

Around the Horn

by Allan Fox, November 2005

When I was growing up 'Around the Horn' was a comedy show that we listened to once a week on the radio. Nowadays, 'Around the Horn' triggers memories of a marvellous cruise on Celebrity Cruise Lines, GTS Infinity, earlier this year. (GTS = Gas Turbine Ship)

At 90,000 tonnes the Infinity is one of Celebrity's Millennium Class, 965 ft long, 105 ft wide, cruising speed of 24 knots and a passenger capacity of just over 2000. Having only entered service in 2001 the Infinity is still new and she is kept in pristine condition.

The Grand Foyer in marble and onyx is stunning and makes a great first impression. The décor throughout is reserved, comfortable and luxuriant and whilst she carries a compliment of 2000 passengers, she never felt crowded.

At the Ocenview Café and Grill breakfast only finished because lunch was waiting to be served. Dining in the twin level Trellis Restaurant each evening the Maitre'D lowered the blinds, it was still daylight outside. For those special occasions, the SS United States feature restaurant, served an unforgettable degustation menu.

During the day when our determination was strong, the Gymnasium, AquaSpa and Persian Gardens beckoned, with lunch at the Spa Café. A stroll through the Emporium Boutiques afterward was another perfect way to exercise. Of course, you could always just check out a book, or a cd, or the Internet Café.

Joining our table friends for a pre-dinner drink we chose a different location each day. The Champagne Bar, Martini Bar, Michaels Club, so many bars, so little time. For an after dinner dance the Constellation Bar would rock the night away. Assuming that you didn't want to go to a live show, or the casino, or dancing, or to the Cova Café for a nightcap.

But enough of the ship, what about the cruise?

Our cruise began in Valparaiso (Chile) and ended 14 days later in Buenos Aires (Argentina), with scheduled stops in Puerto Montt and Punta Arenas (Chile), Ushuaia (Malvinas), Stanley (Falklands), Puerto Madryn (Argentina), Montevideo (Uruguay).

Our favourite ports were Ushuaia and Stanley although white water rafting in Punta Arenas was truly memorable.

In Ushuaia we took the boat to the 'lighthouse at the end of the world', drank hot chocolate and had our pictures taken with the seals. Later, walking through the streets of the town centre rugged up in our R M Williams we wondered just how difficult life must be in winter, if this was summer.

Having once been English, Stanley held a fascination for me. Why had the Argentineans invaded this island? Why had they left over 100 landmine fields when they went home? Why did everyone drive Land Rovers that had been shipped from the UK? Why are letters handed in at the post office flown back to the England before being posted around the world?

There were several lazy sea days when the landfall was often in view off the port side. We had two memorable days when we glided through the Chilean Fjords and the Straits of Magellan. As we sailed silently in the frozen waters we marvelled at the glaciers, the natural rock formations, the snow on the mountains and the sheer desolation in this part of the world. Magnificent in all of nature's glory, how had Magellan ever conceived of sailing this route in a sailboat?

The Infinity spends the summer in South America and repeats this itinerary several times during the season. Celebrity Infinity and the cruise come with our recommendation.

Infinity Itinerary

- Day 1 Valparaiso, Chile
- Day 2 At Sea
- Day 3 Puerto Montt, Chile
- Day 4 Chilean Fjords
- Day 5 Straits Of Magellan
- Day 6 Punta Arenas, Chile
- Day 7 Ushuaia, Islas Malvinas
- Day 8 At Sea
- Day 9 Port Stanley, Falkland Is
- Day 10 At Sea
- Day 11 Puerto Madryn, Argentina
- Day 12 At Sea
- Day 13 Montevideo, Uruguay
- Day 14 Buenos Aires, Argentina

