

2008 SEA CLOUD AND CANARY ISLANDS

Thursday October 30, 2008. Checking in, the agent seemed to have some sort of trouble with my ticket. However a co-worker straightened it out. The agent had put the wrong flight number in. They have all new wheelchairs at the Atlanta airport. They aren't as comfortable as the old ones but one advantage is that the carry-on bag fits under the seat so you no longer have to have it in your lap. We got to Concourse E so early that the Elite lounge wasn't open. I don't care for the Crown Room so after two o'clock I moved to the nicer lounge.

The flight to Paris was delayed because Charles de Gaulle Airport is limiting the number of flights that can arrive per hour. Once in the air I mentioned to the steward that we had traveled together before. He claimed to remember me but I doubt it. My seatmate was a businessman from Hanover. He is interested in history and laughed that Americans think a two hundred year old house is old. He thinks we should give more emphasis to our Native Americans history. After dinner I watched a so-so movie called Baby Moma¹ and went to bed.

Friday October 31. As we were coming into Paris the stewardess told me the agent hadn't ordered a wheelchair as I requested and there was no way she could order one for me. She also told me it is a long walk from Terminal E to Terminal F and I would miss my plane. I just love CDG Airport!² An agent asked if I could walk to meet the chair and she set out at a brisk gallop to show me the way. I thought of how slowly John walked and how he was always somewhere behind me. Now I understand. There were some moving sidewalks and I was able to sit on my Carex cane³ seat occasionally as the sidewalk moved me. The chair pusher kept assuring me that I would make my flight but I found it hard to believe since it was already boarding in another terminal. We took an elevator down to the street and along came a wheelchair bus. CDG is built like an octopus with long tentacles in every direction and I think we explored every one of them before we found a "Casablanca" bus. I thought I would be boarded on it, but instead we followed the bus out onto the field. And finally "voila", there was the plane. I was the last to board.

Casablanca⁴ has a small airport although it is the 6th largest city in Africa. I walked to baggage claim. There I collected a porter and we waited and waited for my suitcase to arrive but it never did. The porter took me to baggage claim to report it lost. I was told it was still in Paris but would come on the next plane at 6 PM. They gave me 300 dirham⁵ to compensate me for my inconvenience. Since the Sea Cloud sails at four I will have to find some clothes in a hurry. 300 dirham is worth about \$35 so it won't go very far,

A taxi took me for 27 Euro to the Best Western Toubkal Hotel⁶. It is in the center of the city right around the corner from the high rent hotels. The hotel is pleasant enough although the carpets are somewhat worn. The staff said I could keep the room until four. Since I had no clothes I could not change. Dick and Peggy Krementz⁷ still had not arrived. I lay down on the bed and slept for an hour or so. I was preparing to start out for the nearby market to get some clothes when I had a call from the Sea Cloud's headquarters in Hamburg⁸. Due to bad weather the ship would not reach Casablanca until after three and I was to come to the Hyatt Regency⁹ at 7:00 so they could feed us dinner. Wonderful! Now I will have the bag so carefully packed for the cruise! They also wanted to know where the Krementzes were because they did not know how to contact them. I don't know either. Peggy had told me they would take a train from Fez to Casablanca today and meet me at my hotel.

I called the ship's agent to see if they could retrieve my suitcase and was told I had to do it in person with my passport because of security. I checked out of the hotel leaving messages for the Krementzes about the Hyatt and decided to walk there to leave my roll-on. It was only about five blocks but the walk was difficult for there was a stiff wind blowing. It blew so hard that a sign fell off a storefront and came crashing down a few feet from me.

¹ http://www.wildsound-filmmaking-feedback-events.com/baby_moma.html

² <http://www.paris-cdg.com/>

³ <http://www.lifesolutionsplus.com/carex-folding-seat-cane-p-478.html>

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casablanca>

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirham>

⁶ <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do?propertyCode=93492>

⁷ My sister and her husband

⁸ http://eurorivercruises.com/Cruise%20tins/sc_scll_overview.html?gclid=CNXUxMuC6JYCFQu-Ggodh3zHPg

⁹ <http://casablanca.regency.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp>

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At the Hyatt I asked the concierge if she could help me and she said she could not because I was not staying at the hotel. I was on the verge of tears when she put me in a Petit Taxi¹⁰ to take me back to the Toubkal. The people at the Toubkal are sweet but few speak much English and don't seem to understand my French. I do not speak even a word of Arabic! However the man at the desk arranged a cab to take me to the airport and bring me back for 500 dirham. Air France Baggage was closed when we got to the airport but he arranged for me to get back in the custom area to reach the baggage service where I filed my claim. I was assured the bag would come at six. I waited perhaps 20 minutes and there it was. I could finally feel my stress start to lift. Then I had to convince the taxi driver to take me back to the Hyatt instead of the Toubkal.

