

A Journey of Adventure: Reflections of Our 50 Years of Marriage

"Memories Will Be Our Souvenirs"

As the curtain falls on 2024 and the dawn of winter approaches, Diane and I embark on an extraordinary three-week Summer South American/Caribbean odyssey. This journey promises to be more than just a vacation; it is a chance to relive our past visits, a testament to our unwavering sense of adventure, and an opportunity to create new memories that will become part of the tapestry of our shared history.



The highlight of our Caribbean odyssey will undoubtedly be our return to the Island of Barbados, where **Diane and I tied the knot at the Court House in Bridgetown, officiated by Magistrate Lynch. Revisiting this special place after 50 years of friendship and marriage promises a profoundly moving and nostalgic experience. We'll walk the same streets we did as newlyweds, feeling the echo of our younger selves at every step.** This adventure promises to enrich our lives through the splendor of nature and culture and reinforce the bonds of love that have defined our years together.



Our adventure begins at Harry Reid International Airport as we check in our faithful 20-year-old red and black hard-side Samsonite suitcases, aptly named after the Pointer Stars of the Ursa Major, Dubhe & Merak. These two stalwart companions have weathered countless global trips, their scratches and scuffs telling tales of adventures

gone by. We can't help but feel a twinge of nostalgia as we share this golden age of travel with these friends.

With a wink and a smile from the Las Vegas Sphere on our portside, we leave the landmarks of the Las Vegas Strip behind us, looking forward to the memories we'll create and the wonders we'll witness in the upcoming weeks. This trip is not just about the destinations; it's about celebrating our enduring life, our shared spirit of adventure, and the joy of experiencing the world together. It's a testament to the rich fabric of experiences we've woven over the last 53 years and a promise of more adventures.



Where Civilization Fades and Adventure

A Night of Romance, Adventure, and Gastronomic Delight

Blog – December 12, 2024

The Seduction of the Setting Sun



As the day gave way to dusk, the sky above Fortaleza Port transformed into an artist's canvas, painting the horizon with hues of

deep indigo and brilliant gold. This celestial masterpiece was a breathtaking prelude to our journey. The stars of the Southern Hemisphere began their nightly dance while planets like Venus and Mercury shone brightly, their luminescence a beacon of promise for the adventures to come. It was a mesmerizing spectacle that set the stage for an unforgettable night.

Anticipation and the Buzz of the Promenades

The air crackled with anticipation as fellow travelers gathered on the ship's promenades, their conversations filled with excitement and a palpable sense of shared anticipation. The warmth of the Brazilian summer enveloped us, a tangible reminder of the exotic lands we were about to explore. The humidity hung heavy in the air, yet it reminded us of the vibrant life that awaited us. The collective energy was infectious, a contagious blend of excitement and the promise of new experiences.

An Invitation to the Chef's Table

We were fortunate to receive an invitation from the ship's captain, Marcus Bergstrom, to dine at the legendary Chef's Table. It was a culinary event whispered about with reverence, promising exquisite dishes and captivating stories. As we entered the grand dining room, we were met with an intoxicating symphony of aromas, a delectable blend of spices and herbs that danced in the air. The room was filled with the laughter and chatter of fellow voyagers, their voices a joyful chorus of anticipation.

A Feast for the Senses



The Chef's Table was a feast for the senses. The table was adorned with vibrant dishes, each a masterpiece of culinary artistry. Sparkling glasses filled with chilled wine reflected the candlelight, creating a warm and inviting ambiance. As we sampled the delectable creations, we were captivated by the chef's

innovative techniques and the symphony of flavors that danced on our tongues. Every bite was an adventure, a journey into the heart of Brazilian cuisine.

Captain Marcus Bergstrom, the Storyteller



Captain Bergstrom was not only a skilled navigator but also a captivating storyteller. He had a knack for bringing his tales to life, his voice resonating warmly as he shared stories of his adventures across the seas. He spoke of historical voyages, fabled treasures hidden beneath the waves, and encounters with exotic cultures along the Amazon River and beyond. His words painted vivid pictures in our minds, transporting us to faraway lands and distant times.

Stories for Our Children

The evening at the Chef's Table was a tapestry woven with threads of culinary delight, captivating stories, and the warmth of shared experiences. It was a night that etched itself into our memories and would be recounted with fondness for years. As we drifted off to sleep, we knew that these stories, these moments of shared joy, would become cherished memories – stories for our children, tales of a journey that stirred our hearts and ignited our imaginations.

The High Tea Experience on Viking



The High Tea experience on Viking is a delightful and refined culinary occasion. Held in the Atrium Room, the setting is enhanced by natural light and elegant décor, creating a serene atmosphere for social interaction. Guests are greeted by ship officers and escorted to their tables, where various meticulously crafted sandwiches and pastries await.

The menu features high-quality sandwiches artfully arranged on tiered platters, emphasizing taste and visual appeal. Each pastry is considered a work

of art with intricate designs and vibrant colors, contributing to the overall elegance of the event. The thoughtful pairing of pastries with various teas enhances the tasting experience, allowing guests to explore complementary flavors.

Overall, the High Tea on Viking transcends ordinary dining, offering a luxurious blend of flavors, artistry, and cultural richness that creates lasting memories.



