

4/11/07 Day 86 –
Dubrovnik, Croatia -
Wednesday, 11 April,
2007: We cruised in to
the port of Dubrovnik at
daybreak. There was
just enough light to get
a photo of the beautiful
bridge that spans an
inlet near where we
docked.



Here is where we were located in
Croatia.

Amsterdam. We started the day by taking an organized group tour of the Prinsendam. The Prinsendam is smaller than the Amsterdam and holds about half as many passengers.

Lisa from the Prinsendam Cruise Activity Staff led our group around the Prinsendam. The ship was in immaculate condition and we were impressed by the circular stairways that led from one deck to another. The public areas were given the same names as those on the Amsterdam so it was easy to compare the two ships. In all cases the space allocated to various public functions like sports, library and the restaurant are smaller than on the Amsterdam but beautifully designed and decorated. We toured a couple staterooms and they seemed slightly smaller than on the Amsterdam but since we were looking at different price scale categories it was difficult to compare. We will have to refer to official Holland American Line literature to resolve that issue. We got the feeling that compared with the Amsterdam; the Prinsendam might deliver a more cozy, intimate feeling during a cruise. During the tour you could hear comments both pro and con about the Prinsendam. In January the Prinsendam was cruising around the southern tip of South America and was hit by two huge waves in rapid succession. The ship heeled over to such an unusual degree that a significant amount of dishes were broken. Lisa described what it was like to live through the event. It was amazing that there were no serious injuries and the main loss was the dinner ware. The ship had to put in to a nearby port and new dinnerware was flown in by air express. There was no evidence of damage to the Prinsendam that we could see.

After the Prinsendam tour we were ready to visit the old city of Dubrovnik. A shuttle bus was provided to get us from the Amsterdam to the Pile Gate which is the main entrance to the old city through the wall.



On the left is the Pile Gate in the old city wall. There is a walkway along the top of the wall.

We had visited Dubrovnik in 2005 but it was raining the day we were there and we mainly just scooted between awnings and souvenir

shops. This time we had a bright sunny day to work with and the city was a grand sight.

There is a path around the top of the city wall which is about 2.5 miles long. Our main objective was to take the walk around the top of the old city wall. We started our walk near the Pile gate. They rent audio phones with recordings explaining the sights at numbered locations around the wall but we decided to go without that feature.



We climbed up this long flight of stairs and paid our 15 Euro per couple fee at a booth in the wall part way up.

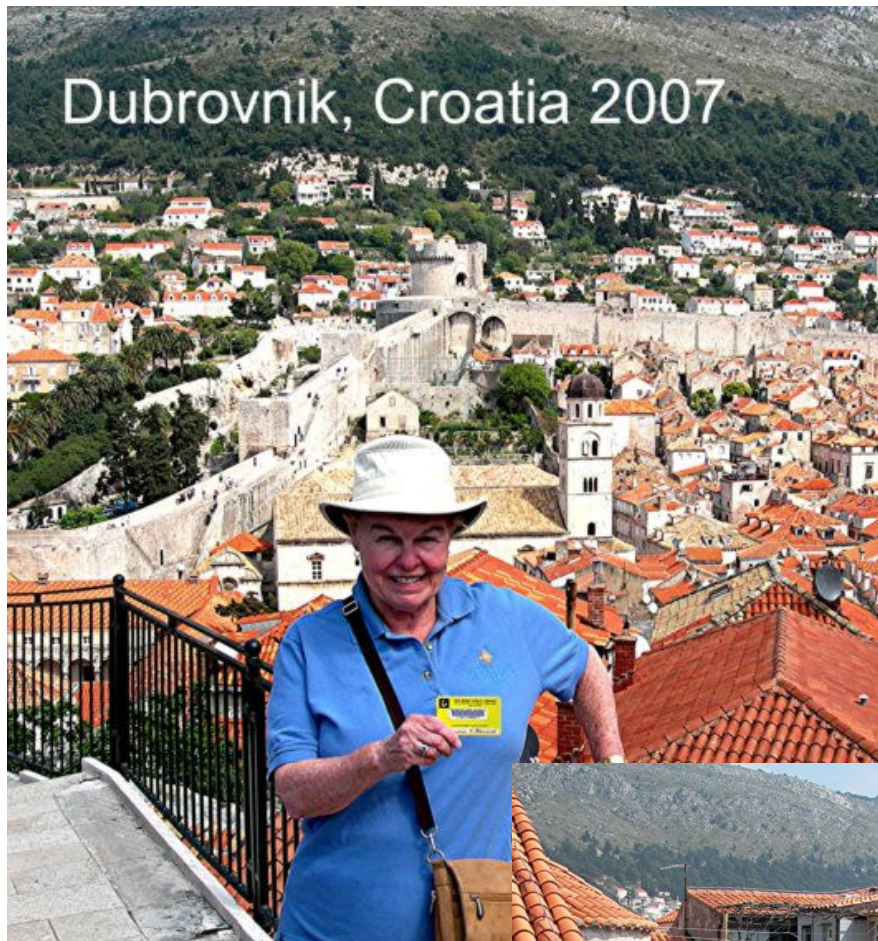
We started walking south on the wall. This was one of the first views we had looking out over the Pile Gate into the Adriatic Sea.



