

CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER RYND SPEAKS ABOUT QUEEN VICTORIA

By Richard H. Wagner

*Captain Christopher Rynd is one of two captains who have commanded all three of Cunard's current Queens - - Queen Elizabeth 2, Queen Mary 2 and Queen Victoria. His career prior to coming to Cunard included commanding traditional small liners as well as mega-cruise ships. In addition, he has had a substantial period in command of Queen Victoria including a large portion of her first world cruise as well as during her regular itinerary. Consequently, he is in a unique position to assess the new Cunarder.**

A Nautical Assessment

She is easily the most maneuverable ship I have ever had. Even though she is nearly 300 meters long and 90,000 tons, her maneuverability is just superb. The power to weight ratio, the azipod propulsion down aft, three very powerful bow thrusters - - she is just superb. We can turn, dock, un-dock and maneuver this ship in a unique way. As we left Zeebrugge after having spent the day in port with the QE2 we did a maneuver there that demonstrated that to a remarkable degree. We were doing the undocking and turning the ship 180 degrees in a confined space in a crosswind of force seven and she just performed beautifully. There was a little bit of demonstration in that too just to show all of those who were watching us what she can do. Yes, we had a tug there on stand-by but that was more of insurance.

You put full helm on [i.e. make a sharp turn] at full speed and she is a pretty stable ship. You have a

certain amount of confidence maneuvering this ship, which has been a great advantage going up through the Stockholm Archipelago and all that time in the fjords that we have been doing up in Norway. It lets you carry a decent speed as you are doing these passages without having to slow down to make sharp alterations of course. I have a lot of confidence in that.

The design for Queen Victoria began with the design for the Vista-class cruise ships, which are mainstays of the Holland America line fleet and which are found in the fleets of P&O Cruises and other lines. However, Cunard made certain changes to the design including lengthening the hull by 11 meters. By making her a little longer, they have actually made her ride a little higher in the water and at the same time given her better transverse stability. So, [for example] going through the Stockholm Archipelago yesterday, we were doing some quite tight turns at moderate speed and she hardly heeled at all [the way] other ships do. With that extra length, she has turned out to have this better transverse stability as well as a better ability to trim fore and aft. And for the same engine size [as the Vista-class ships, there is no loss of speed.

While not designed to be an ocean greyhound, Queen Victoria can travel faster than many modern passenger ships. She is quite fast - - about 24.3 knots I believe was her speed during her sea trials. Not that these days you want to be doing that. Our ideal speed is much lower than that for economy reasons. These days, you are certainly watching very closely how you are setting your speeds.

Some of the Vista-class ships use a combination of gas turbines and diesel engines to generate the power needed to drive the electric motors that turn the propellers and to provide electricity for the ship's hotel operation. *Queen Victoria*, however, has all diesel engines. A gas turbine is very clean burning but very expensive fuel. What they have put in this ship [are diesel engines that] predate the common rail diesels of today but [which] are a reliable type of engine and a flexible machinery plant which allows us to run only exactly the number of engines required for optimum power output and minimal fuel use. We have six engines, four large and two smaller ones - - four of them are 11.2 megawatts and two of them are 8.4 megawatts and the pods themselves are maximum rated at 17.6 megawatts each - - in two engine rooms. There is a certain amount of redundancy in the case of a disaster there as well. On just two large and one small engine we can make a very handy and economical speed of about 18.25 knots."



Captain Christopher Rynd.

Best passage planning means that you set your speed at or slightly below the required speed for the passage on the minimum number of generators. So, most often we are in the position where we are operating say two or three generators on maximum load for the majority of the passage and then just speeding up at the end with what we require at the end to make the arrival. In that way we will achieve the best fuel economy.

At night, as the passengers go to bed and galley operations slow down, the officers are able to transfer some of the power from the hotel operation to the electric propulsion motors. We are talking about two or three revolutions per minute. [But] So, two or three revolutions will actually make quite a difference. If it means that we do not have to put another generator on line for an hour or two, that is significant.

By the same token, to give the officer of the watch confidence and flexibility, we will say you may be up to 12 minutes late [arriving in port. This is done] so we don't put on a generator for a whole hour to make up the 12 minutes which we are late. Again, it is all economies and then you will endeavor to make up that lateness in say the time it takes to tie up the ship or whatever. We are working to very fine margins now in terms of fuel costs.

Queen Victoria was not intended to do regular-

*ly-scheduled transatlantic crossings but rather as a complement to *Queen Mary 2* that can do itineraries and visit ports which the larger, deeper drafted ship cannot. She is a lighter build of ship which gives her those unique advantages of maneuverability but does not translate into a heavy weather ship. She is not the QE2 or *Queen Mary 2* in heavy seas. Every ship design is going to be a compromise in some degree and this ship does not have the same weight and scantlings or power that those ships have. In heavy weather, she will not perform as the QE2 and certainly not the *Queen Mary 2*, which is four or five times as comfortable as the QE2 in similar weather. So, she will not be as comfortable in the same weather as they will be. Where she does have the advantage is that she can access ports where they cannot because of the confines of the port or the depth of water in the port, this can go where they cannot so that is part of the compromise.*

*In addition, *Queen Victoria's* itinerary does not take her where she is likely to encounter major storms and high seas even on her yearly world cruise. The number of places where might get heavy weather is fairly limited. There is the transatlantic to start with [on the*

world voyage] but from the time that we leave Hawaii through until the very end where we are going from Gibraltar back up to England, we are in mostly equatorial seas. We had the most superb conditions so much of the time on this last world voyage. Again, the percentage of time where heavy weather is likely, is actually very small when looked at over the entire course of the voyage.

