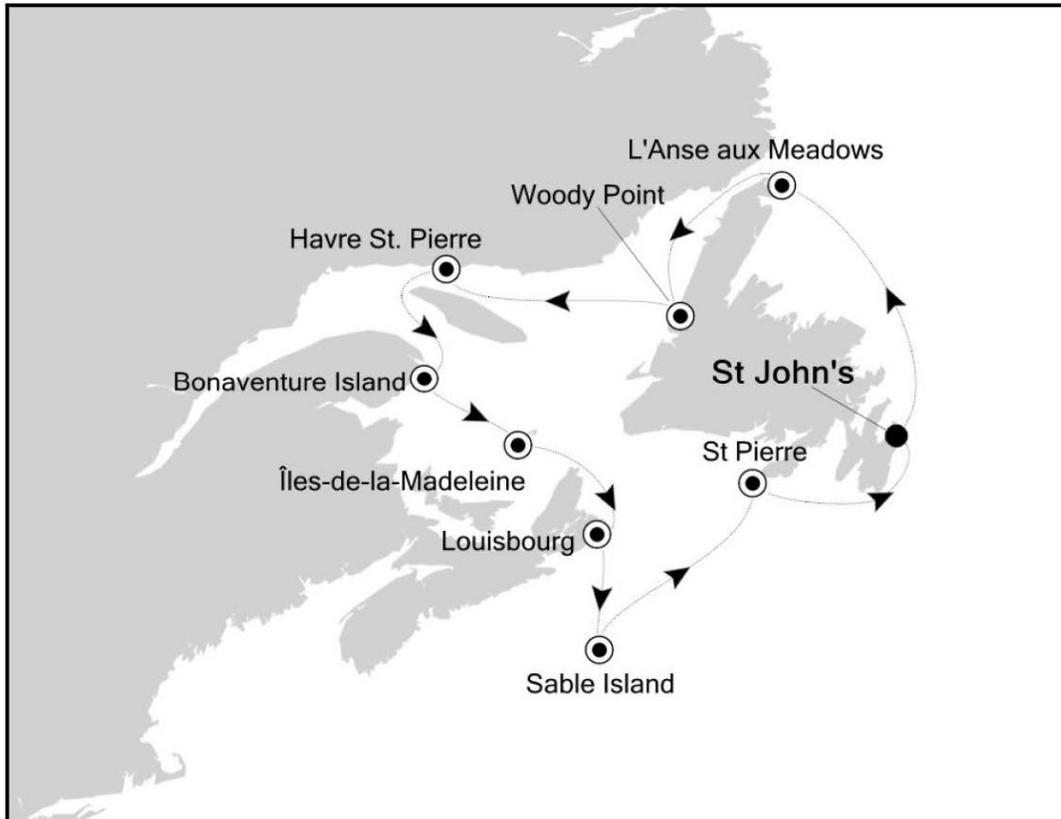


Our Cruise in the Canadian Maritimes

Maxine Okazaki and Peter Aitken

Bird photos by Maxine, other photos by both of us.



In September of 2018 we went, with friends Kay and Bob, on a 9-day cruise through the Canadian Maritimes. The cruise started and ended in St. John's, Newfoundland, and in between visited eight small towns and places of historical/natural interest. This was an "expedition" cruise, meaning that (with one exception) the places we visited did not have docking facilities for the ship, so going to shore and back was done in small Zodiacs holding 8-10 people at a time.

We sailed with the SilverSea line on the ship Silver Cloud. This is a small/medium sized expeditionary ship that holds a maximum of 254 passengers. On our one previous cruise (Alaska) we were on an even smaller ship, 100 passengers, so the Silver Cloud seemed very

spacious and luxurious to us. And, all the passengers are treated like royalty, with 220 crew for just about the same number of passengers we were pampered! More on this soon.



