



news

1/11/2024

608-238-6001 [TEL]

greg@cruisingreview.com [Email]

Cruising Review

News for the travel industry



This webpage QR code

Structured Data

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
  {
    "@context": "http://schema.org",
    "@graph": [
      {
        "@type": "Organization",
        "@id": "https://cruisingreview.com/#organization",
        "name": "Cruising Review",
        "url": "https://cruisingreview.com",
        "sameAs": [
          "https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7gOvLwcx8MtYt3ExzAZJQ",
          "https://www.instagram.com/pepe.g6"
        ],
        "telephone": "608-238-6001",
        "email": "greg@cruisingreview.com",
        "logo": "https://cruisingreview.com/logo.png"
      },
      {
        "@type": "WebSite",
        "@id": "https://cruisingreview.com",
        "url": "https://cruisingreview.com",
        "name": "News for the travel industry",
        "description": "News for Cruising Review and the travel industry including social media influencer software, and reviews for resorts, private jet charter, helicopter, and cruise ships."
      }
    ]
  }
</script>
```

News for Cruising Review and the travel industry including social media influencer software, and reviews for resorts, private jet charter, helicopter, and cruise ships.

PDF Version of the webpage (first pages)

<https://cruisingreview.com/news.html>

Burgenstock Resort November 2021

The Burgenstock Resort above Lake Lucerne, Switzerland remains my favorite desination in the world. This near holiday visit brought out the snowy outdoors and the wintry beauty in the region. While the Felsenweg hiking trail was closed due to ice and snow (it is closed in the winter), other trails were open displaying the incredible winter wonderland.

1/11/2024

My Experience With Covid

I got it. Not traveling, but by staying at home.
Hard to believe, but true when you live in a high-rise condo building.
Read more about my experience below.

Breaking News CDC Drops all Cruise Ship Protocols

As of July 18, 2022, CDC's COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships is no longer in effect and this page will no longer be updated. New guidance for cruise ships to mitigate and manage COVID-19 transmission will be available in the coming days. For more information, please see the cruise travel Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
From Cruising Review: This now drops all regulations as far as CDC is concerned, meaning cruise ships can set their own standards and protocols for vaccinations, masks, and more.

The Chedi Andermatt

The Chedi in Andermatt, Switzerland is one of the newest and hottest sensations in the Swiss alps.

The food is the best in Europe. I would say that it ties or a very close second to the Burgenstock.

The rooms are the best I've ever had, for a European hotel in this class. Even better than my loved Burgenstock. Price point is similar.

The Andermatt is easily accessible from the Swiss rail system (SBB), car, and even helicopter (albeit you have to land outside the village down the valley). I chose to arrive by Air Zermatt Helicopter (about 3500 Euro) from Zermatt, which the most incredible flight I've had so far (at least 10 in the past few years). Please see photos of the helicopter flight towards the end of the page.

This amazing hotel offers the best in dining and is the destination in Andermatt. If you want better visuals, then I suggest the Burgenstock, which overlooks Lake Lucerne, Mount Pilatus, incredible sunsets, and Lucerne.

Cruise News

This section will be for current travels, upcoming flights and cruises.

The big news of the day is moving the website from WordPress to our own proprietary web site generation program we developed using FileMaker database, which allows us to use all of our past cruise ship reviews from 2001 onwards.

Fondue Boat

The Fondue Boat concept is wonderful. And how appropriate that it was docked at the amazing Vitznauerhof Hotel in Vitznau, Switzerland.

Vitznau is near Weggis, and at the base of the queen of mountains, Mount Rigi. Vitznau is where you can take a train up to the mountain, but also on lovely Lake Lucerne (Vierwaldstrattersee). It is also the gateway to what I term the enchanted valley part of the Canton of Lucerne and on the edge of Schwyz and Nidwalden. The lake winds around the beautiful terrain with many instagram villages like Sisikon and Fluelen. Off of this is nestled around Stoos, Rigi, and Fulen. Some of the prettiest mountains in Switzerland.

Hotel Vitznauerhof contracted the Fondue Boat to dock at their resort for the month prior to the Christmas holiday.

I was fortunate enough to dine there not once, but twice, and each time was amazing. You see, I love boats. Combine that with a fondue dinner, friends, and even a crackling wood fire on shore, and you have the setting for a unforgettable evening.

What Happened United Airlines ? Demonetizing flight credits and impossible to get refunds.

I recently booked a trip to Paris in July 2021 with unused flight credits from last year during the pandemic. Remember when United canceled their change fees ? Well they have something better up their sleeve.

If I did a search for a standard economy fare (basic or standard) my fare was \$1,300. But when I tried to use my \$2,800 (Business Class fare) unused ticket to Europe from last year when the flight was canceled, the fare that pops up is \$2,600. So basically United has decided to use a pricing model that demonetizes your paid fare by half. That's 100 percent profit.

Even worse, last year the original fare was for Business Class. Now I can barely get Economy. So they did not honor the class booked. Now Business Class is \$5,000-\$10,000.

Clever.

To make matters worse, United offers a cabin upgrade offer, for 20,000 miles and \$421 from Chicago to Paris. When I took the offer, United deducted 40,000 miles and \$421, and did not even declare the miles deducted on the receipt. Go to the website (after waiting 1.5 hours on hold with United customer service) and the agent suggested to go to United/Refunds on the website. Unfortunately, you can't even file a complaint or refund request until the flight has already passed. I tried calling again today and after another hour on hold, I gave up.

