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“Amazingly easy to use. Very portable, very complete.”
—Booklist

“Detailed, accurate, and easy-to-read information for all price ranges.”
—Glamour Magazine

“Hotel information is close to encyclopedic.”
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About the Authors

Fran Wenograd Golden is the travel editor of the Boston Herald, co-author of Frommer’s Alaska Cruises & Ports of Call (with Jerry), and author of TVacations: A Fun Guide to the Sites, Stars and the Inside Stories Behind Your Favorite TV Shows. She lives in Boston and is the proud Mom of Erin and Eli, who love traveling and often join her on the road.

Jerry Brown was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and worked as a reporter for Scottish newspapers before joining the news department of the London Daily Mail. Later, for 31 years, he was the West Coast Bureau Chief of a leading travel trade newspaper. He is the co-author (with Fran) of Frommer’s Alaska Cruises & Ports of Call. He and Margaret, his wife and best editor, have two grown sons, Mark and Paul, and as a family unit and individually, they have sailed the waters of Europe on numerous occasions. Jerry is the proud grandfather of Victoria Rose, Mason Patrick, and Maddox Matthew, whom he hopes someday to introduce to the joys of a European cruise vacation.

Acknowledgments

A big thank you to the writers who contributed to this book: Art Sbarsky, Ben Adelman, Tania Mejer, Arline and Sam Bleecker, and Carolyn Spencer Brown. Special thanks to Silversea Cruises for sharing invaluable port information, as well as all the cruise line public relations departments. And finally, a special nod to our wonderful Frommer’s editors.

—Fran Golden & Jerry Brown
An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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Wiley Publishing, Inc. • 111 River St. • Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

Other Great Guides for Your Trip:

Frommer’s Europe
Frommer’s Cruises & Ports of Call
Frommer’s Alaska Cruises & Ports of Call
Frommer’s France
Frommer’s England
Frommer’s Italy
Frommer’s Germany
Frommer’s Greece
Frommer's Icons & Abbreviations

We use two feature icons that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

- **Tips**: Insider tips—great ways to save time and money
- **Value**: Great values—where to get the best deals

The following abbreviations are used for credit cards:

- AE  American Express
- DISC  Discover
- V  Visa
- DC  Diners Club
- MC  MasterCard

Frommers.com

Now that you have the guidebook to a great trip, visit our website at www.frommers.com for travel information on more than 3,000 destinations. With features updated regularly, we give you instant access to the most current trip-planning information available. At Frommers.com, you’ll also find the best prices on airfares, accommodations, and car rentals—and you can even book travel online through our travel booking partners. At Frommers.com, you’ll also find the following:

- Online updates to our most popular guidebooks
- Vacation sweepstakes and contest giveaways
- Newsletter highlighting the hottest travel trends
- Online travel message boards with featured travel discussions
Fran first cruised in Europe—or more exactly, to Europe—in 1959 when she was 3 years old and, with her mother and brother, traveled transatlantic from New York to Southampton on the old United States. She remembers nothing of the trip by sea, but obviously something stuck because she loves to visit Europe, loves to cruise, and finds it great fun to combine the two. She explores Europe’s waters as often as she can, usually in the company of friends (both American and European) or family (who fight over who gets to go along).

Although he was born and raised in Europe (in Scotland), Jerry didn’t cruise the region until much later than Fran, in 1984, on the Pacific Princess (now retired from Princess Cruises’ fleet). The cruise evokes happy memories and laughter in the Brown household. The cabin steward delighted and amused Jerry’s sons (then ages 14 and 9) by deliberately exaggerating his cockney accent to make himself virtually unintelligible to them. And there is, in the Brown family album, a classic photograph of Jerry’s sons on that cruise looking utterly bored among the ruins of Pompeii. (Take note of that boredom if you’re dragging teens to sites of ancient civilizations. Take them, by all means. Just don’t be surprised if they pretend not to enjoy it!) The kids, now grown, agree that cruising Europe is by and large a joy, and the Browns individually and as a group have cruised to and in Europe umpteen times since.

Whether you are a first-time visitor to the region or are returning to see countries you’ve visited before from a new ocean-view perspective (many European cities were built to be seen from the sea) and at a different pace, cruising in Europe can be wonderful.

European ports hold treasures of antiquities and natural beauty, fascinating history (you’ll quickly realize how young 1776 is in the scheme of things), and enchanting cultural experiences.

