

## 1988 GRAND CIRCLE PACIFIC

No chronicle of my travels would be complete without mentioning at least one Royal Viking Tour, Mother took a long cruise with them each winter after she got too old for land tours. She would take my sister or I, or one of the grandchildren for company. Thus we all got to see a lot of the world. My problem with a cruise however, is the fact that you only get a quick look at the ports and are insulated pretty much from the native population on the bus tours. To me it is like staying at a luxury hotel except that the scenery keeps changing. One difficulty is that you sit at a fixed table for meals. Sometimes you get lucky and have a congenial group, as we did on this cruise. However, a cruise is a closed society. After a few weeks, you have no new people to sparkle up the conversation.

February 12, 1988. John and I tried to fly to Boston to meet Mother, who has a bruised hip, but the weather was so bad Delta took us to Washington instead. Mother and I always seem to have something go wrong when we travel together. We were probably the only people on the plane that were not angry. I called Boston and found my sister was there with everything in hand. Then John and I were free to call John's daughter, Margie Hughes and go out for a gala dinner with her and Bob.

February 13. We flew to Los Angeles and met Mother coming in from Boston. We spent the night in the exclusive Bel-Air Hotel. My niece Betsy and her husband Bill Byrne came to have dinner with us.

February 14, 1988. My friends Betty Lyn and Al Hifield joined us for brunch and then we took a limo to visit Bill and Betsy at their home in Hollywood. After a visit, the limo took us to LAX and we caught a Qantas flight to Tahiti.

February 15. We arrived at Papeete at 4:00 AM! Luckily we have a two-night package at the Taharaa Hotel to recuperate.

Our complimentary sightseeing trip left at 9:30 AM! We were taken to Pt. Venus, where Captain Cook landed on his visit. Here he set up an observatory to study the transit of Venus across the sun in 1769. Then we were taken into Papeete for an overlong visit at the black pearl store. At last we went to a native market, but it was pretty much over for the day. It was not the most successful tour I have ever been on.

February 16, 1988. We boarded the Royal Viking Sea and threw a few streamers as we set sail. It was great to finally be aboard. We had lifeboat drill as soon as we sailed.

Mother loved Royal Viking and went on a cruise with them every year until the end of her life. She basked in the luxury of everything from meals in bed to the doctor paying house calls if necessary. Best of all, the same group of women went every year, so there was a social schedule of cocktail parties in addition to the other amenities of shipboard life.

February 17. We were at anchor at beautiful Bora Bora. We took a glass bottom boat ride and walked around on the island.

That night was full formal as Captain Haakon Gangdal welcomed us on board.

February 18-21. We enjoyed the life at sea, losing a day when we crossed the International Date Line. John likes all the live entertainment and the desert table at the buffets.

John and I went down for dance lessons and they were teaching Cha Cha Cha. This was not to John's liking. I wandered into the next room and heard a lecture on weak two bids. It caught my attention and they got me a partner so I could play. There is a game every afternoon except when we are in port.

February 22. We docked at Nuku' Alofa, Tonga. Tonga is a kingdom that has never fallen to another government. We viewed the Royal Graves and the palace. Captain Cook landed here in 1777 and was greeted by the king. We saw a strange arch like structure that may be the remains of an ancient astronomical laboratory. There was also a cantilevered church.

At last we found a handicraft store. I bought a wall hanging made of Tapa cloth in geometric designs.

To cap off the day we were given a Tongan feast, an open-hearth cookout with native dancers to amuse us.

It was very hot and the best part was to swim in the surf!

Thursday, February 25. After another day at sea we arrived in Auckland, New Zealand. We took the bus tour to Rotorua. Here, in the mountains, the culture of the Maori culture is preserved

## 1988 GRAND CIRCLE PACIFIC

A Maori named Ihenga discovered Rotorua in the 14th century. Other settlers who came by canoe from Hawaii followed him. The area abounds in thermal water, which provided them with heat for cooking and warmth. The Maori are now largely integrated into New Zealand society. We saw a Maori Temple, adorned with carvings. The Maori woodcarving school only allows people of Maori descent to attend. We watched the students at work. Lunch was at a trout farm in Rainbow Springs. There were other animals here including the wild pigs that descended from the ones Captain Cook turned loose on the island. The Maori Culture Center was interesting surrounded by geysers and thermal springs. The Maori even do their laundry in them! The whole area is very beautiful.