At the Hyatt I met the Sea Cloud rep named Barbara and was checked in to a lovely room on the 10th floor. The other people on the cruise are all German so everything will be in German. I fear it will be a lonely trip with no one to talk with. Peg and Dick have still not been heard from and I am very worried something has happened to them.

We were taken by bus to a local restaurant where I had a delicious dinner. I had not eaten all day and was starved. I sat with Margret Stuwe and her son, Mark. Margret's English is very good although accented. She translated a book called The White Swan. Some of the others speak some English as well.

I fell going down the steps and again getting off the bus. It's these darned glasses I am supposed to wear all the time. I used to fall when I was in bi-focals and in these progressives¹¹ I can't look down because my vision is impaired.

Back at the hotel I took advantage of the Internet to get off some email. I heard back from Betsy that she had not heard from her parents since they left. What on earth happened to them?

Saturday, November 1. We didn't leave for the ship until 10:30 so there was time for a leisurely breakfast before getting the bags out. The port is very close to the Hyatt. Almost disguised among the cranes and derricks were the four tall masts of the Sea Cloud.

The Sea Cloud is a destination in itself. Built in 1931 as a private yacht for Marjorie Merriweather Post¹² she had every amenity: marble bathtubs and fireplaces and even a freezer so the ship could cruise for two weeks at a time without putting into port. Originally she was furnished with antiques and works of art. A nice touch was that when you sat on the toilet in the owner's suite a whiff of perfume perfumed the air. Marjorie had four husbands and divorced them all. By her second husband, Edward Francis Hutton, she was the mother of Dina Merrill, the actress and socialite¹³. Dina was practically raised on the Sea Cloud. Born in 1925, she lives now in New York City.

In 1978 a group of Hamburg ship owners bought this legendary ship and restored her to her former glory¹⁴. She is truly unique.

I loved the ship from first glance at her teak decks and varnished railings to the many halyards tied near her stays. A four-masted Bark¹⁵, she is supposed to carry 80 square sails aloft. Her lounge and dining room are paneled with carved crown molds over the doors and an elaborate wreath of wood carved over the marble mantle piece. My cabin is not one of the historic ones (some were added when she was converted into a cruise ship) but is pleasantly outfitted with oil paintings and gold fixtures with the pseudo wood paneling.

We were served an elegant champagne brunch to welcome us aboard.

At noon we sailed for Agadir, Morocco¹⁶, a change from the original schedule. We make 12 knots under power. A storm the last day of last week's cruise caused such high seas that the Sea Cloud even put her bowsprit¹⁷ under and her eagle figurehead was damaged. The Sea Cloud did not get to Casablanca until 10 PM last night.

¹⁰ <http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g293732-s304/Casablanca:Morocco:Taxis.And.Rental.Cars.html>

¹¹ <http://www.velocitypress.com/progresive.shtml>

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marjorie_Merriweather_Post

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dina_Merrill

¹⁴ http://eurorivercruises.com/Cruise%20tins/sc_scll_overview.html?gclid=COTNgc7L8pYCFQETGgodyzCM

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¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barque>

¹⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agadir>

¹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowsprit>

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Everyone is very friendly. I met Andy and Chris who drove Route 66¹⁸ all across the US using a 1930s road map. Some of Route 66 no longer exists but they found a lot of it. Andy also knows a lot about tall ships and told me all about the Gorch Foch 1¹⁹ which is now in Stralsund²⁰. The company that owns Sea Cloud and Sea Cloud 11 is now building a third Sea Cloud. She will be the largest tall ship ever built and carry several hundred passengers. That doesn't appeal to me at all.

The Cruise Director Heike Diefenbach gave the lifeboat drill (in German) but I dutifully went to show I know how to put on a life vest. It was held in the lido bar on the upper deck. The canvas and plastic sides to the bar flapped and snapped in the wind making the storm seem much worse than it is. One woman asked where the doctor was for she needed seasick pills.