From your ship, depending on the route you choose, you will have easy access to such delights as the ancient cities of Pompeii and Ephesus; Europe’s historic and cultural capitals, including London, Paris, and Rome; modern port cities; gorgeous islands; scenic fjords; rugged coastlines; and glamorous resorts.

You can visit museums, cathedrals, palaces, and monuments and learn about the region’s history. Or you can concentrate on the Europe of today, checking out the trends in food and fashion before they hit the shores of the U.S.

**WHY A CRUISE?**

Europe is a popular cruising region, second only to the Caribbean (and followed by Alaska in third place). It’s a no-brainer to see why. The region truly offers something for everyone: great sights, shopping, beaches, museums, cultural and natural attractions, and a decent climate.

The **ports** are close together, meaning you can visit several in a limited period of time; the seas are relatively calm; the opportunities are interesting and diverse. Europe has a seafaring tradition that goes back to ancient times—you can choose
an itinerary that follows the exact route of the ancient mariners—so is it any wonder a European cruise sounds so exciting and romantic?

A cruise is also one of the most practical, comfortable, and economical ways to see Europe (no worrying about the fluctuating euro; your accommodations and meals are prepaid). You unpack only once, your floating hotel takes you to a variety of ports in different countries, and you don’t have to deal with the hassle and expense of getting around Europe by plane or train.

On a cruise you are fed, pampered, and taken care of in a stress-free environment. You don’t have to worry about currency fluctuations and their effect on your hotel, entertainment, and meal costs, because all of these are included in your cruise fare. Food will be familiar—you can even sip a piña colada while viewing, say, St. Petersburg. You don’t have to deal with language problems, because there will be personnel on the ship who speak English.

A downside to cruising is that you might not have as much time in port as you’d like with which to experience the local culture, although some lines overnight in such cities as Venice, Monte Carlo, and Istanbul, and smaller ships may overnight in smaller cities. The cruise lines do their best, through their organized shore excursions, to get passengers to the major sights. And if you’d rather sit at a cafe and check out the local scene than do an organized tour, you can head off on your own.

We’ve found that when cruising in Europe, it’s best to think of your cruise as a sampler package. If you fall in love with a city, plan on visiting again later.

**EUROPEAN CRUISING 2006**

For a while, cruise lines—including major American lines like Princess, Holland America, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Celebrity—were steadily increasing their presence in Europe. Then came the tragic events of September 11, 2001. In the aftermath, some travelers were hesitant to go to Europe. Several ships slated for Europe itineraries were moved to other markets like the Caribbean and Alaska for the 2002 season. The war in Iraq also caused a few ships to move out of Europe in 2003, but most lines stuck with their Europe itineraries. In 2004 there were discounts to attract ambivalent travelers, and by 2005 there were big increases in the fleet (and fewer discounts) as Europe once again proved to be a desirable cruise destination. The cruise lines are committing significant numbers of ships to Europe. Holland America will have four ships based here in summer 2006 as well as a visiting ship. Royal Caribbean and sister company Celebrity together have a whopping nine ships in the market. Depending on what’s happening in the world, this is likely to be a popular year for European cruising.

Cruise passengers can choose from all sorts of itineraries in Europe, and there is a variety of ships to suit everyone’s tastes. The European cruising season has expanded from April to October, to March to December; there are even winter cruises, mostly in the warmer Mediterranean.

In 2005, Europe will represent 19.7% of passenger cruise capacity (based on cruises marketed to North Americans) compared to 40.7% in the Caribbean. About half of the capacity is in the Mediterranean, while the other half cruises other parts of Europe (such as Northern Europe, Norway, and the Baltics). Although overall Europe capacity is down 2.6% from 2004, the Mediterranean actually climbed 10%. (These numbers are based on published itineraries, as reported in the Cruise Lines International Association Spring 2005 “Cruise Industry Overview” report.)
Because European cruises are again so popular—and to encourage even more business—North American cruise companies are putting some of their most impressive ships in the market. In 2006, for instance, Princess will send the 2,600-passenger Grand Princess, Star Princess, and Golden Princess, three of the biggest ships in the world, to spend the entire summer in Europe. Holland America’s Europe fleet includes the line’s flagship, Rotterdam. Celebrity offers the lovely Millennium and Constellation among its ships in Europe. Those on European cruises can enjoy Royal Caribbean’s 3,114-passenger ship (even bigger than the Princess ships), the innovative and amenity-filled Voyager of the Seas (rock-climbing, anyone?) and the lovely Jewel of the Seas. Posh Silversea will have three ships in Europe this summer, including its newest 388-passenger Silver Whisper. And Radisson Seven Seas will have two ships in the market: the all-suite, all-balcony cabin Seven Seas Voyager and the all-suite Seven Seas Navigator. Even Carnival Cruise Line, king of the Caribbean cruise scene, will have its new ship, Carnival Liberty, based in Europe in the summer of 2006.

