

## Carnival Journeys – 11 Night Exotic Southern Caribbean Cruise

Carnival Vista – 16 November 2016 – New York to Miami – Debbie Peters



Carnival is fun for everyone 😊

Carnival Vista Rocks! 133,500 tons, she is a big deal with lots of appeal. Carrying 3954 passengers and 1450 crew she was launched in May 2016. With 6 months running in time completed, we decided to check her out. We loved what we found.

We choose this cruise to celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday while on board and have a great family holiday – our daughter is 13 years old, so we wanted entertainment for her, and things that we could all enjoy together. Carnival Vista ticks all the boxes, and the Caribbean is very cool – we loved it.

### **Here's the stats:**

3233 metres long

51 metres wide

23.6 knots – top speed

US\$820 million – stock on loaded at NYC at beginning of our cruise – their biggest amount ever

16,000 hamburgers - were consumed in one week

30,500 beers – were consumed in 1 week (not counting the fresh brews from the on board brewery)

1471 crew on our voyage

61 –nationalities make up the crew

26 years old – Average crew age (crew have been hand-picked for this ship and the journeys cruise)

37 –highest number of past Carnival Cruises by one couple on board, actually this voyage had the highest number of past passengers. One guy we met had been on board for 47 days!

**Captain:** Stefano Battinelli – joined the ship 3 wks ago.

**Chief Engineer:** Cesare Boldrini – his brother is the Staff Capt. Carnivals first non-Italian Capt started 3 weeks ago, he's Croatian.

**Hotel Director:** Pierre B, Camilleri

**Cruise Director:** Matt Mitcham ....he's English, and is the life of the party.

I thought the crew were very courteous, given the number of people they had to look after. Our cabin Stewart was a lovely lady from Russia.

### **Was it crowded?**

Just depended where you were. There are a lot of people on board – but I never felt crowded. Lido deck 10 out around the pool and the eateries was busy. However you could always escape with a book to a lounge on any of the many wide open decks. Or pay the bit extra and book into the Havana or Cloud 9 Spa areas of the ship- their facilities are excellent, and very peaceful 😊

### **Were there queues?**

Yes – of course there were. Be real, you cannot expect to be on a ship of this size and not encounter some. So we would choose what we did and when, to avoid them. We'd eat later, go ashore later and thrash the Skyride on the non-sea days. The benefits of having so many people on board is that Carnival can afford to offer so many great entertainment and dining options.

### **Overall feel of the Ship**

Contemporary, fresh and bright, but not over the top. It's fun. I love the outdoor spaces that the restaurants and bars along promenade deck open out on to. If you have taken an Inside cabin – there are plenty of lounge chairs everywhere for you to come out and enjoy the sun. A commercial decision was made to break away from the internal glass elevator – freeing up more space for cabins. Also the Liquid Show Lounge doubles as the nightclub late night, freeing up space in the promenade for a bigger Bonsai Sushi etc.

### **Cabins**

Bright and fresh. Not huge, but what's in them works well. TV's are more like a laptop monitor, being interactive, where you can check your on board account balance, find out what's happening and watch the live feed from the cruise directors morning show – very funny when he phone's up someone who is still in bed hungover.

I would recommend booking early and getting the great value on a suite. The cabin size is much better, especially for the three of us, and you get priority check in (we were on board before midday), and you get a free bag of laundry done 😊

### **Unique entertainment features**

This was a part of Vista which really impressed us. The entertainers were top notch and so many to choose from. Again these have been hand picked off the other ships to be on Vista. We loved all the live music. The shows were outstanding. Amazing production, top quality performers and again so many of them on stage.

**Imax** was huge, was hard to believe I was still on a ship when I entered the huge cinema and put my 3D glasses on – excellent picture, and saw an inspiring show about our beautiful planet, as seen from space.

**Skyride and Waterslides** were all great fun – this is not just for the kids to enjoy. They are a must do, so much fun!

**Heaps of Food** There really are so many options, and for some of our fellow passengers food was a major feature of their cruise experience. The Buffet area on Lido is set up with this in mind, with very large oval plastic plates which have a lip so you can really pile up the food! One side has home comfort food – in a style that would suit my dad, while on the other side the selections are more

exotic and more Caribbean spiced – which we liked. The speciality restaurants are at an additional cost – but its good value; Asian and Italian are US\$15 pp and Steakhouse US\$35 pp.

Main Restaurant is Horizons for Open Dining and Reflections is for the Early and Late set dining. On the first night there seemed to be a bit of confusion as everyone fronted up the Horizons and the Open seating ones had to be sent back to Java Blue café to register and then be called to come down to the restaurant when a table is ready. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> night this seemed to settle and it worked pretty well for us- we just enjoyed a drink and some live music in Ocean Plaza while we waited for our buzzer to go off.

Those on Early dining found it tricky at times to get through dinner in time for the show – we found open dining suited us.

### **Journeys Cruise**

This is unique to longer Carnival voyages like our one – means you get more time at sea to enjoy greater entertainment, crew connections, specialty cooking experiences, and throw back sea days which include activities like; Ping pong bathing suite challenge, Aqua Frog racing, Men’s knobby knees competition, roll the dice horse racing and the Marriage show. Plus mega deck parties.

### **Ports of Call**

We had four stops in the Caribbean – all very easy and friendly. Water is warm and great colour. Never got burnt. I think this was an excellent time of year to be there. Had one rainy day – which was happened to fall on a sea day. There a plenty of shore excursions to choose from. We walked and caught the local bus, got into the groove that way.

### **Embarkation and Debarking**

Priority check in at New York was well worth getting a suite for – we were one of the first on board and Waimarie was up on the Skyride well before anyone else! Miami was very busy, on the day we arrived there were 6 ships in. Best way to get off easy self-assist – carry your own bags off.

Surprisingly, even though there were heaps of people we found our transfer quite easily. The guest services team very kindly phoned them the day before we arrived to confirm pick up time etc.

### **Overall highlights**

Entertainment – we love music and shows

Fun activities – there is so much to do, I didn’t do the lazy book reading thing at all

Caribbean – cool destination, love the groove

Sailing out of New York – it is a spectacular city and at night is even better 😊

