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November 13, 2017 - by Melody Wren



With a spa, gym, pool, a whirlpool, several restaurants, bars, a theater, lectures, a casino, live music and excursions to choose from, the days are full.

On the ship, passengers have the opportunity to follow their passions by relying on the insider information served up in the daily newsletter delivered to our cabins every morning.

For foodies, onboard menus are diverse and feature local, seasonal fish, local beef, and lamb. If you have food allergies as I do, they are not just catered to, but celebrated. When in port, advice on local dishes to indulge in are included in the daily newsletter.

For cocktails, there was a “daily drink” listed reflecting the current port as well as incorporating any local distillery’s specialty or brewery. You can sit at the Star Bar’s U-shaped outdoor bar and sip a handcrafted drink while feeling the ocean breeze roll through.



If there was any time spent onboard, I did laps of Deck 8 once I discovered that 8 laps were the equivalent of one mile. I quickly found out it was a great way to meet other passengers doing the same.



Enroute to Glencoe in the Scottish Highlands, we stopped for the view as a bagpiper was exiting his vehicle. As I ran over, I asked if I could have a photo. At the last second, I grabbed his hat and put it on. You can see by the look on his face, he wasn't amused.

Adventurers chose from daily excursions offering plenty of choices from motorcycle cruises on the Isle of Man, a vintage steam train or a cliff-edged hike. When the weather cooperates, there are bicycles to rent, as well as paddle boards and snorkel gear available while in port. The slower paced passengers can have a gentler amble around the shops and museums and indulge in the local bakeries and cafés.

With 100 out of 204 passengers returning for a second, sixth or fifteenth cruise, I took the opportunity to chat to a few of them about choosing Windstar. The most common answers were size of ship, number of passengers, crew, and itineraries. The size of the ship makes it easier to get to know fellow passengers and visit smaller locations. The guest to crew ratio is remarkable with 155 crew to 204 passengers. The demographic is an older crowd as one might expect, but according to Mary Schimmelman, PR for Windstar, the “demographic is changing to a younger one with more international passengers”. She goes on to say that “the Gaelic Explorers itinerary appeals to Canadians and Americans as they are tracing roots.”

Guests enthuse about Windstar’s distinctive features — namely, the watersports platform and the open bridge policy. On Windstar yachts, you can swim, snorkel, sail, water ski, windsurf, paddle board and kayak from a platform that opens right onto the sea from the vessel's aft.

Windstar’s open bridge policy is a rarity in the cruise industry. You can watch the Captain and crew navigate the open seas or dock in a small port.

The 450-foot Star Pride, a recently renovated ship with Windstar Cruises, offers luxury beyond marble counters. Its the attention to detail; the personal passenger service was exceptional. The sweep of a gesture, raise of an eyebrow, the additional dessert thought about, but not ordered, name recall on day one, celebration of food allergies, not the reverse. The cruise I took had a high return rate with one



So looking forward to the day in the Isle of Man, an island governed independently with their own currency. The torrential rain didn't dampen our spirit as we explored the

hundred out of the 204 passengers coming back for more, which is certainly high praise on the high seas.

town. Returning to the ship, a rainbow welcomed us onboard.

For more information about the Windstar Gaelic Cruise, [EXPLORE HERE](#).

Ports of Call

- Edinburgh
- Invergordon
- Kirkwall
- Portree
- Tobemory
- Portrush
- Isle of Man
- Dublin

Star Pride Specifications

- Capacity: 212 Guests
- Suites: 106 Suites, All Outside With Ocean Views
- Owner's Suites: 2, With Private Verandas
- Classic Suites: 4, With Private Verandas
- Balcony Suites: 36, With French-Style Balconies
- Ocean View Suites: 64, With Picture Windows
- Decks: 6 Guest Decks
- Crew: 151 International Staff
- Ship's Registry: Bahamas
- Length: 440 Feet (134 Meters)
- Draft: 16.5 Feet (5 Meters)
- Beam: 63 Feet (19 Meters)
- Tonnage: 9,975 Gross Registered Tons (Grt)
- Propulsion: Twin Propeller, Driven by Four Bergen Marine Diesel Engines
- Speed: Cruising Speed 15 Knots

Photographs: Jeff Thomason



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