These oranges looked inviting at eye level just inside the wall.



Dubrovnik suffered major damage during the civil war in old Yugoslavia that took place in 1991. Many of the roofs were destroyed in Dubrovnik but some survived. We looked at the roofs with a critical eye and decided that the roof with the dormers in this photo must have survived the war but the adjacent roof looks like a new one.



Barbara took out her Oak Ridge Library card and we snapped this picture to show that her card had arrived in Dubrovnik. This view shown on the left was taken from the top of the south wall next to the Adriatic Sea. The tower on the north wall can be seen in the distance on the other side of the old city.

Life goes on in the ancient city. The clothes are washed and hung out to dry from the upstairs room of this old home in the southern part of Dubrovnik. A garden grows in the courtyard below.





An archway that was on the south wall had the date of 1834 indicating at least that part of the wall was nearly 200 years old. The photo was taken through the arch on top of the wall and the dark object at the bottom of the photo is an island off shore in the Adriatic Sea.



An outdoor restaurant is open for business on the sea cliff outside the south wall of Dubrovnik. According to a fellow walker on the wall, the restaurant was excellent but it was difficult to find the right streets and alleys in the old city that led to the restaurant through a door in the wall.



The boat harbor is tucked into the eastern portion of the Dubrovnik city wall.

The northern wall snakes majestically along the hilly mountainside.



Some roof rebuilding was going on in this part of the old city. They were using a chain saw to cut the roof boards to proper length.



Virtually every building in the old city has a red tile roof as can be clearly seen in this view from the north wall.

The highest point of the wall is the Mincet Tower on the north wall.





The exit from the wall was just a short downhill walk from the Mincet Tower. Soon we were off the wall and down into town near the large circular fountain.



We rewarded ourselves for the strenuous walk around the wall by getting some of the delicious ice cream called gelato. It seemed reasonably priced at about \$1 USD per ice cream cone.

The city streets within the walls are as intriguing as the ancient wall. Here are a few scenes.





About this time it was 2pm and we took the shuttle bus back to the Amsterdam. We wanted to take part in the Grand Voyage Signature Event Reception and hear comments from the Holland America Line CEO, Stein Kruse that were scheduled at 3pm.

The Signature Event Reception took place on the Lido Deck (number 8) by the pool. The stewards had been working hard for days to get all the decorations in place and it was beautiful. Here are some photographs of the arrangements and early guests.



The stewards circulated among the guests and served hors-d'oeuvres and cocktails. Here is one of our favorite stewards, Reza, with Barbara.



