

NIEUW AMSTERDAM INSPECTION:

How lucky were we that we picked today to walk to St Marco Square! A highlight for me so on this trip – seeing this big, beautiful ship sail into Venice! What an amazing experience without being on board to watch her come into port.



She looked stunning. Very close to land you feel you could reach out & touch her. The passengers on her starboard side cabins had the best view for arriving. The passengers on her port side have the best view for departure. Best of both worlds so doesn't matter which side of the ship you are on.

Come 4pm we head to the ship for an inspection. From the Hotel to the people mover it was only about a 5 minute walk. EUR1.50 each way on the people mover takes you approx 5 minutes from the ship. With that extra deck, she looks so much bigger than the other ships of similar size in the fleet. What a sight – she looks amazing. So clean & new.

Upon arrival we made our way to the show lounge. The decor is much lighter on this ship. The seating in the lounge is true theatre style. No tables or couches in this lounge, just rows of seating which takes on a great show atmosphere. Quite a different 'show lounge' feel to the other Holland America ships. There are drink holders in all the seats that you can pull out, so there is no need for tables in this lounge.

Making our way from the theatre we find ourselves in the casino & through to the Northern Lights nightclub. The Northern Lights is definitely bigger including the dance floor. The bar area that stretches into the dance floor is all open so its more like 1 big room. There are small seating areas that are funky & comfortable.

Next comes the Culinary Arts Centre/BB King Lounge. Cooking shows by day & BB King Jazz by night. There are 3 shows a night at 8pm, 9pm & 10pm & are proving very popular with the passengers.

The Pinnacle Grill is its usual amazing looking self. Offering a fine dining option daily (as well as a lunch option) plus a Le' Cirque dining experience once or twice on your cruise. This restaurant is surcharged slightly but is well worth it. For the normal Pinnacle Grill it is US\$29 per person & for lunch it is US\$10 per person. If you choose to sample the Le Cirque menu then the cost is US\$49 per person.

The Pinnacle Grill bar is more open & a lot lighter. Such an inviting area to sit & relax prior or post to the Pinnacle Grill dining experience.

The Explorer's Lounge is quite different. A lot more open than the same lounge on other ships &, like the Eurodam, has a bar within the lounge. This is a lovely place to sit & enjoy a pre or post dinner cocktail. Or during the day, a nice quiet place to escape to. In the evenings there is live music of strings accompanied by the piano.

The traditional Mural across the wall of the lounge would be my favourite so far. An outstanding painting depicting 'Nieuw Amsterdam', New York City.

This also shines through in the Atrium. The centre piece is showing an amazing sculpture of New York City also in reflection & all in lights. This would be one of my favourite Atrium pieces, yet 2nd behind the Volendam's Atrium of the piano/organ.

The Manhattan Dining Room is set out exactly the same as the other Holland America ships. The decor is modern & fresh & again quite light.

The Promenade Deck has the usual array of shops & meeting rooms along with the screening room. The one feature that is quite different is the Ocean Bar. The bar itself is on the opposite side of the ship close to where the live band is set up in the early evenings. The whole bar is more open, obviously with the Atrium in the middle but a more relaxed & open atmosphere. Very bright & airy.

Another feature I really liked was the private Cabanas by the Lido Pool as well as the ones above the Lido Pool in the retreat area. These are surcharged, Lidos from US\$30.00 per day & retreat Cabana from US\$45.00 per day (in port) but are yours from 9am to 5pm & personally I think worth the cost for a bit of extra privacy. There are approx 6 down by the Lido pool but set back against the side of the ship. The retreat cabanas are on deck 10, just above the Lido Pool. This is a private area that you cannot enter unless you have a cabana booked for the day. There are even a couple of family ones here.



The kids clubs are a big feature on the ship. Club HAL is for 3-7 years & 8-12 year olds & The Loft for 13-17 year olds. A bright fun, friendly area for your children to hang out in, there is even a full replica of a New York taxi in here.

Most features are the same on every ship & that is what is so familiar. Once you have been on a Holland ship you will feel at home on any other ship in the fleet.

There was 1 point of difference that I must rave about. Like the Eurodam, the Nieuw Amsterdam is fitted with the Tamarind Restaurant. What an amazing experience. The food was out of this world, so fresh. We were lucky enough to have the privilege of eating there when on board. There is a surcharge of US\$20 per person, but well worth the small charge.

Explorations Cafe/Library seemed a lot bigger & the Crows Nest slightly smaller than the other bigger ships in the fleet. But this certainly doesn't affect life on board.

Explorations Cafe is where you can purchase those speciality coffees & help yourself to complimentary treats, peruse the internet, read a book or build a puzzle.

The Crows nest certainly has one of the best views of the ship. This public space offers a panoramic view out over the bow another great place to relax on sail away.

Again, I am so honoured to have had the opportunity to view the newest ship of our fleet. It always makes me proud when I see one of our ships in port & to see her sail into Venice was an experience I will never forget.

I have no hesitation in recommending the Nieuw Amsterdam to anyone. She is beautiful ship & I would love to sail on her myself.