Feeling screwed yet ? Yup.

I love United (pre-pandemic). The new United puts profits ahead of customer experience and has now gone down the rabbit hole of deceit.

The pandemic has spawned a littany of trumped up fees, and other expenses which they pass on to the customer, but which is pure profit to the company.

Remember that fuel surcharge ? How about employee wellness programs ? How about add on fees after you have shipped something ? Or better yet, how about that nice tip you charged on your bill for the fantastic spa massage or other experience (like drink tips). Yep, you guessed it, it goes directly to the owner or company. It's all profit mongering and greed. Next time ask where the tip goes, and you'll be surprised.

United, time to step up to the plate and treat your customers better. We love travel, let us spend money and travel, without the hassle of trying to figure out how you're demonetizing our hard earned money. We want you to thrive, but now at the expense of greed and deceit.

@unitedairlines

1/11/2024

United Airlines Demonetizes Tickets and Makes Refunds Extremely Difficult

I recently booked a trip to Paris in July 2021 with unused flight credits from last year during the pandemic. Remember when United canceled their change fees ? Well they have something better up their sleeve. When I tried to use my \$2,800 (Business Class fare) unused ticket to Europe from last year when the flight was canceled, the fare that pops up is \$2,600. So basically United has decided to use a pricing model that demonetizes your paid fare by half. That's 100 percent profit. Even worse, last year the original fare was for Business Class. Now I can barely get Economy. So they did not honor the class booked. To make matters worse, United offers a cabin upgrade offer, for 20,000 miles and \$421 from Chicago to Paris. When I took the offer, United deducted 40,000 miles and \$421, and did not even declare the miles deduced on the receipt. Go to the website (after waiting 1.5 hours on hold with United customer service) and the agent suggested to go to United/Refunds on the website. Unfortunately, you can't even file a complaint or refund request until the flight has already passed. I tried calling again today and after another hour on hold, I gave up. We love travel, let us spend money and travel, without the hassle of trying to figure out how you're demonetizing our hard earned money. We want you to thrive, but now at the expense of greed and deceit.

@unitedairlines

Riffelalp Resort Junior Suite

High above Zermatt, Switzerland, the Riffelalp is located at 2222 on the Gornergrat with an amazing view of the Matterhorn.

Bora Bora late January and early February 2021

Just returned from a wonderful trip to French Polynesia and the Conrad Bora Bora Nui. As of February 2nd, French Polynesia is closed (at least from what I understand).

The Conrad has closed until 1 April 2021. It was surreal to be at a resort with only 30 guests. On the flight back I had to do a negative Covid test (Antigen or PCR is approved according to the CDC) before boarding one of the last United flights back to SFO from PPT. Luckily, there is a rapid test center at the PPT airport in Tahiti (for about \$45 you can get Antigen test results in about 30 minutes). I got a day room at the Intercontinental (ask about day room rates which are about \$240 and includes a taxi ride back to the airport) which was perfect instead of waiting at the airport.

I booked Economy on United for about \$940 RT from Madison (MSN-ORD-SFO-PPT and back), and upgraded for \$1,299 from SFO to PPT to Business Class on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. On the way back, they were offering upgrades for \$1,299 cash, or \$600 plus 60,000 miles (for some reason they were not offering just miles upgrades). So I canceled my ticketed United fare, then looked for a miles fare one way. To my surprise, they had a one way fare for 70,000 miles plus \$6 from PPT-SFO-ORD-MSN all on Business Class. So, for a little bit of work, I was able to score a nice upgrade using points. It was a good work around, and a much better value than the \$1,299 upgrade.

AirBNB Yacht:

Over the past year I've been developing a AirBNB renewable powered (solar PV) multihull. The 60 ft. yacht will be a unique trimaran, with three carbon fiber hulls and all-systems and living quarters above the waterline. There will be no bilge (an odd revolutionary concept).

The hulls will be a unique woven air-pocket system which will be extremely durable and solid (but light). The bridgedeck will start at 4 ft (3.1 meter) above the water to prevent any slamming, with a two-deck system. The craft will first be designed for Swiss and Italian river and lake usage, and then adapted for ocean-going service.

The unique design will be a paddle-wheeler, to reflect traditional European lake and river cruisers. More important, the paddle-wheel was chosen over all other designs for ease of build, cost, durable, and dependable service. Built in modules, the vessel will be shippable via ocean freight container.

Why I left Wordpress and developed my own Web Page Generator

For the past 6 years I've been using WordPress. Initially, I thought it was super easy to build and maintain websites (I had over six), but then quickly realized it was the big Trojan Horse in the room. Basically, they lure you in with flashy sites, then bog you down with Microsoft-like annoyances (uploading plug-ins to fix basic site user experience problems) and other inherencies. One feature I loved was a mobile upload using a smartphone app. It was great until I found out that images were not rotated properly, and yes, you guessed it, there's a plug-in to fix that. So annoying. It got so bad I found myself spending more time trying to fix the base operability than actually building content.

