

This is my review of the Ecstasy Voyage on Jan 20th, 2003. It was a 4-day cruise to Ensenada and Catalina. It seems that every time I'm on this ship, they do something different, so I'll give you my opinion of how I felt things went.

I sailed with my mom and we had a great time and will sail Carnival again. We booked an OV guarantee, but used the Kelley method to find our cabin – and we were assigned U197. So woohoo, this is a two category upgrade!



My dad dropped us off at the pier. We arrived approximately at Noon, just before the tour busses arrived. It took about 30 minutes to stand in line and check in. Definitely get passports. It made things so much easier. This ship is an older ship, so you get both sign and sail cards and room keys. This time was different, because we were then told to go through the terminal to the other side and wait for our boarding group to be called. I've never done it this way before, but the room was full and they began boarding shortly after we arrived. It took us about another 30 minutes to get onto the ship because we had to walk through the metal detectors, then outside, then we got our picture taken, then we walked up the stairs, then walked to the WAY BACK of this long line. Once we got up in the line to where we saw the top of the stairs, we saw many people cutting into line, and there was no Carnival/Security employee there to make sure this doesn't happen. But the passengers weren't too angry with that, but many did voice an opinion that this needs to be fixed (along with many things on the ship).

Anyone know when the last time was that this ship went to Dry-dock? I'm just wondering because the ship looked worn in many places.

We boarded the ship, and since I knew where our room was (and my way around this ship), we didn't have any trouble finding our room. When we walked down the hallway, it looked as if there had been a parade going through our hallway. The carpet was absolutely filthy. It was supposed to be orange/red, but it was dark brown (and only in the center/traffic area). We wondered if all decks were like this. We explored later and found that it was only on deck 6 (upper deck).

The picture here shows what the carpet is supposed to look like. Ours desperately needed to be cleaned. Its not that we went looking for carpet stains. My parents are sailing this ship in a little over a month on the Bare Necessities Cruise (Feb 28th) and her room is on the Main deck. She wanted to find her room. Once we found her room, we saw that the main deck is decorated in blue and the carpet looks great. We wondered why the Upper deck looked bad. Mom joked that the Ecstasy gave its carpet-cleaning machine to the Elation!



Anyhow, ok so then we go to the Lido deck and find that there were a normal number of seagulls visiting us. There also was a patient Carnival employee trying to chase them away with a broomstick. It seems that this was her only job (as rudely pointed out by her superior in front of EVERYONE in the Panorama restaurant). The turkey was so good, so juicy and tender. We actually weren't very hungry, but went back for seconds. At the Blue Grille, the neon sign is falling apart. It's the B in Blue. At first it was blinking. Then it just stopped working, then it fell off! LOL, I hope it wasn't during a busy time!

It took a really long time for our luggage to get to us. The last piece arrived just before 7pm. So again, this was a first, as it's never taken that long for all of our pieces to get to us. Also, we smuggled liquor and soda on board and made our own drinks. Some people do, some people don't. We do!

The first night we weren't hungry for dinner so we didn't go. We were also a little upset at the fact that if we wanted late seating dinner that night that we'd miss the game shows and activities going on around the ship. So we opted to skip the dining room the first night, but then shared a room service sandwich later. I've had good experiences with room service before, but this time it was great! They said they needed 20 minutes, but were there in 5! We gave them an extra tip. We also asked for menus to be delivered because, there were NO menus in our room! How were we supposed to know what to choose from? Sigh. Oh, by the way, this has happened before!





pillows and didn't touch the air conditioner upon request. We also asked for the safe key, but ½ way through our voyage, the key wouldn't come out of the keyhole. Even though maintenance crews came in and WD-40'd the keyhole, it still didn't come out. Sigh. (On the last night before leaving for dinner, we asked Oscar to remove this himself while cleaning, as we literally couldn't remove the key. He forgot to do so – then woke us up the next morning to get the key out! He admitted he'd forgotten to remove it!)

Oscar made the cutest little animals for us. One night it was a creature holding a mint. He was a good steward, but didn't vacuum the floor ½ way through the voyage. It would've been nice because our Formal Night outfits left specks of glitter ALL OVER our room! It was also ALL OVER the bathroom!

The next day in Catalina, we saw how many of the tours were leaving first thing in the morning. We thought that since we have to tender into the island that we'd wait till mid morning



Our Cruise Director was Matt Ross. Naren and I nicknamed him "Sir Talks-a-lot" when we sailed the Ecstasy on Dec 27th. Well, Matt was still on board and was still as "Talky" as usual. He's a good first time cruiser CD, but if you've sailed before, he just talks way too much! For example, he was explaining that there were booths selling stuff on the Atlantic deck. He could've just said that the gold and silver was beautiful and that we should check it out. Instead, he proceeded to describe each type of chain, and the benefits of this type versus the others. Sigh. Matt, shhhhhhh!

In our room, we met Oscar, our room steward. He was friendly and attentive, but his memory wasn't too good. We asked for and he brought for us; extra blankets, extra



to get off of the ship, therefore – avoiding the lines to get off the ship. We arrived at 8 a.m., and would leave at 4 p.m. At 11a.m. that morning, Mom and I saw that there was a 2-hour wait to get off of the ship! Then, we heard from the purser's desk that the line at Catalina to get back onto the ship was 1 hour long! We then decided that we wouldn't get off of the ship. We played cards instead. Being from Southern California, we have been to Catalina many times before, but STILL! For those families that had never been there, why should there be a 2-hour wait? This DEFINITELY went on our comment card! The weather was really beautiful that day, and we talked with many people who had a great day. I'm glad they got out and enjoyed it!