We thought an especially classy touch was that Holland America had arranged for professional mimes and sidewalk entertainers to come to the event from London to provide some light hearted entertainment. Here are several we caught in photographs.

This act, on the left, needs no explanation for the excitement they created.

This pair were made up as stone statues and stood still or moved very slowly as part of their act.



This mime doffed his hat to our Amsterdam neighbor, Carl Deremo.



This act consisted of a pair of cranky wanderers with the actors concealed in what looked like huge back packs.

A man with very nimble hands, Jason Maverick, could make these glass spheres do amazing things where they appeared to be on the verge of dropping to the floor but never did.



We often talk with Murat Kaya, the Amsterdam beverage manager, when we see him around the ship. He was especially busy for this occasion but took time to come by and say hello.



Our concierge, Rollie, came by the table and here he is with Trudy and Carl.

Barbara made a special effort to tell the Hotel Manager, Fekko Ebbans, how much we were enjoying the reception. He introduced us to Bill Prince, from the Holland America Line Seattle Office. Bill Prince was the organizer for this Grand Voyage Signature Event that was going so well. Here is Bill Prince on the left and Fekko Ebbans on the right.



It came time for the Holland America Line CEO, Stein Kruse to speak to the guests. He welcomed us all to the reception and spoke about the vision of the Holland America Line in providing a quality product to people interested in cruising. Mr. Kruse thanked the guests for their support of Holland America Line. He also had praise for the crew that had worked so hard to put on the Signature event.



The Mayor of Dubrovnik, shown on the left, was introduced and she welcomed the people from the Prinsendam and Amsterdam who visited her town. She urged us all to return soon.

The ambassador to Croatia from the Netherlands was also in attendance and she addressed the reception. She

stressed economic benefits of the tourist industry to a country like Croatia.

After the ambassador spoke Stein Kruse said a few closing words and then we adjourned to the Queen's Lounge where some local musical groups were going to perform for us.

We were first treated to songs by the choir from a Dubrovnik school for girls. They sang two songs, both in Croatian language but on-key and beautiful to the ear. One song that was a favorite of the audience was "Glory,



Glory. Hallelujah". They did a masterful job and when it came to the chorus the audience joined in with clapping of hands.



Next the wonderful Dubrovnik Orchestra entertained us with a grand selection of music. Our favorite was the Hungarian Dance which the orchestra did with great skill.

The music ended and we gave the orchestra a standing ovation, they deserved it.



We made our way from the Queen's Lounge to the main dining room for the early dinner seating. Barbara had a birthday coming up in a couple days and our table mate, Bob Robbins, had made a special gift for her. Bob had noticed that Barbara loves to eat the crisp bread sticks that come in a bread dish on our table. She usually gets most of them. Bob had taken photographs of a

bunch of bread sticks and using a computer software program cut and pasted together the most clever picture of a bread stick lady with Barbara's head on the body. The "breadstick Barbara" was tastefully dressed in a flowery two piece bathing suit. The picture came nicely framed. Bob and Ester had really planned ahead for this and had bought the frame for the picture in one of our prior ports. Barbara was thrilled by the thoughtfulness and will always treasure the gift.

Our table stewards Yudan and Denny were aware of Barbara's birthday. Towards the end of the meal they rounded up the head waiters and stewards from other parts of the dining room. That impromptu male chorus delivered the most impressive "Happy Birthday" song she has ever received. First they sang in English and then followed up with



a very energetic version in Indonesian. We all enjoyed the fun and festivities and especially the cake that had been made for this occasion.

Here, Denny and our head waiter, Zain, continue the celebration.

We are thankful for the friends and staff of the Amsterdam that are making this cruise so enjoyable. As the ship prepared to get underway the sun set over the islands off the Croatian coast.



This busy day was bid a fond farewell as we got this last photograph of the beautiful bridge at Dubrovnik after dark.