



## December Newsletter

Hi Everyone - Wow what a party we just had on our Mexican Riviera Cruise... it was just too much fun. Hopefully everyone has recovered by now.

Well it's our first newsletter for our trip next year into the **Southern Caribbean**.

### Great News... Big Discounts!

Royal Caribbean announced a few days ago that they have suspended their fuel surcharges for all cruises after Jan. 1 / 09. This, and along with reduced air travel costs, has allowed us to make a significant reduction in the price of our cruise package for next year.

Consequently, every cabin category is being reduced by \$175.00 per person or \$350.00 per couple. The new pricing is now shown on our website at [www.frenchconnectionevents.com](http://www.frenchconnectionevents.com).

If you already booked your cabin, don't worry, you will automatically get the lower prices, which will be reflected in your next invoice.

If you haven't already registered for next year's cruise, what are you waiting for? We have already sold out most of the top tier cabins and the Junior Suites are really priced right. So sign up today and take advantage of these new low prices. Note: We already have over 80 cabins sold!

### The New Site is Up

Every year, we put up a site, just for those going on our cruise. It is the best place to get up to date information, see who else is going and chat it up on our message board. To access this private section of our site, just go to [www.lifestylecruising.com/](http://www.lifestylecruising.com/) and click on the "Already Booked" tab and you will see a

prompt for a password. The user name is: "lifestyle" and the password is: "cruise5".

If you haven't already, send in a photo of yourselves to Carol at [ting@pathcom.com](mailto:ting@pathcom.com) so she can add it to the list of "Who's Sailing" with us.

### Dining

Please advise at your earliest opportunity if your prefer early or late dining so we can get you placed into the correct category.

While the flexible Round Robin dining was popular with most of our cruisers, if you have a specific group of people that you want to eat with on a nightly basis, let us know early on and we will include you in our general seating area, but not in our round robin selection of tables.

### The Dungeon

This ship has an exciting option for those that like to dance and it's called "The Dungeon!". Yep, we're not kidding, this disco is right up our alley and we already know that a lot of our group will be spending plenty of time in this dark and sexy club.



Gargoyle in the Dungeon

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The Dungeon Nightclub is decorated with gargoyles, shields, halberds and stain glass windows. The entrance to the second level of the Dungeon is flanked by two snarling life size guard dogs made by Ridgeway Sculpture of fiber glass resin, but very bronze looking. Inside is the Dungeon's Balcony, where the portraits of the "Executioner" and the "Executioner's Wife" (observe her hands!) can be admired.

The disco has already been reserved for 2 private disco parties. Courtesy of Royal Caribbean, the drinks at the first party will be **Free!** The disco on this ship covers two stories and is unlike any dance club you might find on a ship, in fact it is more like a night club you might find in a hip city, it really is outstanding.

### Isla De La Verde Beach Resort

We will be staying at the wonderful Isla De La Verde Beach Resort in San Juan. The hotel will be prepaid as part of our group package and will include the following.

- a Free buffet breakfast overlooking the ocean
- 4 Free Drinks at the bar  
( tickets will be included in your package )
- \$25.00 in gambling coupons  
( tickets will be included in your package )
- 2 Free bottles of water daily
- Free Internet in the business center
- All resort & P.R. taxes prepaid

A few of our attendees have asked if they can stay at another hotel or use their points for their stay. In order for us to secure the best overall rate for everyone, we really need everyone to stay at our main hotel. This will ensure that you will get to meet other couples in our group and it gives us the amount of rooms needed to be able to negotiate these great rates.

Trust us, you'll love this hotel and at the "All Inclusive" package price, you won't be able to get a better deal in San Juan.

### Photos from the Isla De La Verde Beach Resort



Join us for breakfast and this breathtaking view



How about a dip in the pool  
or a drink at the swim up bar?



Look for Tess & Bob in one of these  
oceanfront hammocks

### Meet & Greet Party in San Juan

We are presently working on the details for our huge meet & greet party and will have details in the near future.

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## Excursions

Yes , we will be arranging some special private excursions for our group and details will be announced during the first quarter.

## Galapagos Cruise

Just wanted to have a reminder that we now have 21 couples booked for this adventure in MARCH 2010 and we just had another 7 cabins released to us. This will be a totally unique adventure , so please get back to us for all the details.

While this 300 foot ship only has 43 cabins - our group will have 28 cabins (that means we have over 65% of the ship!).

## Dominica

Each Newsletter, we will highlight one of our ports to give you a better idea about the places we'll be visiting. This month, we are going to highlight the island of Dominica, one of the lesser known islands in the caribbean. Don't confuse Dominica with the Dominican Republic (next to Haiti), this island is vastly different and will be a pleasure to explore.