An Unexpected Docking Adventure in Belem, Brazil

Samba - Belem, Brazil

Bethlehem



Our journey to Belem took an intriguing twist, transforming a routine port stop into a memorable adventure. As we approached the Brazilian city, our Viking vessel faced an unforeseen challenge: the need for repairs to its 4th Turbine Engine and the harbor's limited pier access. This combination of factors led to an unconventional docking experience that added an element of excitement to our arrival.

Unique Anchorage

Instead of the typical dockside berth, our ship anchored about two miles offshore from Belem's famous Market Marché Ver-o-Peso. The resonant horns of tugboats broke the early morning stillness, heralding our arrival as they guided our vessel to its temporary home in the Amazon River.

Tender Adventure

The shallow, muddy waters of the river delta necessitated an innovative solution for passenger disembarkation. Tender boats were employed to ferry travelers to shore, adding an unexpected nautical element to our land excursion. While this operation was costly for the cruise line, it was essential to maintain the ship's integrity and provided us with a unique perspective of Belem from the water.

The festive spirit aboard our tender boats was palpable as we reached shore. The ship's pianist had set the tone earlier, playing various recognized Christmas favorites. Some passengers joined in, singing along to the carols. In contrast, others contentedly lip-synced, all contributing to the holiday atmosphere that seemed to bridge the gap between our anchored ship and the awaiting shores of Belem.

A Journey of Discovery

This voyage to Belem was a reminder that life is a grand adventure filled with moments of beauty, discovery, and connection. The vibrant sunsets, the bustling promenades, the culinary delights, and the captivating stories – all these elements combined to create an experience that would forever hold a special place in our hearts. As we sailed into the Caribbean, we carried the memories of this unforgettable journey, ready to embrace the wonders that awaited us.

Embarking on an Amazon Adventure: The Journey to Ribeirinhos Villages



Today, Diane and I embark on an extraordinary expedition into the heart of the Amazon rainforest where the journey begins on Deck A of our cruise ship. Our destination is the remote villages of the Ribeirinhos, accessible only by outboard motorboat at Docas do Para. This unique adventure promises a high-speed cruise along the river, offering unparalleled opportunities to observe the rich equatorial flora and fauna up close. As we prepare to board the expedition tenders, the air is thick with anticipation, marking the start of our magical journey into one of the world's most diverse ecosystems.

The expedition tenders serve as our magic carpet ride into the heart of the rainforest. As we settle into these smaller vessels, the reality of our adventure begins to sink in. The gentle hum of the outboard motors mingles with the sounds of the surrounding wilderness, creating a symphony of excitement and natural wonder. Each tender

becomes a floating platform of discovery, offering intimate views of the river's edge and the teeming life that calls it home.

As we push off from the cruise ship, the expansive Amazon unfolds before us like a living tapestry, its coffee-colored waters mirroring the infinite shades of green from the towering rainforest canopy. The humid air carries the symphony of the jungle—bird calls echoing across the water, the gentle rustling of leaves, and the occasional splash from beneath the surface.



This river journey to the Ribeirinhos villages transcends mere transportation; it's an immersive introduction to the rhythm of Amazonian life. Each

winding turn reveals new wonders: brilliant scarlet macaws launching into flight from emergent trees, troops of curious capuchin monkeys swinging through vines to investigate our passage, and the magical moment when a boto—the legendary pink river dolphin—arcs gracefully through the water beside our boat.

The journey itself becomes a window into the delicate balance between humans and nature in this extraordinary ecosystem. As we approach the stilted wooden homes of the Ribeirinhos, we're not just visitors but participants in an ancient relationship between people and the mighty river that sustains all life in the Amazon.

Our Postcards from St. John Caribbean Night Skies: A Celestial Symphony

As we sit on our balcony, navigating to the next destination, St. John's, the Caribbean night unfolds before us like a celestial canvas. The stars, scattered across the inky darkness, whisper ancient tales directly to our hearts. **Each constellation reminds us of our incredible fortune - to be here, in this moment, with our health and lifelong friendship.**

This journey isn't just about the destination but the shared experience under these vast, shimmering skies. As we gaze upward, we're filled with profound gratitude for the opportunity to witness such beauty together, creating memories that will shine as brightly as the stars above.

As Diane and I savored the flavors of our dinner at Manfredi's Italian restaurant on the ship, we couldn't help but reminisce about the incredible journey thus far. Barbados and St. Lucia are now etched in our memories, and we found ourselves excitedly planning our next excursion. But more than the stunning landscapes and crystal-clear waters, it was the extraordinary personalities we encountered that genuinely made our Semicentennial Odyssey unforgettable.

These newfound friends added their unique warmth and camaraderie, becoming an essential ingredient in the rich tapestry of our travels. As we clinked glasses and shared stories, we marveled at how these encounters transformed our trip from a simple vacation into a profound personal adventure.

The Caribbean night sky is a spectacle that humbles as well as inspires. It's a reminder of our place in the universe, tiny yet significant. The Milky Way stretches across the horizon, a river of light connecting us to distant worlds. Shooting stars streak across the sky, carrying our wishes and dreams on their fiery tails.

We reflect on life's journey in these quiet moments, surrounded by the gentle lapping of waves against the ship and the soft sea breeze. The stars above mirror the twinkling lights of distant ships, creating a seamless blend of earth and sky. In these moments, we truly

appreciate the magic of travel and the bonds of friendship that have brought us here.