

by Melissa Wolcott

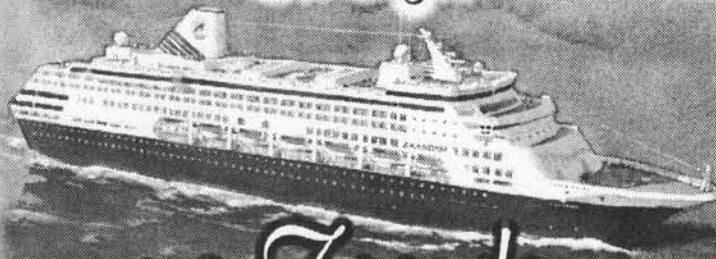
The Holland America Line (HAL) has presented us with another of their luxury vessels with the introduction of the ms Zaandam. Very similar to its sister ship, the Vollendam (which just entered the cruise market last November) the Zaandam, never the less, has its own personality. HAL's appeal has always been an understated elegance, and the Zaandam doesn't disappoint.

HAL is consistently named the "Best OverAll Cruise Value" because they present a five-star fleet of ships, award-winning entertainment, exceptional cuisine, and a variety of activities for people of all ages. The Zaandam follows HAL's "Tradition of Excellence," including spacious staterooms, superb dining, renowned service, casino, first-rate entertainment, duty-free on-board shops, the "Passport to Fitness" program and complete fitness center, coupled with the popular "tipping not required" and "cashless" ship policies.

The Zaandam is 60,906 gross tons, 781 feet long and carries 1,440 passengers and a crew of 647. The ship's top cruising speed is 23 knots. The vessel has 10 passenger decks and a three-deck oval atrium. The ship offers 720 of

the largest staterooms in the industry, of which 80 percent have ocean views, including 197 with deluxe verandahs. The Zaandam features one penthouse suite and 28 suites, 168 deluxe mini-suites, 384 standard outside staterooms and 139 standard inside staterooms. The ship also has 23 staterooms equipped for the physically challenged. Each of the suites and deluxe staterooms has a private verandah, a VCR, whirlpool bath and minibar. All staterooms are equipped with sofas, hairdryers, individually controlled air conditioning, telephone with voicemail and computerized wakeup service, multi-channel music system and closed circuit

Cruising The Caribbean In Style



ms Zaandam

television. In each room the beds are convertible from one queen size to two singles.

To appeal to a broader range of vacationers, the The Zaandam has expanded its spa; created an Internet center; offers a butterfly-themed playroom for children; and Club HAL, a complete youth program for young cruisers age 5-17. A full-time Club HAL director is on all sailings to coordinate age-appropriate activities.

A \$2 million collection of art and artifacts is showcased throughout the ship. The Zaandam also exhibits works created specifically for the vessel by world-class artists, plus an amazing collection of Egyptian artwork

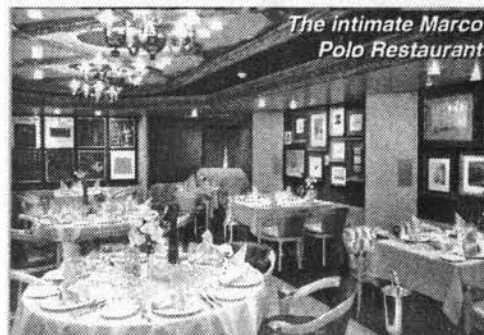
displayed in the Art Gallery. Although the ancient pieces are replicas, they are so well executed, it would take an expert to tell them from the real deal.

In a bid to become a little more "hip" the Zaandam features a music-related decor, highlighted by a collection of guitars signed by famous musicians including The Rolling Stones, Iggy

Pop and David Bowie, and '70s/'80s rock band Queen, is featured throughout the Zaandam's public rooms.

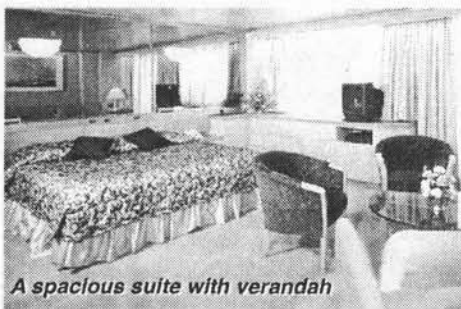
The Casino Bar showcases music memorabilia, from jazz and blues to rock-and-roll and the classics, while the centerpiece of the Zaandam's grand atrium is a towering, 22-foot-high pipe organ, complete with puppets that move in rhythm with the music.

We enjoyed our time at the casino, as the Zaandam has several slot and blackjack tournaments set up during the day and evening. Although it's not a large casino, it has gaming tables and the latest slot machines available.



