overall manager of Castaway Cay and a woman (I didn't catch her name) who was the DCL the director of Human Resources (she had just come off the ship). They were just finishing up a lunchtime "one-on-one" meeting at one of the picnic tables in the BBQ area. They were very welcoming and I was able to ask a few questions. Part of what I learned is that there is a staff of 90+ custodians, boat captains, drivers, landscapers, and maintenance personnel who live on the island full time. All the guest service staff comes from the ship's staff. Diesel fuel for the island's generators is delivered by the cruise ships and gasoline for the vehicles and boats is delivered periodically by tanker. They are currently looking to hire a maintenance manager. I think NHShorty was glad I didn't have a resume with me.

Around 2:30, after our lunch and chat with Gunter, we decided to walk back towards the ship and stop along to enjoy the sights and buy some goodies for the frozen people back at home. We walked the length of the old runway and stopped at the Heads Up Bar. This bar is on a peninsula that divides the two family beach areas.



Here we had some kind of frozen cappa-frappa-chino coffee drinks.

The deck area of the Heads Up Bar affords some pretty nice views, including the camouflaged cell tower.



Along the way back to ship we forced strangers to take our pictures at various spots. NHShorty in front of the first aid station is significant. She spent a lot of time there on one of her earlier trips after breaking some toes in an encounter with a lounge chair on the beach. There were no injuries on our visit.

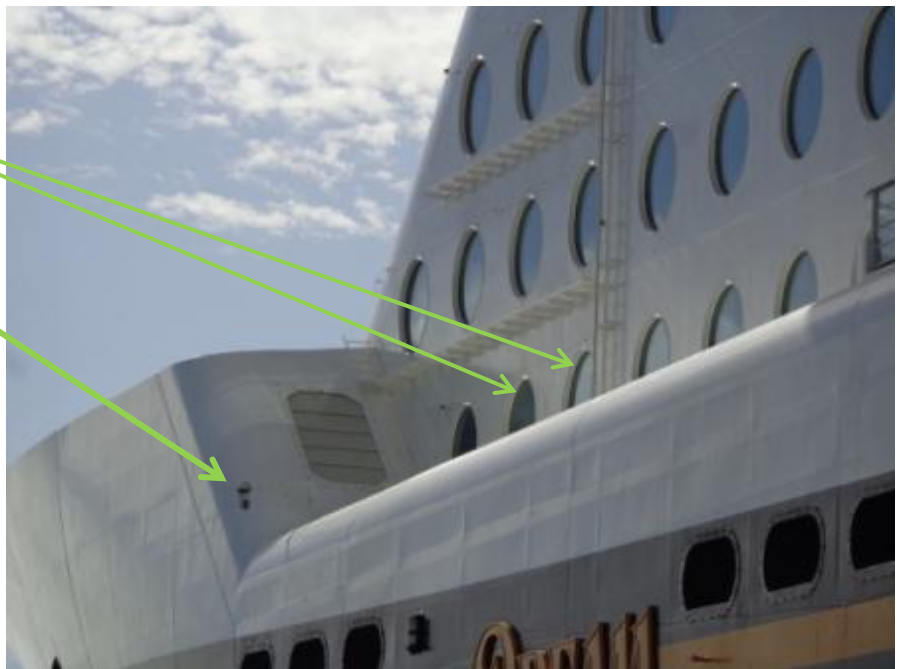


Here is NHShorty sitting on the only kind of Jet-Ski she will ever sit on. It's the kind that is on dry land. The trams were nicely decorated. We also took a picture of our porthole windows.



Our Portholes

An infrared camera that wasn't there when we left Florida, but appeared in Nassau.



After retiring to our cabin to change and drop off the goodies we had purchased, we returned to Castaway Cay to mail some postcards and rent some bikes for exploring the island. Here's my shadow and NHShorty.



We peddled out to the observation tower. The bike paths are paved and fairly flat. This was a lot of fun.





We completed our bike ride around 5 o'clock and returned to the ship. We went directly to deck 13 to enjoy the view.



Apparently, the captain did not lose the keys to the Dream while he was on the beach, because we left the Castaway Cay dock around 5:30. We returned to our cabin to get dressed for dinner. While in the cabin I took pictures of the Christmas decorations NShorty had brought.



Our dinner rotation on our last night took us to the Royal Palace. As with Animator's Palette, the dinner at the Royal Palace is a demonstration of controlled chaos. We decided to dress up for dinner and once again we had some sort of beef for dinner at our own table for two. A good time was had by all concerned.



After dinner we strolled around the ship and turned in around 11.

Stand-by for Day 5 of this report when I find a chip in the paint, a small boat bounces off the side of the Dream, and we drive under the "Welcome to Walt Disney World" sign.