

Like a Rolling Stone

# SeaDream Yacht Club

BY DEBBIE SILVER



WHEN YOUR FAMILY is scattered all over the world, a small luxury cruise is a wonderful, relaxing way to gather together for a family celebration. The challenge was finding the right cruise for our family of five adults: a 7-8 day cruise, elegant yet casual, with open seating dining, no formal evenings or little kids running around.

In reviewing all the award-winning, small luxury ships, I discovered SeaDream Yacht Club with its intriguing logo, "It's yachting, not cruising." The website boasted an impressive list of "World's Best" accolades from Condé Nast Traveler and Travel and Leisure. But what did cruisebloggers have to say about SeaDream Yacht Club? Wow, I couldn't get over how passionate people are about their SeaDream experiences.

One site has a posting "You know you're addicted to SeaDream when..." Each entry lists how many SeaDream trips traveled and the date and destination of their next SeaDream cruise. Like a camper who can't

wait to go back next summer, SeaDream cruisers express a yearning to return to this experience where they were the happiest and most relaxed.

SeaDream I and II each welcome 112 guests aboard. With an award winning crew of 95, the service is extraordinary. SeaDream is all-inclusive and gratuities are included in the cost of the trip. It's so easy to relax when you don't have to reach for your wallet!

I can't figure out how the crew is able to greet guests by name on the first day. Passengers are welcomed aboard, handed a refreshing chilled towel with a hint of lemongrass and a glass of champagne. Take me away SeaDream!

The ocean-view staterooms have the most comfortable beds with Belgian linens. Each room has a flat screen TV, DVD, and CD Player with marble bathrooms, a multi-jet shower massage with Bvlgari® bath products. Love the personal fridge stocked with champagne, beer, sodas and

water, and 24 hour room service.

The first night you'll discover a pair of cozy SeaDream pajamas on your pillow. When you notice your name has been embroidered on the pajamas, you understand why SeaDream Yacht Club is so special. They go above and beyond to get to know their guests. On the second day your waiter remembers that you like an iced cappuccino with breakfast and in the evening, your favorite cocktail. My parents' milestone anniversary was celebrated with a cake at dinner, but that was just the beginning. When they returned to their stateroom they discovered their room had been filled with balloons, rose petals scattered on their bed, champagne, and an origami of towels shaped into two swans kissing.

Every staff member is so happy to see you, checking to make sure you're comfortable; can they be of any help? I asked the concierge for a piece of tape for my broken reading glasses. She insisted on taking them to the ship's engineer for repair. The glasses were fixed and returned to me on a silver platter.

The cuisine is outstanding. The preparation and breadth of selection is most impressive. There are no buffet lines, or platters for the masses. The presentations are beautiful and served with flair by a team of expert waiters. Lovely wines are served at lunch and dinner, each selection a winner. Oenophiles can purchase select bottles from the wine cellar for a fee. All inclusive: five-star dining, complimentary wine at lunch and dinner and open bar serving cocktails to your heart's content. A trip aboard the SeaDream Yacht Club is a great value.

The Champagne and Caviar Splash™ is a signature event on the SeaDream. Guests and crew celebrate with flowing champagne toasts and caviar served shoreside, followed by a fabulous beach barbecue,

elegantly served on china. On voyages where it is not possible to host the Champagne and Caviar Splash™ ashore, the celebration is held onboard on the Pool Deck.

A variety of tours are offered at each destination and mountain bikes are available for exploring the ports. There's plenty to do onboard: a fit-



ness center, 30-course golf simulator, an outdoor swimming pool and whirlpool. SeaDream I and II have a retractable marina with a Zodiac for water skiing, Hobie Cat "Wave" and Laser sailboats along with glass-bottom kayaks, banana boat, tubing, boarding, snorkeling, and a floating island. The Spa onboard offers a beautiful menu of Thai massages, body treatments and La Prairie Facials. Rows of Balinese Dream Beds are available for lounging or sleeping under the stars.

Each one of us felt transformed by the end of the week. The tension and exhaustion of everyday life had lifted and we discovered true relaxation. It was such an intimate experience, as if we were aboard our family's private yacht and there were simply a few other folks along for the journey.

The most extraordinary staff cared for my family. There's an important difference between being pampered and being cared for. The SeaDream staff is endearing; they are the heart of what makes this experience so memorable. The destinations are wonderful and beautiful but we could have stopped anywhere or not stopped at all. Being on board the SeaDream was what we cherished most. It was the best trip of our lives!

SeaDream Yacht Club: 800/707-4911; [www.SeaDream.com](http://www.SeaDream.com).