

## **ONE OF THE BEST HOLIDAYS WE'VE EVER HAD!**

George Stagno Navarra reports after the ALPS cruise holiday  
From the 28th September to the 9th October 2017

**BOOKING.** A good number of ALPS members and friends of the association booked for the cruise that has taken them to East & West Mediterranean between the 28th September to the 9th October 2017. The local agents for NCL Norwegian Spirit have been extremely helpful. With tickets in hand we made our way to Pinto Terminal to start our much awaited holiday. We were able to look at the excursions prior to departure and even book them through SMS Mondial Travel of Valletta which was also useful.

**DEPARTURE.** On the afternoon of the 28th September, we were escorted by coach to the cruise ship and started placing our personal belongings inside the individual cabins prior to our departure that was scheduled for late evening. This of course gave to each one of the participants on this cruise an opportunity to go to the upper deck and admire the magnificent scenery of the Maltese fortifications as they were lit at night. A scene not to be missed at the very beginning of our holiday trip. On the very first night, the ALPS group had special arrangements inside the ' Windows ' restaurant aboard the vessel, to be seated together and to familiarize themselves with each other. The vessel NORWEGIAN SPIRIT is a great ship with all amenities and with many entertainment spots that have made the whole experience stress free. i.e no worries. Before our first dinner of course we could walk about in the ship to familiarize ourselves with the places that we had to be sharing during the 12 days that we were spending together.

**NCL - NORWEGIAN SPIRIT:.** The entire ship is very well signed and with staff constantly cleaning and offering washy washy hand gel at each and every corner.. The facilities are second to none on the ship and we loved everything about the ship. Everyone on board, were fantastic normal friendly people coming from all walks of life and from many different countries. Full integration between the passengers that made this ALPS cruise holiday so pleasant from beginning to end.. We have never encountered anyone who was drunk and we did not hear any abusive language from anyone. If there were kids on board I must say that they behaved impeccably and generally stayed near the amusements area and could not be heard elsewhere. Our staterooms were family friendly and we found them quite adequate in size. Some had balconies, others had outside ocean view windows whilst a few were inside cabins. That said, our cabin was kept immaculate by our attendant. The room was very well insulated so we did not hear other guests when they walked the corridor at night near the room. Great nights' sleep on very comfortable beds. In general, all the staff on board the Norwegian Spirit have been very friendly and helpful.

**ENTERTAINMENT.** Cruise director was truly fantastic. A daily show made the ALPS group make their individual decision to attend for a show before or after a dinner. TV channel in the staterooms kept guests informed. The Cruise Freestyle Daily bulletin delivered to the room along with an itinerary was most helpful to enable the ALPS group to decide their evening activity as well as prepare for the next days' on shore excursions if/when taken... The shows that we saw were all fantastic and coupled with a gin and tonic or an aperitif, we could all enjoy an evening together.

**FOOD.** The restaurant staff being at Windows, Shogun, le Bistro, Blue Lagoon, Casino Late Night, Garden Main Dining were very busy but we always managed to be seated at a table. Plenty of variety on offer and we found the food hot and good. It was superb. Our waiters were very attentive

and always brought us our chosen dishes from the menu. *(That's why we may have added a few pounds / inches to our waistline)* The drinks waitress at reception did her best to accommodate our desires and was friendly with everyone. Sometimes we preferred to walk to the upper deck on the 12 floor for buffet eating where there was a very wide variety of food to our hearts delight.

**PORTS OF CALL:** . In addition to the ports that were listed in our holiday brochure like Messina, Naples, Civitavecchia, Livorno, Cagliari , Heraklion, Pireus, Santorini and Katakolon, many have managed to also visit Savoca / Taormina / The Vatican City & Olympia, the famous city where the Olympic torch is lit and is carried every fourth year to that country where the games are taking place. This was done in temperatures varying between 23 to 25 degrees C. It was only on our way to the center of Rome that we encountered five minutes of rain whilst riding on a hop-on-hop-off bus. It lasted only for five minutes. The sea condition was always most favorable with very light swell that managed to rock all of the ship's passengers to a nice slumber without suffering sea sickness. Perhaps it is worth mentioning a spontaneous/ unannounced visit to His Eminence Cardinal Prospero Grech, who very kindly received a sizeable group of ALPS members and friends at his Vatican Residence. We could spend at least half an hour with a Prince of the Church and add to the merriment of this Cruise on board The Norwegian Spirit.

**Join the ALPS the next time that an overseas holiday is planned for you members and friends of the association. ALPS goes into every detail to try and give you the most enjoyable time, in the company of a group of ex-Lyceum students who travel together with their family and friends and who always bring back the most happy memories of places that are visited.**