Coming down the steep stairs from the upper deck I fell again. I have now taken off the glasses and will go back to where I was before my last visit to the Optometrist. It is embarrassing to fall even though I have figured out how not to get hurt. The secret is to not fight the fall.

I skipped the welcome aboard lecture (it was in German) and took a long nap waking up just in time for dinner. I sat with Leopold and his two daughters, Alice and Leanne. Leopold is from Austria. He blames the current financial difficulties on President Clinton and does not feel either presidential candidate is capable of fixing it. He thinks John McCain²¹ is too old and Barack Obama²² is inexperienced. The last thing I expected to be doing on this cruise was to debate American politics with an Austrian!

Sunday, November 2. Woke up to a sunny day. It is still chilly but obviously the bad weather has gone. After breakfast I went up to the Lido bar and sat in a deckchair while Dr Constantin Elfe described the setting of our sails in German. I had an English crib sheet and so could follow along²³. Born in Berlin in 1955, Dr Elfe grew up in two cultures being educated in an American School. He has made many trips to America and worked for a time for the US State Department. He later learned the business of investing and acquisitions. He has traveled extensively and has done a lot of sailing, even sailing across the Atlantic in a 38-foot cutter.

Setting the sails is quite a process. First all the many halyards and sheets must be laid out and wrapped around the huge winches. Then comes the call "Hit the rig" and the crew starts up the ratlines²⁴. They climb out on the booms and undo the stops. The sails drop down from their spars and are sheeted below. I noted the crew does wear safety harnesses and that there was at least one woman in the crew! We did not rig the spanker that is furled on the mizzenmast.

On the mainmast the sails are named from the top down: skysail, main royal, topgallant, upper topsail, lower topsail and main sail. There are many other sails but I did not even try to learn all the names.

We went forward to watch them launch the flying jibs. My regret is that I cannot see our magnificent boat under sail from afar.

I checked out the bridge. The third officer explained that the telegraph is original but no longer used. They have modern communication with the engine room today. Like most bridges it was filled with radar and other navigation equipment. Unlike the Wind Spirit²⁵ where the sails are controlled electronically, everything is done by hand on the Sea Cloud. Under sail we can sail 65 degrees to the wind. When the ships of old went around the Cape of Good Hope it took months to tack up the east coast of Africa for one had to go far out on one tack only to return on the next and make only a few miles. This is why they like to sail with the trade winds as much as possible for we are designed to go downwind. Our sails did not stay up for more than a few hours today for we had to head out to sea into the wind to avoid some more rainstorms. We were rewarded with a beautiful rainbow.

¹⁸ <http://www.historic66.com/>

¹⁹ <http://www.wunderground.com/wximage/viewsingleimage.html?mode=singleimage&handle=marbon&number=12>

²⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stralsund>

²¹ <http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>

²² <http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>

²³ <http://piratemaster.wetpaint.com/page/The+parts+of+a+ship?t=anon>

²⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratlines>

²⁵ <http://www.7blueseas.com/cruiselines/ship.asp?id=119>

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I caught the end of Dr Elfe's lecture on Atlantis²⁶. He had some great slides. Afterwards he told me he was trying to equate the Trojan horse²⁷, and the legend of Atlantis to the fall of civilizations. He does not believe either was real but used symbolically to illustrate what happens when a nation falls. He equates it with what is going on today. What will be the symbol of our fall?

At the buffet lunch I sat with Julia and Jans Carlson. Julia's parents immigrated to the United States but she returned to Germany when she was 18. She plays many games but not bridge. I urged her to call the Munich²⁸ club and sign up for lessons. She is to play chess with another passenger later this afternoon. She explained that about 25 of the passengers are clients brought on the cruise by a German consulting firm. They are to have a lecture on how to pass a business on to children and so forth. There would be 55 passengers if Peg and Dick were here.

The lunch included a huge Parmesan cheese²⁹, which was scooped out to mix the spaghetti. I opted for some delicious lamb. No one starves on cruise ships.

I enjoyed a deck chair on the lido deck most of the afternoon wrapped in a blanket. Then I discovered them serving tea and making crepes³⁰ on the promenade deck. I had one with raspberries and chocolate. Best of all it was served with a scoop of pistachio ice cream on the side. I hate to think of how much weight I am gaining.

Tonight Captain Richard Choinski held his welcome cocktail party. After the general welcome he made a special point of welcoming his only English speaking passenger. Then he introduced his staff.

