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Special Report *** COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS *** Special Report
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QUEEN VICTORIA

The **QUEEN VICTORIA** is a cruise ship part of the Cunard Line fleet, named after Queen Victoria.



The 294 mtr long **QUEEN VICTORIA** is of the same basic design as other **Vista class** passenger vessels, though slightly longer and more in keeping with Cunard's interior style. At 90,000 tons, she is the second largest Cunard ship ever built, after the RMS **Queen Mary 2**.

The **QUEEN VICTORIA** was originally destined to be an addition to the Holland America Line fleet, the order for a Vista class vessel put into Fincantieri was soon transferred by Carnival Corporation (parent company to Holland America, Cunard, and P&O) to Cunard with the intent that the vessel would become the **QUEEN VICTORIA**. The keel was laid down at the Fincantieri ship yard in 2003. However, due to restructuring within Carnival Corp., as well as a later decision by Cunard that modifications should be made to the design to bring in certain aspects which had proven successful on the **Queen Mary 2**, such as decor, junior suites, dining alternatives, promenades, etc., the hull was then designated to become the P&O ship MV **Arcadia**. A new **Queen Victoria** was subsequently ordered with Fincantieri in 2004, which was 11 meters longer, 5,000 tons larger, and with an increased passenger capacity of 2,000.

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Above the hull for the (first) **Queen Victoria** which became later the **ARCADIA**

The keel of the liner was laid on May 12, 2006. 80 prefabricated steel "blocks", each complete with interior structure, cabling, and ducts, and each weighing 325 tons, were then added. The completed hull and superstructure was floated out on January 15, 2007, after having a bottle of Prosecco smashed against her side by Maureen Ryan, a Cunard employee who has served on all four Cunard Queens. The ceremony also saw the traditional placing of coins on the

mast - in this case a Euro and a gold **Queen Victoria** sovereign were welded beneath the radar mast.

The **Victoria** left the Port of Venice on August 24, 2007, to commence her sea trials.

Photo left :
Mark Rowden ©



The **QUEEN VICTORIA** arrived in Southampton to much fanfare and media attention on December 7th much of the coverage focused on the ship's superlatives, with the liner being touted as "Cunard's most luxurious ship." The ship was christened by **Camilla**, Duchess of Cornwall December 10th continuing the tradition of Cunard Queens being named by members of the Royal Family, but **Camilla** was not able to break the bottle, for the superstitious and seafarers it is a bad omen. When the woman who could become Britain's next queen officially named a new luxury cruise liner, the champagne bottle did not smash.

As a flag-waving audience looked on, **Camilla**, Duchess of Cornwall, pushed the button to send the bubbly crashing into the side of the 90,000-tonne **Queen Victoria**. But nothing happened. The bottle eventually swung into the hull, then bounced off. Eventually, a second bottle of Veuve Clicquot was smashed manually over the side at the ceremony in Southampton, on England's south coast.

British media attempted to read the runes, drawing parallels to previous occasions when the champagne failed to break, and hoping it does not also spell bad luck for heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles's second wife. There have already been rumblings of discontent about **Camilla's** choice for the ceremony as in Britain tradition has it that **Queen Elizabeth II** launches and names ships bearing a monarch's name.



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The **Queen Victoria** is to be a running mate to the **RMS Queen Mary 2**, **RMS Queen Elizabeth 2**, briefly, and, in future, **Queen Elizabeth**; however, unlike most other Cunard Queens, she is not an ocean liner, but a cruise ship. Nor will she carry mail and thus is not having the RMS (Royal Mail Ship) status.

Captain Paul Wright was appointed master of the **Queen Victoria** in October, 2006. The **QUEEN VICTORIA** started her maiden voyage, a cruise to northern Europe, on December 11, 2007 and entered as first port of call the Port of Rotterdam where the vessel with onboard 1990 passengers and 989 crewmembers was warmly welcomed by a lot of spectators, onboard small boats but also along the river banks



Following this cruise, and after a cruise to the Canary Islands, the **QUEEN VICTORIA** will embark on her first world cruise, circumnavigating the globe in 106 days. The first leg of this voyage will be a tandem crossing of the Atlantic with the **Queen Elizabeth 2**, to New York City, where the two ships will meet the **Queen Mary 2**, on January 13, 2008. This will mark the first time three Cunard Queens have been present in the same location.

The facilities onboard include seven restaurants, thirteen bars, three swimming pools, a ballroom, and a theatre.

The **Queen Victoria's** exterior design closely resembles other Vista class ships built for the Holland America Line, like the **MS Oosterdam**, with a wrap-around promenade deck, private balconies, and a retractable glass magrodome over the mid-ship pool.

