

2/17-18/07 Days 33 and 34 – At Sea – Saturday and Sunday: Saturday was a kickback day with not much going on. We attended a port lecture for Cairns (pronounced Cans) Australia. Cairns is the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef which acts as a draw for the tourist industry. There is also significant agricultural activity particularly in growing and harvesting sugar cane. In the afternoon we gathered in our cabin with our dinner table mates for a little before-dinner wine and conversation. The highlights of the dinner hour were tasty Australian menu items consisting of crocodile and kangaroo dishes.



On the right - Pan-Sautéed Crocodile Filet with lime and ginger sauce



On the left - Sautéed Kangaroo Steak with Balsamic glaze – with carrot, green beans and mashed potato

These cuts of crocodile and kangaroo meat were tender and delicious. The first rate chef in the kitchen and well crafted sauces probably had a lot to do with that result.

The evening show featured Tommy Bond, an accomplished pianist and showman from the UK, who kept us thoroughly entertained.

On Sunday we attended church services by Pastor Doug van Gessel. The inspiring message was that failure is not final. Mark in the Bible and Lincoln in American history are examples of people who overcame failure to accomplish great things.

The Amsterdam was cruising north up the eastern coast of the Australian Continent. The seas had a gentle roll in the morning and toward evening even that roll disappeared so that the ship was steady as if tied to the dock.

We soon were in the vicinity of the Great Barrier Reef which parallels the Australian east coast. We were seldom out of sight of small islands on the left (port) side of the ship. According to one of the guest speakers the Great Barrier Reef was built on the remains of a mountain chain that eons ago slipped beneath the surface of the ocean. The small islands that we see are all of that mountain range that remains above water.

The morning was topped off by a meeting in the Crow's Nest Lounge of www.cruisecritic.com contributors and readers. Dorothy Hennings (Blue whale) organized the meeting that was attended by 35 to 40 persons. Dorothy had been frustrated when the meeting scheduled for yesterday was cancelled at the last minute because of a conflict with a mandatory abandon ship drill. Murat Kaya, the Beverage Manager, and Jacques Louw, Cellar Master, came to her rescue by preparing classy new invitations and providing refreshments. Dorothy had tried to get Bruce Scudder, Amsterdam Cruise Director, to visit our Cruise Critic get-together but he had a schedule conflict.

A few candid photographs from the meeting are shown below.



Dorothy and George were joined by their cousins John and Patricia (Johnboat) from Tampa, FL.

Dorothy, John, Patricia (with prized ceramic Duck Billed Platypus), and George

This was a chatty group and everyone enjoyed the chance to get better acquainted.

We were happy to meet Bill and Mary Ann (WCB) who have taken on the role of primary contributors on www.cruisecritic.com for this 2007 Grand World Voyage [[search for Travel The World with Bill & Mary Ann HAL's Grand World Voyage 2007](#)].

Bill and Mary Ann (WCB)



Jack and Evelyn (travel2much) had made the Harbour Bridge climb and Jack provided a detailed description of how it was carried out in a safe manner.

Jack and Evelyn (travel2much) the Bridge Walkers.



Donna (Cruisin'canuck from Canada, right side of picture) filled us in on her husband Bill's health problems (he is now back in Canada) and her recent round trip across the Pacific by air.



Here's a candid photo of some other attendees having a good time.



Ron (Ronvoell) from Idyllwild, CA

Jacques Louw, the Cellar Master from Murat Kaya's Beverage staff, came by to see see how the Cruise Critic get-together was progressing.

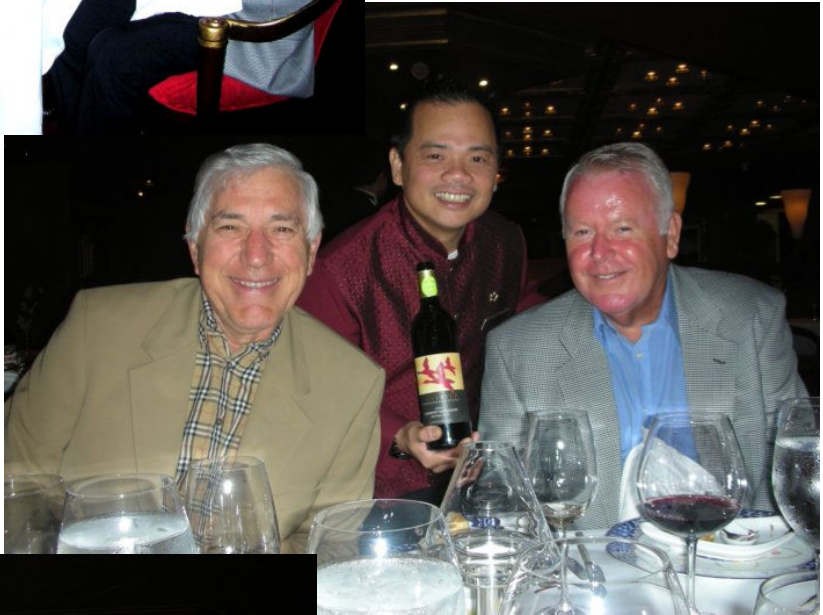


In the evening Paul and Maria Bradley, of the UK and FL treated us to a dinner in the Pinnacle Grill which is the premier restaurant on board the Amsterdam. We had become acquainted with Paul through his witty contributions to the Cruise Critic website message board leading up to this 2007 Grand World Voyage. After drinks in the Rembrandt piano bar we adjourned to the Pinnacle Grill.



We were seated comfortably in the restaurant, served delicious food and treated royally by the serving staff.

Paul had selected great red and white wines for our meal that were served up by Tony, our wine steward.



Rene, our chef from Holland, dropped by to chat and make sure that the meal met with our approval.

The crème brulee served at the Pinnacle for dessert was a work of art and delicious beyond even Barbara's ability to describe.

At the end of this wonderful evening we bid good night to Paul and Maria and closed out another memorable day on the voyage.

