



The **MILLERGRAM**

by **Bill Miller**
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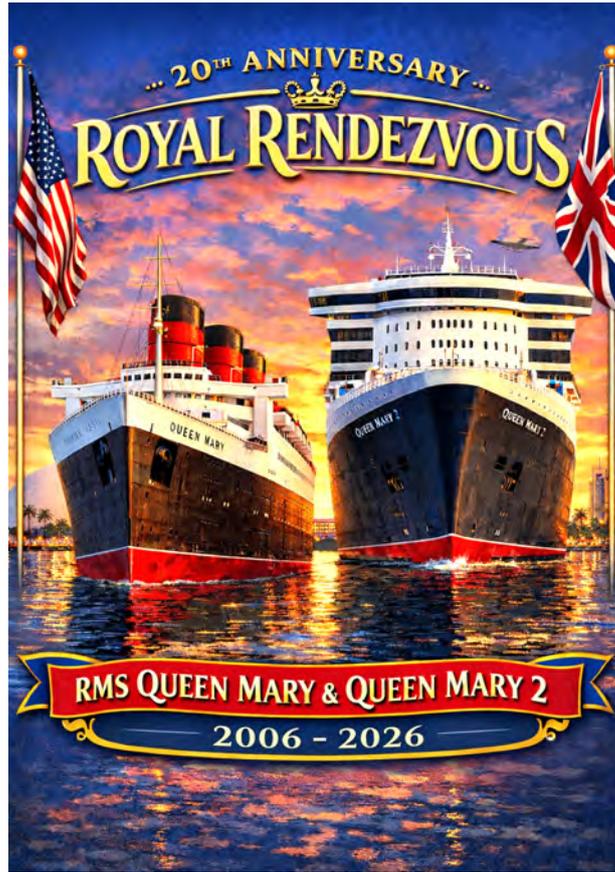
Winter 2025-26

The Millergram is designed and formatted by Tim Noble, our good friend from Melbourne, Australia and a former navigating officer with the Blue Star Line.

ALONG THE PROMENADE: Like the officers on the bridge and stewards along the corridors, celebrities – from European royalty to Hollywood stars – added to the culture of the great liners of the past. Below: Actress Paulette Goddard who was travelling to England aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* with her husband Burgess Meredith in 1947.



CUNARD: 2026 is the 90th anniversary of the legendary *Queen Mary*. And the 20th anniversary of the Royal rendezvous of the *Queen Mary* & the *Queen Mary 2*.



CRUISING: Between 2024 and 2025, solo passengers – even as they often pay double fares – have increased by 50%.



The cruise industry is experiencing its strongest growth in years, generating more than \$168 billion in global economic impact and supporting 1.6 million jobs worldwide.



The *Crystal Serenity* seen from the *Crystal Symphony*.

NEW YORK: I keep an eye on my favorite port anywhere and its changes. The North Cove Marina was created, along with the World Financial Center, in Lower Manhattan back in the 1980s. Pleasure boats, sailing ships & some mega yachts have berthed there. But now comes word that it will shut down for at least five years before the end of the year as crews build a massive seawall along the waterfront. Nautical owners have been scrambling to find new spots in the city's dwindling marina spaces.



The North Cove Marina is seen from the 105th floor of the World Trade Center – with Jersey City at the top.

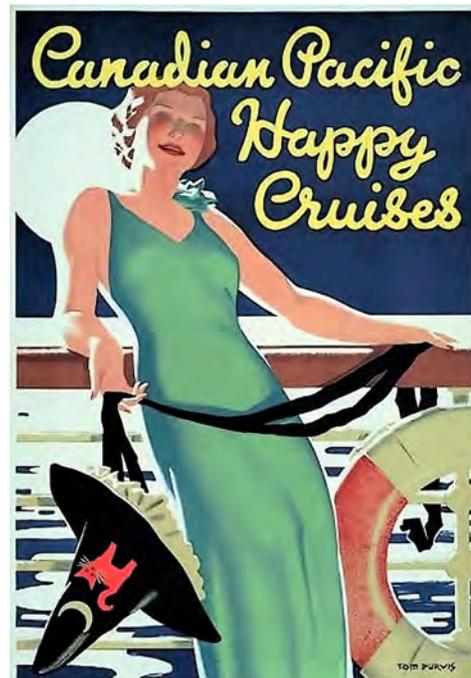


Until the 1960s and the building of the World Trade Center, Piers 14 & 15 existed on the very site of the Marina and were used by the Belgian Line.

