



## THE NEWEST CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE DESIGN INNOVATIONS PRESENTED BY GLENN APRILE

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING**



(Photo: Carnival Cruise Line)

Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the innovative design and development journey of Carnival's groundbreaking Excel Class ships. Explore the nostalgic charm and storytelling behind *The Golden Jubilee* lounge aboard *Carnival Celebration*, and get a first glimpse at the exciting new features set to debut on *Carnival Festivale* in 2027, including immersive music zones, expanded family experiences, and Carnival's largest water park at sea.



**Glenn Aprile** is Assistant VP, Brand Experience and Product Development, responsible for the development of marketable product offerings that enhance the guest experience on Carnival's ships and port destinations. Glenn played a pivotal role in the master planning and guest experience development of Carnival's largest and most innovative new builds including the Carnival Excel Class and Carnival's new, exclusive destination on Grand Bahama Island, Celebration Key.

Glenn has earned a reputation for his extensive knowledge of the industry by virtue of his experience cruising on or visiting over 140 different cruise ships across more than 30 different brands in addition to his years of work in the commercial and operational aspects of the business.

Glenn's passion for cruise ships began early. He joined the World Ship Society – Port of New York Branch at the age of 13!

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## YARMOUTH CASTLE BURNING PRESENTED BY ERIC TAKAKJIAN

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 6:30 PM (ET) ZOOM MEMBER MEETING**

**PAST AND FUTURE OF NUCLEAR SHIP SAVANNAH**  
**PRESENTED BY ERHARD W. KOEHLER**  
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 10 AM (ET) ZOOM ENCORE PRESENTATION**

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**MEMBER PHOTOS**



*Celebrity SILHOUETTE in Akureyri, Iceland, July 2025. (Photo: Tom O'Reilly)*



*NCL NORWEGIAN AQUA in New York Harbor during her maiden call, August 2025.  
(Photo: Justin Zizes)*





*Atlas WORLD VOYAGER, Eternity Fjord, Greenland, August 2025. (Photo: Denise Dacey)*



*Swan Hellenic SH VEGA, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 2025. (Photo: Pat Dacey)*



*Artic Umiag Line SARFAQ ITTUK, Sisimiut, Greenland, August 2025. (Photo: Pat Dacey)*



*Carnival MARDI GRAS docked in San Juan, PR, September 2025. (Photo: Marjorieann Matuszek)*





*The “very wide” Royal Caribbean International ICON OF THE SEAS docked in San Juan, PR, September 2025. (Photo: Marjorieann Matuszek)*



*Princess Cruises ISLAND PRINCESS, Amber Cove, DR, September 2025. (Photo: Marjorieann Matuszek)*



*Virgin Voyages BRILLIANT LADY on her NYC maiden call at the Manhattan Cruise Terminal, NY, September 2025. (Photo: Tom Rinaldi)*



*VIKING MARS underway on her maiden call to NYC, September 2025. (Photo: Justin Zizes)*

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Have you visited our website lately? [World Ship Society – Port of New York Branch | Est. 1965](#)



**WORLD SHIP SOCIETY  
PORT OF NEW YORK BRANCH**

**SAVE THESE DATES FOR THE FOLLOWING MEMBER ACTIVITIES  
WITH MORE INFORMATION TO BE SHARED SOON.**

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**CARNIVAL VENEZIA CRUISE TOUR AND LUNCH  
Manhattan Cruise Terminal  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**&**

**HOLIDAY PARTY AT TONY'S DI NAPOLI  
1081 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Streets  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28**

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Members may submit the following for consideration for publication in The Porthole: member photos with descriptions and dates taken, news, cruise details, and articles that may be of interest to your fellow members. Please direct submissions to [wsspony@gmail.com](mailto:wsspony@gmail.com). Please note published materials are subject to editing and are not necessarily the opinion of the WSS-PONY Branch.

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## SHIP'S LOG

### FAREWELL TO MARCO POLO BY DAVID TREVOR-JONES

Recap by Alan Zamchick

David developed a lifelong fascination with the Soviet “Author Class” liners, dating back to a family cruise on MIKHAIL LERMONTOV in 1973. On November 16, 2020, with the only requirement being a “simple” Covid test, and in a strange twist of fate, David Trevor-Jones became the final ship aficionado to tour and document the former Russian ship ALEKSANDR PUSHKIN, now the MARCO POLO as she was being readied for further post-Covid service. No one could know that to be the case. His presentation detailed that visit in emotional words and pictures.

