

**Windstar Cruises** – 7 Nights Dreams of Tahiti: Papeete – Papeete  
 WIND SPIRIT: Friday 27 August 2015 – Friday 04 September 2015  
 Weather: 27-29°C Partly Cloudy (still plenty of sun to get a tan!)

Date	Port	Arrive	Depart
Fri 28Aug15	(Check in from 1pm: All aboard 5:00pm for Safety Drill 5:15pm)		
Fri 28Aug15	Papeete		11:59pm
Sat 29Aug15	Moorea	6:00am	6:00pm
Sun 30Aug	Taha'a	8:00am	5:00pm
Sun30Aug	Raiatea	6:00pm	overnight
Mon31Aug	Raiatea		10:00pm
Tue 01Sep	Bora Bora	8:00am	overnight
Wed 02Sep	Bora Bora		9:00pm
Thu 03Sep	Huahine	7:00am	5:30pm
Fri 04Sep	(B/fast served 6:30am – 8:15am)		
	Papeete	8:15am	
	Final Disembarkation: 8:45am		

### Overview

Awesome – a unique experience. No wonder Windstar have been voted No.1 Small Ship Cruise Line. What unfolded for us in Tahiti was truly, 180° from Ordinary.

### The Ship – Wind Spirit



Built in the 1980's, recently refurbished in April 2015, she is the sister ship to Wind Star, and one of three sailing ships in the fleet. The other is Wind Surf (formerly Club Med 1) which is 50 metres longer and has an extra mast.

Wind Spirit Facts:

Length: 110 metres

Tonnage: 5736 gross reg. tons (our cruise 4500 tonnes) - no light weight!

Draft: 4.1 metres (shallowest entrance we went through was Bora Bora, 9 metres)

Speed: Sails faster than she motors 14.5 knots (sail only) 8.5 knots (under power)

She has a large back end and tends to pull to starboard. On our cruise winds were too light so always used a combination of sail and motor.



She has 4 masts 62 metres high, which look very impressive with the big white sails out. The Signature Sail Away each evening, fills your soul with Spirit!

*Useful note:*

When the diesels are running – you do hear it in your room, so pack ear plugs if you are a light sleeper. It is a small ship and there is movement – I liked it. We had a 3.5metre swell during one of the overnight sails – I found it rocked me to sleep, however some others felt the effect. One night I changed to sleep across my bed to rock with the movement rather than being rolled from side to side. Sea sick tablets are free and available from the medical centre, plus during these evenings reception have green apples, and water crackers available.

Guest capacity: 148 (on our cruise we had 97)

Crew members: 90 (however on our cruise there were 98)



### The Crew – Wind Spirit



**Captain Ricardo Pinzon** (from Panama) this was to be his last voyage then he takes a break, returning to Tahiti in November. He's been replaced by a Captain from Portugal who has Captained Wind Spirit in Tahiti before, and holds the valuable exemption certificate to enable Wind Spirit to get in and out of the islands without needing a pilot (except for Papeete where one is always required). Captain Ricardo returns to Papeete to Captain the Wind Spirit in Nov 2015.



**Hotel Manager Jeffrey Jack (J.J.)** (from Caribbean, pictured above with Faye from Air Tahiti Nui) Jeffrey leads his crew with the BIGGEST smile – they all really like him and are like a “family” really. The crew are of international background, officers from Europe, America, South America, South Africa, remainder of the crew from Indonesia, and Philippines. All extremely friendly.

*Interesting note:*

Jeffrey told me Windstar have committed now to the next two years in Tahiti. Jeffrey came up with the name “Charlie’s Angels”, which stuck with us through out the entire cruise. In fact, everyone including the Captain, crew and all the passengers, called Merv “Charlie”.

**The Guests – Wind Spirit**

Younger age group (honeymooners to 60 year olds), experienced travellers, also very friendly – in fact passengers and crew were all like family at the end of the cruise. Sharing laughs and adventures of the day. There were a few single travellers on board, who were very quickly included in what was going on and invited to join tables at dinner time. On our cruise there were quite a few honeymooners on board. At one stage they were all in the Jacuzzi together having a great time, laughing, talking and drinking.

Nationalities on board; New Zealand, Australian, American, South American, European. No Asian’s or Japanese on our particular voyage.