Your choice of cruise types are many: You can cruise in Europe on a giant floating American resort ship with Las Vegas–style entertainment, lavish casino and spa, and a mostly American clientele. Or you can choose a ship that’s more like a floating European hotel where multiple languages are spoken, Americans are the minority, and meals are a form of entertainment. You can choose to see the Continent in luxury with the very best in service and cuisine; or you can pick a small, casual ship from whose stern you can jump off a platform for a swim.

And you can choose itineraries as diverse as the Rivieras, where the sun shines on cafes and beaches in places like St-Tropez; or the Norwegian fjords, where the midnight sun may shine all day and night, but you’ll use that light to spot whales and reindeer rather than celebrities in their skimpy bikinis.

You can easily extend whatever itinerary you choose with a land stay, which the cruise lines can arrange for you, usually at reasonable rates, or which you can arrange on your own.

The lines have also expanded into different cruise regions in Europe and have introduced more 1-week options to the traditional 10- and 12-day Europe itineraries. For instance, several lines now offer weeklong Baltics itineraries.

A European cruise is a big-ticket item, but you can save money by booking early. And while Europe has traditionally drawn a senior crowd, the cruise lines, through shorter itineraries and a greater diversity of product, have lately done a good job of attracting families, younger couples, singles, and honeymooners.

**BON VOYAGE!**

Just the fact that you’ve bought this book means you’ve got a hankering to cruise. Now it’s our job to find the cruise that’s right for you from among the huge selection of ships and cruise experiences in the market. In the following chapters, we’ll detail the diverse itineraries in Europe and the types of ships that can take you there. And we’ll give you a taste of what you can expect from your European cruise experience.

Whichever option you choose, we’re sure you’ll want to come back for more.
The Best of European Cruising

Whether you’re looking for pampering and resort amenities or an off-the-beaten-track experience, cruise ships offer it in Europe. To make it easier for you to see what’s what, we’ve put together a list of our picks for the best cruise experiences and offerings. You’ll find full details on the ships in part 2, and full details on ports in part 3.

1 Best Ships for Luxury

• **Silversea:** Luxurious without being overly highbrow, this line’s ships offer lucky passengers a heavenly, pampered cruise experience, and win our vote for top choice in the luxury category. With its cuisine, roomy suites, and over-the-top service—including complimentary and free-flowing Philipponnat champagne—Silversea is the crème de la crème of high-end cruises. See p. 216.

• **Seabourn:** Small and intimate, but with lots of space for all, this line’s sleek, modern ships are floating pleasure palaces with doting service and the finest dinner cuisine at sea. See p. 205.

• **Crystal:** Crystal’s dreamy midsize ships offer the best of two worlds: pampering service and scrumptious cuisine on ships large enough to offer lots of outdoor deck space, generously sized fitness facilities, four restaurants, and over half a dozen bars and entertainment venues. A bonus: Crystal’s California ethic tends to keep things lively. See p. 180.

2 Best Mainstream Ships

• **Celebrity:** While every line’s new ships are beautiful, Celebrity has proven itself above the norm. The *Millennium* and *Constellation* are simply stunning, and make excellent additions to a European fleet that includes the *Galaxy* and the *Century* (which will re-emerge almost brand-new this year following a $55-million renovation). In particular, we like the cutting-edge art collections aboard all the Celebrity ships. Dining rooms are beautiful spaces and feature wonderful French-inspired cuisine. Added to that are plenty of plush getaway areas, including cigar and champagne bars. See p. 81.

3 Best Small Alternative Ships

• **Star Clippers:** These real sailing vessels offer a fun, wind-in-your-face experience in an environment that’s surprisingly attractive (you won’t be roughing it!). See p. 233.

• **Clipper Cruise Line’s Clipper Adventurer:** A solid contender in this category, the *Adventurer* usually attracts an older crowd. See p. 228.
### 4 Best Ships for Families

- **Princess’s Grand Princess, Golden Princess, Sea Princess, and Star Princess:** Nothing beats these giant ships in this category. The 109,000-ton vessels each have a spacious children’s playroom and fenced-in outside deck area designated as kids’ space (with a kiddie pool and a fleet of red tricycles). For older kids, the teen center comes complete with computers, video games, a sound system, and even (on the Grand Princess) a teens-only hot tub and sunbathing area. Supervised activities are offered for kids ages 2 to 17. The ships also have amenities designed to please adults and kids alike, including a pizzeria, basketball and volleyball courts, and a virtual-reality game room (including a motion-simulator ride). See p. 124 and 128.

