

Travel Review:

Mediterranean *Cruise*

We flew from Luton to Palma in Majorca to join the ship *Destiny* owned by the Thomson Group to visit Monte Carlo, Monaco, Nice, Florence, Pisa, Rome, Corsica, Menorca, returning to Palma then flying back to Luton.

The *Destiny*, which was full, has 9 decks, the lower 2 devoted entirely to cabins. The other decks have a variety of activities as well as further cabins. Everything you need is provided for, the cabins are spotless, and this was the first time that we had a TV in the cabin, enabling us to stay abreast of news at home as well as local weather forecasts. There is a wide range of entertainment on the ship; children's clubs, games, a gym, two swimming pools, two theatres, a casino, several bars (some with live music) and two shows each evening. The evening meal is in two sittings and we chose to sit with other dining companions who we got to know well during the holiday. The dress for the evenings varies, sometimes casual, some smart, and some formal. It is not possible to go into evening dinner in shorts. The food is excellent with a wide choice of meals throughout the day, with vegetarians being well catered for too. The crew who cared for us were gracious and efficient, coming from a wide range of nationalities.

The first day was at sea, crossing from Palma in Majorca to Villefranche, and was a fine sunny day, but the wind was keen and you needed a sheltered spot on deck to take advantage of the sun.

After breakfast, we boarded a coach in Villefranche which would take us to Nice, Monte Carlo and Monaco. The day was warm and sunny and the coastline as we drove along it was idyllic. Very scenic with mountains and blue sea. In Nice there are some beautiful homes perched on the hillside. Elton John and Tina Turner both have a residence here and the view from their respective homes over the bay of Nice must be marvellous.

Monte Carlo and Monaco are very clean, pretty places, almost toy-town like. Beautiful flower markets; lavender is grown profusely here and exported all over the world. We travelled along a small part of the Formula 1 circuit, and also went into the Casino - a work of art both externally and internally. We had a really glorious day.

The next day we docked in Livorno for Florence and Pisa. The weather was not good, very overcast and eventually rained quite heavily. Florence did not live up to our visions of it although there are



some beautiful cathedrals created out of green, white and black marble. The green and the white marble is mined in Tuscany. The streets however are narrow, confined and not very clean. Pisa was interesting. The Basilica, Cathedral and Leaning Tower are very attractive buildings to look at. The cathedral internally was very beautiful too. The leaning tower surprised us: though we had read about it, the lean was still more exaggerated than we had imagined. Thirty people at a time are allowed inside to climb to the top.

Unfortunately, there was not enough time for us to get in the queue to get to the top, or to explore the interior of the Basilica. Civitavecchia for Rome: When we docked in Civitavecchia, it was raining again.