

An “Inspiring” Cruise...

Being together on Carnival *Inspiration* suited everyone!

By Mira Temkin



Nightlife — Karaoke and Disco

One of the reasons I chose Carnival was because of its onboard nightlife. My “kids” coaxed us to do karaoke and we had a blast. At dinner, I was busy snapping pictures of them dancing the Conga through the dining room. Later, they went to the disco until the wee hours. Of course, the casino was their constant hot spot. Rumor had it, one of my girls got really hot at blackjack.



When I decided to celebrate my husband’s 60th birthday on a cruise, I wasn’t sure which line to pick. After researching the options, I decided on Carnival because of the wide variety of activities that would appeal to my multi-generational group. It turns out I was not alone as I saw many families with three generations in tow.

We sailed on the Carnival *Inspiration* out of Tampa with port stops in Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Mexico. This 5-night, 6-day cruise gave us an opportunity to share new experiences together as well as enjoy all the wonderful amenities of the “Fun Ship.”

“The best part of cruising for families is that everyone can have their own schedule and still get together over dinner to share their day,” said Felipe Couto, Cruise Director. “With our big screen TV, interactive video games and their own shore excursions, teens don’t want to leave. For younger kids, Camp Carnival offers outdoor games, face-painting, and other activities. Carnival even offers late-night babysitting. It’s a win-win situation.”

Swimming with the Stingrays

As I’m always up for adventure, the “Coral Reef and Stingray Safari” in Grand Cayman seemed exciting. After riding on a catamaran, we stopped in the middle of the North Sound where I could see hoards of people standing around with stingrays moving past them. Guides brought the stingrays up close and personal so we could touch them. The snorkeling to view exquisite underwater reef and rainbow colored fish was astonishing.



Keeping Busy at Sea

The *Inspiration* has recently undergone major renovations, with the addition of a waterpark. It looked like great fun as I saw three-year olds laughing with glee, followed down the slides by my “kids.” Carnival recognizes that adults want quiet time and have added an adults-only Serenity Deck. My daughter liked to play bingo and I enjoy the art auctions because I always learn something or dis-



cover new works. In addition to the daily shopping specials in the duty-free shops, there were seminars on nutrition, shopping at port, spa treatments, fitness center, mini-golf and more. Of course, there's always just reading on deck with a Reggae band and cool drink.

Exciting Innovations Ahead

Carnival continues to build them bigger and better. The new Carnival Splendor carries over 3,000 passengers with the new "Cloud 9 Spa," a two-level 5,500 foot children's play area, and a sliding sky dome over the main pool with a massive LCD screen for movies and concerts. The new Carnival Dream, to debut in late 2009, has a Water Works aqua park, "scenic whirlpools" and new stateroom categories, catering to families. Wow!

At the end of the cruise, I felt like Carnival had provided just the kind of experience I was seeking – relaxing onboard, new experiences in port and memorable fun for everyone! As my brood grows, I'd love to go back with grandchildren. I know Carnival would be perfect!

Carnival is the largest and most popular cruise line in the world with 22 "Fun Ships" that cruise the Caribbean, Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, Europe and South America. For more information about Carnival Cruises, call 888-Carnival or visit their website at www.carnival.com.

Before or after the cruise...

Embassy Suites Tampa, Downtown Convention Center

One of the best reasons to stay at this Embassy Suites is its close proximity to the Port of Tampa Cruise Terminal. Because my personal mantra is to arrive in the port city the day before my cruise departs, I thought the Embassy Suites had the ideal location. Each suite had a private bedroom, spacious living room with two televisions. And the hotel was just a few blocks from Channelside, a lively dining and entertainment complex. I checked my email (at no charge) in the Business Center, stopped at the nightly Manager's Reception; even met a few people cruising with us the next day. The next morning, we enjoyed complimentary, made-to-order breakfast. Then, right out the door of the hotel, we took the streetcar to the terminal, rested and ready to set sail! For reservations, call 813.769.8300 or 800.560.7782 or visit www.tampadowntown.embassysuites.com.

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