## Embarkation



A very easy and relaxed affair.

Boarding is available at Fingers Pier from 1pm.

Lunch is available in the Verandah Deck 4 1:00pm – 4:30pm

Shore Excursion presentation is at 3pm

Handing out of snorkel gear is 3:30pm – 5:00pm

You are free to go back off the ship in the afternoon, some of us took a stroll around the shops, since we are docked right at the bottom of town.

All aboard on our voyage was 5:00pm

Mandatory Safety Drill was 5:15pm

Cocktails and live music in the lounge Deck 3 at 6:15pm

Dinner in AmphorA Restaurant Deck 3 7pm – 9pm

Or Candles 7:30pm or 8:00pm by reservation.

Live music and dancing in the lounge 9pm – close

Sail Away from PPT 11:59pm



We got to the pier about 1:45pm, no queues. No need for bag tags or even tickets really... just your passport and they knew who we were. Once customs checked our bags they were tagged and then taken and delivered to our staterooms. Once you went up the gangway the Captain was there to meet each one of us personally and welcome you on board. Once inside a refresher towel is handed out, and we are led into the lounge, and handed a glass of champagne to sip on while we sit in the comfy chairs completing the check in details. Once we have handed them in and signed credit card details etc, we are issued with our room key/ship charge card. USD is the currency used on board, however everything is charged to your account so you don't need to carry USD cash with you. If you want to at this point you can sign up for some special spa / massage treatments on offer especially those on the Motu (island) are extra special, and you can sign up for the beverage package.



*Beverage Package*



Beverage package cost is USD\$116.00 per stateroom per day +15% service charge (Single occupancy is USD\$58.00 per day +15% service charge)  
You can drink unlimited cocktails per day, wines start at USD7.50 per glass, cocktails from USD8.25, Spirits from USD\$7.00, beer USD\$6.95 (see bar list held in Reservations)  
(You have until 10pm of the first day to decide if you would like to take up the drinks package)

*Interesting note:*

About half our group took the drinks package, some thought it was good value and they got their monies worth, others didn't drink as much. I decided not to take the drinks package, I'm more of a beer drinker and I was happy with that. Remember all non-alcoholic beverages are free on Windstar. Regardless if you have the drinks package they still require you to sign docket for your drinks, for inventory control.

**Laundry Package**

Cost is USD\$54.50 per person for 7 day cruise for unlimited regular laundry and ironing.

I did take the laundry package, found it was excellent value as I only took a very small bag of clothes with me. They even washed and ironed my boardies!

**Smoking on Board**

Smoking is allowed – only on the starboard side, Deck 4 (where the Pool Bar is).



**Evening Dress Code**



**“Elegantly Casual”**

No shorts, T-shirts, jeans, jandals & tennis shoes at dinner or in the lounge during cocktails and in the evening.

## Dining on Board



**Amphora** (pictured above) Deck 3 – only open in the evenings 7pm -9pm  
No need to book. Amphora can seat everyone. Birthday celebrations involve a cake with candles lit presented at your table, and the crew (& most of the guests join in too) singing happy birthday.



Meal sizes were very generous (my steak was yum, cooked just how you like it)  
**Candles – Deck 4 Pool side dining under the stars 7:30pm or 8pm (by reservation)**  
Weather permitting, Candles is the outdoor alfresco dining alternative under the stars, around the Pool deck at the aft. It pays to book early if there is a particular evening you would like. Due to the intimate size of Candles, each stateroom can dine one evening in Candles – there is no cost. Candles can only be booked once you're on board – no pre-booking allowed either online or via request to FTM!

#### **Other places to eat**

**Veranda: Deck 4 Breakfast: 7am – 9:30am Lunch: 12pm – 2:00pm**

Casual a la carte, and buffet with cooking station. I loved my omelette with the works every morning!



**By the Pool** (as shown above) for early riser breakfast 6am-12pm  
& afternoon tea 3:30pm-4:30pm  
Appetizers are served in the lounge 6:30pm – 7:15pm

**Communication / Internet**

Internet cards are available from reception  
USD\$60.00 – 200MB  
USD\$120.00 – 500MB  
USD\$250.0 – Unlimited internet



There are computers available in the Library / Business centre (open 24 hrs)  
Internet is dependent upon satellite ipads and personal devices may automatically download which will drain your minutes, so pays to check your settings on device before using the internet package.