Our ship, the Silver Cloud



Zippering in a Zodiac

We originally planned to fly up a couple of days early so we could explore around St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula, but Hurricane Florence was threatening, and we didn't want to leave the house unattended. We flew up on Monday instead, and even so Florence was still threatening with tons of rain and tornado warnings as we drove to the airport. Fortunately, the storm had passed the Raleigh-Durham airport by our departure time and we got off on time.

Sept 18

After a layover in Toronto we landed in St. John's at about 7:00 pm and were met by tour staff and whisked to the hotel. Then the four of us headed to dinner at a nearby pub, The Celtic Hearth. Traditional food – mussels (a lot of mussels are farmed around here) and shepherd's pie.

Sept 19

We had an early breakfast on our own at the hotel and Peter tried the traditional Newfoundland breakfast consisting of fish cakes (made from salted cod), toutons with molasses, baked beans, and eggs. A touton is very traditional here, it is really nothing more than a piece of plain bread dough fried on a griddle and typically served with molasses. We really liked it.



A touton

It was a gloomy, windy, rainy day – not a forerunner of the trip, we hoped! We trudged around a bit in the morning to do some shopping, had lunch at the hotel, and got ready to be taken to the ship.

Because there were 2 other cruise ships in port we couldn't use the passenger wharf and had to use a commercial wharf. We didn't know that St. John's was such a popular port for cruise ships. One of the ships was the Aida Diva, based in Germany, and the second was the Silver Spirit, a sister ship (non-expeditionary) to our own. Our luggage was taken away (to appear later in our suite) and we boarded on a very long and steep gangway. After registration and receiving our ship ID cards, we were escorted to our suite (across the hall from Kay and Bob). We met our butler, Ravin, who is from Mauritius. At first, we were a little uneasy about having a butler, it seemed a bit too upper-crusty for us. But on talking with Ravin, we realized that jobs like this are a big deal and offer an opportunity for people from poor countries to make a decent living and move up in the world. In fact, from the French captain to the Filipino housekeeper, the ship was a veritable United Nations, and all the more interesting for it (we don't recall a single American among the crew). Each butler served 10-12 suites and was available at almost any time to do almost anything: serve drinks, move furniture, bring room service, get laundry done, set up parties in your suite, and so on.

In the suite we found parkas and backpacks for each of us, courtesy of the cruise line. And not cheap stuff! The parka was very high quality with a removable down liner. This is why, in some

photos, everyone is wearing an orange jacket and carrying a gray backpack. More about the ship and our suite below.

As we left the sheltered port of St. John's, the seas were quite rough. We went to the Panorama lounge, at the stern of the ship on Deck 8, and watched as the headlands faded astern. The ship was swaying a good bit (both up and down and sideways) and it was humorous to walk down a hallway behind several other people and see everyone swaying left-right-left-right! Peter christened us The Ship of Drunks. And the spray was so high it reached up to our 6th level balcony.



Leaving St. John's harbor.



Spray reached our 6th deck balcony.

We had a mandatory life vest/life boat drill to teach us how to put on the clunky orange vests, where to assemble in an emergency, where the lifeboats are, and so on. It was, I hate to say, rather funny to watch some of the passengers trying to get their vests on (as they watched us)!

Dinner was at the boringly named The Restaurant. This was the default for dinner, as reservations were not required. But it was far from ordinary, with white linens, 3 forks, 3 wine glasses, super-attentive staff, and exceptional food. The menu changed each day and was very creative and well prepared. Your wine glass was bottomless (dangerous, we know!). And should you want champagne before dinner or cognac after, just ask and ye shall receive.

Sleeping was interesting, given the rough seas and rocking. But, we managed. And in the morning, we were happy to find that the marble shower was spacious with plenty of hot water. Seems they have a desalinization plant on board to ensure an adequate supply.

Sept 20

We had 2 choices for breakfast...a buffet table service. We usually chose the buffet due to the extremely wide variety of delicious choices.

