

Escape

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Aboard a vessel with restaurant fittings from Titanic's sister ship Olympic, JANE JOHN dances her way to a smaller dress size during a sea cruise around New Zealand.

SHAPE-UP at SEA

Lose weight on a cruise? When piglets sprout wings, you say. I hate to boast, but – lose it I did. I blame excessive enjoyment.

When my husband first suggested a two-week cruise around New Zealand to Australia I couldn't resist stating the obvious.

"We have seen New Zealand before. Sydney, too.

"But we've never seen Fiordland. Might be some surprises."

Now, I don't usually say this – but he was right.

Celebrity's cruise ship Millennium boasts six eateries, four bars and complimentary 24-hour room service. Cruising is not about denial. So I pace myself. And I'm fussy. At seven-course dinners in the two-storey Metropolitan Restaurant I eat the tastiest portion of each course – then move on. Less bread, more lobster. I test cheese, taste dessert, sample sorbet. I enjoy everything – always leaving room to taste more.

Even the chocolate lover's midnight feast is no bar to losing kilos – if you dance the night away!

And dance we do. The morning's "Dancing with the Stars" class is a must-do. The "stars" of the ship's Broadway-style shows teach us new

steps, new dances. Over and over until we get it right. They are very patient and smile a lot.

Every evening we get to practise. Before dinner we dance to "the big band with the Glenn Miller sound". And after dinner. And after the show. And before the midnight swim. And, no, I don't think I'm a danceaholic – yet.

This is my disguise-exercise enjoy-everything approach to shape up on a ship. Lots of dancing, swimming and learning new stuff. Go to the ship's perfectly nice gym on holiday? Too boring.

That famous health and fitness fanatic, Captain James Cook, pops up regularly when you cruise along New Zealand's coastline. Well, he named most of it. And there was plenty of dancing, sightseeing and shopping (trading) on Cook's voyages, too.

He kept his crew fit dancing hornpipes and free of scurvy with fresh fruit when possible, or much-hated sauerkraut at other times. Refuse and you got 12 lashes – for your own good, of course.

The morning we wake up in Dusky Sound it's not dark, or dusky

as named by Cook, but pristine, bright and sunny. Dress-circle views from every deck keep me moving around the ship aiming the camera

at seals and scenery most of the day.

An "enjoy-everything" cruise needs commitment. In port as well as at sea. Shopping (especially window shopping) and sightseeing has to be done. Even if it's raining. On a wet day in Dunedin we exchange a wildlife trip for an eye-popping walk around the public art gallery. Surprises here: Monet, Turner, Gainsborough, an extensive Frances Hodgkin's collection and a painting by Thomas Sickert, who is alleged by novelist Patricia Cornwell to have been Jack the Ripper.

In Sydney for two days, Millennium is moored within spitting distance of The Rocks, the place old Sydney began: a perfect shop-sightsee combo.

Among historic buildings and arty shops, we meet Pia Anderson in the Metcalfe Arcade. She sells vintage clothing and is a dead ringer for a 1950s movie star. Clothes, curves, make-up scream rock 'n' roll – her other passion.

