

7-Day Alaskan CRUISE

—By President's Club Member, *Raylene Taskoski*

First of all, and it probably goes without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway, if you've never been on a Pure Romance sponsored Consultant Incentive Trip, you must. It is an experience like no other, 100% first class all the way! This was my first Incentive Trip, but I can assure you it won't be my last.

My husband, Mike, and I are experienced cruisers, having been on seven during our 12 years of marriage, but in all that time we've never had as much fun as we did on this cruise and it started right in the airport! Meeting up with several Consultants who lived in, or were routed through Detroit, we flew into Seattle where it seemed like everyone in the airport was with Pure Romance! Oh, we do love our PR gear, don't we, girls?

Getting on board the *Celebrity Infinity* was quick and so was finding our way to our cozy, comfortable staterooms to discover who would be our neighbors for the next week. We wandered all around the ship bumping into old friends and meeting people whose names we've seen in *Inspire*, on the forums and on TV!

The first night, Patty and Chris had us up to the Constellation Lounge for a Meet & Greet Cocktail hour. Patty welcomed us and Chris revealed that they'd brought a copy of Patty's new book with them and each of us had a chance to flip through it quickly, just enough of a taste to leave us wanting more.

Our first full day at sea included our first Formal Night. Everyone was dressed to the nines, the girls all gorgeous in their gowns and the boys so handsome in their tuxes... "sigh". We are a fine looking group of people, I must say! The highlight of the evening, though, was when Adam Garley took to his knee and asked Renee Ridley to marry him. (Here I go getting all misty again! Oh, and she said yes, and walked lopsided the rest of the cruise trying to get used to the weight of that new ring on her hand!)



But enough about the ship; how about Alaska? Now, I'll be honest, I lived in Alaska from 1987 - 1991 but I never saw it like this. I can't begin to describe for you how beautiful it is, but the line "Purple Mountains Majesty" from the song *America the Beautiful* barely does it justice.

Our first stop in Alaska was Sitka. Alaska is known for both its Russian History and its totem poles and in Sitka we were treated to a magnificent display of workmanship and heritage at the Sitka National Historic Park. Highlights included a walk through the woods and some very old totem poles, some kept inside to preserve them and even some that were being repaired. Sitka is also the site of Castle Hill, a National Landmark where the Russian Flag was lowered, and the American Flag was raised in 1867 marking the transfer of Alaska to the United States. (It became a State in 1959.)

The next day was a Day at Sea/Glacier cruise-by. Patty and Chris kindly provided each of us with a pair of high-powered binoculars and the view was spectacular. With the binoculars you got close up views of eagles, bears, mountain goats, waterfalls that you couldn't see from the ship, and the Hubbard Glacier. The ship crawls carefully through the passage and then stops and rotates around so everyone on the ship could have a front row view of its splendor. It was truly breath-taking.

Cruises are known for activities, all day, every day, all night, every night! Throughout the trip there was joke-telling, karaoke, comedians, game shows, bingo, dancing, contests of every type (Polar Bear Plunge, anyone?) and later in the cruise, an "Awards Show" for the *Celebrity* guests who had excelled in all the various activities during the cruise. And wouldn't you know *Pure Romance* would represent in a big way? Brocha Evans, our resident Opera Singer, sang "Lady Marmalade", Nick Smiley (brother of Kendra Smiley) told a joke, and John Calvert (A.K.A. Johnny "Speedfish" and husband of Leslie Zay) and his team won first place for the Team Trivia that was held throughout the ship during various times.

Our next stop in Alaska was Juneau, the capital of Alaska, and a very different view of what we expected a capitol city to look like! Some of the excursions at this port of call included some fantastic Whale Watching trips and Mendenhall Glacier and fishing expeditions, but after five days without email, my first stop was an internet café to do some business. Wouldn't you know, I bumped into a lot of other PR girls with the same thing on their minds! My husband and I opted to do a little shopping in the area, but even with the best fur prices in the country, I still couldn't afford that \$60K coat! Someone on the cruise bought the fur-lined jock strap for her husband, but I'm not naming names!

Although activities and shore excursions seemed to go 'round the clock, there was plenty of "getting to know you" time for all of us. It seems that if you sat in one spot long enough, each of the other Pure Romance cruisers would come through that area and you would have a few minutes to talk. Those moments were priceless.

