

relaxed in your casual clothes. Take a couple of hours over a superb meal, followed by a visit to the theatre, or take a quick snack if you are planning to go on shore. There is the 'Aqua Spa Café' specialising in lighter healthier dishes, or how about the 'Silk Harvest' an Asian speciality restaurant. You really are spoilt for choice and it doesn't take long to realise that Dan Hanrahan has included great cuisine in his focus for success along with exquisite design and superb service.

There is also a complete Spa Centre available with some of the most amazing treatments, should you feel like spoiling yourself during your cruise. My wife was tempted by the 24 Karat Gold Facial but we were told that the Resylane treatments are also very popular and you can even have botox on board with a licensed Medical Doctor.

Other misconceptions about cruising are questions like "will I be bored, or feel confined?". The Equinox and its sister ships are like floating first class towns. You can be quiet and private enjoying anything from the lawn (yes, areal one) 14 decks above sea level to a comfortable well-stocked library, card room or wander around the shops. In the evening there is the theatre, and the shows are quite literally spectacular, or a lively disco, or the peaceful Martini Bar, colourful and fun 'clubs' or cocktail bars with stunning sea views. If you like to be sociable, there are plenty of opportunities to meet fellow passengers.

And you will certainly not feel confined. The ship is beautifully designed with the aim of bringing as much light into the inside areas as possible. In fact all the names of the ships in the Celeb-

erity range communicate light: Solstice, Equinox, Eclipse. The comments on the beauty of the ship from the media are considered by the CEO as "praise indeed". And coupled with its beauty is its commitment to the environment. Consideration has been given to the present and future of Equinox's carbon footprint, with 270 solar panels which will become more efficient as technology evolves, LED lights and a super efficient hull. The challenge was to design the hull first and work upwards. Which brings up yet another misconception about cruising. Those who went on voyages a couple of decades ago often decided that cruises were definitely not for them because they didn't have sea legs. Not so now - movement while sailing is almost imperceptible, your champagne remains static in the glass. Cruise liners are not in the business of laying on the most dazzling onboard entertainment and then allowing it to be spoilt by sea-sickness. They want you to have a great time and for that reason they have got stabilisers down to a fine art.

I personally have a boredom threshold that can be measured in minutes, yet a cruise actually makes me relax, and I was never bored. Most days you are moored at a famous destination, and you can choose to wander off the ship to look around, take a tour, or just stay on board and relax on deck or on your own terrace, take a Spa, swim, sunbathe, visit the gym, the list just goes on. How about watching a movie, or visit the Corning Museum of Glass and watch glass blowers at work, or take in a lecture, go to a cooking lesson from a top chef. You can do it all, or do nothing.



The beautiful Bleu Restaurant

Bored, never. Relaxed, always.

Entertainment on board is also first class. 'Equinox - The Show' was sensational and featured top talented singers, dancers and acrobats. It was a West End production, sparing no expense or special effects. It left us dazzled that such a performance could be performed at sea and only served to remind us that the Equinox is about perfection in all that it does.

In terms of value for money, the Equinox takes a lot of beating. Be a little flexible and you can get a sea view stateroom for under a €1,000 for seven nights. That's less than €150 a day, and includes luxury dining three times a day, 'theatre tickets' for a show of London's West End standard after dinner, the best sea view you could wish for and much, much more. If the idea of relaxation and good food in luxury surroundings appeals, a cruise on this ship should be high on your list. The Equinox will be cruising from Southampton and Rome, for Mediterranean Cruises of various lengths, including a Holy Land

cruise which sounds superb. Personally the one thing that has always put me off the idea of visiting the Holy Land is the endless packing and unpacking as you move hotels. This is much better, the hotel moves with you!

As with other cruises, your 'hotel' takes you to your chosen destinations, all you have to do is to get off and look around. There are so many destinations and cruises to choose from, summer and winter, you cannot fail to find something that will appeal, and prices will, as always, vary with demand, but it's great value for money. So, if cruising misconceptions still lead you to think cruising is not for you, put a new name in your head, say you are going on a 'premcru' which it will surely be on this 'premier cru' of cruising experiences.

RCI and Celebrity Cruises now have an office in Lisbon, you can call 210 329 416 to speak to someone in English for further information and to book or visit [www.celebritycruises.com](http://www.celebritycruises.com).

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The Equinox



One of the elegant staterooms designed by a panel of five women



Imitate Sir Walter Reilly at the lawn club



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