



ADVENTURE AT HOME

Adventure Canada celebrated twenty years of cruising in Newfoundland and Labrador by setting sail for Saint-Pierre et Miquelon from St. John's Harbour, bringing *The Herald* along for the adventure and the 24-hour long party

It's a tough job, but someone had to do it. When this writer was invited aboard a unique sailing aboard the 18-passenger *Sea Adventurer*, with promises of whales, icebergs, amazing food, and a pit-stop in France alongside inspirational sailing companions, there was little hesitation. Having an opportunity to be a tourist at home, with an at-sea view of this province's rugged charm and geographic magistry, before heading into international waters for France, was once in a lifetime, and an amazing way to spend 24 hours.

CLASSIC SEND OFF

The *Sea Adventurer*, who just happens to be the sister ship of the infamous *Lyubov Orlova*, would be sailing from St. John's Harbour to the French island of St. Pierre. A grand dock-side farewell, complete

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with the Signal Hill Tattoo, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (the Blue Puttees) and a serenade by the Harbour Symphony set the tone and put cruise-goers, including my party of three, in party mode.

But then this *was* a party! Adventure Canada was celebrating 20 years of visits to the province and with that in mind, the Swan family received the rarely-given Freedom of the Seaport from Mayor Dennis O'Keefe on behalf of



► **HERALD SPECIAL FEATURE: ADVENTURE AT HOME!**



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the City of St. John's. Adventure Canada is the only company to home-port its ships in the city, so the honour was well deserved, though there would be no approved hangings conducted on Signal Hill to accompany this honour, the major joked to great cheering.

“LABOUR OF LOVE”

There was a seriousness to the ceremony as well. The folks at Adventure Canada were “not simply cruising around Newfoundland and Labrador,” Mayor O’Keefe said, but they were involved more in a “Labour of love”. The Swan family had “come to be a part of us, or as we say, a part of we,” the mayor said.

Family spokesperson, Cedar Swan, vice-president of the company her father Matthew Swan helped found,

thanked the province for making them feel welcomed, adding the family doesn’t only work in this province; they also spend their holidays here. “We really love the province. We celebrate it, explore it and are a part of it,” she said.

Minister of Service NL, Dan Crummell spoke as well, identifying the “significant impact” Adventure Canada has made in the province’s tourism sector, bringing remote parts of the island to the world on vessels like the *Sea Adventurer*.

It was time to board. My six-year-old daughter, Elia, along with my mother, Regina Pardy, accompanied me, and we excitedly boarded the ship. We were ready for adventure!

To say the *Sea Adventurer* is a handsome vessel is an

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understatement. The ship puts one in mind of boarding on a grand ocean liner: Varnished wood, brass, and luxurious wooden decks. This writer has been on two Caribbean cruises in the past, and this ship wasn't about to play second-fiddle, even though there *was* fiddle music aboard and my mother and daughter enjoyed a scuff on deck. From staff, to food, entertainment, lodgings and atmosphere, including a mystic and magical foggy sail out the foggy Narrows, greeted of course by spectacular icebergs, no stone was left unturned by nature, and the folks at Adventure Canada.

IN FINE COMPANY

We dined on deck alongside some interesting characters. Besides the mayor and other politicians, world-famous author and keen birder Margaret Atwood and famed filmmaker Barbara Doran were along for the ride as was Newfoundland author Kevin Major and Conne River Chief Misel Joe.

But then this was about the experience and the trip itself was a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. Besides the fancy mug-ups and never-ending entertainment and merriments, each cabin had its own window with a spectacular ocean view. The morning we sailed into St. Pierre, we woke to see pods of orca and minke whales leading us into the St. Pierre harbour.

The celebrations were not done. Before a bus tour of the beautiful island of St. Pierre, we had the chance to get out and explore the coastline's rugged beauty. There was a formal welcome, with music, food and much more merriment. There was also some free-to-explore time. My mother, daughter and I enjoyed a walk-about, visiting the local shops, including tasting some mouth-watering local pastries and decadent ice-cream, and continuing on with our walk-about in the downtown area of the beautiful island. Then it was back to reality, and we headed for the airport before somewhat wearily boarding a plane back to Canadian soil.

But beyond the incredible experience that this writer, with daughter and mother in tow, packed into 24 hours, the folks at Adventure Canada have been bringing this amazing province of ours to the world for twenty years, providing a unique view of Newfoundland and Labrador to those who possess the spirit of an adventurer.

With adventure possibilities like this; "Gros Morne, the planet's mantle frames fiords that would be at home in Norway; on the Avalon Peninsula, a chunk of what was once Africa meets remnants of the Appalachian Mountains. Fogo Island is one of the traditional four corners of the world! Starting and ending in historic St. John's, we'll experience Newfoundland's lively culture and dramatic scenery in daily expedition stops," the company's site boasts. There's little wonder the company is celebrat-

ing 20 years of success.

But Adventure Canada isn't just exploring our island exclusively. Why not spend two days along the spectacular coast of Greenland with its dramatic fiords, calving glaciers, and charming communities. Across the Davis Strait, the Inuit territory of Nunavik, Quebec beckons, followed by Nunatsiavut, homeland of the Labrador Inuit. Community visits here are eye-opening and inspiring, reads another possible adventure choice.



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Or this one; "Torngat Mountains National Park contains eastern Canada's highest peaks. Along Labrador's shore lie the ghost settlement of Hebron, founded in 1776, and the contemporary community of Nain."

'LEIF THE LUCKY'

Or this one: "Tracing the route of Leif the Lucky, we arrive in Newfoundland at L'Anse aux Meadows, the first known European settlement in the New World. A kitchen party awaits us in Conche, and Fogo Island is one of the traditional Four Corners of the Earth. Our adventure ends in St. John's, North America's oldest city, with its legendary cultural attractions."

The adventure options are almost limitless. But one thing's for sure; no matter the chosen adventure, with Adventure Canada as a guide, the experience, like the one three generations of women in my family experienced, will be one never to be forgotten. ♠

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