

I found your request for feedback in my spam folder. Most feedback forms lack the breadth and depth to be of any real value. Multiple choice questions without an appropriate choice, missing topics, rate from one to ten without context etc.

First, let me illustrate the weight that this cruise was to have.

My wife, Sherry, and I were married on May 25th, 1993. The day of this writing would have marked our 29th anniversary.

We had decided to work, save, and plan for retirement and do our traveling then. To that end, we worked overtime, worked sick, worked all our scheduled hours, and sometimes worked extra jobs. Together we never took a vacation. Prior to marrying her I had never taken a vacation.

Forward to September 25th, 2016. Sometime between 1:00am and 4:00am, having slept through two of her morphine injections, I woke up on the floor next to her bed to find that she had, mercifully, finally died after a ten day round the clock marathon of grand mal seizures.

I pulled her tubes washed her and dressed her in a favorite nightgown. I sat in a lawn chair in the front yard, placed the night before, for five hours waiting for hospice to clear out no longer needed controlled drugs and the funeral home to take the body from its final resting place on my lap.

The next day, I continued working, as I always have but with a no longer clear goal, not missing a single hour for the next five years.

After five years of nightmarish dreams, for which I needed not be asleep, and two failed, very short, relationships, attempts at having some sort of actual life, I met someone with whom I could feel at home with. Some peace of mind. Someone I could once again belong with.

After ten months we decided to take time off together. We opted for the Alaska cruise, somewhere neither of us had ever been. I would lose a week's pay, having just changed jobs. As a premature coda, Maribeth would return from the cruise with Covid-19 and lose the following week's work. I am currently losing the week after having tested positive on the 21st.

So, Maribeth would take her first cruise. Ever. I would take my first vacation. Ever... on the Crown Princess, 7 May 2022.

I am 66.

A preface to this next section.

This document will be posted on <https://www.mikerobotics.com> in pdf format and the code added to the site to index it on Google.

Getting there:

The propensity of organizations to herd people like cattle has become disconcerting. A dystopian future preview. TSA herded us at the origin airport. Transit bus companies herded us at the destination airport. Princess herded us for yet another security scan. And yet again for 'checking in.' I was a little relieved to find that there was a ship and not a slaughterhouse outside the terminus door. Those lucky enough to leave the ship were herded onto tour busses and, presumably, herded through another security inspection on return. (I never watched this last one.) Probably no stopping this, but it will weigh in if we ever take another vacation. (I have ended up not a big fan of vacations, particularly cruises.)

First the big, screwed us over, issues:

We picked this cruise for the Juno stop and the whale watching excursion. On boarding, we would learn that the reason for our choice was rendered moot. Rumor had it that the ship had 'problems' that prevented it

from 'reaching full speed' and that our primary stop was eliminated altogether. The same issue seemed to get us in late at each port. Two additional excursions that were scheduled were also canceled. That accounts for all our scheduled excursions. By the time these were canceled, there were no more excursions available, having been scooped up, presumably, by everyone else who was canceled at one or more stops. During the entire cruise we never made it off ship. Our entire experience of Alaska and a small piece of Canada (for which we both bought passports and tendered the paperwork to visit) were done entirely from the deck of the ship through binoculars or a telephoto lens.

The extremely irritating issues:

By the time my high school class graduated, I was part of a military aircrew. That makes me a high school dropout. 11th grade at that. As such, it is near certainty that I lack the vocabulary to elucidate how utterly, totally, and absolutely useless the software on the ship was. (I know, superfluous redundancy). Unfortunately, the ship relied on the software either on the phone app or the stateroom TV for *everything*.

Some examples.

- In general. The app would hang on menu selection, fail to back step, freeze during a screen refresh. The first day we ran into a woman whose app was removed for reinstall and then couldn't because we lacked internet connection. On much of the first day the menus for shipboard functions on the stateroom tv would not work at all. Best guess, the ship doesn't have, but needs, its own servers. At its best, the app was painfully slow.
- Reservations. The app would not make reservations for specialty restaurants. You had to call a support number who would give you yet another number. No list of numbers covering failed app functions was made available in the stateroom. Reservation availability had to be handled manually. The stateroom TV would not work for this either.
- Internal navigation. Set aside, for the moment, that the interior design and lack of apparent movement (about 19mph throughout) made it impossible to tell fore and aft until one had some internal navigation experience. Several days' worth. The app would show you relative positions on a blank screen. It wouldn't necessarily tell you that you needed to navigate through doorways, around walls and make turns to get there. Just two dots and a path on a blank screen. A floor plan, even a line drawing, as a background would have at least made this function useful. By and large, we were pretty lost for several days.
- Shipboard activities. Neither the stateroom TV nor the phone / tablet app *ever* showed shipboard activities. We tried daily and the app would hang. Sometimes one could back step, sometimes you could kill and relaunch and sometimes a phone reboot was necessary. One could use the large monitors located throughout the ship, but you could only see a few hour window at a time and three or so activities, on individual lines, in each time frame. Lots of scrolling to find anything.
- Canceled excursions disappeared from the screen as if they were never slated. Oft times prior to our knowing they were canceled.