As with most newbuild passenger ships, the **Queen Victoria's** public rooms are mostly arranged along the lowest public decks of the ship, mainly on 2 Deck and 3 Deck. There is no central circulation access, the main corridors being to the starboard side, with the public rooms mostly along the port.



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The lowest passenger deck, holds the lowest level of a three story lobby, as well as of the **Royal Court theatre**.



At the 2nd deck can be found the mid-level of the **Royal Court theatre, casino, Golden Lion Pub, Queen's Room, Todd English à la carte restaurant, Chart Room bar**, and lower level of both the library and **Britannia restaurant**.



The top most level of the theatre, **Royal Arcade, Midships Lounge**, and upper level of the library and dining room are all on 3 Deck, along with a wrap-around exterior promenade. The decks above these contain mostly passenger cabins until 9 Deck on which is the **Cunard health club and spa, Winter Garden lounge, Lido Restaurant**, and two outdoor pools. On 10 Deck is the **Commodore Club**, and **Hemispheres night club**, and

the **Queen's Grill** and **Princess Grill**, (Photo Right) along with their attached lounge, as well as an open courtyard between, are on 11 Deck.

Though **QUEEN VICTORIA** is theoretically a "classless" ship, it has been argued that the **Queen Mary 2** and **Queen Elizabeth 2**, both of which follow the same



practice of separating passengers into different restaurants based on the price of the cabin they booked (the **Britannia** as "standard" for regular cabins, the **Princess Grill** as "middle" for those in junior suites, and the **Queen's Grill** as "superior" for deluxe suite occupants), are actually ships divided into three classes, despite the fact that all other public rooms are used by all passengers equally.



The theatre is the first theatre at sea to have private boxes. As well, she

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has a Winter Garden lounge with a retractable glass roof and water fountain, and a two storey library with a connecting spiral staircase, additional charge for the private boxes is 25 euro each person for watching a show.



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A nautical atmosphere also infuses the 77-seat Chart Room on Deck Two. This cozy room features sand-blasted maps with sea views, glass vitrines displaying ship models and maritime artifacts, and perhaps the most dramatic element of all: two striking oil painting portraits by noted maritime artist Robert Lloyd of the iconic **Britannia** (first Cunard ship) and **Servia** (first steel Cunard ship).

A Cunard tradition, the Chart Room offers a full bar menu and extensive selection of single malt and blended scotch.



Live piano music and jazz sessions on selected evenings make it a lively choice for maritime buffs.



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The ship's largest dining venue, the **Britannia Restaurant** is a strikingly elegant space featuring a soaring double-height ceiling offset by cornices and intimate groupings of tables that belie the room's magnificent size. Inspired by the dining car of the famed **Golden Arrow** that linked London to Paris, the restaurant's Art Deco design influences are captured in its original artwork, wall sconces and a combination of authentic finishes that include polished wood, bronze mirror and gold leaf. The room's focal point - a visually arresting illuminated world globe - stands 10 feet tall, a sizable yet subtle reference to Cunard's rich history plying the world's oceans.



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The **Queen Victoria** is equipped with 16 decks from which 12 are dedicated for the passengers, installed power is an 63.4 MW Sulzer ZA40 diesel plant, which are driving two 16.7 MW Azipods for a maximum speed of 23.7 knots (44 km/h) and a service speed of 18 knots (33.3 km/h), the ship is able to carry 3,000 tons of heavy fuel and 150 tons of marine gas oil, consuming 10 tons per hour for maximum output.



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At all the staircases and walls a large paintings mounted, as can be seen above the **QUEEN ELIZABETH** and below the **CARINTHIA**



For readers who are interested to book a cruise onboard the new **QUEEN VICTORIA**, I regret to inform you that the liner is fully booked for the upcoming 107 days world cruise, and the first cabins are only available from May 2008 onwards.

The maiden voyage onboard this 470 million euro vessel was fully booked in 1 hour 47 minutes only

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The **QUEEN VICTORIA** departed from Rotterdam a few hours later than scheduled, and was finally at Maaspilot station 22:00 hrs, after disembarking the pilot the cruise ship set course to Copenhagen (overnight call), Oslo, Hamburg and Zeebrugge. **Queen Victoria's** first Christmas will be spent in the sunshine of the Canary Islands, Morocco and ports along the Iberian Peninsula. The 16-night voyage will leave Southampton on December 21, 2007 and will call at Vigo, Lisbon, Malaga, Funchal, Las Palmas, Arrecife, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Casablanca and Gibraltar. Christmas Day will be spent at sea, after returning to Southampton the **Pathway to the Explorers World Cruise** - 106 Days (Southampton to Southampton) will commence.



All photos by Piet Sinke unless mentioned different

With thanks to the Port of Rotterdam and Cunard for the invitation

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