A brief recap of PUSHKIN’s place in what was to become two “batches” of ships totaling five vessels in that class followed. The PUSHKIN was the second in the first batch of ships (that was technically considered the IVAN FRANKO class). The second group followed with three additional ships.

Next were rare photos of her in 1965 including views from the VEB Mathias-Thesen-Werft yard in Wismar, East Germany, from which all five ships originated. One very smart photo shows her arriving for her first Tilbury, UK (*below image*) arrival when she operated Leningrad–Montreal services. He highlighted her distinctive early Soviet appearance — the black hull, red band, and hammer-and-sickle emblem — and later modifications, including a forward expanded superstructure added after the introduction of the MIKHAIL LERMONTOV. When her Russian service ended, the ALEKSANDR PUSHKIN found herself abandoned up a creek in Singapore.



#### Transformation to MARCO POLO

David described how the ship was gutted during her 1991–92 rebuild in Greece which transformed her into a virtually new ship for Orient Line. While her Sulzer diesel engines remained, her interior was almost



unrecognizable from her Soviet days. He noted advanced original features, such as a prototype magrodome and vehicle decks later repurposed, even speculating they were used for Antarctic landings when – thanks to her ice strengthened hull - she became one of the earliest cruise ships to sail there. The result was essentially a brand-new vessel, with a completely redone interior but remaining close to her original 1965 profile.

### *Service and Ownership*

David continued by tracing her career through Orient Line and later Cruise & Maritime Voyages (CMV), who celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. CMV, initially an agent, became her operator and by 2019 gave all their ships a distinctive new livery in an Amsterdam shipyard. By February 2020, she was laid up in Bristol, UK in the Port of Avonmouth (*below photo*), as the pandemic shut down the cruise industry. There she sat.



CMV collapsed in July 2020, and the MARCO POLO and her four fleet mates were arrested and auctioned. In October 2020 she sold for just \$2.77 million, while her companion ship ASTORIA, which was not owned by CMV lingered before heading for scrap this year.

### *Behind-the-Scenes Visit*

Then began David's recounting of his formerly NDA-protected personal, privileged visit to the laid-up MARCO POLO in November 2020, thanks to contacts with her formerly anonymous owner, now identified as Steve Pink! It was Steve that put David in touch with the MARCO POLO's new, and again, anonymous owner. David was told he had to be at the dock on November 16 with that required negative Covid test, as the new owner was hoping to take her out to sea the next day. So, it was on the 16<sup>h</sup> that David "screamed down a deserted motorway to Bristol not quite believing his good luck," and entered the deserted port seeing MARCO POLO in her new livery. He drove around to the equally deserted pier unsure if the plan to board would bear fruit. A "clearly suspicious" ship's nurse not fully understanding why he was there, Nurse Marynas, greeted him at the end of a rickety gangplank, along with some of the other 28 Ukrainian crew who had maintained her since February. Nurse Marynas confirmed the negative Covid test result David provided by giving David another Covid test before they began their tour.



Nurse Marynas motioned for him to follow her down what he assumed was a crew cabin corridor, opened a door, and he found himself standing in the MARCO POLO engine room (*left photo*)! He noted in some detail how absolutely immaculate the small Ukrainian crew had kept the ship since she had been in layup. David walked around accompanied by the nurse around the raised platform that circled the room noting the builder's plate (*right photo*), ship's bell and



warm cylinder heads that proved to him the engines had regularly been turned over. One curiosity he noted were little, seemingly handmade petrol-driven cars, not unlike go-carts that he surmised the crew built and may have used to race around the ships' decks.

The next stop, the bridge. Nurse Marynas began to relax as they chatted their way up. Physical entry to the bridge itself was not allowed in an over-abundance of Covid-caution. David saw the stopped wall clocks and the ghostly emptiness of once-vibrant spaces throughout. He so wanted to visit the Monkey Island above the bridge and Nurse Marynas agreed. Here is where they were afforded a clear view of the lock that connects the dock from Avonmouth with the Bristol Channel. They were able to walk aft on that top deck, restricted space for any passenger carrying cruise – but now providing direct access to the ship's funnel where David stopped and did something he always had wanted to do – touch the funnel (*right photo*) which he went ahead and did! He nostalgically shared that one of the things he and others would try to do, unsuccessfully, after exiting the bars late on his Steamship Historical Society of America cruises aboard her in the 1990s and 2000s was to try and get up top to touch the funnel. Finally!!