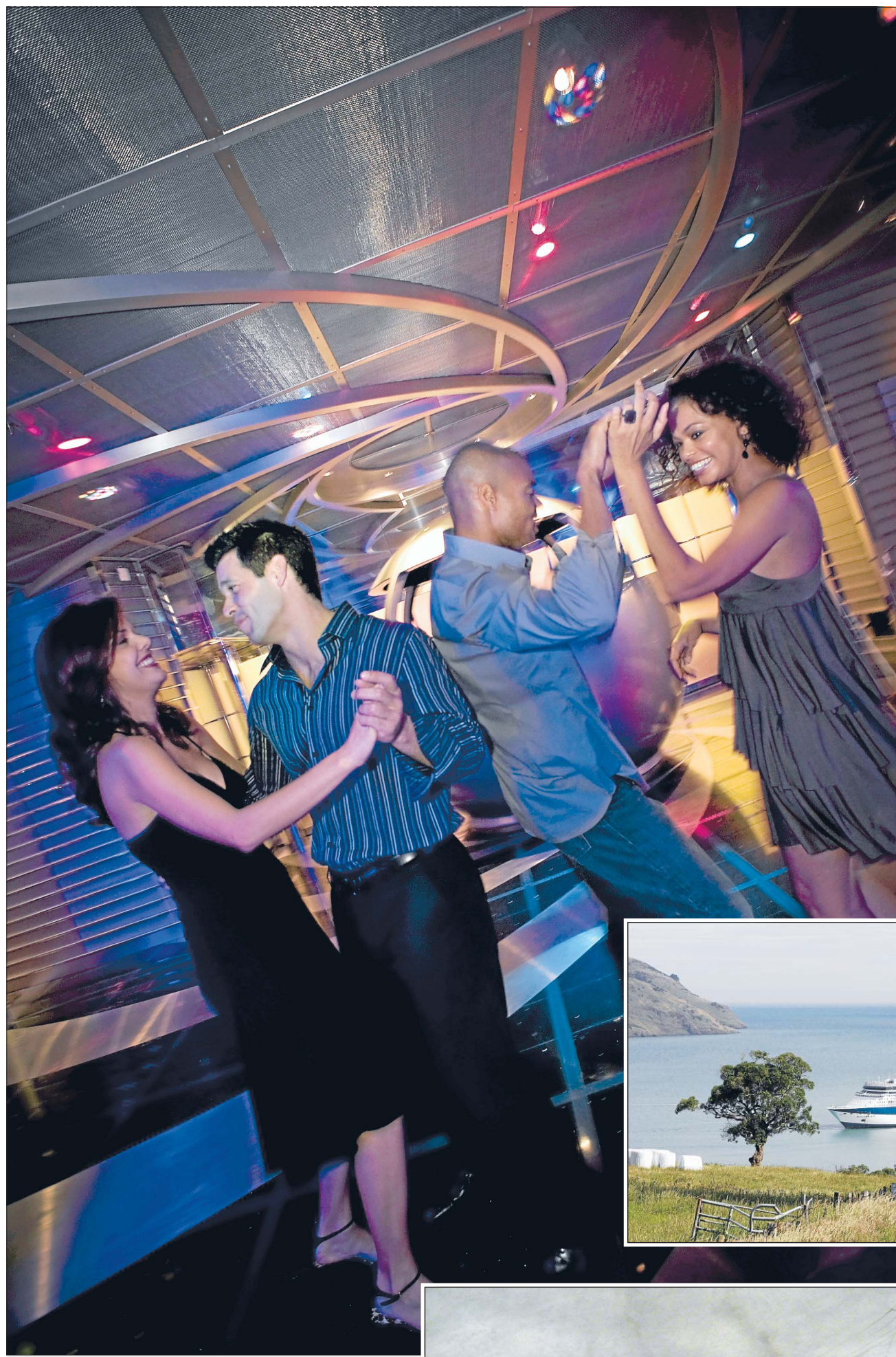
She tells us, "People say they like my costume. I say, 'What costume?' I wear this everyday." I buy one of the cheaper skirts. Funny how second-hand – sorry, "vintage" stuff is so expensive. Happiness is a smaller skirt size.

On Circular Quay we catch a ferry then a cable car to the top of Taronga Park Zoo.

We walk – and walk – though "Australia". Past snakes of all shapes and sizes and the angelic (he's asleep) Tasmanian devil. And then I see the dragon. Tuka the komodo dragon is 24 years old, over two metres long – and Indonesian. He's a close cousin of his zoo mate, the native lace monitor lizard often dubbed "the most aggressive Australian" – even without a green and gold jersey.

