

Destination MEDCRUISE

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ISSUE 1

Via Valencia

A city within a city



A spaceship has not landed in Valencia rather the futuristic-looking white complex, which is fast becoming a landmark destination for the city, is La Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias - City of the Arts and Sciences leisure complex.

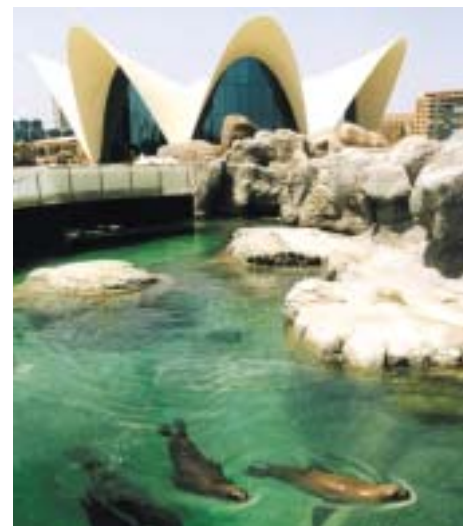
Created around the great questions that concern mankind: science, art, the future and nature, the complex offers a wealth of interesting things to see and do for all ages.

The design concept is that of a city within a city consisting of four parts: The Palace of Arts

devoted to the creation and dissemination of the scenic arts; the Science Museum designed to hold permanent and travelling Med exhibitions; the Hemisfèric providing the latest in image and sound technology including planetarium, Imax cinema and laser show; while the Oceanogràfic is dedicated to marine life.

Since opening in February more than 200,000 people have visited the Oceanogràfic (pictured right), unique in size and design and for its biological collection. There you will find a Dolphinarium and interactive room dedicated to the Red Sea plus the opportunity of getting to

know the behaviour of sea lions, seals, sharks and other marine animals and learn about coral ecosystems and the richness of the Mediterranean Sea.



Board View – Juan Madrid, President

Welcome to the first issue of Destination Medcruise, a quarterly newsletter designed to focus on the tourist attractions and shore excursion opportunities accessible to cruise passengers via MedCruise member ports.

Over the last ten years the Mediterranean cruise season has been gradually extending and now for the first time this second most popular cruise arena has become a year-round destination with Costa, Mediterranean Shipping Cruises and Festival operating vessels throughout the year.

What we would like to see now is the North American lines coming into the Med for a full year operation. With more capacity to fill and the Caribbean getting over-crowded I believe this will become a reality by 2005.

Demand during the winter is also being fuelled by the booming European source markets plus a change in holiday planning. Instead of taking their four weeks off at one time either during July or August, many Europeans are taking three weeks in the summer months and scheduling one week at another time.

During the winter, the weather is very mild and the destinations are far less crowded. With such a diverse range of tourist attractions available throughout the region the Mediterranean is an itinerary planners dream and that can now be turned into a reality for cruise passengers twelve months of the year.



For more information on: La Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias visit www.cac.es; Valencia as a destination visit www.turisvalencia.es and for the port of Valencia visit www.valenciaport.com or www.medcruise.com

Distance from port:- The complex is only 1km away from Port of Valencia's cruise berth. A tourist information point at the berth explains how to reach the complex via foot. Taxis and buses also available.



Via Venice

Discover the secrets of the Doge's Palace



Just recently opened to the public is the Doge's Palace, the residence of the Doge and also the seat of the main government symbolising the glory and power of Venice.

A guided tour will take you in the Doge's private apartment, up into the attic and the Piombi prisons, where Casanova made his famous escape, and again through the hidden passage-ways to the torture chambers. An exciting journey through time and history!

Venice is a city offering all kinds of opportunities: For romantics enjoy a dinner or

lunch on a beautiful terrace overlooking the Grand Canal. Discover the Venetian Cuisine, a symphony of flavours and colours, a fusion of different cultures.

You can discover the historical roots of Venice by visiting the islands of the Northern lagoon: Torcello, one of the most ancient settlements in Venice, rich in archaeological remains, with a natural environment that creates a

special atmosphere. Murano and Burano, celebrated for their traditions and secret crafts.

