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It Is Smoke Free In This Paradise : Take A Caribbean Cruise With Fellow Non-Smokers

By Jane Stokes (Courtesy of News Canada)

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(NC)–Would a "smoke-free casino" be an oxymoron?

Until recently, I might have bet good money on that, considering it's a pretty rare occasion when one can enjoy a cocktail in a smoke-free bar, nightclub or lounge – let alone in a casino where all around the world gambling and nicotine just naturally go together. But here's the exception:

A policy of "no cigarettes, no cigars, no ashtrays, and no second-hand smoke anywhere" is at the core of the cruise experience aboard the MS Paradise – and it's a policy that is unusual indeed.

The US\$300 million Paradise is the only, totally non-smoking cruise ship in the world and upholding the integrity of this claim is a challenge taken very seriously by parent company Carnival Cruise Lines. Not even the construction crews in the shipyards of Helsinki were allowed to smoke when working on the vessel – and now every week, its 2,052 passengers are asked to sign an agreement to abide by the rules, even on the open decks.

Traditionally, cruise ships have not had too much difficulty containing the areas where passengers can smoke. If you choose any of the mainstream American-based cruise lines for example, chances are you will not encounter second-hand smoke until evening in some of the clubs and at some of bars. Restaurants are generally smoke-free and cruise advocates will tell you that the ratio of non-smoking areas has been increasing with every new ship. But for those who would like to go just one step further, it's good to know that out there, cruising the Caribbean every day is a grand, luxury vessel which may be four years old now, but she still looks, feels, and smells, brand new.

This season, passengers have the choice of exploring either the Eastern, or the Western Caribbean on itineraries that include some of the more exotic tropical harbours like Belize and Honduras. And for a glimpse at shipboard tone and style: imagine the atmosphere aboard Paradise to be similar to most Carnival cruises, one of cheerful, attentive service – in a plentiful fantasyland.

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The trademark decor of this cruise line is one that creates a larger-than-life playground for adults and children alike. You enter Paradise, for example, through an illuminated, sky-high atrium surrounded by grand columns and Space Age glass-elevator pods, enhanced by classical stone and mahogany fixtures. Interior designer Joe Farcus pinpoints the "grand era of ocean liners" as this vessel's overall fantasy theme, emphasizing the impact of The Queen Mary, The Normandie, and the SS United States on the late 19th century, world of style.

At least 12 decks are configured into the 70,000-gross-ton Paradise with the top deck tiered to attract activities in the sun. Here, the Lido Deck draws everyone sooner or later. It is where you will spread out in a full-length deck chair, swim in the pool, relax in the whirlpool, partake in sports interests, or spend all afternoon on a Carnival specialty: the giant waterslide. The recreation decks on Paradise stretch the entire length of the ship, so you may even find a few private places to call your own.

These upper decks also house the ship's mammoth, 12,000-square-foot exercise club and spa. The "bigger the better" was the consensus of the passengers I spoke to up there, with one saying that when the cruise line devotes this much space and effort to building a fitness facility, "it sends a clear and sincere message that improving one's health and wellness can be a very real part of a cruise experience."

They also pointed out that the more inviting the space to exercise, the more you get to eat – because it's true what they say: on a cruise ship you can literally eat all day. On Paradise the choices are: 24-hour complimentary room service; dining room table service; a pool deck buffet, three times a day; the cake and coffee bar; plus round-the-clock deli sandwiches, a pizzeria, and of course, the midnight buffet.

Then again, for most of us food quantity will not be the main attraction. Rather, it will be the food "experiences" that really count – and that is precisely why Carnival and most of the better cruise lines these days are so preoccupied with adding and subtracting dining options, so they can be sure, for every last passenger, they get it right.

More Information:

Research the details of your cruise at

, or ask your travel agent for this season's

latest brochures.

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Cruise In The Caribbean With Caribbean Cruise Lines

By Louise Wasa

The weather is one of the most beloved features of the Caribbean Islands. You can expect to have the perfect weather here almost the year around. The best way to enjoy the Caribbean's lovely weather is to travel with a Caribbean Cruise Line.

Yes, you can always take a plane to the Caribbean if you are in a hurry. That is the quickest and probably the cheapest way to reach your island destination. If you want to combine transportation with leisure views of the islands from the ocean a Caribbean cruise is best. There is no better way to enjoy an island paradise than from the deck of a luxury cruise line ship. It also great to unpack once and still reach many destinations.

About two million persons take a Caribbean cruise line each year to enjoy the cruising, the beautiful beaches and a warm weather. The cruises are very popular also because of the activities and amenities that are available on board. Most of these ships cruises and make stops at various islands along the way and that gives you a chance to enjoy several aspects of the islands all for the price of one.

If you decide to take a Caribbean travel cruise you should take some time and plan ahead. Not only because of the price as a Caribbean cruise are on the expensive side compared with all inclusive and other packages. If you plan well and choose the right season you can get a great deal with many of the Caribbean cruise lines. For example, cabins may get fully booked months before the Caribbean travel cruise is scheduled to depart. If you want to make it your chosen cruise, you should book early. You can also work out the details of your own Caribbean travel cruise through an online travel agent.

On the internet you can check for several great cruise lines. For example, if you are taking a Caribbean cruise line with your kids, you should stick to the Disney cruise because if anything, this is guaranteed to have activities designed specifically for children. When traveling as a couple, then look for one of those romance-themed cruises that provide you with a quiet atmosphere, like the Princess cruise for instance. On the other hand, if you want to sail on board the most luxurious ships, then look to liners known for their top notch Caribbean travel cruise services, such as Crystal, Silver Sea or the new Queen Mary II.

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