Saturday, February 27. We came into Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, which is on the south side of the North Island. Across a strait we could see the South Island in the distance. Our tour took us along the coast to Barang Head Light. The surf pounding on the rocks was spectacular. We had lunch at Orongbronga Lodge. Afterward we were treated to an exhibit of sheep herding. There are supposed to be more sheep than people in New Zealand. The dogs are very clever at rounding up the sheep and bringing them to the coral. Once there, the shepherd gave a demonstration of how he shears his sheep. The sheep is set on his hind end where he gives up any resistance. The shears work fast cutting off the wool in almost one piece. We drove back to Wellington and had time to view St Paul's Church and the Parliament building, which looks much like a beehive.

Monday, February 29. When I woke up, we were just entering Milford Sound on the South Island of New Zealand. The weather was not the best in the world, but we could make out in the mist the steep sides that make the sound compared to the Norwegian fjords. The ship cruised up the sound as far as she could go and then turn around. Of course, as we left the sound, the weather cleared!

Tuesday, March 1. Life aboard ship has become routine. John checks out the daily movie while I play bridge. The first night they asked him if he wanted chocolate, vanilla or strawberry and he replied, "Yes." So from then on, the waiters brought him a dish with all three kinds of ice cream that was offered. Twice a week there are formal nights. This night we had a "sendoff" cocktail party for all the people taking the overnight wine tour.

Thursday, March 3. We came into Sydney harbor with its dramatic opera house. This is the capitol of Australia. We took the city tour to be shown the oldest parliament in Australia, and other interesting buildings.. The city is having its sesquicentennial and there are many banners and decorations.. We went to the top of the Sydney Tower for the view. That night John arranged for us to go to the Opera House for dinner and a show. Designed by Jorn Utzon, the building stands like a sculpture overlooking Sydney's harbor. Up the grand stairway, there are three theaters. We saw "Six Actors Waiting for an Author." It was a different sort of play.

Friday, March 4. John and I signed up for an overnight if ballooning in the wine country. We felt it was overpriced at \$533 each. I always feel the tours on a ship should be included in the price. It is perfectly possible to spend more on tours than you do for the cruise! We boarded a small amphibious aircraft and flew up the coast to Cessnock in the Hunter Valley. The flight took about an hour. Cessnock used to be a mining area but now they grow grapes and produce the premium Australian wines. The town is nothing but the countryside is pretty, rolling and rural. There we were taken to the Rothbury Estate for a tasting. We enjoyed the wines very much. We also walked around the estate inspecting the grape vines. We stayed at the Pokolbin Motor Inn and enjoyed the swimming pool and whirlpool. That night we went to the Hungerford Hill Wine Complex and enjoyed a gourmet French dinner with the local wines.

Saturday, March 5. The weather didn't cooperate, it poured rain, and so we never got our balloon trip. And we woke at 5:00 AM full of hopes! They did give us a champagne breakfast. The main excitement of the day was the trip by amphibian plane back to Sydney. The pilot flew low enough so we had some amazing views of the east coast of Australia before landing in Sydney's harbor. For our inconvenience we were given a credit of \$42 and offered a free tour when we get to Fremantle.

## 1988 GRAND CIRCLE PACIFIC

This was one of the breaking points of the cruise and so we had a sendoff of champagne and streamers to leave Sydney.

Monday, March 7. Vic Garth, the town crier, in full costume greeted us when we docked at Hobart, Tasmania. On the dock was a small bazaar but we noted most of the souvenirs came from Korea.

We were driven by the modern convention center overlooking the water and saw the yacht basin and Theater Royal, the oldest theater in Hobart. We enjoyed the view from atop Mt. Nelson. Then we had time to explore the Pioneer Village museum.

