

At Sea – Day 2 Sept 28:

The shower of our stateroom has an innovation that had been mentioned in one of the Cruise Critic message boards and Barbara immediately loved it. What pleased her was an attachment on the wall for dispensing shampoo, conditioner, and soft body soap. This device took the place of the miniature plastic bottles that the stewards used to leave for us each day. Those bottles would usually fall on the shower floor and were hard to precisely identify while taking a shower without the aid of glasses. This new advancement in bathing technology appears to be a real improvement. Our three bottle installation is shown in the picture on the right, next to the shower plumbing.



Today there was a presentation in the Queen’s Lounge describing the things we will find in the port of Petropavlovsk, Russia. The Travel Guide, Barbara Haenni, whom we have met on prior cruises, conducted the session with her usual



stimulating flare. It turns out that Petropavlovsk is rather small with one main road down the center and a huge statue of Lenin in the center of town. The many small shops and architecture with an ethnic Russian and Siberian flavor sounded like more than enough to keep us engaged for the part of a day we will be able to walk around town. Our camera struggled with the low lighting but a picture of Barbara, who is a favorite of many cruisers, is shown on the left.

One of the reasons we like the Cruise Specialists travel agency is that for long cruises like the one we are taking they provide experienced travelers as official escorts who apply some enjoyable social “glue” for the group of Cruise Specialists clients and they are there to help in case of unforeseen problems during the cruise. For this Grand Asia & Australia Voyage, the Cruise Specialists escorts are Henk and Lucia Barnhoorn. On those days when we are at sea Henk and Lucia hold a “Chat Time” hour session in the Explorer’s Lounge for Cruise Specialists passengers. Today we attended the chatting session and enjoyed talking with some of our fellow passengers whom we might otherwise not have met. Henk and Lucia, shown on the right, seem to know everyone’s name and that facilitates the interaction that takes place. It is an informal gathering with people coming and going as their personal schedule permits. It was an enjoyable time and we plan to participate as much as possible in the future.



At lunch today we joined our friend Trish in the Lido Restaurant. We had met Trish on the 2010 Voyage of the Vikings cruise and this was our first time to sit down for an extended conversation. Trish is a lively Canadian and we chewed over a range of subjects from the Canadian health insurance program to clothes fashions and how to pack for a cruise. On the 2010 Voyage



of the Vikings we had taken Andrew, our grandson, who was 13 years old at the time. Andrew was a big hit with Trish and she lamented the fact that we didn’t bring him with us on this voyage. She pointed to the empty chair at our table and said that was where Andrew should have been sitting. Alas, Andrew has to attend high school at this time of year so Trish was finally understanding. Here is a picture of our friend Trish and the empty chair for Andrew.

The dress for dinner tonight was formal with a pre-dinner champagne welcome reception for the passengers by Captain Eversen in the Queen's Lounge. We got dressed in our finery and tramped down to the reception about 4:30pm. The Captain introduced the senior staff of the Amsterdam and wished us all the best cruise of our lifetime. It could well work out that way!

After dinner we went to the Queen's Lounge expecting to see the Amsterdam Singers and Dancers put on a grand show billed as "Ultimate Broadway". Cruise Director, Gene Young came on the stage and explained that the seas were a little too rough for the dancers to safely perform their show. Instead, arrangements had been made for us to be entertained by Marty Henne and his show called "Songs You Know By People You Don't". Marty played the piano and sang familiar old tunes accompanied by a polished monologue that gave the history of the song and the writer of the lyrics which no one had ever heard of. It was a nice tribute to unknown writers who had given us tunes we have all enjoyed and "privately" sang over the years.

After the show we returned to our cabin and found a nice pillow gift from the Amsterdam for each of us. It was a leather bound journal book along with a cloth storage bag and a leather card carrier with "2011 Grand Asia & Australia Voyage, ms Amsterdam" embossed into the leather. A picture of the gift is shown on the right. Very nice, indeed.



Also left by the stewards was a familiar note informing us that the clocks would again be turned back one hour tonight as we sail into a new time zone. We have turned our clocks back one hour each night since leaving Seattle. By tomorrow morning we will be 6 hours behind Eastern Daylight Time at home in East Tennessee.