At dinner I sat with Margret and Mark and a Swiss named Tony who seems to know a great deal about wines and persuaded me to try the red Spanish wine with my beefsteak. It was delicious. He thinks the very best wine in the world is Opus One³¹ so I must look for it.

Monday, November 3, 2008. We came into Agadir, Morocco³². It is a large container port. The Portuguese established a trading post here in 1505. It came under Moroccan rule about 1536. In 1911 Germany sent the warship Panther to Agadir and the French retaliated by making Agadir a French protectorate in 1912. By 1913, the French occupied most of Morocco. In 1960 two devastating earthquakes leveled the town and killed 15000 people. All that remains is the fortified Agadir or granary perched on a cliff above the town. The town was rebuilt at a nearby location and nothing is allowed where the old town sat on the fault between the Atlas Mountains³³ and the Anti Atlas Mountains³⁴. The fault is the plate that divides Europe from Africa. People don't come to Agadir for the town but for the mild climate and beaches. It is a popular destination for not only Moroccans but Europeans as well.

For the tour to Taroudant³⁵, Heike hired a special guide for me. His name was Khalid and he had lived in Orlando when he was 19 working in Disney World. He is now married with two young daughters. What a joy to have my own English speaking guide!

The drive to Taroudant took about an hour at first passing through desert rocky land where nothing seemed to grow except a type of wild Acacia called Argon or Goat trees. The reason they are called goat trees is that goats actually climb up in the tree to get the more abundant leaves than they can reach on the lower branches³⁶. The tree only grows here and in Mexico but in Mexico it does not bear fruit.

Then we drove through the agricultural Souss valley³⁷. All sorts of vegetables and bananas are grown in plastic greenhouses. Outside they grow carrots and potatoes in the rich artificially

²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis>

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trojan_horse

²⁸ http://www.bridgeclub-muenchen.de/HP_English.htm

²⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parmesan>

³⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cr%C3%AApe>

³¹ <http://www.thewinenews.com/febmar00/feat.html>

³² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agadir>

³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Mountains

³⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Atlas>

³⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taroudant>

³⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQev3UoGp2M&feature=related>

³⁷ <http://www.world66.com/africa/morocco/sousvalleyandantiatlasmountains>

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irrigated soil. One of the problems is that more and more farmers are coming here and the water supply is being strained. There is a reservoir but very little rainfall.

Khalid told me there is a 53% illiteracy rate in Morocco for school is not compulsory. The Government plans to start universal schooling in the next two years. Meanwhile most children only have the Koranic schools for their parents must pay for private schools.

We stopped at an attractive restaurant for refreshments. I bought a bottle of water and Khalid was most surprised I had local money. There was a cat there but he did not look very healthy and he certainly wasn't friendly.

We then drove to the walled city of Taroudant and everyone got off the bus to take pictures of the ancient walls. Khalid does not know how old they are however Wikipedia tells us they were built by Mohammed ash-Sheikh about 1528. We parted company with the rest and Khalid and I explored the colorful covered market where you can buy everything from clothing to doors to food. We made the compulsory rug stop but I wasn't tempted. We watched artisans at work making furniture or working their forge. It was very interesting. Then we went to where the Berber women were grinding the seeds of the goat trees to make oil. The plain oil is used in cosmetics and the cooking oil is mixed with toasted and ground almonds and smells delightful. Then there was the compulsory stop to buy the products³⁸. I spent most of the rest of my dirham to buy a cream "guaranteed" to rid me of wrinkles and age spots. We shall see!

Back to the ship and while I was enjoying the buffet in the lido bar, I was given the wonderful news that the Kremetztes would be boarding the ship tomorrow in Lanzarote. Later I got an email from Dick saying they had missed the ship in Casablanca but no details. I went to the shop display and bought a Sea Cloud sweater to wear on deck³⁹.

Before dinner we were given a tour of the historic rooms. About 30 of us met in room #1, Marjorie Merriweather Post's wonderful white room with the decorative glass mirrors and rosettes in the plaster. Even though Heike's talk was in German I could follow a lot of it. She talked of the many famous people who had come aboard as Marjorie's guests. The adjoining room #2 was for her husband and was much different with dark wood paneling. Then there were six other rooms each furnished in 1930s style. Marjorie's second husband Joseph Davies⁴⁰ was not much of a sailor but he was appointed ambassador first to Russia and later to Belgium. When he wanted to have discussions free from eavesdropping they were held on the ship. Her daughter Dina was usually aboard traveling with her nanny and tutor.