At the Bonorong Wildlife Park we saw wallabies and kangaroos, even a kookaburra bird. I had a chance to hold a baby wombat. We also saw the Tasmanian devil, an animal even its mother would find hard to love. They have bad tempers and a very unpleasant screech.

The bus tour continued to historic Richmond and the oldest bridge in Tasmania. We saw the historic Richmond jail and had lunch overlooking the yacht harbor.

Friday, March 11, 1988. We came into Albany. This is one of the biggest deep-water harbors on the southern coast of Australia.

A welcoming rock group informs us that it is pronounced "Al -bany" with the accent on the first syllable. The tour showed us the replica of the Amity, which brought the first settlers here. The monument to the World War 1 veterans is on a hill with a great view of the area. There was some interesting architecture in town, including a lop-sided church. We saw a rock that looked like a large dog's head. There is also a whaling museum in town reflecting the city's long history as a whaling port.

In short this is not a tourist city, but was added to our itinerary to break the long journey from Tasmania to Perth.

Saturday, March 12. One of the thrills of the trip was that Bill and Helen McGraw (he's a past commodore of the Bayview Yacht Club, Detroit) arranged to take us to the Royal Perth Yacht Club. Ian Cameron showed us around. Two years before they won the America's Cup, in 1987, the club built a special room to house the cup. This Victorian silver trophy is the most prestigious trophy in yacht racing. It was long enshrined at the New York Yacht Club.

Sunday, March 13. There was much excitement in Fremantle. John Sanders was being welcomed home to celebrate his single-handed circumnavigation in the Parry Endeavor. He is the first person to sail single-handed around the world three times. This last cruise took 657 days. A yacht from the Royal Perth Yacht Club led him in. Hundreds of boats were in the harbor to escort him to the dock. He tied up just aft of the Royal Viking Sea so we had box seats for the celebration. This was more exciting than the America's Cup.

After the celebration we went to the Esplanade Hotel for lunch. The hotel was built for the America's Cup competition.

We had our free tour of Fremantle. It is much quieter now that the Cup Race is over. The town had been refurbished for the regatta but now it is really in a depression. We did feed the black swans.

Wednesday, March 16. Mother, John and I gave a cocktail party to repay all the many invitations we have received. It was very easy as the ship had suggested menus and printed and delivered the invitations!

Thursday, March 17. We arrived at Bali. This is a beautiful tropical paradise. There was a welcome band when we docked. Our tour took us to Ubud to see its highly decorated temple and palace.

Everyone in Bali is an artist and the art schools at Mas produce all sorts of wonderful woodcarvings. Everyone leaves with a suitcase full of wood. I spotted three crude duck carvings and wanted to buy them. They tried to dissuade me saying this was a beginners task, but I held my own and they have waddled in my living room ever since. I also bought a beautifully carved Barong who is the good god who brings good luck. We watched the carvers at work.

We had lunch in a hotel restaurant in Ubud overlooking a deep valley of rice paddies. The typical Balinese family lives in a walled compound with his extended family. He is very religious, practicing an animalistic Hindu faith and there are shrines with small offerings everywhere.

There are always religious parades going on. We saw one clan parading their idols to the sea in order to wash them. The idols in the temples are dressed in clothes. We saw floats being prepared for the parade on their New Year's Day.

## 1988 GRAND CIRCLE PACIFIC

Friday, March 18. Surabaya, Java. We were met with a native dance exhibition. But Surabaya is not a tourist port! We were assigned a car with a non-English speaking driver. Worse yet, he didn't even know what to point out! We did see the Komodo dragons, the largest lizards in the world. We also saw the flower market.

At last we were taken to a performance. No one explained what we were there to see. It seemed to be the usual native dancing sort of thing in elaborate costumes. They used incense to show us the ancient mysticism of the east. A man was also turned into a horse! They whipped him and he pranced around and ate grass. Finally they fed him light bulbs! It was all rather gruesome, even if it was a performance reserved for heads of state!

Saturday, March 19. We crossed the equator with all the usual shenanigans as Neptune and his court came aboard. They staged a marriage of Neptune and his bride who were our cruise directors, Paul and Susan. Willing volunteers were plastered with icing and dumped into the pool.