After breakfast we went to a mandatory zodiac training session so we could get on and off the little boats without falling into the water. Since we were going to disembark and return to the ship via zodiacs at almost all the ports, they didn't want anyone falling overboard. We also heard about the onboard photo studio and got information about the next port of call, L'Anse aux Meadows, an English adaptation of the original name L'anse aux Méduses (Bay of Jellyfish). At the far northern end of Newfoundland, this is where the Norse (aka Vikings) established a settlement in about the year 1000—first Europeans in the New World. The northerly wind was too strong for a zodiac landing at L'Anse aux Meadows, so we went to nearby St. Anthony where conditions were better. Even being anchored in this sheltered location, the zodiac ride was, shall we say, quite exhilarating. We really needed to wear our rain pants and raincoats. Once we landed in St. Anthony, a fleet of local school busses took us the 45-minute drive to L'Anse aux Meadows, while a local guide on the bus described the history and culture of the area.



A Viking welcome at St. Anthony

The Norse site itself is not very imposing—after 1000 years there is nothing left but the faint remains of buildings and hearths visible only as mounds in the grass. More interesting are the reconstructions of the settlement created by Parks Canada and the local people based on the archaeological data. There never were more than ~100 people living there, and it was a very harsh life, based on trading timber, furs, and some iron to the Norse colonies in Greenland. The settlement was not successful, and they all left after about 10 years.



View of the remnants of the original Norse settlement.



Reconstructions of Norse buildings.

Back on the Silver Cloud, as we left St Anthony, we saw a beautiful sunset with very unusual clouds (below).



Sunset near St. Anthony, Newfoundland.

Then dinner at The Grill restaurant. The Grill was semi-outdoors, covered and partly sheltered from the wind. It specialized in “hot rock” cooking, where they bring a very hot chunk of lava rock to the table along with your raw food and you do the cooking. Sort of gimmicky, but fun. As it was a chilly and windy night, we had to really bundle up, but we managed to have a good time. This was the only time on the trip where the food was not up to the usual excellent standards. Maxine’s prawns were not as fresh as they might have been, and Peter’s veal chop was a bit tough and way too thick for hot rock cooking—it had to be cut up. Still a nice meal, the only one all week we could complain about in the least way.

Sept 21

Overnight we cruised to Woody Point, on the west coast of Newfoundland. In the morning we had a presentation about the area, which is famous primarily for its geology. There are certain rocks—the mantle—that elsewhere on the earth are always buried deep below the surface and therefore inaccessible to geologists, but here they came to the surface and have provided a treasure trove of geological evidence about the earth’s history. We started at the Gros Morne National Park visitor center and saw some interesting exhibits and a video about the area. Then we took a guided walk through the Tablelands, so named because of several flat-topped mountains that were caused by the unusual geological activity. The guide showed us some of the unusual rocks, pitcher plants, and more.



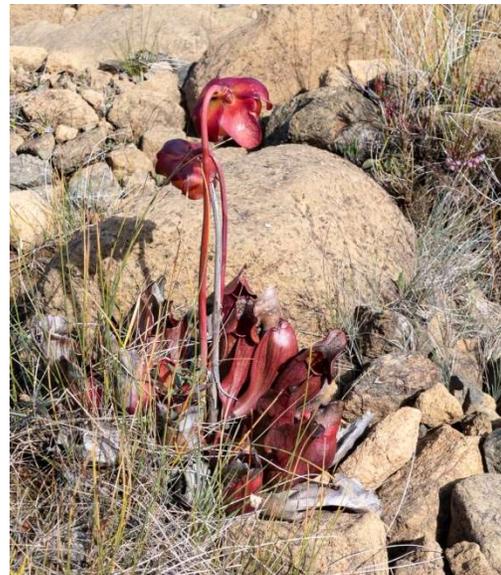
At the Woody Point harbor



On the road to Gros Morne



The geology at Gros Morne - The Tablelands



Pitcher plant at Gros Morne

We got back to town at lunchtime and rather than go back to the ship to eat we wandered about and found a homey place called The Merchant Warehouse Retro Cafe and Wine Bar. Despite the fancy name, it is more or less a pub. We had great fish'n'chips, perhaps the best and freshest cod ever, and Peter discovered a new favorite ale, Rickard's Red. As we walked back to the docks we fell in with a local fellow and had a nice chat about the town, its history, and so on.