The intimate Marco Polo Restaurant

Guests on the Zaandam may dine at the charming 88-seat Marco Polo Restaurant or at the elegant two-deck 747-seat Rotterdam Dining Room. The Marco Polo Restaurant features a collection of 17th century food-themed still life paintings. Although both restaurants are beautiful, we especially enjoyed our Marco Polo experience. Excellent Northern Italian cuisine was presented in a lovely, intimate setting, with only a few tables set up in



A spacious suite with verandah



Holland America's own private island, Half Moon Cay



from, with appetizers that included antipasto, bresaola, salami, prosciutto, seafood, seared beef tenderloin. Pasta selections included penne pasta with prosciutto, spicy tomato and basil sauce; and linguine pasta with grilled prawns. The entrees included sage and rosemary broiled veal chop; grilled chicken breast with mushroom, tomato concasee and gorgonzola; or braised veal shank in rich red wine sauce with saffron risotto and asparagus. Dessert choices included such delights as a

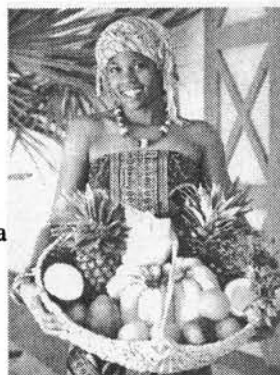
warm flourless chocolate cake complimented with a raspberry couli, or hazelnut custard served on fresh fruits. Guests who wish to dine in the Marco Polo Restaurant need only make an advance reservation; there is no additional charge. For casual dining at breakfast and lunch, there is a 386-seat restaurant, which features an extensive buffet, which is adjacent to the swimming pool.

The Show Lounge offers Las Vegas and Broadway-style revues and variety entertainment without the view obstructions that you find on many cruise ships. One night the stage was pushed back and a dance floor set up for dancing to a top-40 band.

The pool area has a retractable glass magradome ceiling. A running track and a dual-purpose tennis/volleyball court are located on the Sports Deck. The ocean-view Ocean Spa fitness center includes a full-service beauty salon/barber shop; dual saunas and steam rooms; six spa treatment rooms and a juice bar. The fitness room features treadmills, stationary bikes, stairsteppers, rowing machines, weights and weight machines and glass walls for scenic views. Walks can be taken on the wrap-around teak walkway on Lower Promenade Deck, which also features traditional reclining wooden deck chairs.

I believe most vacationers choose cruising because it is the ultimate "get-away-from-it-all" — no phones, no business, no one bothering you about anything. However, if you must keep in touch with the outside world, The Zaandam has an internet center on board, called The Web Site. Guests can stay connected with friends, family and their offices via e-mail, plus keep track of their investments. The Web Site is open 24 hours, and a staff member is on hand during posted times. The basic charge to guests is 75¢ per minute. For guests sending e-mails through their "cruisemail" account, there is an additional charge of \$5.95 per e-mail; there is no additional charge for guests sending e-mail through their own Internet service provider, such as America Online, Prodigy, Hotmail, etc. The Web Site is equipped with eight computer terminals and a printer.

The naming of ms Zaandam follows a tradition of ship names dating back to the company's founding in the 19th century. The names of Holland America ships follow a pattern. During its 127 years in business, HAL has had both cargo ships and passenger liners. The names of the cargo ships all end in 'dyk.' They're named for the dikes that keep the water from overflowing the great percentage of Holland that's below sea level. The names of



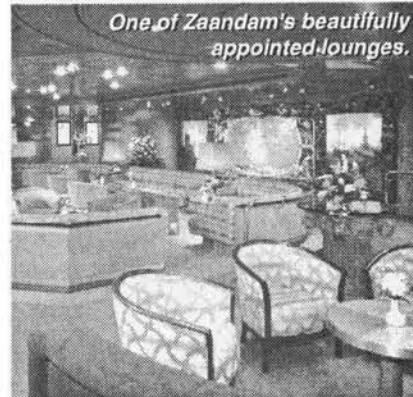
the passenger ships all end in 'dam.' They're named after the various dams that cross many of Holland's rivers and allow for irrigation. The Zaandam's namesake is the town of Zaandam, located north of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Zaandam sails on a program of alternating seven-day Eastern and Western Caribbean cruises.

The seven day Eastern Caribbean itinerary features Nassau, Bahamas; San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. John/St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands; and an exclusive visit to Half Moon Cay, Holland America's private island paradise in the Bahamas. The seven-day Western Caribbean cruises visit Playa del Carmen/Cozumel, Mexico; Georgetown, Grand Cayman; Ocho Rios, Jamaica; and Half Moon Cay. The visit to Half Moon Cay has activities for everyone. Guests can sail, swim and snorkel in the turquoise waters, laze on silky white sand, have a beachside massage, and enjoy an island barbecue.

Holland America Line is a member of the World's Leading Cruise Lines alliance which also includes Carnival Cruise Lines, Cunard Line, Seabourn Cruise Line, Costa Cruises, and Windstar Cruises. Together, these member lines offer cruise vacations that appeal to the widest range of lifestyles and budgets.

For more information, consult a professional travel agent, call 1-877-SAIL HAL (724- 5425), or access Holland America's web site: www.hollandamerica.com.



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