

November 2, 2011

## Some reflections over the Kungsholm destiny

The Kungsholm, was one of several classic cruise ships, that sailed the Sevens Seas, during the first Peak period of luxury cruising, the sixties – the mid seventies. This was, at least at the beginning a period when Trans Atlantic flights were not to common at that time.

Several of the cruise passengers during these years were wealthy Americans, some of them with Scandinavian ancestry. The owners, The Swedish American Line was founded already in 1915, and ran firstly cargo-and passenger lines, and then continued with Transatlantic lines.

During about the same period companies like Norwegian American Line & Holland America Line had their transatlantic passenger liners followed by the transformation to cruise liners.

The former flagship of Holland America Line, is the **S/S Rotterdam**, today a hotel/museum in the harbor of the Dutch city Rotterdam, worthwhile to make a visit to her.

I was there last weekend together with my wife, and we really enjoyed it.

The **S/S Rotterdam** was launched in mid September 1958, and was completed summer of 1959. The owners were Holland America Line. She was in duty between 1959 – 1997, then she sailed for another company for another three years, all in all forty one years of duty. The owners today are the company “De Rotterdam BV”, business driven and also with some support, not defined, from the state.

The **M/S Kungsholm** was owned by the Swedish American Line. She was in duty between 1966 – 1975, nine years, then she sailed for several other companies until 2010, all in all forty four years of duty, and today a floating hotel in Oman.

The **S/S Rotterdam** is very gently and professionally restored, state rooms, lounges, bars etc.

When it comes to the bridge, officer’s cabins and engine room, it almost looks like they left the ship last week.

When the ship was new, she was a state-of-the-art example of modern cruise ships, and even today, as a former crew member on the Kungsholm, you could see and experience that most probably the drawer’s of the Kungsholm got influences from the Rotterdam, since she was launched some eight years before Kungsholm started her cruising career.

The **S/S Rotterdam** had a length of 228 meters (Kungsholm 201,33 meters) and a tonnage of 38.650 gross tons (Kungsholm 26.677 GRT), so she was a tiny bit bigger than the Kungsholm.

More information about the Rotterdam and possibilities to visit her, please look at:

<http://www.ssrotterdam.nl/English/index.aspx>

And now, some reflections over the Kungsholm destiny:

- I think it was an excellent initiative by Mr. Lars Hallgren to make the Kungsholm a hotel/museum based in Gothenburg.
- The City of Gothenburg did not have the same experience, willingness and the same view as the City of Rotterdam had, to make an important part of the history of the city, come true.
- I do not know anything about the official and possibly unofficial investors, but they could probably have done more to support Mr Hallgren also with the influence of the decision makers
- The status of the ship in summer of 2010, was quite different from the glory days in the beginning of the seventies, and the restoration of the most important parts to get her in shape would have cost a few “dollars.....”
- From my point of view, the most important restoration parts were:
  1. Restore the Aft Bar as original, with lounges on former Veranda Deck & including elimination of the staterooms in the same area
  2. Restore the Main Lounge in all aspects on Veranda Deck, as well as Aft Library on the same deck, including the golden ceiling and the Mid Night Sun decoations in the Main Lounge
  3. Restore the lounge and forward card room on Veranda deck, Starboard side, forward from the shop.
  4. Exchange the current funnel, into the two SAL funnels, including original logos.
- Without these changes/restoration the update of The old Kungsholm would not have been worth the name and the memory of the great ocean liner.
- From my point of view, the visit on the S/S Rotterdam gave me the insight, that the necessary decisions, logistics & the cost for a similar restoration of the Kungsholm was probably not really possible.
- Let’s keep her memory in mind, and view our pictures once in a while.

For those of you who wants to see some pictures taken onboard the S/S Rotterdam last week end, please find the enclosed pictures.

And, if you ever pass Rotterdam, allow some hours for a visit !

Regards,

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