My sister and her husband had booked #1 and it is so sad they are not here to enjoy it.

I joined Andy and Chris and Rolanda and her husband for dinner although the latter spoke no English.

Tuesday, November 4, 2008. What a lovely day to spend wrapped in a blanket while we went under sail. I really didn't do much else until lunch. In the afternoon Dr Elfe gave a slide show lecture showing the evolution of sailboats. He is a sailor himself and has sailed single-handed across the Atlantic. Some of his slides showed pictures of replicas of famous ships that have been built such as the Nina, Pinto and Santa Maria⁴¹. I had not realized there were so many replicas around the world. Then there were some great pictures of the Americas Cup⁴² defenders and even a couple of the more recent ones that are hi-tech monstrosities covered with commercial advertisements. I think I am not alone in losing interest in the race since they stopped using the 12-meter boats. The last slides were of clipper ships⁴³ and some of the other tall ships in the world. He has been to many of the tall ship reunions. I remember going to one in

³⁸ <http://www.berbersources.com/1-argonoil.htm>

³⁹ <http://www.seacloud.com/boutique/en/>

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_E._Davies

⁴¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Mar%C3%ADa_\(ship\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Mar%C3%ADa_(ship))

⁴² [http://images.google.com/images?q=pictures+of+americas+cup+boats&ie=UTF-8&oe=utf-](http://images.google.com/images?q=pictures+of+americas+cup+boats&ie=UTF-8&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=1&ct=title)

[8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&resnum=1&ct=title](http://images.google.com/images?q=pictures+of+clipper+ships&btnG=Search+Images)

⁴³ [http://images.google.com/images?um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-](http://images.google.com/images?um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-US%3Aofficial&q=pictures+of+clipper+ships&btnG=Search+Images)

[US%3Aofficial&q=pictures+of+clipper+ships&btnG=Search+Images](http://images.google.com/images?um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-US%3Aofficial&q=pictures+of+clipper+ships&btnG=Search+Images)

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Charleston, SC. I was a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary at the time and our chapter went out on the Coast Guard Eagle⁴⁴ under power to escort some of them in.

Then it was time for Belgian Waffles⁴⁵ at teatime while I waited for us to come into Arrecife, our first Canary Island stop on the island of Lanzarote⁴⁶. This island is volcanic and has an interesting cave but I will not get off the boat for I want to see the Kremenzes. They were on the dock waiting for us and it seemed to take forever docking before I could finally welcome them aboard. Peggy says she will not talk about how they missed the ship.

Simon Kwinta, the hotel manager ushered us down to Cabin #1 where we were presented with champagne while the features of the cabin were explained. Alas the whiff of perfume no longer happens when you sit on the commode. I envied them the lovely lounging bathtub with the gold swan fixtures.

We met in the Lido Bar for drinks and then had a barbecue buffet. After dinner a band came aboard to play Spanish music.

Wednesday, November 5. I rose early and had a deck continental breakfast before joining Peggy in the dining room. I was told Barack Obama⁴⁷ won the presidential election but it did not seem like a big event to the Germans. I know most if not all of them have preferred him and I certainly hope with them that he can restore America's economic health. The ship's newspaper had an interesting editorial about how perhaps this will also help end the racial prejudice for which we are known.

We docked in Rosario on the island of Fuerteventura⁴⁸. Geologically this is the oldest of the Canary Islands⁴⁹ that are all volcanic in origin.

Peggy and I took the offered jeep tour and rode in David's jeep with Margret and Herbert and his wife. David is Italian with only a small knowledge of English. Our eight-jeep convoy left the dock in lock step and drove out of town and then off the main road. It was windy and chilly in the open jeep but we were told we could not have the top up because it would get too hot. The road soon showed us why we were in jeeps. It was like a washboard with ruts and rocks.

And then we made our first stop in the middle of a completely barren treeless plain. The object of the stop was to tell us where we were going to go on the map. We spent enough time there for me to take some "scenic" pictures of our jeep convoy and everyone standing in the dust. I swapped with Margret to the front seat where it was much warmer and out of the wind. We continued over the bumpy road to the opposite side of the island where we stopped for a photo op to take pictures of the scenic cliffs. They were so steep only a rock climber could have gone down to the beach below.