At the Merchant pub



Peter's new favorite ale

Back at the ship, we sat in the Panorama lounge for a while and then attended a talk on bird migration by Nigel, our ornithologist. Then, we went to the Captain's reception where we drank Champaign and were introduced to the ship's management. It's impressive how many things there are to deal with on a ship like this. We met the captain, first officer, engineer, a few chefs, hospitality manager, activity director, and expedition staff (naturalist, ornithologist, geologist, etc.).

After another great dinner, we had to set our clocks 1-1/2 hours back because the next stop was Quebec. Yes, they have some odd ideas about time zones here, with Newfoundland being a half hour difference from the rest of the Canadian Maritimes!

Sept 22

Today we stopped at Le Havre St. Pierre in Quebec. Because we signed up for different tours, and Peter's was a lot earlier, he got room service for breakfast. He ordered what seemed like a

perfectly ordinary meal—bagel, lox, grilled tomatoes, and fruit—but the presentation was amazing. Ravin, the butler, showed up with a huge tray laden with food. He set up a table with linen tablecloth and napkins, silver coffee pot, 3 forks and 3 knives (and god knows how many spoons!). Small jars of jam, cream cheese, and what have you! Peter almost didn't dare touch the beautifully presented food—but he managed.



Peter about to enjoy his fancy breakfast.

Le Havre St. Pierre is a modest town on the coast of Quebec. It was settled in 1857 and for many years its mainstay was fishing. Now the economy is based primarily on the hospital, which attracts patients from a wide area of Quebec, the nearby titanium mine, and tourism. We chose different activities for this day. Peter opted for a walking tour of the town. We had a charming and knowledgeable guide, a retired priest, but otherwise the tour was a disappointment. We saw a very homely Catholic church and otherwise just walked thru residential neighborhoods. The one treat was a stop at a local restaurant for coffee/tea and a slice of cloudberry pie (aka lingonberry). The pie, despite being commercial, was very good, and our hosts were most friendly.



Our guide in le Havre St. Pierre, a retired priest.



Our group outside the “cloudberry pie” restaurant.

After the town tour things picked up. We went to a celebration the town put on for us (they were paid, I am sure) where we feasted on local dishes — almost all seafood! We had lobster, crab, shrimp, cod, cockles, mussels, and more. Hardly a carb in sight! And a very good local band played Québécois folk music for us.

Maxine went to Iles Quarry in Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, a 30-minute ride by high-speed zodiac. As the group walked along the virgin forest trail, the Québécois naturalist

explained the natural history of the island's vegetation and geology. Maxine was very fortunate to catch a glimpse of a spruce grouse along the trail. On the other side of the island, was the highlight of the island...limestone monoliths.



Spruce grouse on the forest trail.



Kay and one of the monoliths.





Limestone monoliths on Iles Quarry in Mingan Archipelago National Park Preserve

More About the Ship

Even with all the excursions, we did spend most of our time on the ship—and it did not disappoint! Our suite was roomy and comfortable, with an outside balcony, large walk-in closet, and spacious marble bathroom. And, of the seven suite options on the ship, this was second from bottom! The public areas were what you would expect on a “luxury” cruise, lots of brass and polish and recessed lighting. There were several lounges, an observation deck, a pool, and a couple of hot tubs.



Our suite (before we cluttered it up).





Looking from the main stairwell past the elevators and lobby and down the hall that led to the suites on Deck 6.

The ship had four restaurants. The boringly named The Restaurant was mentioned above, as was The Grill. La Terrazzi was (of course) Italian and we found it to be excellent. The top of the heap was La Dame, a small, very tony, and excellent restaurant in a continental theme with a modest but impressive wine list.