OCEAN LINER ARCHIVES: Looking back – on Mon Apr 10th 1962, no less than 6 passenger ships arrived at New York. The *America* arrived at 8:00am with 382 passengers from Bremerhaven, Le Havre, Southampton & Cobh; the *Noordam* at 8:00am with 45 passengers from Rotterdam; the *Italia* also at 8:00am with 605 passengers from a Caribbean cruise; the *Oslofjord* at 9:00am with 362 passengers from a Caribbean cruise; the *Nassau* at Noon with 415 passengers from a Caribbean cruise; and at 4:00pm, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* (below) with 427 passengers from Nassau.



POSTER ART: Posters were an extremely evocative promotion of travel by ship. They prominently featured in travel agent & tourist offices. Right: Winter Caribbean cruises on Canadian Pacific in 1935.



VOYAGES: In 1955, the North German Lloyd was back in business. That January, the 19,000-ton, 975-passenger *Berlin* – the former Swedish *Gripsholm*, built in 1925 – began regular sailings between Bremerhaven & New York. The 9-day sailings were first for a German passenger ship since September 1939, when the war in Europe began.



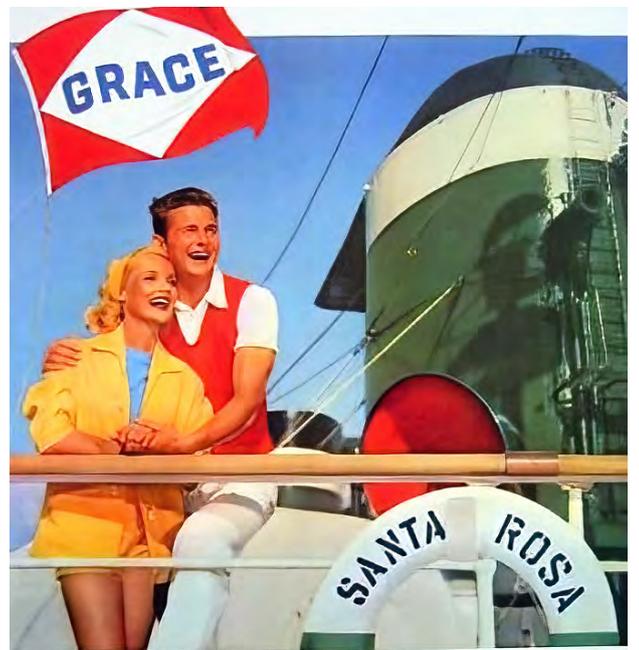
WINTER CRUISES: Cruises were plentiful in the winter of 1955. Travelers could take Grace Line's *Santa Rosa* or *Santa Paula* on weekly 12-night itineraries from New York to Aruba, La Guaira, Curacao & Cartagena. Minimum fare was \$440 and, although without air-conditioning, the sister ships offered the likes of a tiled outdoor pool and all outside cabins with private bathrooms.



The handsome *Santa Rosa* & *Santa Paula* sailed from New York every Friday morning.



Cruise TO THE CARIBBEAN AND SOUTH AMERICA
 The Santa Paula sailing through Caracas Harbor...



GRACE LINE
 Caribbean and South America Cruises



Dining rooms on the azerahis, "Santa Elena", "Santa Paula", "Santa Rosa" and "Santa Lucia" have casement windows opening on promenade decks and roll back domes which open to the sky