Our goal was El Cotillo⁵⁰ that looked like an interesting town but we passed through without a stop to a parking lot where we were offered Cava⁵¹, Spanish champagne that tastes like cider. I was not impressed.

Then it was back in the jeeps to head for Corralejo⁵² billed as being a fishing village with a picturesque lighthouse. We never saw the harbor as we convoyed on through and went on to a sandy beach with cabanas where we were offered a chance to swim. I stayed with the two jeep loads that were taken back into town, far from the picturesque harbor, for a half hour of shopping. We set off with Peggy and Margret and Margret proposed we walk 15 minutes out and 15 minutes back. Passing the Gucci and other shops Peggy and I got distracted by a small boutique and somehow lost Margret. We made our way back to the jeeps parked in a scenic filling station and waited and waited. No Margret! Finally we drove slowly back through town looking for her.

⁴⁴ <http://images.google.com/images?um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-US%3Aofficial&q=pictures+of+Coast+guard+Eagle&btnG=Search+Images>

⁴⁵ <http://images.google.com/images?um=1&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla%3Aen-US%3Aofficial&q=belgian+waffles&btnG=Search+Images>

⁴⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lanzarote>

⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama

⁴⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuerteventura>

⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canary_Islands

⁵⁰ <http://www.sunnyfuerteventura.com/el-cotillo/>

⁵¹ <http://www.wineintro.com/types/cava.html>

⁵² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corralejo>

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When we caught up with her we found she had stopped in a shop and turned the wrong way coming out. Because of this detour we were fifteen minutes or so late getting back to the beach for our picnic. Prosciutto ham⁵³, sausage and cheese bits were offered as well as some bread. I was afraid it might be lunch but someone said Sea Cloud would feed us on our return. Back in the jeeps we headed back for Rosario. Wind blows sand from the Sahara and there were some sand dunes for which the island is noted. Among the dunes there were numerous people flying colorful kites but we had no time to stop for we had to get back to the ship. End of tour! The tour cost 39 Euro and was a complete waste of time. Dick was smart to stay behind on board. After lunch we put on sail and headed for Tenerife. I had a nap and only woke up after tea. Tonight was the Captain's farewell party. Simon Kwinta, the hotel manager introduced his crew. Then he sat with us. He is very entertaining. Also sitting with us was Dietmar Schlabertz, the pianist. He knew the musicians on the Katharina von Bora that I rode down the Elbe several years ago. He prefers larger ships where he is not the sole musician.

Thursday, November 6. In the morning we had an interesting tour of the engine room. I am always impressed at how clean an engine room can be. We were shown our two huge diesel engines and the apparatus where they transform seawater into fresh.

It is such fun to watch the crew work the sheets and halyards. On a square-rigger the hard work is pulling the sails in. I felt like I was watching bell ringers as they jumped and heaved down on the lines. Some sang while they do it so it must be fun for them.

After lunch we docked at Tenerife⁵⁴, the largest of the Canary Islands. The ship's tour was so bad yesterday; we decided to do our own thing and find an English speaking taxi to take us up on the volcano. Neither of the two taxis on the dock spoke English. The tour bus kindly took us into the center of town where Dick made several abortive attempts to flag a cab. We crossed the highway and came into the central park of Santa Cruz, the capital. I noticed one wall and then the roof of another building were covered with a green garden and Peggy told me these green walls and roofs are all the rage. They are attractive but how do they keep them free of weeds? At last we found a cab rank and Dick went down the line inquiring about English. He was almost to the end when he found one. Miguel's English was very good for he has spent some time in the states. His wonderful cab was a very comfortable Mercedes⁵⁵. We negotiated a price of 125 euros to see the mountain.

I was here some 25 years ago with Mother and remembered the volcano because of its perfect shape. We started up through a pine forest and were told this type of pinewood is used in building. The forest was lovely and we stopped two or three times to get out of the car and admire the views. Soon we were above the clouds and tree line and it started to look like we had landed on the moon. The name of the volcano is Teide⁵⁶ and it means snow and there were traces of snow near the 3718-meter summit. It is the highest mountain in Spain.

We stopped for refreshments and Dick and I each enjoyed a chocolate cone. We drove past the funicular to the Rocks of Garcia⁵⁷. No one knows who Garcia was but Cinchado, one of the huge rocks, has an unusual shape. I started to climb the trail to the overlook but even with Dick's help, I found it hard to breath. Part of the trouble was the altitude. So I left them to finish the climb and came down where I found an overlook where you could see the valley. There are several volcanoes here and the last eruption was in 1909. Underwater volcanic activity is creating another island in the archipelago.