Breakfast and lunch offered 2 options, a buffet (at La Terrazzi) or table service (at The Restaurant). The food was quite similar between the two, but we almost always chose the

buffet for variety's sake. The offerings were astounding, and we cannot begin to remember one-tenth of them, and most important, all were well prepared. And, at lunch and dinner, the wine servers were on the prowl!

And, everything (with a few exceptions) was at no extra cost! Yes, it is included in the ticket price, but still it's relaxing to be able to order anything you want "for free" without the hassle of worrying about cost or paying the bill. This included all your food, including 24-hour room service, and (most surprising) all the alcohol—and not just cheap stuff, but brands like Johnny Walker Black, Makers Mark, and Beefeater. You could sit in a lounge and order cocktails all day without paying a cent. Unlimited wine at meals. The only exceptions were the super-fancy La Dame restaurant, which charges a modest per-person dining fee, and you also pay for some super-premium spirits and wine. Spa treatments also are extra, as are individualized photography classes and boutique purchases. But then, the cruise line provided us a \$1,000 credit (per suite) to use toward any and all ship expenses. We had trouble using up our credit, so Peter is now the owner of \$250 Maui Jim sunglasses (which he hardly dares wear!).

The ship had 9 decks. The bottom two were devoted to engines and machinery. The third, other than the zodiac embarkation port, was mostly crew quarters. Then 4 through 7 were guest suites, lounges, restaurants, and other guest amenities. Deck 8 had The Grill restaurant, the pool, hot tubs, and the bridge. The topmost Deck, 9, had the Tor's observation lounge at the front, storage for the zodiacs (which were lowered into the water by a crane when needed), and at the stern, a balcony around the pool that served as a jogging track.

Sept 23

Last night we could feel the seas getting rougher through the evening, and we were gently rocked to sleep by the North Atlantic. We were originally scheduled to land on Bonaventure Island, the site of a huge gannet nesting colony; however, this was not possible because of the rough seas. Plan B was to visit the town of Gaspé, located in a sheltered bay where we could anchor overnight. The next day we were disappointed to find that the seas were too rough—15 foot waves!!—to permit a zodiac landing in Gaspé. We heard a talk by one of the on-board naturalists about the quite serious problem of plastic pollution of the oceans. So, Plan C, which was to sail between Percé (Pierced) Rock and Bonaventure Island. We were required to travel very slowly (7 knots) due to regulations protecting the whales feeding in the area. We were told that several different kinds of whales were feeding nearby, including minke (smallest) and sei. We did see quite a few whales but were not able to get a positive identification on the type because they were not close enough. We also saw a huge flock of northern gannets, thousands if not tens of thousands, hovering over the water and diving to catch fish. We saw, at a distance, the gannet colony on Bonaventure Island where jillions of birds nest and breed each year. At the daily recap, Wendy (our naturalist) showed Maxine's photo of a Spruce Grouse

(from Iles Quarry), with due credit to Maxine. Then another delicious dinner. The ship was really rocking side-to-side and we had another case of many “drunks” weaving down the hallways.



Early morning rainbow near Bonaventure Island



Thousands of gannets (white specks) diving for fish between Percé Rock and Bonaventure Island.



A gannet flying by the ship



Gannett colony on Bonaventure Island. The white specks on the rocks are gannets and the streaks down the rocks are their guano.



Two views of Percé Rock

Sept 24

This morning we anchored off Iles de la Madeleine, a small archipelago in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We had a bouncy 10-minute trip on the zodiacs to the shore. Then a bus took us on a tour of the long, skinny islands. We stopped at several places including a lovely beach with

impressive red sandstone cliffs and the Cap Alright lighthouse overlooking Plaisance Bay. Yes, it was a busy morning!