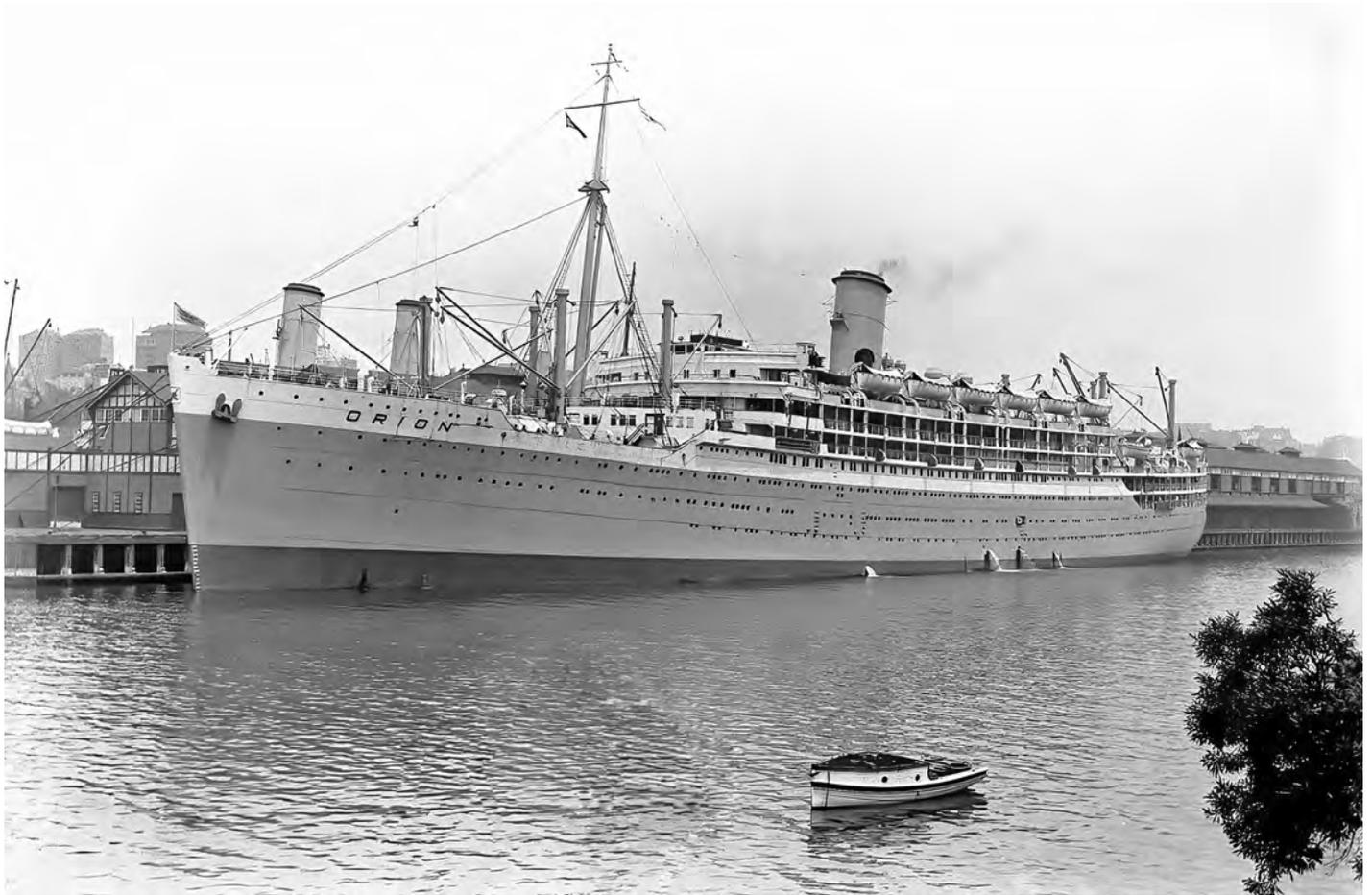
Grace Line
 CARIBBEAN-SOUTH AMERICAN CRUISES



- 16 days, 8 ports, permitting visits to 13 cities. Sailings every Friday from New York.
- Luxurious Santa liners, especially built for tropical cruising. All outside rooms, each with private bath. Outdoor tiled swimming pools.
- 31 and 38 day cruises to Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Round South America cruise tours.
- See your travel agent or Grace Line, Rockefeller Center or 111 Hanover Square, New York; Boston: Pittsburgh, Washington, D. C.; New Orleans; Chicago; San Francisco; Los Angeles; Seattle. Copyright 1959 by Grace Line, Inc.



**HEARD ALONG THE BOAT DECK:
90 YEARS AGO FOR THE *ORION*
of 1935**



Ocean liner buff Tony Ralph remembered the liner *Orion* from its visits to Sydney: “The *Orion* had exceptional art deco interiors, styling that made it more like one of the famed transatlantic liners than one on the Australian run. It was also a pioneer of sorts for the Orient Line. It made the first trip, in 1954, of an expanded Orient Line service over to New Zealand and then up to Hawaii and the North American West Coast. Orient was looking for more passengers by then, to expand, to offer an almost worldwide service. Hereafter, you could take a liner such as the 1,400-passenger *Orion* up to Vancouver or San Francisco or Los Angeles.”

Captain Bob Ellingham recalled this expanded service: “In the mid-fifties, the P&O and Orient lines began to spread their range across the Pacific to North America and thereby becoming the most diverse liner operation in the world. However, this initial expansion was not without its problems. I can remember steaming into San Francisco in the old *Orion* with 10 first-class passengers aboard. We simply weren’t known in America and the few who had heard of us thought we were a Japanese company.”