Day Six brought us to Ketchikan, Alaska's First City and The Salmon Capital of the World and there's a huge sign that tells you

so as you enter the city, just in case you didn't know. Shore excursions included bears and boats and backcountry jeep tours (oh, my!) as well as flight-seeing, fishing and Fjords (which are long, narrow inlets with steep sides, created in a valley carved by glacial activity). Mike and I, as well as a good number of our new friends, took in the very humorous Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show.

That night we once again dressed in our finest and met in the Atrium for a group picture, or "group of 92" as we were referred to by the photographers. One wonderful moment was relayed to me by Health Education Director, Erin Lapham. As we, the winners of the cruise, were being positioned on the stairs and our husbands milled about, taking pictures and waiting for their chance to be photographed, a gentleman asked what sort of group we were. Erin explained and the man exclaimed, "Those ladies sell vibrators? That's not what I thought ladies who sold vibrators would look like!" I'd like to think that Erin, in her very gentle and educational manner, and us just being who we are, left him with a very different impression of our industry. One person at a time, ladies, one person at a time.

“Sailing around the world is certainly the way to live life to the fullest! Our Pure Romance cruise to Alaska with Patty and Chris was the vacation of a lifetime! We spotted bears, eagles, sea otters and whales! Daredevil Tina Fletcher zip-lined over glaciers! Shelley Hyde visited the home of Dolly-a turn of the century female entrepreneur who left behind a boatload of business tips on how to extract money from men. Rachael Hamilton and her husband, Chris, celebrated that they're newly expecting! After so many yummy things to eat, Robin McCartney decided to begin a fantastic detox program. Marcey Goldstein and her husband, Tom Trumpinski, visited Musher's Camp and played with puppies. Winner of several trivia contests, my husband starred in the celebrity special featuring his brain. Good times were shared by nearly one hundred PR playmates!!!”

- Leslie Zay



We then met in the Constellation Lounge again where we were once again treated to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and a short show by a fantastic acapella group called "Port Authority". Their song, "60 Minute Man" had us in tears of laughter and was a terrific wrap up to an amazing cruise. Wait? Did I say wrap up? Oh, no, there's one more night to go and someone let Chris McIntire and Matt Brisben take charge of the shore excursion for the next night ...did someone say, "PUB CRAWL?!"

This one night, which was optional, brought us through the city of Victoria, BC, Canada on foot. The boys arranged for a tour bus to drop us off at one pub and pick us up later at a third, just in time to get back to the ship and get a little sleep before heading back to our respective homes and time zones all over the country.

I suspected it before I went, but now I'm sure. Pure Romance people are the most awesome people in the world!



"I started out heading to the zip-line alone wondering why no one was going to do it. I met up with Corporate Director of Training, Cheryl Force and she agreed to go with me on the tour. After much coaxing of the bus staff we got Cheryl on the bus and she didn't even pay for the tour yet. Once there we got on our gear and got ready to go!

I was so excited because I loved zip-lining previously in Mexico. We started from a little house and headed out. Well, no one said anything about going from tree-to-tree like a monkey with nine other people. I was thinking, I wasn't scared of heights but I didn't like hanging in a tree with nine people by a little rope. I think I told Cheryl I was sorry a hundred times and I couldn't wait to get my monkey-butt out of the trees! A huge thanks to Cheryl for going with me; without your support, I think I might have been swearing in Spanish like one of the other girls on the last tour in Mexico!"

- Tina Fletcher

"When we pictured Alaska, it didn't involve being pulled in an oversized golf cart roving through the muddy roads of a rainforest, but there we were. The sixteen Alaskan Huskies obeyed the musher flawlessly and between giving orders he explained that hauling loads of tourists' built muscle that would be useful when they compete in the Iditarod Race which is held in early March each year. The huskies were very different from the puffy-furred Siberian Huskies from the Disney movies-they were lean and shorthaired, more like German Shepherds with a touch of Greyhound. They posed for photos at a short stop in the middle of the trip, but only for a minute, for they were anxious to keep on their way. Afterwards, we knocked off the mud which had been kicked up onto our jeans and windbreakers and were offered hot chocolate. Most of us, though, were too busy playing with the little puppies that the mushers brought out for us to hold and pet. It was a perfect side trip-a little excitement, a little information, and a few quick canine kisses."

- Marcey Goldstein