Why not try wine tasting on the Doges' road. Travel through the wine towns of Annone Veneto, Portogruaro, Pramaggiore, San Stino di Livenza already appreciated by the "Dogi", in the beautiful landscapes made of vineyards and wineries, a few kilometres away from Venice.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, until the fall of the Venetian republic, beautiful villas decorated with splendid frescoes were built on the banks of the river Brenta. Visit one of the beautiful Villas, now open to the public and enjoy the hospitality of the owners that will welcome you in their houses and make you live the special atmosphere of those times.



Via Ravenna

Mosaics & monuments

Ravenna is celebrated worldwide for the ancient mosaics of its basilicas (such as S. Vitale).

S. Apollinare Nuovo and S. Apollinare in Classe), and its mausoleums (like Galla Placidia and Theodoric) which have been put on the World Heritage List by UNESCO.

The city was the major political and cultural centre of the West and was capital of the Roman Empire and seat of the imperial fleet in the port

of Classe, whose remains today represent an archaeological site of great interest. Later it was capital of the Barbarian kingdom led by King Theodoric. Then Ravenna was conquered by the Byzantines and it became the outpost of the Byzantine power in Italy for about two centuries. The famous mosaics and monuments of Ravenna, which represent

incomparable traces of that period, were visited by 40.000 cruise passengers in summer 2003.

As a matter of fact, in the city centre, cruise passengers had the chance of visiting an extraordinary archaeological jewel recently brought to light: the 'Palace with marble carpets'; while, in the outskirts, mention should be made of



Brisighella, with its fortress and Medieval Festival events, and S. Marino, with its austere and suggestive appearance of the past.

But the city of Ravenna is not only rich in history and art, many top-level theatrical, ballet, opera and concert events take place in the city, the main appointment being the concert event 'Ravenna Festival': different amusement opportunities are also offered by the numerous theme parks, the most important of which being the Mirabilandia Park (located only 10 km from Ravenna) offering countless shows and wonderful attractions and representing Italy's second most popular theme park.





Via Sorrento & Naples



The well preserved ruins of Pompeii are a must-see attraction that can be easily reached via both these Italian ports. Originally settled by indigenous people before the 8th century BC, and later ruled by Etruscans, Greeks and Samnites, Pompeii became a thriving commercial centre under Roman rule. It was a city bustling with shops, markets and town houses with paved streets,

wide sidewalks, a stadium, two theatres, temples and baths.

Shortly after noon on August 24th in 79AD, live cinder and ash from nearby Mount Vesuvius covered the entire city and 30,000 inhabitants were entombed. A layer of ash five to six metres deep covered the city preserving the architectural details, furnishings, houses, even food and artwork. It was rediscovered in the 16th century and

excavation work began in 1784.

Today excavation work still continues throughout the 66 hectares site where you can walk through the streets, rutted by chariot tracks, past the ancient forum, homes of wealthy traders and the shops. Body casts of citizens caught in the moment of death encapsulate the horror of that fateful day.



Via La Spezia

Palmeria's new Sea Museum



A call at the sheltered natural harbour of La Spezia offers cruise passengers not only the chance to explore the city, which is just 200mtrs away, but an opportunity to visit a whole range of must-

see attractions in the surrounding area such as Portovenere, Cinque Terre, Pisa, Florence and Portofino.

A new attraction which opened at the end of 2002 is the Museo del Mare (Sea Museum) on nearby

Palmaria Island. The fortress, which is situated on Palmaria island, facing Portovenere, is a beautiful example of a fortified military naval structure.

Its name is Fortezza del mare (Fortress of the sea) because it is situated inside an old fortress, which has been transformed into a Cultural Centre of maritime civilisation. It contains an exhibition and convention area as well as laboratories for underwater archeology and marine science.

The museum is open on weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10.00 – 12.00am and 15.00 – 18.00 in the afternoons).

Palmaria Island is reachable by ferry, both from Portovenere (10 minutes) and from La Spezia (20 minutes).

La Spezia welcomed 20 cruise ships this year including new visitor Costa Romantica and the port is planning to build a new cruise terminal which will be realised in the next three years.

Via Toulon, St Tropez



Unique maritime heritage

Toulon old town is just 5 minutes walk from the cruise port via a pedestrian walkway. The long promenade running alongside the main marina features a host of good restaurants and brasseries!

The city's unique maritime heritage can best be appreciated by a boat tour, with its exceptional views over the city's ancient military architecture and modern warships and submarines, coupled with a visit to the National Maritime Museum on the port.