Sandstone cliffs on Iles de la Madeleine

We stopped at a shop featuring local cheeses, Fromagerie du Pied-De-Vent—we could see their cows out in front munching the grass—and we bought a few gifts. If only we could take some cheese home! Then to a herring smoking facility, Le Fumoir D’Antan, (D’Antan being the name of the family that started and still runs the business). There used to be 14 such smokeries on the island, but with the collapse of the herring populations there is only this one left. We had a very interesting and entertaining presentation and then visited the smokehouse where there are millions of cleaned herring hanging over smoldering wood fires. It sure smelled good, but the product was, at least for us, disappointing – extremely hard and chewy.



Our guide explaining the smoking process



Herring hanging in the smokehouse.

Then off to lunch at Domaine du Vieux Couvent restaurant. It was sort of disappointing; crowded with some other tour groups and only 2 menu items to choose from. We had the fishcakes, which seemed to be mostly potato and breadcrumbs. But the dessert, traditional Queen Elizabeth cake, was very nice.

We visited a small lighthouse on a cliff where the winds were so strong, we literally had to lean into them. This area also has beautiful red sandstone cliffs. Then we went to the small town of

Le Graves and had an hour to ourselves. The area consisted of restored fishing shacks containing souvenir shops, bars, and local craft shops. We bought a couple of souvenirs and Maxine and Kay spotted some interesting birds on the shore. Bob and I struck up conversation with a local fellow who was a retired art teacher from the town high school who owned a jewelry/crafts shop. We had an interesting chat about town history, fishing, weather, and so on. Then back to the bus and the zodiacs.



Disappointing lunch restaurant in Isles de la Madelinas



Lighthouse on Iles de la Madeleines.



Lesser yellowlegs with a shrimp.



Three ruddy turnstones on the rocks and a lesser yellowlegs in the water.

Back on the ship, at 7:00 we went to the Venetian Society reception. This is a “club” for those who have been on SilverSea cruises before. We had not been, but our traveling companions Kay and Bob had, and we went as their guests. The cruise line has an interesting “frequent traveler” program. Based on the number of days you have spent on their cruises, you get discounts, special perks, free trips, etc. They announced some of the highest scoring people, and we were amazed to hear that some folks have spent over 500 days cruising!

Then off to a fancy dinner on the ship at La Dame! As great as all the other restaurants were, this is “la crème de la crème” and required a \$60 per person fee (but payable out of our shipboard credit). Dinner was impeccable. We would not want to eat like this too often, but it’s great fun once in a while.

Sept 25

Overnight we cruised to Louisbourg, Nova Scotia. This was an important strategic site during the 18th century wars between England and France, and the French built a major fort here. After the English booted the French out of Canada, they occupied the fort for a while and then razed it to the ground so the French could not use it again.

A few decades ago, this part of Canada was severely depressed economically. The government launched a project that hired hundreds of unemployed locals to rebuild and restore part of the fort and town, as we see it today.



The reconstructed fort and town at Louisbourg, seen from the ship.

The ship anchored right off the fort, but because the landing facilities were under repair, we had to take the zodiacs to the modern town, a few kilometers away, and then a bus to the fort. It is very well done, with dozens of historically accurate buildings reconstructed and actors in period costumes playing their roles for us.

The first stop was the home of a merchant—someone relatively well-off in those days. We heard about the day-to-day life back then—which, even for someone well-off sounded very

unpleasant by our standards. Next was a tavern. Back then, there was a thriving trade between the fisheries of the northeast and the Caribbean. The landowners of the Caribbean, who had tens of thousands of slaves to work the sugar cane plantations, needed a nutritious yet cheap food to serve them. Salted cod was just the thing. So, cod went south and sugar came north. But a shipload of cod was worth a lot less than a shipload of sugar, and the ships did not want to sail back north with mostly empty holds. So they brought back molasses and rum as well as sugar.

The result was that rum was very cheap in the colonies, and there were many problems with public drunkenness. But, there you have it, and one of our stops on the tour was a reconstructed tavern where we were served a (very) small tot of rum that was formulated, as best they could, to taste like the rum from 250 years ago. Which, to be honest, tastes pretty much like modern rum! Maxine even had a wee sip!



