

Travelling in Style/ Cruising with the S.S. Azure Seas

by Myrna L. Oakley

"A trip, a safari, an expedition, is an entity different from all other journeys. It has temperament, personality, uniqueness . . . no two are alike. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip . . . a trip takes us."
—John Steinbeck/Travels With Charley

"The gods do not deduct from man's allotted span those hours spent in sailing."
—Phoenician proverb

Steinbeck knows whereof he speaks, and to illustrate, I am living proof that you can take a three-day cruise to Ensenada (on the Baja peninsula some 200 miles south of Los Angeles) with the clothes on your back, one camera, two rolls of film, and the contents of your cosmetic case.

My writing colleague and I had a couple of hours to kill before heading to the Port of Los Angeles at San Pedro, where the cruise terminal is located. We lingered in downtown L.A. to see historic Olvera Street, where the city's Spanish roots run deepest. Armed with camera, we immersed ourselves in the sights and sounds of the old cobblestone street, colorful Mexican wares, street musicians strumming guitars, brightly clad tourists, spicy aromas from open-air cantinas, and enjoyed eating fresh papaya drizzled with lime juice and sprinkled with cayenne.

The empty automobile trunk was, to say the least, totally unexpected. "Ermalene, would you please come back and look at what isn't here," I gasped as I lifted the lid to replace my camera. Obviously, persons more streetwise than us had helped themselves to our cruise-bound luggage and camera bag in the trunk. The lock had been efficiently and carefully popped, with nary a paint chip missing.

By the way, should you have a similar experience in downtown L.A., ask for Detective J. Miller at the Los Angeles Police Department, Central Detective Division (213/485-2671). He's a jewel. Note: It is best to have everything of value engraved; keep a list and full description of each item. This is entered into the police computer system for easier identification of recovered goods.

An experience like this helps one realize the truth in Steinbeck's words—". . . we do not take a trip, a trip takes us." It also revealed once again how transient and temporary possessions are and how attitude can make the difference when travel-

ling. "We were lucky," said Ermalene, "they didn't steal the car and we weren't mugged."

Then and there we took stock of what was left and decided to proceed to San Pedro. With time to stop at quaint, shop-filled "Ports of Call" next to the cruise terminal, we found a small cafe overlooking the harbor and sipped welcome cups of steaming hot tea. "This one is on us," said the waitress. "You've had enough happen to you today." There are some nice folks in L.A.

The S.S. Azure Seas loomed white and sparkling (she's 604 feet long, 78 feet wide, with nine decks) as we trooped aboard the Promenade Deck with our cosmetic cases—encountering just one or two stares from heavily-baggage fellow passengers. Our room on the Atlantis Deck was clean, comfortable and decorated in warm earth tones. A welcome haven of rest.

For those west-coasters who have never taken a cruise, the weekend Azure Seas cruise (departs Friday evening, returns Monday morning around 8:30 am) to Ensenada is an ideal way to see what sailing the seas is all about in a short span of time and without costing an arm and a leg. Rooms range from \$395 to \$585 (per person, double occupancy). If you're economy-minded, ask for Emerald Deck.

From sunrise to sunset, life on the S.S. Azure Seas is leisurely. The party moves indoors in the evening, although spontaneous late-night soirees in the hot tub on the upper deck, with champagne and caviar, are possibilities, I'm told.

On Saturday morning we were docked in Ensenada's large, natural harbor, Bahia de Todos Santos, which means Bay of All Saints. We took one of the many taxis into town and poked into colorful shops bursting with Mexican pottery, silver and turquoise jewelry, wool blankets, ponchos, bright straw bags, and exquisite embroidered dresses. We each found just the right dress for the Captain's party.

The best of the nightly entertainment aboard the Azure Seas was the colorful, noisy Mexican Folklorico show on Saturday night. The traditional dances are done by a group of young local Mexican men and women—a pure delight of flashing eyes, jet black hair, whirling dresses, and stomping feet accompanied by traditional Spanish music.

A weekend to remember, aboard the S.S. Azure Seas—sans luggage. Believe me, it can be done.



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Eugene Hosts Regional Bridge Tournament

by Joy Ledbetter

August is the time for river running and blackberry picking, but for the avid bridge player, August is the time for the Emerald Empire Regional where all attention will be directed indoors to the bridge table. For 7 days and nights, from August 12-18, 1500 players are expected to descend upon the Valley River Inn, mostly from out of town. They come for the gold, points that is. Bridge points come in three colors: gold, red and black. Black points are won at the local games while the coveted red and gold are won mostly at major tournaments such as this one.

The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), the governing national organization, sanctions all tournaments, awards, all master points, and designates the rules and regulations of play.

Social bridge, the most popular indoor sport in America, trivia buffs take note, is a different game entirely from competitive bridge, replacing the 'luck of the draw' with skill. All pairs play the same hands; the object is not just to beat the opposition but all the other pairs in the room holding duplicate deals, thus the name duplicate bridge. Duplicate creates addicts and keeps the brain cells oiled.

Three hundred points are needed to become a Life Master, a major achievement for the average bridge player, though a talented few accomplish it in weeks by winning a major tournament.

Eugene hosts a regional once

every three years. The first one was in Mac Court with a tarp beneath the tables and basketball rims overhead. In contrast, the Valley River Inn is a very popular location. Players flock here because of the beauty of the surroundings and the convenience of shops and restaurants nearby.


Sid Davidson, the director, comes from San Francisco to referee the tournament. When the yell goes out, "Director," Sid comes running to settle the argument or answer any questions. The Emerald Empire Regional is a sanctioned red and gold point tournament. Events are planned for all levels of play: beginner, intermediate and expert.

On Friday and the weekend, flighted events separate players of similar skills based upon master point holdings. For those still awake on the last Saturday night there will be a panel discussion by bridge experts hosted by Big John Anderson, an ex-Eugenian who now lives in Sixes. Big John and friends will choose the most interesting hands from the Nationals and our Regional.

The kickoff event of the tournament is the Linfield College Charity Pairs. The ACBL has pledged \$175,000 to the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse during 1985. This event is only one of many to raise funds for the selected charity.

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