

RESTAURANT REVIEW:

BREAKFAST AT SABATINI'S

on Princess Cruises'
Crown Princess and Island Princess

by

Richard H. Wagner

Guests who choose to cruise in a suite are often looking for a cruise experience that is more luxurious than the norm. One of the ways that Princess Cruises seeks to fulfill this expectation is by offering guests staying in the suites on its ships the option of having complimentary breakfast in Sabatini's specialty restaurant each morning.

Sabatini's is Princess Cruises' signature specialty restaurant. The culinary department at Princess has long had ties to Italy, going back beyond the line's acquisition of Sitmar Cruises to one of the line's first ships, the Italia. Sabatini's carries on this tradition embodying elegant Italian luxury in its décor, menu and service.

For breakfast, the restaurant's Italian theme is not emphasized. There is nothing particularly Italian about the menu offerings. However, the restaurant's

atmosphere of luxury remains.

Sabatini's is beautiful in the morning. On Crown Princess, Sabatini's is high on Deck 16 overlooking the ship's stern. Outside the large picture windows at the aft end of the room is an elegantly decorated terrace with wrought-iron, glass-topped tables and a pair of fountains. Each morning on my cruise, a man would appear on the terrace and salute the morning sun with a display of Tai Chi., which underscored the serenity of this space.

Inside, the room was bathed in the soft light of the morning sun. This light served to enhance the warm, light wood furnishings and the Mediterranean villa-style décor of this sizeable room - - elegant but not heavy or overpowering.



*Sabatini's on
Crown Princess*

On Island Princess, Sabatini's is along the indoor promenade on Deck 7. The windows offer a view of the port side outdoor promenade and beyond that the sea. This scene, in some ways constant and in some ways ever changing, was punctuated by a few early morning strollers passed by each morning as well as the occasional passing ship.

Like the Sabatini's on Crown Princess, the décor of the restaurant on Island Princess was inspired by Italy. There are large murals of the Italian countryside set in amongst off-white pillars and arches. The soft light of the morning on the elegant table settings gives the feel of unhurried luxury.

While the visual appeal of the restaurant contributes to making this a luxury experience, what really makes it luxurious is the personalized service. Relatively few guests are eligible to have breakfast in this restaurant and not all of them arrive at the same time. As a result, you have the immediate and direct attention of the staff. There is no waiting for a menu or for someone to take your order. Furthermore, over the course of a cruise, the staff comes to know your preferences - - that types of juice you like; coffee or tea; a Cappuccino or a Mimosa; which of the muffins and Danishes that are brought on a tray to your table is your favorite.

Along the same lines, the guests develop a rapport with the staff. As the staff's duties allow, there are

conversations about the ships, the ports and about home. The staff is friendly but always respectful.

There is little interaction amongst the guests. The restaurant has more than enough tables for everyone and you do not share a table except with your own traveling companions. Everyone is respectful of the morning privacy of others.

The breakfast menu in Sabatini's is fixed and is standard throughout the Princess fleet. It includes fruits, cereals, eggs and breakfast specialties such as Eggs Benedict, Brioche French Toast and Belgian Waffles.

What really stands out about the food in Sabatini's is its freshness. Each item is prepared as it is ordered. The orange juice is freshly squeezed and the muffins and pastries freshly baked. This greatly enhances the flavor of the food.

You have a wide choice of ingredients for your omelet. My favorite was an omelet that included cheddar cheese, mushrooms and smoked salmon. However what to include in the omelets is up to your taste and imagination.

Of the breakfast specialties, I liked the Brioche French Toast the best. The bread was thick and soft, not at all overcooked.

While it is tempting to indulge in the breakfast

specialties each day, there are also healthy options. Amongst the selection of cereals is the restaurant's homemade muesli. There are also melons and fresh fruits. One item that became a favorite of mine was the yogurt parfait with fresh raspberries. On Crown Princess, the server noted with evident pride that the granola used in the parfait was made onboard. On Island Princess, I found that adding the fresh berries from the mixed berry starter to the parfait made for an even more delicious and nutritious start to the day.

On the other hand, you can also start off the day with a bit of decadence. Mimosa cocktails (champagne and orange juice) and Bloody Marys are complimentary as are the espressos and the cappuccinos.

In sum, breakfast at Sabatini's does indeed enhance the suite experience. It is simply a luxurious way to start the day.



Sabatini's on Island Princess.