Don't miss the inimitable southern hubbub of the

vast, sun-dappled Provençal food market on Cours Lafayette (every morning), or the Medieval quarter with its muddle of winding streets, ancient cathedral, shady squares and moss-covered fountains.

The chic and buzzing eastern Mourillon quarter – easy to reach on foot, by bus or on the tourist train (30 minute ride) – features delightful little boutiques and shops, many of which open on Sunday mornings, and good eateries. Just a step away, the sandy Mourillon Beaches are lined with pretty cafés and restaurants. Adjacent to the beaches, the magnificent coastal

footpath winds along wild, pine-bordered creeks and provides stunning views over the sea.

For tired or elderly people, the 50 minutes tour on the scenic touristic train introduces the history of Toulon and offers breathtaking views over the bay, including the 16th century Tour Royale, sandy Mourillon beaches (pick up point) and promenade overlooking the marina (departures every hour)

Other attractions closeby include Sanary (below), 15 mins. from Toulon, a pretty 11th-century harbour with daily fish market. Set a mile or so inland, the steep Medieval village of Le Castellet (20 mins. from Toulon) is an absolute must for arts and crafts lovers. Bandol, 20 mins. from Toulon is a lively resort, featuring an elegant palm-lined promenade, casino and boutiques selling high-quality jewellery, shoes, clothes and artwork.



Via French Riviera Ports

Tradition and cosmopolitan culture



The ports of Nice, Villefranche and Cannes offer access to the traditional heritage and cosmopolitan culture of the French Riviera. All are located in the heart of the cities and provide direct access to shopping and sightseeing. Must-see attractions include:

At Nice - Villefranche

Castle Rock: panoramic views of the Bay of Nice, Promenade des Anglais: numerous beaches, restaurants and palm trees around the bay, Cours Saleya : flowers, bric-a-brac and antiques market, street cafés and restaurants, picturesque streets

and small shops, Cimiez monastery and gardens, Avenue de Verdun and Rue Paradis: luxury boutiques, Avenue Jean Médecin: department stores, boutiques, bars, souvenirs, newsagents and Villefranche old town (left).

At Cannes

Le Suquet: from the church there is a magnificent view of the entire Bay of Cannes, La Croisette: pavement cafés, luxury hotels, elegant shops and palm trees line the Bay of Cannes, The Old Port: with its colours and traditions, the rallying point for luxury yacht (right), Forville market: Provençal market open everyday except Monday (bric-a-brac fair), "Allée des Etoiles du Cinéma": handprints of the greatest cinema actors of all time at the foot of the Festival Centre, Mini-train ride: the Croisette, the Suquet, and Rue d'Antibes and Rue Meynadier: clothes, leather goods, jewellery, perfume, household linen, souvenirs, newspapers, confectionery, herbalist's, grocer's, baker's...

Nice and Cannes are exiting cities with their casinos (Carlton Casino Club, Casino Barrière Palais des Festivals, Palm Beach Casino, Casino



Ruhl), restaurants (Provençal cook, fish and seafood specialities) and numerous conferences, exhibitions, festivals and stars...

Other excursions available from Nice or Cannes:

- Cap d'Antibes
- Biot glassworks
- Vallauris pottery
- Old village of Mougins
- Grasse perfume factories
- Estérel mountains
- Saint-Paul de Vence
- Verdon gorges
- Mont Boron forest
- Beaulieu
- Menton
- Cap Ferrat



Via Haifa

Nature... just a walk away



Haifa is Israel's third largest city, lying in a natural bay with the awe-inspiring Carmel Mountain as a backdrop. Whilst the city's terraced lanscape offers a rich variety of panoramas and the streets are packed with museums, theatres, cinemas, restaurants, elegant hotels, air-conditioned shopping malls and boutiques

there are a number of walking tours enabling the visitor to enjoy nature too!

A three hour walk beginning in Lotus Street and finishing at the start of the Siah River is suitable year-round and for all ages with theroute passing through one of the most beautiful gorges in Haifa offering a combination of rare flora, springs, historical sites and panoramic views. A shorter two hour walk along the

Lotem River highlights one of Haifa's most natural sites. An wealth of birds and flora can be found just a few minutes walk from the bustle of the city.