In sum, looking at Queen Victoria's performance against the characteristics typically considered when measuring a ship's performance, Captain Rynd is well-pleased. In addition, in these times of growing fuel costs, there is reason to believe the ship's value will become even more apparent as time goes on.

Increasingly, how efficient a ship is is going to be a significant factor in our running costs. This is an efficient ship.

Assessing the hotel

The captain of a modern passenger ship is in charge of the entire onboard operation, not just the navigation of the ship. Indeed, navigation falls under the purview of the staff captain. Like the staff captain, the ship's hotel manager reports directly to the captain. Thus, while Captain Rynd's formal training is in navigation and marine operations, he has also had ultimate responsibility for the hotel operations on the various ships that he has commanded. This has included large and small ships, traditional ocean liners as well as modern cruise ships.

On a per berth basis, I believe this is the most expensive ship Carnival [Corporation] has ever built. I think to a very large degree that is because of the amount of the work and the authentic materials that they have put into the public areas of the ship to recreate that grand ocean liner feel for the ship.

A huge amount of effort was put in by Teresa Anderson, who was responsible for the interior design of this ship. I went to visit her in her studio. She was making reference to designs and plans and brochures of the old Cunarders - - Aquatania, Mauretania - to try and re-create here what was best about that grand age of ocean travel. Plus [she drew] inspiration from the English country houses, most notably Osborne House,



Queen Victoria's home on the Isle of Wight, from which the Queens Room was inspired. I think she did it very well. The theatre, I believe, is a superlative work, both in its technology and in its old world, Mayfair-type presentation.

Bronze railings on the staircases, the plaster and cornice work and the rest of it - - that was all manufactured specially for this ship. Some of the rooms like [Café] Carinthia, which is possibly my single favorite public space on here, is all original down to the design of the furniture and the type of furnishings to make it such a unique place. Yes, the inspiration is there from the great liners including that ceiling from one of the earlier French liners but the overall feeling is of that great age of travel.

Queen Mary 2 has that great ocean liner feel about her. There is a sense that you are on an immensely powerful grand ship carrying on a classic journey. This has the atmosphere of the great liner but in a more intimate sense. The rooms are smaller. They seem more close and comfortable than the large spaces that you have on the Queen Mary. So, there is a subtle sense of difference between the two as an atmosphere.

A considerable number of [past passengers from QE2] come with the feeling that nothing will compare with their beloved QE2 but go away quite well-pleased with what they have seen of the product that they love. I think that is pretty healthy and pretty promising.

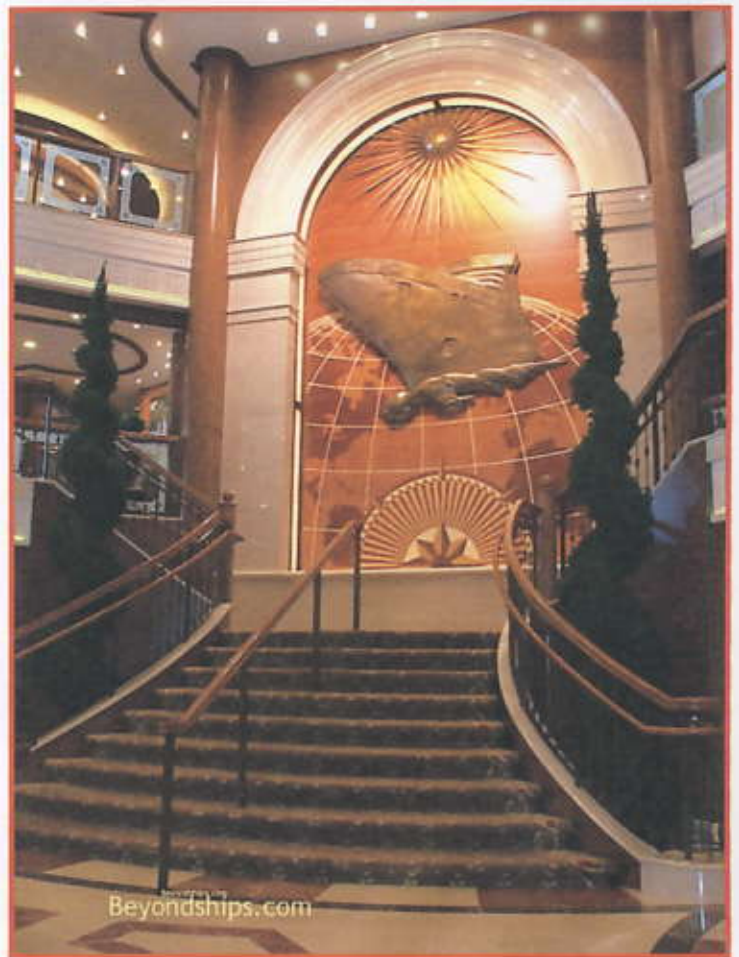
I think that [Queen Victoria's character is still] forming. It is still fairly early in the ship's life - - 8 months now. I think that will develop and my personal opinion is that that will develop more certainly once the

QE2 has gone into retirement.

You are just now starting to get the first of the crew that brought the ship out coming back after their leave and the first passengers coming back after having sailed here before. I think once you build up that mass of people who have been here before, you start to build up an atmosphere. Continuity helps the development. I am pleased that there is a continuity with the senior managers on here which helps settle and determine which direction the ship will take in the future.

There are quite a number of Cunard people who are expected to come here [when QE2 retires]. There shall be some natural wastage as well - - quite a few have stayed on [QE2] to see their careers through on there and will then take the opportunity to retire or start a new life. But it can only be a good thing that we are bringing some of the QE2 people across because they bring with them part of that Cunard tradition.

*The portions of the above that are in italics are the editor's. Captain Rynd's comments are in plain text.



The grand lobby in Queen Victoria.