So I decided to rely on what I know best. And that was FileMaker Database. The essence of FileMaker is to storage and manage data, and replicate success, while eliminating having to do things over and over. I used this basic foundation to write a database which stored all my content (text), links, images, and pdfs and then present them in a logical format based on functionality and good content creation tags presented by the search engine Google (most searches are done from their base). This includes tags they consider important, and leaving out the gobbledygook that is not necessary.

Time savings from not dealing with WordPress issues, image management, and basic user experience were quickly realized. While more time is spent on developing a strategy, the huge time savings by eliminating duplication and confusion quickly bubbled to the top.

Now I can build, modify, and create content quickly and easily. The images and pdfs are contained within the app, so I don't have to worry about managing separate folders of each. Keep your images web friendly at around 300kb and pdf documents the same. If you need huge files, then store them remotely (separately) and link to them for speed. For movies, use Vimeo and YouTube as your storage medium and link or embed them. This not only broadens your exposure to the web for visibility, but allows you to build additional SEO and page ranking. This happens intrinsically when you link back.

The basic premise of the Web Engine strategy is to have a web page, which is comprised of blocks of information (similar in nature to WordPress, but delivered much better). Gone or endless options on text type and size and confusion in WordPress. Each page is part of a group of pages for your website. Blocks comprise the content of that page, also part of a database. Each block has options for text only, image only, text and image, or raw data (in case you want to utilize code which already exists in HTML format). Using any of those options gives you complete control of appearance and delivery.

Gone is the contact page. Instead, why not give interested viewers the ability to contact you from the top and bottom of the page. I've never understood why it has to be an Easter Egg hunt just to send an email or make a call.

First Principles is the living methodology of Nikola Tesla and Elon Musk. Make it yours. That is, functionality over form (purpose vs. flash).

Who is this type of web strategy good for ? Those who want to delivery a message quickly, efficiently, and those who want to deploy information.

We base the business functionality of this strategy incorporating the QR code. The QR code gives quick link access to information. We recommend you put one on each page, which when printed out (each webpage generated can be printed out on standard format paper), gives the reader the ability to point their smartphone at the code and immediately link up to the page, or to order a part, or to reference a fix, or to buy a product. Instantly. Quickly.

Zermama

Zermama is a charming modern boutique hotel in charming Swiss village of Zermatt, Switzerland.

Centrally located just steps away from the SBB main rail station and Gornergrat rail station, it is the perfect location for all your mountain fun.

The staff is amazing.

Inventing and Development Projects:

For 2021, I will circle back to focus on inventing and researching healthy living, and building a cosmetics company for DIY home skin care solutions (SwissMixIt). While traveling, I hope to seek out local medicinal plants and anti-aging solutions. Probably the best example is Tamanu oil from French Polynesia. I've been using it since 2004, and love how my skin feels rejuvenated. I've been experimenting with skin creams since March 2020 with the SwissMixIt induction touch-free magnetic mixer with fantastic results. This one product will turn the cosmetics industry on end, by allowing DIY at-home formulations (saves money and provides a better quality product by using organic ingredients and less processing and less chemicals used in many commercial formulations). I have also been experimenting with anti-aging formulations with Astragalus, Black Seed, Hesperidin, Vitamin E Skin Creams, and Carnosine. These botanicals are great antioxidants, help maintain telomeres, and help with gene expression. Best of all, you can make these skin cream formulations at home.

Riffelalp Resort Suite 2222

High above Zermatt, Switzerland, the Riffelalp is located at 2222 on the Gornergrat with an amazing view of the Matterhorn.

Lufthansa First Class Chicago to Frankfurt

Full price paid for first class on a Boeing 747 with the Lufthansa experience. Just amazing.

Lufthansa First Class

From Frankfurt to Chicago aboard one of the last B747 in passenger service. This is the very front of the nose of the 747, even ahead of the pilots and the front landing gear.

BORA BORA SUNSET: At the Conrad Bora Bora Nui (#shorts)

August 2020 visit to Conrad Bora Bora Nui in French Polynesia, South Pacific.
Dualing time lapse sunsets.

Zeppelin Ride over Lake Constance

Friedrichshafen Germany tour over Lake Constance.

Pandemic Status:

The most important thing you can do is self-quarantine, take vitamin D3, physical distance from others, and ventilate any indoor room when with others. That strategy will help get you through the pandemic. Vaccines should be available mid 2021. There is increasing science that indicates that hesperidin found in Citrus extracts and Black Seed may be a good prevention and mitigation strategy for Covid. On a personal level, I take a teaspoon of ground Black Seed with honey every day. I predict the huge wave for the USA will peak in January or February, then things will start returning to normal by mid to end of the year. The CDC has given enough regulation to basically prevent the cruise lines from operating in US waters until or after March 2021 (that was the original goal with the CDC no-sail orders, but political pressures forced the CDC to open cruising earlier, which was met with huge regulation hurdles which effectively prevented any cruise line from operating prior March 2021).

