

22 April, 2010

### **Notes on Shore Excursions for The Weekly Standard Cruise**

I have included descriptions of the tours for three ports offered by Blue Diamond Tours. I requested a price quote from them and included the e-mail I received from the owner. I asked for a price for six people (assuming Pat and Vern Lewis would also be interested).

As always, HAL will be offering the same or very similar tours. They have not put the prices for their tours up on their web site yet, but I will keep checking. The prices will no doubt be competitive. The big difference, as we discovered in Europe, is that the private tours can be personalized, there would be just six people (as opposed to a bus load), and there will be greater opportunity for interaction with the guide.

The man from Blue Diamond Tours (Bob Davison) was very thorough and prompt with his e-mail reply. I have e-mailed him saying that I would be conferring with the others in the group and would let him know as soon as possible. Blue Diamond Tours was favorably recommended by many people on the Cruise Critic Board.

### **Bar Harbor, ME -- Sunday, 22 August – 0700-1500**

There are many tours offered by HAL to Acadia National Park which is beautiful. Also, there are many tour operators at the dock (it is a tender port) who can arrange tours to your liking. The village of Bar Harbor is interesting with many shops. It is famous for its lobster. Don and I will probably just wander about the village and then have a lobster lunch. A good restaurant for lobster is the West End Café, but there are many others.

### **Halifax -- Monday 23 August – in port 0800-1700**

Here is where everyone says the place not to miss is Peggy's Cove. We have never gone to Peggy' Cove. The tour I asked about is 4.5 to 5 hours without a lunch stop. If we left the ship by 0830 we could be back on the ship in time for lunch. Also, in Halifax (within walking distance of the ship) there is an interesting Maritime Museum with many artifacts from the Titanic.

There is an afternoon Weekly Standard session which I am thinking would probably not start before 1500. If we did the Blue Diamond Tour, we would be back in time.

### **Sydney – Tuesday, 24 August – in port 0800-1700**

The Blue Diamond Tour to Fortress Louisbourg sounded interesting. It is a six hour tour – lunch on your own, but there are two 'restaurants' in the Fort. Again, there is an afternoon session, but I think the tour would be doable.

I honestly don't remember what we did the last time we were there, except to have lunch. I'll look up the name of the place. I do remember it was good and they had good beer. I'm remembering more about our first visit to Sydney (after checking the pictures) and – both Don and I agree, this was the most least interesting town we visited. The lunch place – Govenor's Pub, however, was very nice and they did have good beer. At the last minute, we had to tender at this port because, as we remember, there was a newer, large ship also in port. Right beside the dock there is a rather large crafts hall, with lots of stalls, and very interesting things – good quality, too. There is also a large (as in VERY large) violin right at the port. You'll see.....

**Charlottetown, PEI – Wednesday, 25 August – in port 0800-1700**

This is a very nice town to explore on foot. There is so much in the town about Anne of Green Gables. Lots of shops and a beautiful cathedral. The tour I asked about sounds like it would take you to some of the countryside. Again, there is another afternoon session. But the tour is a 4.5 hour tour so if we did it in the morning it shouldn't be a problem.

**Quebec City – Friday, 27 August – in port 0700-1700**

This is a city you really need to explore on foot. It is beautiful. A very important item: There **IS** a Funiculaire to get you to the top. You do not have to walk up the hill, like Don and I did last time. There is a great restaurant – I think it's the oldest in the city – perhaps we could meet there for lunch. The name of the restaurant is Restaurant Aux Anciens Canadiens. It has a lot of character. The city itself is just wonderful for wandering around.

**Montreal – Saturday, 28 August – arrive at 0700**

Back to reality. We'll probably just take our time getting off the ship and catch a cab to the airport.