

### Singapore – Day 33 Oct. 30:

This was a second day in Singapore and we woke up to a sunny sky without the threat of imminent rain that dampened our touring agenda a bit yesterday. All aboard for the passengers was scheduled for 10am so our time for exploring Singapore this morning was limited. We had two items on the agenda for today, getting a fix on local gasoline prices and taking a sightseeing ride on the high cable car that passes over the Amsterdam and connects Singapore with a small island called Sentosa that is dedicated to recreational activities.

After breakfast we headed off the ship and quickly through the cruise terminal on the hunt for a gas station that would have the local prices posted. We had seen some yesterday through the rain as the taxi brought us back to the terminal so we hoped to find one this morning. We had learned that even though Singapore must import all their crude oil in ships, they have huge refineries that produce gasoline, diesel and other petroleum products that make up a major export for the nation.

We walked about a mile along a main road into the terminal next to a major elevated freeway. The temperature and humidity were pleasant so we enjoyed the chance to stretch our legs. Along the way the buildings and landscaping were well maintained and attractive. We were reaching the limit of how far we could walk and still make it back to the ship by 10am when we finally spotted a 7 Eleven Shell station with a sign posting their prices. We whipped out the camera and took a photo for the record, as shown on the right.

A grade called Fuel Save 95 was selling for \$2.005 Singapore per liter which is about \$8.02 Singapore per gallon of gasoline. At the current exchange rate of 1.16 Singapore dollars per 1 USD that works out to about \$6.90 USD per gallon of gasoline, a lot more expensive than the \$2.75 USD per gallon we saw in Hong Kong on October 24. The diesel here was \$1.511 Singapore per liter which is about \$5.20 USD per gallon, a lot cheaper than the example we had in Hong Kong of \$6.10 USD per gallon. This swing in gasoline and diesel prices may be a quirk in our simple minded sampling methods or maybe a real government policy difference in taxation and subsidizes for energy sources.



After claiming success in getting gas prices we headed for the cable car ticket booth in hopes we could work that in before the Amsterdam pulled up the gangway at 10am. We were hustling back along the street we had walked before when we noticed that a lot of young men in work clothes were arriving at one point on the street as shown in these photos.



They were all headed in the same direction off the street in the direction of Sentosa Island. Later when we saw all the construction on Sentosa Island we guessed that these guys were the people putting those projects together.

We continued down the street and with a little guidance from locals we were able to find the ticket office for the cable car. We arrived at 8:20am and luckily there was a clerk present who told us they would be open for business at 8:30am. While waiting we noticed a little bit of history had unfolded here in Singapore as well as in our home town. Namely, cell phones have replaced the pay phones and as a result pay phones have disappeared from public places where, in our youth they were ubiquitous. We took a photo of the magnificent marble and glass residence that we presumed was occupied by a pay phone in this cable car waiting room.



At 8:30 we bought our tickets at \$26 Singapore (\$22.40 USD) each and proceeded up the elevator (or lift) to the cable cars which we could see were already running.

We got on to one of the gondolas and because of the early hour there were not many riders so we had the whole gondola to ourselves. We hurried to take a picture of the Amsterdam as we exited the launch station. Luckily neither of us suffers from a fear of heights and the ride was pure enjoyment. As we passed over the Amsterdam we got a photo directly down into the Lido



Pool Deck which had the hatch cover pulled back, as shown on the left. At this early hour there weren't many people using the pool or lounging area.

The cable ride took us to Sentosa Island which has major construction

projects underway. Here are a few photos showing the construction that the young men we saw earlier were probably headed for.



There was a turn-around station on Sentosa Island where we could have gotten off the gondola but we were pressed for time so we just stayed on for a round trip. At one point we were able to get a photo of the famous Merlion on Sentosa Island, as shown on the right. This mythical animal with only his head showing in the photo has the body of a fish and head of a lion. It was used by the Singapore Tourism Board as its logo up to 1997 and continues to be its trademark symbol. The legendary story of the Merlion has roots back the history of Singapore.



We proceeded on the cable car ride and got a second view of the Amsterdam showing the passenger elevated gangway alongside, cruise terminal on the right and the skyline of Singapore in the background.

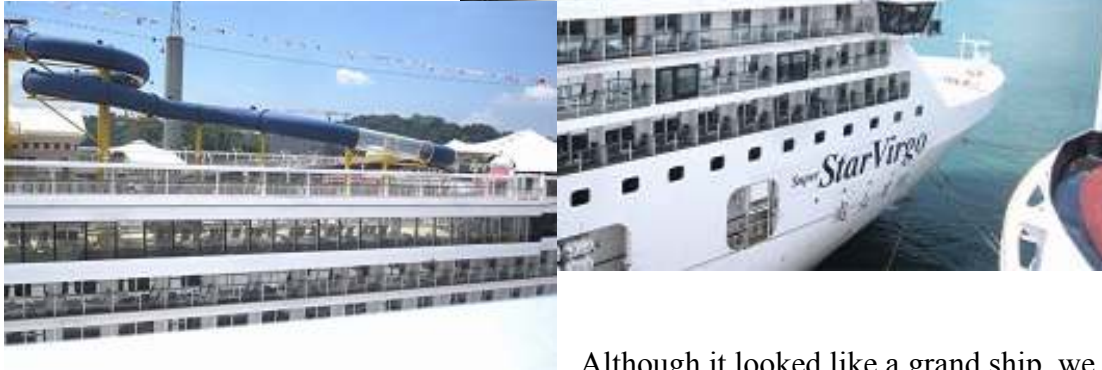


We continued on past our original starting point and on to the other terminal a short distance away on Mount Faber. That route took us over the busy

elevated freeway that connects the harbor area with downtown Singapore. We completed the 45 minute round trip on the cable car and got off. The friendly attendant who had sent us on our journey let us take her picture with Barbara. We walked the short distance to the Cruise Terminal, through the security checks and back on to the Amsterdam well before our 10am “curfew”.



While we were gone the Amsterdam got a neighbor at the Cruise Terminal dock in the form of a Star Lines cruise ship by the name of Super Star Virgo, as shown on the right. On her upper deck she sported a water slide, as shown below, that would thrill any water lover.



Although it looked like a grand ship, we got the feeling that the Star Virgo probably appeals to a different crowd than happily populates the Amsterdam.

The Amsterdam cleared the immigration and port security requirements by about noon and with a mighty blast of the horn the Amsterdam was underway for her next port of call. As we sailed out of the harbor we again passed hundreds of ships that are part of the fleet of merchants contributing to the economic success of this area of the world. A picture we took yesterday from the observation deck of the Marina Bay Sands probably gives the best view of the enormous fleet of merchant ships that were located in the Singapore environs while we were there. The two large glass domes in the foreground of the picture are green houses that are part of the Marina Center Park.



The entertainment in the Queen's Lounge tonight was a presentation by one of our favorite singers, Annie Frances. She is an Australian whom we first heard perform in 2007. She not only has a wonderful voice but articulates the words of the songs so clearly we can understand every one. While melody is an important part of music we like to hear and understand the words also. She was fantastic and there is promise that she will perform again before she leaves the ship.

The Amsterdam continued to sail through calm sea with balmy winds. Tomorrow will be a day at sea and then we dock at Tanjung Priok, Jakarta on November 1.

