



Climb to new heights aboard Royal Caribbean

Adventure OF A Lifetime

BY MIRA TEMKIN



When the earliest seafarers set sail, I doubt if even they could ever have envisioned the sheer magnitude and glory of Royal Caribbean International's **Adventure of the Seas**. Currently reigning as one of the largest cruise ships in the world, the 15-deck Adventure is more than just a spectacular floating hotel carrying 3,400 guests. It's an entire city! Yes, this ship boasts an elegant three-story dining room, impressive staterooms and suites with private balconies, and a grand Royal Promenade featuring many fabulous shops. Adventure also takes the "wow" factor to new heights with a rock-climbing wall, ice arena, full-length sports court, mini-golf and a bounty of activities to keep you moving throughout the entire

seven-day journey. Departing from San Juan, Puerto Rico, the ship sails year-round on alternate routes through the southern Caribbean.

Adventure of the Seas, along with sister ships *Voyager of the Seas* and *Explorer of the Seas*, are part of the new Voyager-class ships, the biggest cruising vessels on the face of the earth. Truly, these ships represent a revolutionary marvel of naval engineering. Hotel Director Martin Rissley said it best, "We love watching the faces of our guests as they come aboard for the first time. They're absolutely blown away by the ship. Even we have to remind ourselves sometimes when we are sitting in the dining room, we're actually at sea!"

Between the sports deck and fitness center, there are more than enough activities to get your heart pumping and energy level rising. What's more, the programs offer opportunities for both the beginner as well as the more experienced sports enthusiast to try something new. Was I up to the challenge of the rock-climbing wall? This 30-foot fiberglass wall is designed to simulate natural rock surfaces with directional changes for authenticity. Donning a helmet and shoes with harness tied around my waist, I climbed under the expert tutelage of Anthony Smith, Sports and Fitness Supervisor, who skillfully guided me up one of the easier courses. Observing the rock-climbing competition was a little less risky, as my husband and I marveled at those who could reach the top of the wall in less than 12 seconds! Anthony told us they add other challenges for the more skillful climbers such as tying their shoes together or allowing them to use only one hand. Talk about extreme sports!

Golf enthusiasts – keep swinging! As the official cruise line of the PGA Tour and Senior PGA Tour, Royal Caribbean offers challenging golf throughout the cruise. On-board, a state-of-the-art golf simulator features 18-hole championship courses in a computer-driven golf video game. Having tried it, I found the best part of the game was that the computer actually finds the ball for you.

When the ship docks, the adventure really takes off! One of the most popular shore excursions in Aruba is the Off-Road Adventure where explorers tour the beautiful island from the seat of a sports utility vehicle. Another is America's Cup Sailing Regatta in St. Maarten where guests compete in a race around a shortened America's Cup course. Under the guidance of experienced crew, you can help navigate, trim a sail or just sit back and enjoy the thrill.

But perhaps the best part of our "adventure" at sea was simply reflecting on these extraordinary experiences from the perspective of our private balcony. Sipping a glass of wine and watching the sun gracefully descend into the sparkling ocean was inspiration enough for the memories to last a lifetime. ❖

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