They began their way down from Deck 12, pausing to notice several missing deck statues and the carefully black plastic wrapped teak deck rails confirming the great condition the crew had continued to keep her. The crew had her ready to go as soon as Covid bans were lifted. As they continued the tour Nurse Marynas informed David that she had served on the ASTORIA, and she was terribly saddened to hear of that ships' layup. She had loved serving on her and she had grown to love the MARCO POLO too. She spoke to David about the ship's Chaplin Peter Morgan who had visited the ship every day, making sure the skeleton crew was happy and comfortable, led them to visits ashore and was critical in keeping morale high.

David did not anticipate Nurse Marynas would give him a tour beyond those areas he had never visited, but as they enjoyed their discussions, and she saw how he was documenting this time in layup she made



sure he saw the rest of the interiors. They wandered through a sample passenger cabin, the public lounges, bars and restaurant with David providing us all photos of the “before and after,” the rooms formerly vibrant with passengers and activity and now nothing but silence and abandonment. Stepping off the ship David documented the ship’s new livery in a series of dramatic photos.

She was a ship just waiting for passengers. The crew, though few, remained disciplined and optimistic. Plans were underway for reactivation: she was fueled, lights blazing, and even went to sea trials. David returned to the ship a few days later, on November 19, 2020, to watch her sail from Bristol in full power — a dramatic, emotional farewell with steam up through the lock (*below photo*). The tug, SVITZER MOIRA, led her out under tow with the SVITZER HAWK at her stern.



### *The End*

Despite an attempted Dubai charter and strong hopes for her revival, the deal collapsed in January 2021. Within days she was tracked heading to Alang, India, where she was beached and scrapped. David closed with deep sadness, showing images of her in her prime and during her final voyage, reflecting on her legacy as a beloved, innovative liner that should have had more years of service.

The World Ship Society - PONY Branch sincerely thanks David Trevor-Jones for his passionate and detailed review of a great ship. We all share the sadness in the passing of this favorite ship. Yet, we are very pleased David so wonderfully memorialized her well-lived life to his last walk-through and her soulful final departure.

*(Photos: David Trevor-Jones)*

## SHIPS IN PORT FRENCH LINE'S DE GRASSE

By Bill Miller

One of my seventh grade teachers in Hoboken, Mrs Frances Heath-Smith, had attended a bon voyage party onboard the French Line's DE GRASSE back in the early 1950s. Family members were sailing to Europe and the departure was, as she later told me, festive including champagne in the stateroom, music by a band in a lounge and then tossing those colored paper streamers as the ship sailed off. The DE GRASSE was smaller, less remembered, but had a distinction. It was the first French Line passenger ship to be restored after World War II. In July 1947, the 17,700-ton ship began sailing between Le Havre, Plymouth and New York.



*The rebuilt & modernized DE GRASSE during a Caribbean cruise.*

The French Line, the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, was in a particularly weak position in the summer of 1945, soon after the War ended in Europe. All but one of its notable pre-war liners were gone. The LAFAYETTE had burned out at Le Havre in May 1938; the superb PARIS met a similar fate at the same port some eleven months later; the very modern CHAMPLAIN was mined in July 1940; and then, perhaps saddest of all, the brilliant and exquisite NORMANDIE caught fire and sank at its New York pier in February 1942. All that remained was the celebrated ILE DE FRANCE, which had been taken and used by the Allies during the War, but which was not fully restored until the summer of 1949. Otherwise, there was one smallish passenger ship that survived, the DE GRASSE. For two years, between 1947 and 1949, it alone maintained French Line's renowned trans-Atlantic passenger service.

The 574-ft long DE GRASSE had been withdrawn from Atlantic service in the fall of 1939, soon after war started in Europe. On her last voyages to New York, the ship transported many evacuees to the safety of



still neutral America. Later, the ship was laid up at Bordeaux, supposedly in safety from the threatening Nazi armies. In fact, the ship was captured some months later, after the fall of France in June 1940, and afterward used as an accommodation ship for Nazi forces. It seems not to have sailed during the war years. However, on August 30, 1944, as the German army began its retreat, the ship was deliberately sunk by depth charges and abandoned in shallow waters. One year later to the day, the French raised it. The repairs and restoration were to take another two years. It was modernized – with new interiors, reduced capacity and a new single funnel replacing the original two.



