

# Cruise around New Zealand on the Pacific Explorer

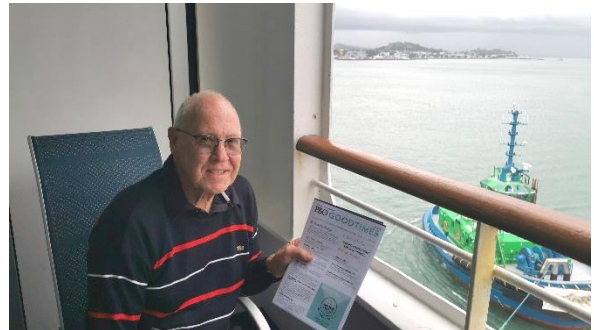
20-29 November 2023

## 19 November. To Auckland.

We drove to the airport and flew Jetstar to Auckland. We were the last flight out before they closed Wellington Airport due to fog! We walked to the Ibis Budget Hotel and settled into our tiny room. Dinner was KFC.

## 20 November. Getting on board the Pacific Explorer

The phone went in the middle of the night and we heard that Kathy's sister, Sue, had passed away. We spent hours on the phone trying to find a way for Kathy to join the family, but to no avail. She had to join the cruise and decided to visit the family after it finished. After minimal sleep we were exhausted. We were met by cousin Joanna Baynes and had a lovely catchup before Joanna dropped us at the port. We boarded the Pacific Explorer smoothly and settled into cabin 9224 – a spacious BD category twin balcony cabin, at the back left of the ship. We had been on the ship recently so decided not to make our typical cruise video, instead doing a slideshow of the voyage. We had dinner at the pantry with friends Bob and Prue Wakelin then we were happy to get to bed.



## 21 November. At sea.

After breakfast we bought the slow Internet package. It is best to buy this on board on day 2. We had a leisurely morning before having lunch at the Waterfront with our friend Fiona.

In the afternoon we played golf, listened to music and then had dinner at the Waterfront with Bob and Prue. A very pleasant day!



## 22 November. Christchurch.

We docked in Lyttleton and were picked up by Sue Trigg – an author friend (known as Rose Pascoe) who we help with her writing. We hadn't been to Christchurch since before the 2011 earthquakes so it was interesting to see how much it had changed. We started at New Brighton where my grandparent's house seemed unchanged from when I had been there last nearly 70 years ago! We then walked through the Botanic Gardens, the Arts Centre and the CBD, including Cathedral Square. There are still many waste areas and derelict buildings and much construction going on but by and large the city centre has been rejuvenated and seems to be flourishing. We had lunch at the Boathouse by the Avon then went through the Quake Museum before returning to the ship via Sumner. It was a wonderful day and so interesting to see how Christchurch has come back to life after the awful earthquakes. In the evening we had dinner at the Dragon Lady with Bob and Prue. Lovely Asian food completed a wonderful day.



**23 November. Port Chalmers.**

We chose this cruise because it was going to Stewart Island. Unfortunately, our visit to Stewart Island got cancelled and was replaced by Timaru. We discovered last night that Timaru had also been cancelled due to bad weather so today we found ourselves in Port Chalmers just out of Dunedin. We will have an extra day at sea tomorrow to make up for it!!

The weather was threatening so after breakfast we walked around Port Chalmers visiting the Rhododendron Dell, Iona Church, the historic Carey's Bay Hotel and the Artisan Markets in the Town Hall. Port Chalmers sure is a historic and interesting place. We discovered you can catch a bus to Dunedin for \$6 return (rather than the ship's \$35) and that if you walk to Carey's Bay you can get on before all the crowds.

After lunch we had a read and a rest then had a really lovely dinner with Bob and Prue in Angelos. Great food, interesting chat with Gena our waitress and a special song by Uli. Another wonderful day.