There are free internet café's across the road from the pier at Papeete, and for a purchase of a beer at Raiatea, and at Bora Bora. And sometimes it's peaceful to be away from all the technology.

There is a phone in your stateroom, to phone NZ 8-011-64-area code-number.  
To phone another room dial 4 and then the cabin number.  
Cost USD\$7.95 per minute and will be automatically billed to your account once you have finished dialling the number, regardless of the connection.

**The Cabins – refurbished in April 2015**



All staterooms on Wind Spirit are twin port-hole Ocean View Staterooms the bed unzips and converts to two twin beds. All B, BX, A & AX cabins are the same size – except the one Owner’s Suite, which is very discreetly positioned on deck one under the medical centre. It has a king size bed, with additional sitting area including a sofa bed for 1 additional pax. Bathroom is larger, with shower only like the staterooms.



Staterooms are spacious and very comfortable, we easily sat 5-6 of us around the dining table for a chat & a wine before dinner.



Good size bathrooms, with a shaver socket near the mirror, and circular shaped shower which gave me plenty of elbow room when washing my long hair – excellent shower pressure too, No Bath, & just a small edge to step into shower.



Plenty of storage in the stateroom, suit case easily fits under the bed.  
Individual air conditioning control, plus MP3 docking station so you can play your favourite tunes.

*Useful note:*

I would recommend up selling to A or AX cabins on Deck 2, generally it isn't that much different to be up on Deck 2, away from some of the noise. I was in cabin AX Deluxe 214, which was mid ships but back enough from where the stairs would be put down each morning for the tenders to shore. The stairs come out either side from reception and come down towards the bow.

**Power plugs in the cabins**



Power supply is US 110 volts – make sure you have the right adaptor – they do have a few on board, but can run out. Best bring your own. There are plenty of sockets – 2 at the dining table, 2 beside the bed and another one beside the tall set of draws.

### **Mobility on board**

There are no wheelchair accessible cabins on Wind Spirit.



There are no lifts – stairs only and the gangway is quite steep.

And at times there can be a fair bit of movement.

You need to be physically mobile to take this cruise. As a result these cruises attract a younger age group.

### **Triple Cabins**

In the triple cabins the dining table drops down and cushions are moved making a single bed, it's quite comfortable for a child.

### **Interconnecting cabins**

There are 5 sets of interconnecting cabins, on Deck 1 towards the front. Doors on both cabins lock inwards and then there is an additional outside door which is closed allowing you to go between the two cabins. The week before we cruised there was a family in a set of these cabins.

### **Children**

There is no kids club, however children 8 years and over are welcome on board. Because the Tahiti cruise means we are anchored at an island each day, there is plenty for kids to see and do.

### **Other Facilities on board**



The pool depth is 2 metres at the deep end cleaned and refilled with fresh water each night. Hot tub is very popular! In the evening the blue lounges are cleared away, as this area turns in Candles Restaurant by night.



Back Deck BBQ Dinner under the stars was held here – there is a massive buffet and BBQ down one side and all guests are seated at tables around this whole area.



**Casino Deck 3 Aft** is open on evenings when Wind Spirit is at sea, offers Black Jack and 3 –card poker as well as a wide range of slot machines. I was hopeful one of our team could win back my bar tab 😊



Health Spa treatment rooms on board offer a wide range of services.

## Doctor on board



(pictured the singing Doctor Dominic)

Medical Centre Deck 2, open 7am-9am & 5pm – 7pm. Free sea sick pills and free syringes/needles disposal containers are available.

Fees are as follows:

First visit :	during regular hours :	USD\$120.00
	After hours	: USD\$150.00
Follow up visit		: USD\$80.00
Cabin visit	during regular hours :	USD\$150.00
	After hours	: USD\$180.00
Follow up visit to cabin		: USD\$90.00

Medication costs are additional and vary.

One of our group cleared up her flu with a visit to Dr Dominic, it cost her USD\$120.00 for the visit and USD\$90.00 for the medication.

The medical centre is able to perform CBC Blood analysis, ECG, INR and offers intra-muscular sea sickness injections amongst many other services.