As offshore activities canceled out, reservations in specialty restaurants became impossible to get.

The buffet, the only place where one could get a variety of food without reservations, was divided into 4 sections. two port and two starboard. Fore and aft sections were joined together. The norm seemed to be to put food on one side, then the other. The problem was that one side would not have enough tables so one had to take one's food outside, through slightly warmer than arctic air, and around one end of the buffet to get to available seating.

The above was exacerbated by automatic door issues. There was an airlock of sorts, an enclosed area with doors at each end, which should have prevented cold air from entering the meal area by only opening one set at a time. Timing issues on the doors opened both inner and outer doors at the rear of the port side buffet and hold them there for an extended period which flooded the entire area with arctic air every time someone walked by. This same issue was prevalent at the forward entry to the spa area where both entry and exit doors remained open during the entire cruise. The automatic would sometimes work, sometimes not. Delay opening and then hang. What appeared to be manual doors, one of which felt like it was going to fall off its hinges when I tried to close it, remained open.

The Saltydog Gastropub was listed as an in-house restaurant by the app. After multiple attempts to find it, a bartender would tell us that "It's part of the bar, but we aren't doing it this cruise." It remained as a viable destination, according to the app, throughout the cruise.

After dragging all of our luggage from the airport to the transit bus herding area, we were informed that it should have been picked up and brought for us. It wasn't.

Not well thought out and minor issues:

The app (again) when working has some hiccups. For instance, if you order a cheeseburger it comes with onion, lettuce, and tomato. Since you can only select 3 things on the order, if you select 'No Onion', 'No Lettuce' and 'No Tomato', there is no longer the ability to select *anything* else. (Like cheese, catsup, etc.) The app also has no mechanism to order condiments for other things. Cheeseburger with fries? Can't order catsup.

If you wanted breakfast and watch the ocean at the same time, good luck. Part of this is since there is only so much available space along side windows. That said, Princess exacerbates the issue. Instead of putting two tables for two people at each window, there are four seat tables. At breakfast there are lots of folks reading, playing cards, chatting. two people at a four-person table. Frequently one.

Twenty-nine degrees and several swimming pools. I never saw a single person use one. So, make an elevated cover with railing and when we get to glacier bay, we don't have to fight for photo space.

Warm food was seldom warm at the buffet.

An omelet bar. Tried it once. The person staffing it took the order in front of me and never came back. Some ten minutes later a lady asked if I had been helped and took my order. Another roughly fifteen minutes I went up to check on it. Omelets were accumulating on a warming shelf. Nobody delivered. As I was finishing everything else, a steward came by and took my ticket. He returned shortly and said, "It's not ready yet, I'll have it soon." About five minutes later it showed up. Cold. I never ordered another one.

Orders delivered to the room were *never* complete or correct. Missing silverware, missing condiments, completely wrong order.

It was obvious that neither this ship nor this crew were ready for this cruise. We found we were on the 'maiden voyage' after a two-year hiatus. I interpret this as we were on a 'prototype' cruise. This would have been good to know ahead of time. We would not have been on it.

Some good things:

Glacier bay was beautiful. Limited rail space kept us from seeing sea otters up close. Too bad. Next time, flight into Skagway or Ketchikan or both (both of which we had canceled excursions in) and a smaller boat.

Perhaps a train to Canada. I always wanted to ride a train. I almost did this trip. Canceled.

The art auction was beautiful. Bought some. Am working out errors in the order.

Time with Maribeth was great. Available in a less stressful venue at a much lower cost though.

Princess, I had one shot at my first vacation ever. You fucked it. Royally. (Ironic that?) There can never, by definition, be another one. I'm not sure I ever want another cruise. If so, certainly not with Princess. Perhaps just working, taking care of the puppies, the house and Maribeth need to be enough. I never want to pay for a disappointment like this again.