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Jeanne Beker  
Lifestyle Editor



# A LIFE WELL CRUISED

For those who've never experienced the ecstasy of a luxury cruise to an exotic destination, this kind of holiday lies just as much in the state of mind it evokes as it is in the adventurous and scenic voyage it provides. Lifestyle editor Jeanne Beker and her partner, Iain, had the opportunity to take a weeklong Silversea cruise to Alaska — and it proved to be a master class in luxurious relaxation.

By Jeanne Beker

**DAY 1.** We arrive at Vancouver's Canada Place harbour and head for the bar at the magnificent Pan Pacific hotel, which provides a view of the stellar Silver Muse, patiently awaiting our embarkation. Already, I've been transported to a mindset ready for ultimate relaxation. An Alaskan luxury cruise offers the best of all worlds: The opportunity for nature lovers to dive into the unparalleled rugged beauty of magnificent northern climes in a relaxed way, as well as the chance to dress up in the evenings and sample the finest cuisine, be entertained by an eclectic array of performers, test your luck at the casino, chill at the spa, workout at the gym or just nurse flutes of Champagne all night long in glamorous lounges or in the privacy of your own verandah. If there ever was a sure-fire way to set your worries aside, this is it.

We board the ship, delighted by the arresting architectural design and fabulous art our floating hotel has to offer. The 698-foot Silver Muse is Silversea's crown jewel. We're taken to our suite, complete with large-screen TV, the most comfortable bed imaginable and a marble bathroom with a bathtub. Our personal butler, Wendell, arrives to let us know he's at our disposal for anything we may need: Simply call him anytime. There are nine restaurants aboard, and nine bar/lounges to choose from, as well as 24-hour room service. But we decide on having dinner this first night at Indochine. I indulge in delicate

tuna sashimi and lobster pad Thai with a flambéed banana served with coconut gelato for dessert.

**DAY 2.** After sailing all night, our morning view is staggeringly beautiful, as we lazily drift by forested, snowcapped mountains. We delight in sitting out on our verandah in the cozy Etro bathrobes provided, soaking in the scenery. Great coffee, lovely pastries, smoothies and light breakfast fare are readily available at the Arts Café, just down the hall from our suite on the 8th deck. Lunch at The Grill on the pool deck is a treat, capped off by a late-afternoon glass of wine in the chic Panorama Lounge. We visit the jewellery and fashion boutiques onboard. In the evening, it's Kasakei for dinner, a modern Japanese tatak restaurant, with intimate tables and the finest culinary fare. ▶



TOP IMAGE: Jeanne Beker

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**DAY 3.** We pull into Ketchikan and our butler brings breakfast to our room. Ketchikan is a charming port, rife with colourful buildings and countless shops. Iain buys me a fabulous “fetish” necklace, featuring an array of small hand-carved gemstone animal figurines. Back to the ship for lunch, and this time we feast from a beautifully eclectic buffet at Terazza. Dinner tonight is at Atlantide, the ultra-elegant dining room that features an impressive haute cuisine menu. We start with caviar, followed by filet mignon and my favourite — lemon sorbet for dessert.

**DAY 4.** We cruised overnight into Juneau, Alaska’s capital. The harbour is bustling, despite the rain. We get comfy with a cup of tea in the Arts Café. A visit to the onboard gym does not disappoint — it’s well equipped, with a gorgeous panoramic view from the ship’s stern. Later, we do dinner and late-night disco boogying with wild abandon in the Panorama Lounge, where a vocal trio called Three’s Company warms up the dance floor for us.



**DAY 5.** We wake up in Skagway and though it’s another rainy day, it doesn’t stop us from boarding the White Pass and Yukon Route railway train for an unforgettable three-hour excursion. The views are stupendous — shades of green and blasted granite and cliffs and valleys and waterfalls and streams, all nestled beneath snow-capped peaks. After the ride, we wander down the boardwalk streets of Skagway, visiting assorted shops before heading back to our Silver Muse. Dinner is at La Dame — the ship’s primo haute cuisine restaurant. The service, directed by the impossibly suave Piotr, is first-class, and for a couple of precious hours, it feels like we’re dining at the ritziest eatery in Paris. ▶



**DAY 6.** The charm of Sitka lies in its eclecticism. We opt for a tour called “The Best of Sitka” for today’s excursion. The first stop is the Alaska Raptor Center, a hospital and rehabilitation reserve for some of the most magnificent birds I’ve ever seen. The second stop is the 105-acre Sitka National Park, which is filled with amazing carved totem poles and features a small museum rife with ancient Tlingit artifacts. The final tour destination is the Fortress of the Bear, where we get to watch brown and black bears in a natural setting.



**DAY 7.** The final day of our journey is spent cruising Hubbard Glacier, and we soak in the luscious display of small icebergs and majestic white mountains. The rain has subsided, and the sunny blue skies provide the perfect backdrop to all the visual delights. We luxuriate in the cool breeze coming off the glacier.

Throughout our holiday, it’s been the romantic, intimate atmosphere that we so appreciate — the kind of feeling you’d think would be hard to capture on a large cruise ship. Perhaps that’s precisely the appeal of this luxury cruise line: Silversea’s vessels are so exquisitely designed, with such impressive attention to detail and such inspiring decor features, that we feel we’re living in the lap of luxury. We truly savoured every second of what proved to be a precious and memorable adventure of a lifetime. **U**