

Accessible Cruising

Something else I find quite frustrating is when a tour operator does not OPENLY advertise the fact that their river cruises through Europe are NOT accessible before one spends \$60 on taxi fares to attend one of their Australian information sessions!

Again I was watching TV and saw an advertisement about river cruises in Europe. I was still feeling euphoric from tripping successfully around the world and thought that I would love to add river cruises to my repertoire. The Cruise Company was holding an information evening at a well known hotel in the city. I knew the hotel would be accessible so rang the Cruise Company to say that I would be attending. I explained my situation – confined to a wheelchair, vision impaired etc and at no time was I told that the cruises would not be accessible for me.

I arrived at the information evening, wheeled passed numerous sales people, sat through a 90 minute video, came out to speak to a sales representative, waited in line over an hour only to be told that the river cruises were NOT accessible to anyone who is unable to walk. Disappointment didn't begin to describe how I was feeling, I was cranky that I had wasted four hours out of my life and the \$60 taxi fare just added insult to injury. Normally I would try to see the silver lining of my experience but instead I went home feeling quite useless and vulnerable for even thinking that was an adventure I could manage. Yes, I was demoralised but not for long!

I still have this issue 'simmering' on the back burner.

Not to be daunted, it is my goal to set sail on the QE2 from New York to Southampton for my 60th birthday April 2019. As my previous experience of accessibility in the United Kingdom was pretty hopeless, I am considering taking the return cruise back to New York and return home via the USA.

I have had rave reports from friends who have disabilities and who have successfully cruised on the high seas.

Going from the sublime to the ridiculous – I am considering to give Sailability a try this year. Yes, that is one of many things on my bucket list to try. When I was an 'upright' I used to sail off the coast of Perth and the twilight races on the Swan River. Sailing was a sport I thought out of the question until I came across Sailability in Shorncliffe, Queensland.

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