



MS Eurodam - Holland America's Newest Addition

By Betsy and Rick Worley



Holland America is one of our favorite cruise lines, thanks to Sue introducing us to them with an Alaska cruisetour several years ago. The MS Eurodam launched her maiden voyage in June of 2008. This is a "mid-size"(!) ship with 11 passenger decks for over 2,000 passengers, a new Pan-Asian restaurant called the Tamarind in addition to the buffet area, fine dining, the Pinnacle Grill, and the Canalotto restaurant with Italian cuisine. Sue was able to give us a travel agent's tip on making a reservation during lunchtime for the Tamarind. Reservations made midday do not add any extra dining charge to your cruise bill. We enjoyed a five-course meal that was elegantly presented and very delicious. The minute you board the ship, we recommend that you make that reservation. If you miss that opportunity, the evening meal costs \$15 per person as a reservation. That is still a great bargain and wonderful indulgence.

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The MS Eurodam featured an exquisite art collection based on the theme, "The Dutch Golden Age - An Inexhaustible Tradition". It highlighted works by Dutch masters mixed with contemporary artists. Every few days, the artwork changed. The art auction was surely fabulous.

MS Eurodam has Club Hal for the young people onboard and the Loft for teenagers with a state-of-the-art film editing equipment. Any photography buffs can edit and produce a scrapbook of cruise memories long before disembarking at the ship photography center.

We sailed from Ft. Lauderdale to the Western Caribbean—the Bahamas, Jamaica, and Grand Cayman in October. The weather was generally in the 80's, with calm surf in the beautiful blue-green waters of the Caribbean lapping along the lovely white sand beaches. The Seven Mile Beach in Grand Cayman is a must see. The ship offered a variety of excursions including swimming with manta rays, snorkeling, riding mountain bikes, or touring the incredible Atlantis Resort with its own aquarium and water park on Paradise Island near Nassau. Many of the young people and families loved hiking up a waterfall in Jamaica. They were led by a local guide and formed a human chain to travail the water and rocks. If you didn't bring water shoes, you could rent them at the park.

English is spoken in all the islands but be careful of renting a car or scooter. The driving is on the left. We had a terrible time just crossing the street. Our favorite spot was the Botanical Gardens on the Grand Cayman. The local bus ride was an adventure in languages and human nature. Within the garden was a blue iguana reserve.

We tend to shy away from the ship's excursions and go out on our own with the local buses or taxis. (Of course, be wary--"island time" is not necessarily the time that will return you back to the ship. Give yourself extra time and clear directions to your driver about the time you must be at the dock.) The Caribbean is a relaxing trip combined with the elegance of the MS Eurodam.