➤➤ To B6

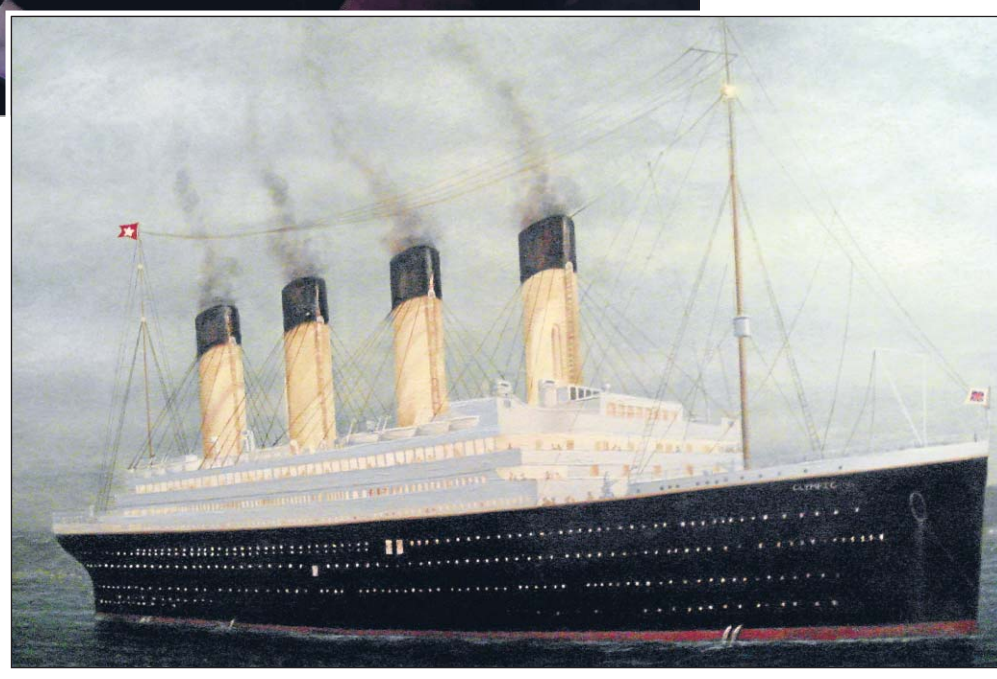
Olympic Restaurant: Original panelling from the Olympic, a sister ship of the Titanic, in a Millennium restaurant.



Alternative to gym: Dancing the night away aboard Millennium.

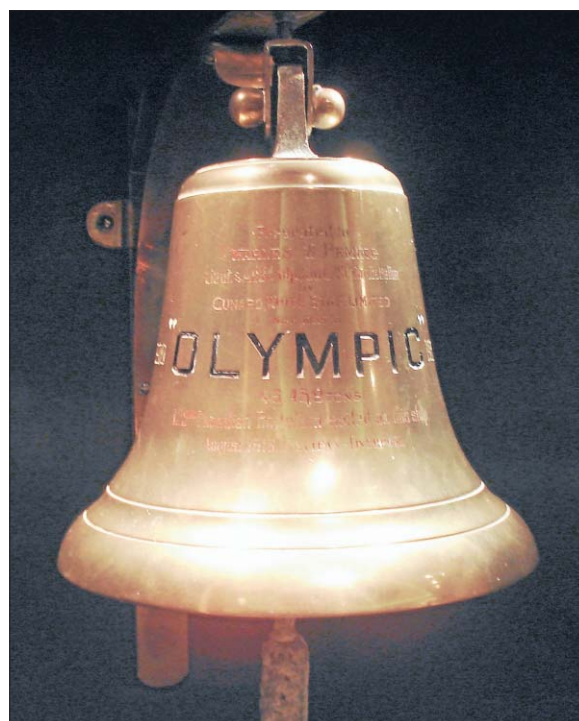
Akaroa stopover: Below, the Millennium moors in Akaroa Harbour near Wainui on Boxing Day, 2008.

Photo: KIRK HARGREAVES



Titanic's sister: A painting of RMS Olympic.

Valuable memento: Left, original bell of RMS Olympic.



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per person share twin
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ITINERARY: Sydney, Brisbane, Whitsunday Islands, Townsville, Thursday Island, Darwin, Komodo, Bali (Benoa), Semarang (Java), Singapore, Ko Samui, Bangkok (overnight).
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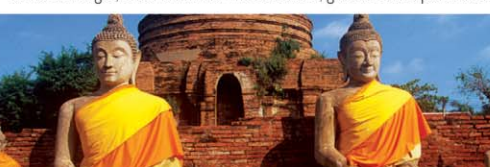
per person share twin
SAILING DATE: 22 January 2010 onboard Insignia
ITINERARY: Santiago (Valparaiso), Puerto Montt, Puerto Chacabuco, Laguna San Rafael, Punta Arenas, Ushuaia, Port Stanley, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo (Santos), Rio de Janeiro (overnight).
INCLUDES: 19 Night cruise from Santiago to Rio de Janeiro, onboard meals & some beverages, entertainment while onboard, gratuities and port taxes.



BONUS: Receive USD \$500 onboard credit per stateroom

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per person share twin
SAILING DATE: 01 March 2010 onboard Nautica
ITINERARY: Bangkok (overnight), Ko Samui, Ho Chi Minh City (overnight), Da Nang, Hanoi (Ha Long Bay) (overnight), Hong Kong (overnight), Taipei (Keelung), Kagoshima, Nagasaki, Shanghai (overnight), Seoul (Incheon), Beijing (Tianjin).
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