Other tourist attractions in the city are Kababir Ahmedi Village, Carmel Centre, Cape Carmel sites with Elijah's cave or Bat Galim seafront promenade via cable car, the Haifa Museum and the German Colony.

Daily bus tours from Haifa take visitors to the Holy City of Jerusalem (below).



Via Tunis

A meeting of yesterday and today

Tunis is a city where yesterday and today blend together - a bustling Mediterranean city of palm tree boulevards, modern buildings, bright yellow taxis and chic boutiques alongside the narrow streets of the ancient Medina or Suuq, with small shops selling brass, olive wood, leather and coloured garments.



Follow the shops offering antiques, jewellery, carpets and pottery towards the Mosque of the Olive Tree, Ez Zitouna at the heart of the Medina. This is the main mosque of Tunis and is named after the mosque's founder who taught the Koran under an oilve tree. Built in the 9th century, the minaret was added in the 19th century. It is today a house of worship and was also until the 1950s a house of learning. Nearby Tunis is the Bardo Museum which boasts the largest collection of Roman mosaics in the world.

Via Palamos



A Dali celebration in 2004

One of the most attractive ways to approach the Costa Brava is to arrive on a cruiseship into the port and town of Palamos. The port is set in one of the deepest and largest natural bays in the area and has two quays for handling cruiseships. This summer Palamos had two cruise calls.

The work of Salvador Dali, the brilliant surrealist artist is very closely linked to the landscapes of the Costa Brava where he was born. Passengers looking for a Dali experience can visit the unusual Dali Museum in Figueras (Girona) and the artist's house in Pubol which has been turned into a museum.

Other attractions closeby include the Jewish

Quarter in Girona, the Medieval towns of Pals, La Bisbal and Peratallada, Castle and Casino of Perelada, Golf in Sta. Cristina d'Aro, Pals, L'Emporda and gastronomic experiences along the Brava coast.

Next year is the centenary of Dali's birth (1904–1989) and many activities are scheduled to take place in this area of Spain to celebrate the life and works of this flamboyant painter.

Via Cartagena

History in the making



Cartagena was founded almost 2,300 years ago and throughout its history has been occupied by various civilisations (Phoenicians, Carthaginians,

Romans, Byzantines and Arabs) which have impregnated the Spanish city with a range of unique historic and cultural treasures.

Cartagena Culture Port Consortium has assigned

€7.8m during 2001–2003, for the fulfilment of a number of projects intended to turn Cartagena into an exceptional tourist destination. These include an Interpretation Centre of the city's history (Castillo de la Concepción), Access to La Concepción Castle, Lift-walkway to La Concepción Castle (Parque Torres), Decumano–Three King's Square (Roman remains), Fortune House (Roman remains), Tourist Transport (boat and tram), and thematic itineraries.

Future investments include a new centre for the National Museum of Maritime Archaeology, planned by the Cultural Ministry, the Municipal Auditorium and Congress Centre, recently launched by the Cartagena City Hall, still under construction.

Must-see tourists attractions include the Roman theatre and modernist buildings. The cathedral at Murcia, la Manga Club Resort and Mar Menor the largest lagoon in Europe.



Shore excursions onboard Oceania Cruises, reports Anne Kalosh

Something to suit all tastes on Regatta



In its inaugural European cruise season, Regatta launched what will become a standard on all sailings: two comprehensive shore excursion packages that feature tours in every port on Oceania Cruises' destination-intensive itineraries.

The Discovery Collection is targeted at first-time visitors and gives a taste of each destination. For seasoned travellers, there's the Explorer Collection, with more exotic choices and a sprinkling of full-day tours.

The packages are very well received, says Gregory Molfetas (above right), destination services assistant, who notes that up to 20% of the guests on the 684-passenger Regatta book them. However, they must be reserved in advance of sailing and no substitutions are allowed. Oceania pays travel agents 5% commission on the packages.

Pricing varies by itinerary and includes a discount off the cost of tours purchased individually. For example, on a 14-day Scenic Splendors and Gilded Palaces' cruise from London to Barcelona in 2003, the Discovery Collection cost \$469 (a savings of \$53), while the Explorer Collection was priced at \$899 (a \$120 savings).