Sunday, March 20. We reached Singapore. The guided tour took us to the Temple of Heavenly Happiness, built by the Chinese immigrants who wanted to give thanks for their safe arrival by boat in 1840. Now many more Chinese have come from Hong Kong, so that Singapore is what Hong Kong used to be as a trade center. Much of Singapore is a modern city of skyscrapers. Only a few traces of the old city remain. We did see the Hindu temple of Sir Mariamman with its ornately decorated tower.

At the end of the tour we were taken to the palm court Old Raffles Hotel for a Singapore sling.

After the tour we caught the shuttle back into town to explore some of the shopping centers and residential areas. We hired two Pedi cabs for this excursion and our drivers raced each other past the sights. It was fun.

Wednesday, March 23. We came to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysian Borneo. This is the capitol city of Sabah and a major port.

They showed us the view from Signal Hill and the picturesque fishing village on stilts. We were also taken to a native market. We saw water buffalo in the mostly rural countryside and a Buddhist temple and a swinging bridge.

Saturday, March 26. So we came to the end of our voyage in Hong Kong. We docked close to the Queen Elizabeth 11, also in port. They took us on the harbor tour to Aberdeen and we saw hundreds of junks and sampans. Some people are born and live all their lives on these boats. It is interesting to see how they live in this very crowded harbor. Then we were taken by bus to admire the view from the Peak and drove around Victoria Island to the Stanley Market, where all sorts of things were for sale.

We checked into the elegant Regent Hotel, with rooms overlooking the harbor. For the next two days we shopped and enjoyed a dinner at Gaddi's in the elegant Peninsula Hotel. The Peninsula is Mother's favorite hotel but she had to admit the Regent was very nice.

Monday, March 28. We flew to San Francisco and spent two nights at the Compton Park Hotel. For two days we tried to get over the jet lag. We did take the harbor tour. Then we entertained the Byrnes, Betsy's in-laws.

March 30. We returned home.

<http://www.ci.la.ca.us/>

<http://www.hotelbelair.com/>

<http://www.tahiti.com/>

<http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/7557/>

<http://www.boraboraisland.com/>

[http://www.southpacific.org/text/finding\\_tonga.html](http://www.southpacific.org/text/finding_tonga.html)

<http://www.marlamallett.com/tapa.htm>

<http://www.aucklandnz.com/>

<http://www.newzealand.com/travel/about-nz/culture/culture-maori-culture.cfm>

<http://www.newzealandnz.co.nz/rotorua/>

<http://www.rainbowsprings.co.nz/home.asp>

<http://www.wellingtonnz.com/>

<http://www.pbase.com/rtwo/image/41191955>

## 1988 GRAND CIRCLE PACIFIC

<http://www.fiordland.org.nz/Explore-Fiordland/Milford-Sound/Default.asp>  
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>  
[http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Sydney\\_Opera.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Sydney_Opera.html)  
<http://www.eldritchpress.org/lp/six.htm>  
<http://www.hunterweb.com.au/>  
<http://www.tasting-wine.com/>  
[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g255328-Activities-Pokolbin\\_New\\_South\\_Wales.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g255328-Activities-Pokolbin_New_South_Wales.html)  
<http://www.discovertasmania.com.au/>  
<http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/BHAN-5358KH?open>  
<http://www.albanyport.com.au/tourism.html>  
<http://www.rpyc.com.au/>  
<http://www.herreshoff.org/Tops/amctop.htm>  
<http://www.esplanadehotelfremantle.com.au/>  
[http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/south\\_east\\_asia/bali/](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/south_east_asia/bali/)  
[http://www.baliforyou.com/bali/bali\\_guide/gianyar/mas.htm](http://www.baliforyou.com/bali/bali_guide/gianyar/mas.htm)  
<http://www.galenfrysinger.com/surabaya.htm>  
<http://www.galenfrysinger.com/surabaya.htm>  
<http://www.visitsingapore.com/>  
<http://www.kotakinabalu-hotels.com/>  
<http://www.discoverhongkong.com/login.html>  
<http://www.friend.ly.net/~dadadata/junks.html>  
<http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/>