### 5 Best European Ships

- **Costa:** Italian line Costa offers the best overall package, with interesting entertainment, fun activities, comfortable surroundings, and wonderful itineraries. The line’s ownership by Carnival Corp. hasn’t hurt it one bit. See p. 142.
- **Swan Hellenic:** Swan Hellenic provides one of the strongest enrichment programs on the high seas, with four or five lecturers giving talks aboard each cruise, dining with the passengers, and accompanying them ashore. The non-repeating itineraries, generally lasting 2 weeks, attract a very loyal and generally well-educated British clientele for whom a standard cruise would never do. Good manners and a quiet approach to life reign. See p. 173.

### 6 Most Romantic Ships

- **Windstar:** Got to go with the sails here. Windstar’s large sailing ships are hard to beat for romance. You can snuggle in your comfy cabin watching movies on the DVD player or be up on deck, enjoying a romantic dinner for two in the open-seating restaurant, and then go off hand-in-hand to explore the lovely ports. See p. 241.
- **SeaDream Yacht:** These small, intimate vessels offer ultraluxury in a comfortable manner. Dining and conversation are the primary evening activities, and tables for two are relatively easy to come by (a rarity!). In addition, couples enjoy lots of opportunities to hold hands, whether it’s while strolling the deck under the stars or while lounging in the “Bali-nese DreamBeds” (puffy outdoor mattresses) on the decks. One couple we know of chose to dine while ensconced in said beds, and the crew added to the romantic atmosphere by obligingly scattering rose petals around them. See p. 211.

### 7 Best Value

- **Carnival Cruise Lines:** The big Kahuna of the cruise industry has arrived on the European cruise scene and is making a splash with its affordable pricing. (Book early for special values.) See p. 75.
- **Orient Lines:** Orient Lines’ product is solid, port-focused, and popular
8 Best Ships for Pampering

- **Crystal Cruises**: Crystal indulges guests all around, including in its nice spas. See p. 180.
- **Celebrity Cruises**: Celebrity’s ships, including the Constellation, Millennium, Century, and Galaxy, offer AquaSpas with indoor thalassotherapy pools and a wealth of soothing and beautifying treatments that are hard to beat. See p. 81.
- **Royal Caribbean’s Splendour of the Seas, Brilliance of the Seas, Voyager of the Seas, and Jewel of the Seas**: All offer wonderful, soothing ShipShape spas adjacent to spacious solarium pool areas. See p. 134, 136, and 138.
- **Princess’s Grand Princess, Golden Princess, Sea Princess, and Star Princess**: Aboard these vessels, a good portion of the Sun Deck is reserved for pampering. See p. 124 and 128.
- **Costa’s Costa Atlantica and Costa Mediterranea**: The spas on these stunning ships offer big indoor whirlpools and sunning areas. See p. 153.

9 Best Ships for Entertainment

- **Royal Caribbean**: The Las Vegas–style shows are well produced, with music provided by a big live band. You’ll also find headliners, a variety of cabaret and lounge acts, and even classical music presentations. See p. 130.
- **Celebrity**: Aboard Celebrity’s elegant modern ships, you’ll enjoy well-produced musical revues of the Broadway show-tune variety, interactive entertainment like a magician’s card tricks at your table, and good cabaret acts. See p. 81.
- **Holland America**: HAL’s ships offer some of the glitziest costumes afloat (in the show lounge), as well as a variety of cabaret acts including magicians, comedians, and illusionists. A bonus is the crew talent show, which usually features folk songs and dances from the Philippines and Indonesia. See p. 91.
- **Norwegian Cruise Line**: Ambitious show productions (sometimes featuring scenes from Broadway musicals), comedians, and juggling acts are among the regular offerings. Excellent local entertainers, including folk dance troupes, come on board in some ports. See p. 102.
- **Princess**: The line’s Las Vegas–style productions are well executed and the cabaret singers excellent (sometimes including known performers). If you prefer, you can choose quiet delights, such as pianists and jazz performers, or fun acts, such as puppeteers and hypnotists. See p. 120.
- **Costa**: Showroom presentations are creative and incorporate modern ballet. There are lots of nighttime participatory activities, including dance contests, a carnival, and even a Mr. Universe competition. See p. 142.