There were a number of people training greyhound-like dogs to hunt for rabbits. This is only allowed on Thursday and Saturday. Rabbits are the only wild animals on the island.

We then came down the mountain on an alternate road and came to Orotava⁵⁸. This delightful town is known for its ornate wooden balconies. The town is also known for the elaborate paintings they paint on the town square when they have their Corpus Christi festival. Rock of

⁵³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosciutto>

⁵⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenerife>

⁵⁵ <http://www.mbusa.com/mercedes/MBHome.html>

⁵⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teide>

⁵⁷ <http://home.no.net/torztein/tenerife/losroques.htm>

⁵⁸ <http://www.whattenerife.com/la-orotava.html>

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different colors are collected from the mountain and then ground to chalky consistency. The pigment is used to make the paintings. At the Casa de Orotava Miguel showed us an exhibit where they had a painting on the floor and behind a cave with aborigine figures in it. We ran the gauntlet of beautiful linens the ladies had for sale and across the street went into the Casa de Balcones. The people who owned this house made their own wines and the ancient press was still in the courtyard. We were offered some of the banana cordial and it brought back memories of when we used to bring banana cordial back from the Caribbean. My tastes must have changed for I did not particularly enjoy the cordial today.

We didn't get back to the ship until almost suppertime. I went down to Number one for a glass of Canary wine and to admire the wonderful tassels⁵⁹ the Kremetztes bought in Fez⁶⁰.

Dinner was a buffet and this was followed by a troupe of folk dancers. None of us really was in the mood for this for we needed to pack but Simon shooed us all up to the Lido Bar for the show. Many of the steps reminded me of the steps used in American square dancing. I snuck out when they started asking the audience to participate and finally had my bags packed by 10:30.

Friday, November 7. The last day. We were supposed to dock at 9 Am but there were a number of other cruise ships and we had to wait for the pilot. The pilot seemed to have a hard time getting us to our dock and it was after 10 before they finally had the bags off and were ready to disembark us.

Tied up across the dock was another tall ship, the training ship Danmark. Her crew watched us with great interest. My last view as the bus for the airport pulled out was the romantic view of the multiple masts of two tall ships.

I took the group transfer for it seemed easier than to cope with a taxi on my own. This gave me a couple of hours to kill before I could check in to my 2:40 flight to Madrid on Europa Air. Security check went easily and I was soon ensconced in the VIP lounge. The seats in Europa's first class are not very comfortable. Then it was a long wait in Madrid before the wheel chair came because they had not ordered me one. At baggage claim I found they had checked my bag through to Atlanta even though I don't go until tomorrow.

When we got to where the jitney buses are it was raining and then I was told I had to call for a bus. I was in tears and finally a man in another jitney got on the phone and called one for me. I did not realize until I got to the Holiday Inn Express⁶¹ that the ride cost 8 euro. The hotel was pretty basic, clean but not attractive. They gave me a wheelchair room. The biggest problem with it is that it takes at least a minute for the door to close (to enable a wheelchair to get out). Not needing this feature I found it an annoyance. They did give me a toothbrush and some paste but had nothing further in the way of cosmetics. I then tried to get on the Internet. It cost 3.5 euros for one hour! I could not make it work in my room so ended up using the public computers in the lobby. In one week I had received 65 emails and countless suspected spam. Then I went to dinner. It was a fixed price 3-course meal for 16 euro. I only wanted one course but the price was the same. The only other alternative was snack type food for the hotel is in the middle of nowhere.

I was happy to check out of this rip off hotel the next morning.

Saturday, November 8, 2008. I took the 8-euro jitney back to the airport and had no trouble checking in with Delta. They assured me they had my suitcase that was checked to Atlanta. During the flight I watched an interesting HBO series on John Adams⁶². When I got to American customs, there was my bag!

⁵⁹ <http://marrakechemma.blogspot.com/2008/03/tassles-glorious-tassles.html>

⁶⁰ <http://lexicorient.com/morocco/fez.htm>

⁶¹ http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g187514-d295474-Reviews-Holiday_Inn_Express_Madrid_Rivas-Madrid.html

⁶² <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0472027/>