## Shore Excursions



Shore excursions can easily be booked when you are on board. I would suggest doing this as there is some useful information given each evening about the shore excursions for the next day, and holding off means you get to see how the weather is before you commit.

*Suggested shore excursions to consider*

Moorea: Dolphin Eco Tour – very interesting but doesn't guarantee dolphins



Moorea: Photographer's eye view of Moorea – excellent if interested in photography

Taha'a: Garden Drift Snorkelling – very good, need to be confident in the water



Bora Bora: 4 wheel drive - our driver Moana (pictured above) was full of fun and included a stop at the famous bar, Bloody Mary's.

Bora Bora: snorkel safari and stingray encounter – see what the weather is like, this is very good in the calm

\*\* See full list of shore excursions, costs and timings etc held in reservations.



(pictured above) beautiful waters of Bora Bora taken from hill top, Pearl Farm in foreground.

Shore excursions are all very well organised, and an excellent way to get out and meet fellow passengers while sharing an adventure.

**Plenty to do – if you want to**



(pictured the bicycles off Wind Spirit at Huahine)

Aside from the paid shore excursions there is plenty of free things you can do.



Off the back of the yacht on the platform, is swimming, kayaking, sailing, waterskiing, single ski, wake boarding, and stand up paddle boarding. These are all free.



There are buoyancy aids for the less confident too. Scuba is available most days – at a cost.



On day 3 at Taha'a Windstar hires a tiny private island (motu) this is another free shore experience, in addition to the private island on Bora Bora still to come.



At Taha'a there is a day excursion to the private motu (island) The crew go ahead and set everything up – they bring it all over from Wind Spirit, it's amazing! The snorkelling here is especially good. The boys will even bring you a pina colada while you are in the water ☺



you can snorkel, kayak, hang out on the beach, play beach volleyball.



Enjoy cocktails while listening to the musicians from the yacht,



and then enjoy the best beach BBQ lunch ever! This is a full day and it fun and it's free!

At Raiatea there is a morning hike up the hill, which is very pretty. It is organised by the crew and it's free too. Then some of the locals come aboard to teach us

how to make Tahiti Lei's, tie our sarongs (with two "nuts" -knots) and perform local dances. This full of laughs and sets the scene for the casual night on board – the back deck BBQ and crew dance party night – included special appearances from "Michael Jackson" and "Village People" performing YMCA on the side of the pool, special singing and dancing performances from the crew, huge fun, everyone; crew, guests the whole ship partied that night!

In Bora Bora Windstar hire another private island (Motu Tapu), you can catch a zodiac over there during the day, here some saw sting ray and a small shark



the sports team off Wind Spirit have already gone ahead with the kayaks



and stand up paddle boards



Local boats are hired in the evening at Bora Bora to transport all of us to the complimentary exclusive private event on Motu Tapu: celebration festival, Yet again the crew have gone ahead and set everything up on this private island



fantastic traditional meal prepared by the ships Chef Klaus and his team, while he completes the finishing touches on the amazing buffet,



the guests chat and sip champagne while watching the sun go down,





then after dinner we are treated to an amazing Tahitian show with fire dancers.



Then after we all returned to Wind Spirit – we set sail that evening for Hauhine.

Early the next morning I was on deck as we sailed into Hauhine



**Hauhine** has a relaxed feel. Wander along the shops for some bargains



and then enjoy a beer at the yacht club.

## Disembarkation

On the last evening we sailed from Huahine to Papeete – this was our longest sail arriving at 7am.

Breakfast is available 6:30am – 8:15am in the Veranda

Disembarkation of all guests is between 8:15am – 8:45am. You are requested to have your bags packed and outside your cabin before 6am. Disembarkation occurs by colour and it is very quick.

Your bags will be waiting for you on the pier when you get off.

Windstar is small ship cruising at its best. You should sell the Wind Spirit with confidence. The agents on this famil were mostly managers/owners and a very experienced group – their **feedback was astounding**. “Best famil I’ve ever been on” “I will never be the same again on a cruise ship...always comparing our experience, the crew and fellow travellers all making it a magical experience. I believe you had the perfect fit for a group, the experience, seeing Tahiti & the Islands, the Hotels, the Cruise experience out shone any educational that I have participated in for years!”

They are now promoting Windstar big time – you should be too ☺