Included in the Explorer Collection for the cruise were a half-day Barcelona city highlights tour, visiting the Gothic Quarter, Gaudi buildings including La Sagrada Família as well as Montjuic Gardens and



Helle Johansen and Gregory Molfetas

Miramar. Palma de Mallorca's half-day jaunts took passengers to places of interest like the Cathedral, a pearl factory, Bellver Castle and Palma History Museum. In Lisbon (right), passengers got to see the Alfama Quarter, the Coach Museum, Jeronimus Monastery and Monument to the Discoveries. The Alcazaba, Gibralfaro Castle, Malaga Bullring and a wine cellar were among the Malaga stops.

In the same ports,

Regatta's Explorer Collection included an evening flamenco show at Barcelona, while at Palma, passengers journeyed to the Caves of Drac. At Lisbon, they went beyond the city to Cascais, Sintra and Queluz Palace, and the Malaga call featured a full-day exploration of Granada and the Alhambra.

Besides the packages, to be repeated in 2004, Regatta passengers can book individual tours (with a choice of four or five per port) or arrange for a private car and guide, a very popular choice, according to Helle Johansen (above left), destination services manager. 'These tours are highly appreciated,' she says. 'The guests often get to be very close friends with their guide.'



Bari opens new cruise terminal



Port of Bari inaugurated a new cruise terminal on September 18th. Part of a €144m investment aimed at developing existing structures and increasing the multi-functional activities of the Italian port.

The cruise terminal covers a 3,500sq mtr work area and includes a check-in area to host three shipping companies simultaneously, a check-in for ferries to Greece, a first aid area, and a nursery. These are just some of the many services that the new terminal will offer its passengers.

This year Bari will welcome at least 205,000 passengers from 125 ships including those owned

by Costa, MSC, Royal Olympia, Fred Olsen, Arcadia and Crystal Cruises. In 1986, cruise traffic reached a modest 23,000 passengers. The total number of passenger traffic, including ferries will reach 1.3m by the end of 2003.

Expectations are high for a good 2004 when 170 cruise ships are scheduled to call bringing 260,000 passengers.

Bari, situated on the Adriatic Sea, is one of the most economically active cities in Italy. The city is divided into two parts by Corso Vittorio Emanuele, that runs between the Old Town and the New Town built in 1820. Bari has a wonderful seaside where many outdoor festivals are held.

Cyprus – A Cruise Centre Seminar

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has launched a new marketing campaign to highlight the island's attractions as a year-round destination. As part of the effort, a special seminar entitled 'Cyprus – A Cruise Centre' was held in Limassol in late September, co-organised by the Cyprus Shipping Council, to promote the island's potential as a cruise hub for the east Med.

For a decade up until 2000, Limassol was a booming mini-cruise hub with more than 250,000 visitors a year – 10% to 15% of all tourist arrivals on Cyprus, the majority British – taking a two or three night itinerary to Egypt, Israel or both, to see Cairo and the Pyramids and/or Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Then came the troubles in Israel, ruling out all calls to that country, followed by 9/11 and the Iraq conflict. Mini-cruise passengers departing Cyprus fell to 210,000 in 2001 and 160,000 in 2002.

Local operators such as Louis Cruise Lines,



Paradise Cruises, Salamis Cruise Lines and Poseidon Shipping Cruises have responded imaginatively by starting new itineraries – to Beirut, Syria, Rhodes and the Greek islands/Athens – but these have tended to appeal to Cypriots more than tourists.

Meanwhile, the number of transit passengers on international cruises calling Cyprus has declined from a high of nearly 200,000 in 2000 to around 105,000 last year.

Cyprus officials feel the east Med market has bottomed out and are busy preparing to attract more cruise traffic when it returns.

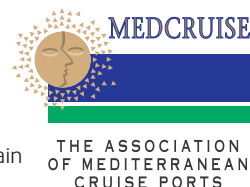
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Contacts

MedCruise

Carla Salvadó
Secretary General
Portal de la Pau, 6
08039 Barcelona, Spain
Tel: +34 93 3068800
Fax: +34 93 3068817
secretariat@medcruise.com
presidency@medcruise.com



Destination MedCruise

Editor: Mary Bond
Seatrade Communications Ltd
Tel: +44 1206 545121
Fax: +44 1206 545190
mary@seatrade-global.com

Designer: Kevin Sylvester
Production Editor: Fiona Hockey



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