That night was formal night. I'm glad we had late seating because it took a long time for my hair to dry, and it was nice to watch the sunset. Even though we had a VERY DIRTY WINDOW!

This was inside our room.



This shot was taken out from the top deck.



When Naren and I sailed on this ship in December, we also couldn't see out of our window. At the end of the December sailing, we wrote on our comment card that they needed cleaning, but apparently the crew needs longer than 3 weeks to clean that many windows.

The dancing show that night was good, but I felt that the crowd didn't totally appreciate the fact that these people were dancing for them. The bend-y Russian couple was GREAT! I swear she doesn't have a spine! Anyhow, the crowd really wasn't very enthusiastic for the dancers or comedians. I guess I was the only one who felt they actually deserved more than they got!

The ship didn't rock very much. The worst of the sea moving was when we were coming into Ensenada at 6:00 in the morning. The ketchup bottles actually slid off the tables in the Panorama bar and grill.



Wednesday we were in Ensenada. The weather was PERFECT! It was mild 70s with perfect conditions for any tour. Mom and I didn't have any specific ideas for what we wanted to do, so we get off of the ship, and there are people doing Bufadora/Shopping/Lunch tours for \$13 each/adult. This is compared to the Bufadora/Shopping/Cultural Center tour provided by the ship for \$27. So apparently, there are cheaper ways to see Ensenada.

Our tour guide, Andrea was the cutest little thing, very nice, informative and a great guide. We went to the Bufadora, the tide was great, the Bufadora bufed, and it made for great pictures. Don't forget your sunglasses! On the way home, we stopped at a roadside stand and got Pineapple Tamales for \$.70 each. They were really good, but some people on the bus didn't like them too much! I feel that our tour took us to many more places to go, see, and do than the tour operated by the Ship, and it was cheaper! I got Naren many little things but I can't say here (in case he's reading this!).

Our Tour guide, Andrea said that the little kids that beg aren't poor. The parents choose to live that way. The kids can go to school and get jobs, but the parents opt to sit on the street and beg for money. The money doesn't go to the kids and the families. It actually goes to their pimp, and in exchange they get food. The kids aren't homeless!! They just look like they are – for the sympathy factor. She said she understands that it's heartbreaking to see them looking like that, so if you want to help them, give them candy or food, not money. Then maybe they'll actually go to school.

At dinner, we had the 8:30 seating. Yes, we were still awake at 8:30, but we took naps each day to be able to stay awake during all hours of the night. Our assistant waiter was by far the best asst. waiter I've had EVER! His name was Vladimir, and he was from Slovakia. The other waiter was from South India, but I couldn't read his nametag. He was good, but didn't hold a candle to Vladimir! Our food was good. I had mainly chicken/diet dishes. I had a bite of Mom's steaks though. The lobster was good. The Chateaubriand really was tough, and the New York steak wasn't very tender either. Both had good flavor, but not too tender. The Jerk Chicken, Turkey Dinner, Pasta dishes, fruit soups, and Salmon were all fantastic. The best dinner was the giant prawns. I had 2 ½ dinners. Shhhh don't tell! A few times I had pizza on the Lido deck and that was really good too. The "make your own salads" were really a good thing.

They didn't have a sandwich bar. So I had to make my own sandwiches out of lunchmeat and rolls. The Jerk Pork was way too dry. Not even the gravy could help it. I had even met up with Rhona, who I met through the Message Boards at Cruise Critic. Before sailing, we emailed back and forth about the different areas of the Ecstasy. Her and her family were having a great time, and it was nice to catch up with them. They were really nice. In our off hours, we played at the Casino. We even entered the slot tournament, but didn't get into the second round. We didn't win a damn thing at the Casino either. However, Naren had won \$180 in that casino when sailing last December. So, I guess it's really a matter of luck. We also played the \$750 bingo game, and were 1 number away from winning!



We even rubbed ourselves for good luck. We still didn't win. We met Bijo, a friendly casino staff member who was really nice. It was good to meet him. He was from South India (Kerala). In our wanderings around the ship we also found that the port side Atrium elevator was still broken (from the December trip), and the Bingo board was also still broken. On the Lido deck, port side, the women's restroom doors also had an interesting time shutting. You wouldn't think they actually shut. It was strange.

From Wednesday onward, the card room (next to the Men's Restroom) also smelled like a line from the bathroom broke into that room.

It smelled like someone went to the bathroom in the card room! Ugh, that was gross, we couldn't stay in there! Also, the library's hours and game selection are limited, so if you like a particular game, you'd better bring it! The purser's desk will actually give you two decks of Ship Cards, so that's cool!

Overall, the ship needs to be "spring cleaned". There are always people cleaning the food eating areas and handrails, but they really need to thoroughly deep clean the entire ship it seems. The Blue Sapphire lounge was also really dirty and we couldn't figure out why, because the crew has plenty of opportunity. We had a great time, and made our own fun, so we will sail again. We just feel that if we're going to pay money to go on a vacation, that the "resort" be kept clean. This was not the case on the Ecstasy. I hope that when you sail on her again, the ship will be cleaner for your enjoyment.