*Posters celebrating the DE GRASSE.*

The 970-passenger DE GRASSE sailed alone until it was joined by the much larger ILE DE FRANCE in July 1949 and then the giant LIBERTE in August 1950. The DE GRASSE remained on the North Atlantic until October 1951, when it was transferred to the Le Havre-West Indies route (and especially to colonial Martinique and Guadeloupe). Soon afterward, the brand new FLANDRE was added to New York service. To the Caribbean, the DE GRASSE was paired with another pre-war survivor, the 13,300-ton COLOMBIE. However, the DE GRASSE was again displaced by 1953 when another brand new liner, the ANTILLES and sistership to the FLANDRE, joined the West Indies service. By April 1953, the twenty-nine-year-old DE GRASSE was retired from French Line service and offered for sale.

Almost just as the Tricolor was being hauled down, Canadian Pacific Steamships found themselves in rather desperate need of passenger tonnage. Their EMPRESS OF CANADA had just burned and capsized at its Liverpool berth, and just as bookings were at peak due to the Coronation in London that June. The DE GRASSE was hurriedly purchased. With very little alteration, the ship raised the British flag and became the EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA. It all but immediately started sailing on the run between Liverpool, Quebec City and Montreal.



*The DE GRASSE but as the renamed EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA.*

Remaining with Canadian Pacific until 1956, the ship was again replaced by new tonnage, but it soon found a third owner, Italy's Grimaldi Siosa Lines. Renamed VENEZUELA, it was refitted extensively to carry mostly European immigrants to the Caribbean and Venezuela, and then returning with West Indian migrants heading to Europe. The ship survived until March 1962, when it ran aground at Cannes and suffered damage that was beyond economic repair. That summer, the former DE GRASSE went to the breakers at La Spezia in Italy.



*In its final phase, the DE GRASSE as the VENEZUELA*

*(Images: Bill Miller Collection)*



## SHIP NEWS

Compiled by Pat Dacey

### BLOUNT BOATS

**“BUILT TO SERVE - BUILT TO LAST - BUILT BY BLOUNT”**



*GRANDE MARINER photographed while sailing for NYC Water Cruise.  
(Photo: NYC Water Cruise)*

The “Built to Serve – Built to Last – Built by Blount” motto of Blount Boats is well representative of the more than 325 boats built since 1949 in their Warren, Rhode Island shipyard. Founded as Blount Marine Corporation by the innovative Luther Blount, they were known for producing boats that were considered “Taskmasters of the Sea” for their outstanding seaworthiness and performance. In 1966, Luther entered the cruise market with the formation of American Canadian Cruise Line (later known as American Canadian Caribbean Cruise Line) with a series of Blount designed and built small coastal cruise ships.

Unique designs on his passenger ships included retractable pilothouses, bow ramps, adjustable pitch props and water-conserving marine toilets, a shallow draft and a bow ramp for beach landings. The retractable pilothouse design enabled the ships to cruise under low bridges where others might not be able to go.

Later changing the name to Blount Small Ship Adventures, the line continued as a successful family run cruise business with their US flagged vessels focusing on itineraries to the Great Lakes, New England, the Chesapeake Bay, the Intracoastal Waterway, the Hudson River as well as the Bahama Islands.

Unfortunately, with the Covid-19 pandemic ceasing operations throughout the entire cruise industry, the Blount family made the decision to permanently leave the cruise business and focus on their shipbuilding operation. As a result, three of their ships, GRANDE MARINER, GRANDE CARIBE and NIAGARA PRINCE were put up for sale in 2020.



After almost five years in layup, two of the ships have been chartered from Blount and seem destined for a new chapter in their careers. It was announced that the 1997 built GRANDE CARIBE has been chartered to Norwegian Cruise Lines/NCL to serve as a floating hotel, providing accommodations to workers at NCL's private Bahamian Island Great Stirrup Cay while working on their private

island's enhancement project. (Above) GRANDE CARIBE while sailing for Blount Small Ship Adventures (Photo: Blount Small Ship Adventures)

The 1998-built GRANDE MARINER is currently in Manhattan and is being chartered to NYC Water Cruises operating as a "full ship charter" option while also offering limited dinner cruises and sightseeing tours. According to their website, the boat is now capable of accommodating 575 passengers for day cruises and offering 9,000 square feet of entertainment space which is far different than her original passenger capacity of 98 paying passengers.

There are no current deck plans on their website, so there is no information as to whether the cabins are still intact or have been removed to create more open space.



(Above) GRANDE MARINER while sailing for Blount Small Ship Adventures (Photo: Blount Small Ship Adventures)

For a more detailed history of this interesting cruise line follow the below link to an informative article by our former chairman and current board member Ted Scull.

[Blount Small Ship Adventures Bows Out - Quirky Cruise](#)

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