

# EUROPEAN RIVERIA CRUISE & ENGLAND 2011

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since 2007, when we flew across the Atlantic 4 times in 3 months, we have been trying to cut down on the number of crossings when we travel. Last year we combined a 14 day river cruise with an 11 day Baltic cruise. This year we combined an 11 day Western European cruise with a private tour of Cornwall in western England and a week in London.

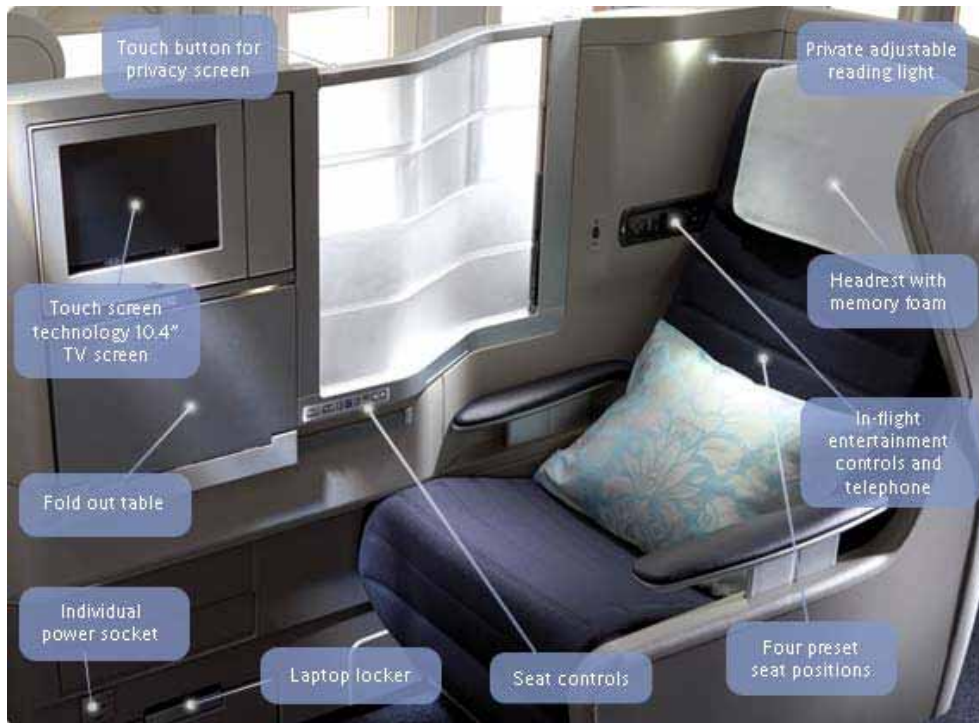
Kathy observed that the 3 segments were so different that they should each have a separate trip story. It made sense, as editing a long story with pictures in it was a nuisance.

## PART ONE- WESTERN EUROPE AND THE RIVIERA

This one started off a little differently. Last year we were overnighting at Dulles Airport before our flight to Budapest, and Kathy was watching a program on Spain on the Travel Channel on TV. Well, she said she would like to see Spain, and that was all it took! I went to the hotel business center and checked on cruises that went to Spain.

I found a couple of them, and when we got back home we chose an 11 day cruise from Rome to London.

A few days after we got back, I got an e-mail from British Airways telling me I had been awarded a companion ticket! Well, I showed Kathy a picture of what Business Class looked like, and she called it obscene! You have your own personal space, sort of like a bathtub, with all sorts of amenities! Fortunately, I had enough miles on my frequent flyer account to swing it.



The only problem was that we would have to stay overnight at Heathrow, so I discovered there was a Sofitel Hotel right at the terminal, and British Airways got a discounted rate, so that solved the problem.

We wanted our bags checked through to Rome to avoid the excess baggage charges we paid in Copenhagen last year, so we made sure we had nightclothes and toiletries for the overnight stay. I pre-ordered our Britrail passes and cards for our bus rides in London so we are good to go.

On our past cruises, we have had a minisuite. After looking at the difference in prices between the minisuite and the balcony cabin, we opted for the latter. The differences are; shower instead of tub, one TV vs. 2, and smaller storage space.

We had previously sailed on Oceania's Insignia in 2007, which is identical to the Ocean Princess, so we were familiar with the layout. One thing we did do, however, was bring a copy of the deck plans from a Princess Brochure. The little booklet they give you only has a side view of the ship, and the