The fine lines of the *Orion* can be seen in this view at Hobart, Tasmania

Commissioned in August 1935, the 23,600-grt *Orion* was an innovative, very significant liner constructed by Vickers- Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness. A sister, the *Orcades*, completed in 1937, became a war loss, being torpedoed and sunk in October



1942. The 665-foot-long *Orion* had been named by the Duke of Gloucester, third son of King George V and Queen Mary, but he was in faraway Brisbane on launching day (December 7th 1934). A radio signal was sent by the duke to the shipyard, which in turn released the liner from the slipway and started her launch.

But perhaps even more significantly, it

was the first Orient liner with one funnel, the first with one mast and the first with a corn-colored hull. The interior design – introducing softer colors and sleek styling – was the start of high art deco on the Australian run. It reminded many of the great, distantly well-known Atlantic liners. And it had extra amenities as well that included air conditioning in both the first- and tourist-class dining rooms, a novelty for the 1930s. The *Orion* was in fact the very first British liner with air conditioning.

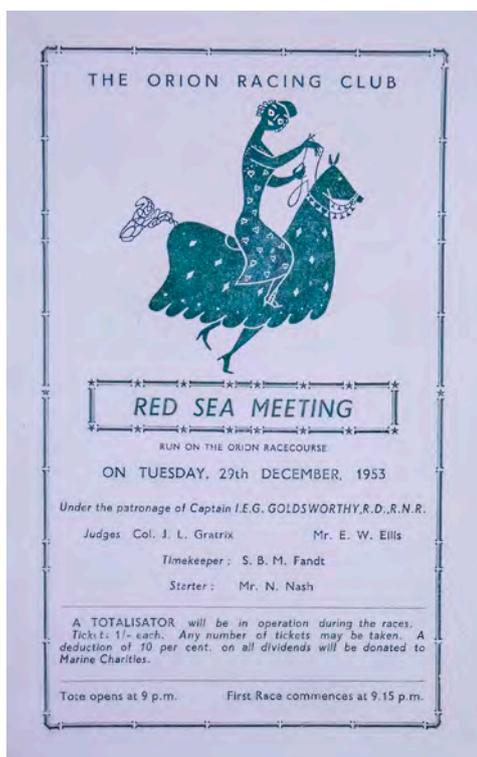


Troopship *Orion* sailing from Sydney for the Middle East 1940.

Returning to service in February 1947 after valiant services in the Second World War as a trooper, the refurbishment cost £500,000, and the passenger configuration was restyled for 550 in first class and 700 in tourist class. These numbers changed during a refit in 1958, becoming 342 cabin class and 722 tourist. There was another change, in 1960, this time to 1,691 all-one-class passengers.



The *Orion* in the London Docks



In 1963, David Carr – then a young junior officer – was assigned to the veteran *Orion*, by then the oldest liner in the P&O-Orient fleet. It was, however, nearing its end. “I was aboard its final sailings out to Australia,” he recalled years later, in November 1983, during a cruise aboard the *Cunard Countess*. By then, he was a chief officer with Cunard. “After sailing from London, we put into Piraeus in Greece to load a large group of Greek immigrants. Homeward, we returned with some disgruntled immigrants, who disliked Australia and Australian life, and lots of young Australian girls, who were headed for tours of Europe or to temporary jobs in Britain. With very limited air conditioning, the *Orion* was among the last P&O liners without the amenity of fully air-conditioned quarters. I can recall the captain sometimes turning the ship around for ten minutes or so just to catch a Red Sea breeze.”



In the end, in May 1963, rather than going direct to the scrapheap, the *Orion* was chartered for several months to serve as a floating hotel at Hamburg for the

Gardening Exhibition, accommodating up to 1,150 guests. Prior to her arrival at the German port, special preparations were made for her to berth at the Overseas Landing Stage.

With duties finished, the twenty-eight year old *Orion*



left Hamburg on October 1st 1963 for Tamise in nearby Belgium, where it was broken up.



CRUISES from AUSTRALIA

WINTER, 1938

FIJI - PAPUA* - NOUMEA*

*Via Great Barrier Reef.

No. 34. June 3 to 16 . . . FIJI †"ORONSAY," 20,000 tons
 No. 35. July 1 to 14 . . . PAPUA ‡"ORONTES," 20,000 tons
 No. 36. July 29 to Aug. 11 NOUMEA †"ORAMA," 20,000 tons
 No. 37. Aug. 26 to Sept. 8 FIJI †"OTRANTO," 20,000 tons
 †First Saloon from 20 gns. and Tourist B from 12 gns.
 ‡First Saloon from 20 gns. and Tourist from 13 gns.

Inside the limits of the usual annual vacation, Orient Line Winter Cruises will bring within your reach pleasant tropic islands in the romantic South Seas . . . And as you travel you will enjoy the advantages of Orient Line comfort, service and cuisine.

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Orion at Aden.