

2/27/07 Day 43 – At Sea - Tuesday, 27 Feb 2007: **Acoustical Device on Deck:** On 25 Feb (Day 41) we mentioned an acoustical device mounted on the promenade deck. The apparatus, clearly identified as an LRAD 1000 was designed to stop people trying to approach the ship. At first we thought that it was considered a defense against pirates that have attacked cruise ships. Since then we have learned from Bill and Mary Ann's www.cruisecritic.com message board thread, HAL's Grand World Voyage 2007, that boat loads of Indonesians illegal immigrants have been making a run from Indonesia to Australia across the Timor Sea. We are cruising the Timor Sea and Indonesian waters so encounters with desperate boat loads of people trying to immigrate from Indonesia to Australia is possible. It seems likely that the acoustic blaster would be more effective in dissuading boatloads of immigrants from approaching the ship than pirates or suicide bombers. Our friend, Ben Foley, researched the device and found that it is manufactured by American Technology Corporation [ATCO] which is a small San Diego company that has been working since 1980 on acoustic technology. The Internet connection on the Amsterdam was too tenuous to do any serious research on the product but Ben says there is lots of info on the device in the following websites. See: <http://www.atcsd.com>
Here's the URL of a PDF file document on the LRAD 1000: <http://www.atcsd.com/pdf/LRAD-Tech-Backgrounder.pdf>
And here's the PDF link to the LARD 1000 data sheet: <http://www.atcsd.com/pdf/Product-Sheet-LRAD-1000-Com.pdf>
If we need protection from pirates or suicide bombers, Ben suggests a couple of 50 caliber machine guns would be more effective than acoustic weapons. We noticed today that the ship traffic around us is quite heavy. At one time we counted seven ships and small boats visible from one side of the ship. This is much different from the open Pacific where we didn't see another ship for days on end.

More on Bali: There were a few more pieces of information that should have been included in the 26 February entry for Bali. Gasoline sells for about \$4 USD per gallon. Cars drive on the left side of the road. We thought the left side driving was a symptom of English influence but Bali has not been governed by England in the past and they still adopted left hand driving. The currency in Bali is the Indonesian rupiah. The current exchange rate is about 9000 rupiah to 1 US dollar (USD). We asked the guide about the cost of a house in Bali. Of course the price of a house is highly dependent on location but he gave us a ballpark figure of 300 million rupiah for a 1000 square foot house. That sounds like a lot of money at first but it works out to only \$33,000 USD. The guide also said that Bali used to export rice to the world but population has grown and production is apparently down so now Bali is a net importer of rice. Rice is the staple of the diet on Bali. The hybrid rice yields 3 to 4 crops a year but the people prefer the flavor of the old style rice. The problem is that the old style rice only yields two crops per year. Most farmers go with the hybrid rice to maximize number of crops and resulting income. We had come to Bali during the wet season that normally runs from November through April. However, the dry season appears to be starting early this year and we enjoyed sunny weather during our visit.

More on Cell phone Service: We tried to use our Motorola Cell Phone on the Cingular network while we were in Australia but never could get it to work. We were dialing 001 area code and number. That worked in Ecuador, Peru and Easter Island but not Australia. While in Bali we learned from another passenger that we should hold down the zero key for several seconds until a plus sign shows up on the screen. After the plus sign, dial 1, area code and then phone number.

It worked! We were told that other Cingular users were successful in Australia using this dialing technique. It was new to us but apparently well known among veteran travelers.

Today was a day at sea so there was time to do a little more photography of the guest facilities offered on deck. Our friend, Elsie Moss, of San Diego asked for more information on the subject of swimming and other deck facilities. Starting at the rear of the ship is an aft swimming pool, bar and sunning area shown in these pictures. Our friend, Maria Bradley, is taking a dip in this photo.



Lido Deck Aft, next to the swimming pool is a great place for sunning yourself.



On the deck above the aft swimming pool is an area set aside for teenagers. There are only a couple teenagers on this cruise so the area doesn't get much use. Here is what it looks like.

The -Teens Only- sign greets you at the gate. Note the water fall on the extreme right side of the picture.



On the left, more stuff in the "Teens Only" area.

There is a tennis court on Deck 9 with net above the playing area to keep the balls on the ship. On the other side of the ship is a basketball and shuffle board court.



The main swimming pool and spas are on Deck 8, adjacent to the Lido Buffet. The area has a movable sun roof that can be rolled back during sunny weather or closed on cold or rainy days. Here are some photos of the pool and spas on Deck 8 taken through the opening in the sun roof.



The pool on Deck 8 comes with a pizza bar and taco bar. Note the movable sun roof above the pool.



The taco bar.



The cheerful serving staff of the pizza and taco bar, Deck 8.



Aft of the main swimming pool is the Lido Buffet Restaurant, shown on the right, with serving bars located on both sides of the ship.



After we have made our food selections here is where we eat in the Lido Buffet Restaurant.

The other facilities on Decks 8 and 9 have been described in prior entries so now we have pretty well covered what the Amsterdam has to offer on deck.

Chris Rainier is a guest speaker who is on board with his wife and baby. He has given a series of presentations about his photo journalism experiences working for TIME and National Geographic. Soon after graduating from college Chris worked as an assistant to the photography icon, Ansel Adams, during the last five years of Adam's life. Today Chris talked about the priceless lessons he learned from Adams and his famous friends who visited during those final years. One of his assignments as a young assistant was to review tens of thousands of photos taken by Adams but never fully developed and cataloged. He showed many of Adam's photos, both the most well known and some we had not seen before. We have thoroughly enjoyed the presentations by Chris Rainier.