Dominica (pronounced Dom-in-ee-k-a) sits midway along the Eastern Caribbean archipelago, just a few miles from Martinique to the south and Guadeloupe to the north. Its location is 15 degrees North latitude and 61 degrees West longitude.

The island's official name is the Commonwealth of Dominica, which is mostly referenced in official communiqué and to distinguish the island from its northerly Caribbean sister, the Dominican Republic.

The indigenous Carib Indians named the island Waitukubuli which means "tall is her body" in the carib language.

The island is sparsely populated with around 70,000 people inhabiting its 289.5 square miles. A significant portion of the population lives in and around the capital city, Roseau. Dominica is an arcadia of unspoiled nature. Tropical forest coats two thirds of the island, which nourishes 1,200 plant species. Rivers, lakes, streams, and waterfalls abound, fed by the islands high annual rainfall. Its volcanic physique points to extensive geothermal activity above and below sea level.



Dominica's Boiling Lake, second in size to the Frying Pan lake of New Zealand, is 200ft wide. It is located five miles from the city at the core of the Morne Trois Piton National Park, a World Heritage Site. This steaming basin of earth is one of the most amazing geothermal features on earth.

The Valley of Desolation, just a few miles from the Boiling Lake, is another of the island's spectacular hot spots. The floor of the valley resembles a multi-colored spattered canvas, from which solfataras and fumaroles spurt.

Liquefied matter from the Boiling Lake and the Valley of Desolation stream into the Victoria Falls and White River, creating a waterway of rich minerals. Volcanic hot spots are also situated at the Trafalgar Falls, allowing visitors to enjoy both the fresh water from the falls and the warm pools along the river at its base. Across the Trafalgar valley are many natural cauldrons and hot water pools in the village of Wotten Waven.

Dominica island is a haven for hikers and nature-

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lovers. In almost every part of the country, trails weave their way into gorges and across valleys, climbing up to 4,000 foot mountains. Whatever



your level of fitness there is a trail just right for you, each with a spectacular attraction at its conclusion.

View at Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls can also be approached from the East coast and combined with Sari-Sari Falls. The trail-heads are close together and each is relatively short, so you can easily do both in an afternoon, if you're up to it!

Fed by the White River, it is so named because of its white color--the mineral content--and main source Boiling Lake. The mineral content of the water also lends the falls the same ruddy white color, while the cliff face and the boulders at the base of the falls show a rich rust color from mineral deposits.

By the way, don't drink the water--it tastes bad and can't be good for you!

The hike should take less than 45 minutes each way.

## Dominica's History

As an island, Dominica is in relative puberty. It is only 26 million years old and is still evolving with continuous geothermal activity. It is one of the youngest islands in the Caribbean chain, formed by the shift of two tectonic plates.

After the Ortoroids vanquished, the Arawaks came. Thereafter, the Caribs arrived and wiped them out; but when Columbus introduced colonization to Dominica in 1493, the same fate that befell the Arawaks was threatening the Caribs.

Ignoring Waitukubuli, the Carib name for the island, the Spanish explorer renamed it Dominica because he landed on a Sunday. By the time the British and French had begun the battles for the island in the 1600s the Caribs' grip on the island had already begun to slide. They fought valiantly to keep it, and temporarily did so successfully, but the gunpowder assaults eventually drove them into the hills.

The British and French fought repeatedly for control of Dominica. The island eventually escaped colonial fangs on November 3rd 1978, when it gained independence. Its embryonic independence era brought increased challenges, none the least was the com-



plication of its political struggles. By the mid-1980s though, Dominica had settled down as a stable and peaceful country. The success of the banana trade, which was the island's major export, brought economic buoyancy to the island. Starting in 1992



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however, Dominica saw sharp declines in banana export earnings with the loss of its preferential access on the UK market.

Today, the Government of Dominica is investing heavily in tourism as the sector to drive the island's economic development.

### Rum

If you like Rum, there are many small rum distilleries on the island. You will find their rums displayed

at "rum shacks" on the side of the road. This is nothing like your typical Bacardi rum, you will find re-used bottles of scotch and whiskey filled with local fruit and spice rums (like prune, cinnamon and mango rums) for sale. Make sure you try some of these home distilled varieties.

You won't be sorry!

Until the next newsletter...

Happy Cruising!

*Bob & Tess and Wane & Carol*



### Where is Dominica?

Dominica is located in the eastern Caribbean, between the French Islands of Guadeloupe (which lies to the north) and Martinique (which lies to the south).

### Quick Fact:

The island is one of only a couple in the Caribbean still with populations of the pre-Columbian Carib Indians. About 80% of the population is Roman Catholic. English is the official language, spoken with a melodic French lilt, but a large portion of the population speaks Kwèyòl (Creole), with a few northern villages speaking Kokoy.