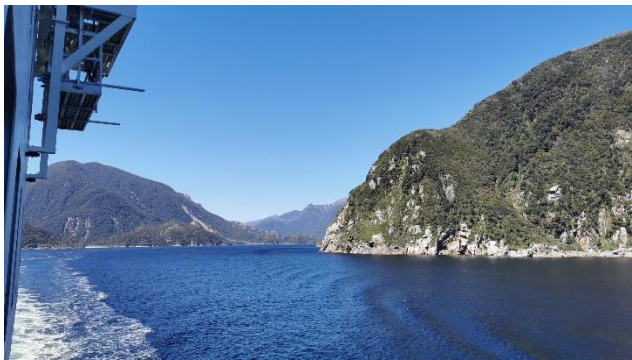


## 24 November. At sea.

A quiet day as we slowly headed past Stewart Island towards Fiordland. We were able to get in touch with family after Sue's funeral which meant we didn't feel so distant. We dined at the Pantry and in the evening went to an average magic show by Mr Marmalade. A highlight in the afternoon was going to the gym and then bumping into Graham and Kay Young who we hadn't seen for about 40 years.

## 25 November. Fiordland.

A fascinating day in perfect weather. We sailed through Dusky Sound, Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound. Each of the fjords was resplendent in the sunshine – far better than other times we have seen them on cruises. The beauty of sailing through Fiordland certainly made up for missing out on Stewart Island and Timaru earlier in the trip. We had dinner with Bob and Prue at the Waterfront and reflected on seeing some pretty spectacular scenery during the day. Our Internet package was just adequate to talk to Phil on his birthday.



### **26 November. At sea.**

A quiet day as we headed north up the west coast of the South Island. We had lunch at the Waterfront with Tom and Fiona, read, and worked on our video. Ross went to the gym and to a (noisy) rock anthems show.

### **27 November. Picton.**

After breakfast we caught the free shuttle into Picton. We walked around the familiar town centre then returned to the ship. Picton looked lovely on a beautiful fine day. After lunch we chatted with Bob and then had dinner with Bob and Prue at the Waterfront. Afterwards we watched a better than average comedy show by Glynne Nicholas.



### **28 November. At sea.**

Our final day. After breakfast we finished our video, walked around the deck and spent our on-board credit (sweater, hat and lollies). We had lunch with Bob and Prue at the Waterfront, chatted in the afternoon and had a very windy walk on the top decks. After dinner at the Pantry we went to a show by comedian Steve Allison, and quickly left!

### **29 November. Auckland and home.**

After breakfast we left the ship smoothly (helped by having no checked luggage) and rode the ferry to Devonport and back. We then took the train to Manukau, had a look around the mall and then took the bus to the airport. We flew back Jetstar back to Wellington, picked up the car and drove home.



Overall this was a most enjoyable cruise, but quite different to how we have cruised previously. We had a difficult beginning with Sue's death and Kathy not being able to get off the ship to attend the funeral. This was compounded by changes in the itinerary which meant we didn't get to visit Stewart Island or Timaru, or meet up with three of the four people we had organised to see in the ports. Yet we made the most of the opportunities we had and the places we visited. We tended to dine in one of the restaurants for lunch one day, and dinner the next which proved to be better than dining there only at night. Also, we didn't go to as many shows as we would normally, partly because many were noisy, not our thing or because we had seen them on previous cruises.

It was great sharing the cruise with Bob and Prue, and with Fiona and Tom. It was also great spending much less time making our cruise video and doing it in totally different style to previous cruises. The end result is a very professional vlog that complements other cruise videos on our calros3 YouTube channel.

So overall, our Kiwi Explorer cruise on the Pacific Explorer was thoroughly enjoyable, and because of the different approach to cruising, quite relaxing. It was great sharing the cruise with friends; the New Zealand ports and scenery were superb, and we certainly made the best of our 9 days on board the ship.



Bob and Prue



Tom and Fiona



Crystal



Marvin and Tiki



Kay and Graham