Jolly serving wench at the tavern.

Next we had a talk from a costumed French soldier (an actress) who discussed how life was for the troops back then. The rank-and-file troops were recruited from France's lower classes, many of whom were in dire straits with no work, no home, and precious little food. So, the army's promise of clothing, shelter, food, and a small salary sounded pretty good to a lot of

guys. Then she showed us a replica period musket, loaded it, and shot it off (without an actual bullet). That single shot was quite loud, and we cannot imagine the sound of a pitched battle.

Next, an authentic lunch at an authentic restaurant. The atmosphere and food were recreations of how the troops would have had it in the 18th century. The room, or mess hall, was crowded, with low ceilings, plank tables, and benches. Lunch was pea and vegetable soup with dark bread followed by either turkey pie or baked fish, then cake with rum sauce for dessert. The bread was not perfectly authentic, we were told, because back then it would surely have had worms and weevils in it.

We had some time on our own to wander around the fort until heading back to the ship. There was an interesting museum depicting the history of the town and the reconstruction project.

Back on the ship that afternoon, we went thru a biosecurity check, required of anyone who was going to Sable Island the next day. The Canadian parks service is very careful about keeping invasive plants and critters off the island, so our outer clothes and backpacks were carefully inspected for stray seeds and other possible hitchhikers.

Then dinner at La Terraza, the Italian restaurant. Maxine had squid salad, pasta with pig cheeks, veal escalope, and tiramisu and decaf coffee. Peter had seabass carpaccio, rack of lamb, tiramisu, and an after dinner cognac. Yes, this is more or less how we ate for the whole trip (poor us)!!



Moon and clouds, somewhere between Louisbourg and Sable Island.

Sept 26

Today we were slated to go to Sable Island, and we were quite excited. This is essentially just a huge sandbar about 100 miles off the coast near the edge of the continental shelf. It is shaped like a boomerang, very long (26 miles) and very thin (about 1 mile at its widest point). The area around it is known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic because of the hundreds of shipwrecks. The sea floor around the island is shallow and constantly shifting, and the ocean currents often result in rough seas and fog. It has been inhabited by life-saving stations, sealers, and shipwrecked sailors, and today by a very small crew of scientists. It is home to a huge grey seal breeding colony and is the only nesting site of the Ipswich Sparrow. There's also a wild horse population, descendants of horses brought there years ago. The area also has scattered oil drilling platforms, some of which are being decommissioned and others that are being built.



Sable Island from space (public domain photo). It is 42 km long.

Mother Nature did not cooperate. We would have had to land in the surf, as there are no jetties on Sable Island, and the waves were too rough. We did, however, go out in the zodiacs and

cruise along the coast for a while, allowing us to see some seals and horses. The critters were almost as curious about us as we were about them. Most of the seals just kept lounging on the beach, but some came out into the water and would stare at us intently.



Seals on Sable Island



Some seals swam out to investigate us.



Sable Island horses watching us.



Sunset as we were leaving Sable Island. Note the oil rig in the distance.

Back at the ship we had some “lounge time,” the daily recap, and another fantastic dinner at La Dame.

Sept 27

Today was St Pierre and Miquelon, the two small islands that are still part of France. St Pierre is the main island where the town is located, and Miquelon is a larger nearby island. We went on the tour of Ile aux Marins, a smaller island just across from St Pierre, which was primarily a

fishing village. No one lives there year-round now, but people have restored the original buildings and use them as their summer homes and have done a very nice job of reconstructing some of the old town. We saw how they would dry the cod, by laying it out on stones in the sun. It took 8 sunny days for the cod to dry properly. It was a tough life.



Coming into port at St. Pierre.



A restored home on Ile aux Marin with rocks to dry the cod in the sun.

We toured the Catholic church, long out of use but nicely kept up. The holy water bowl at the entrance was half a huge scallop shell! Then back to the dock, but the ferry had just left and we

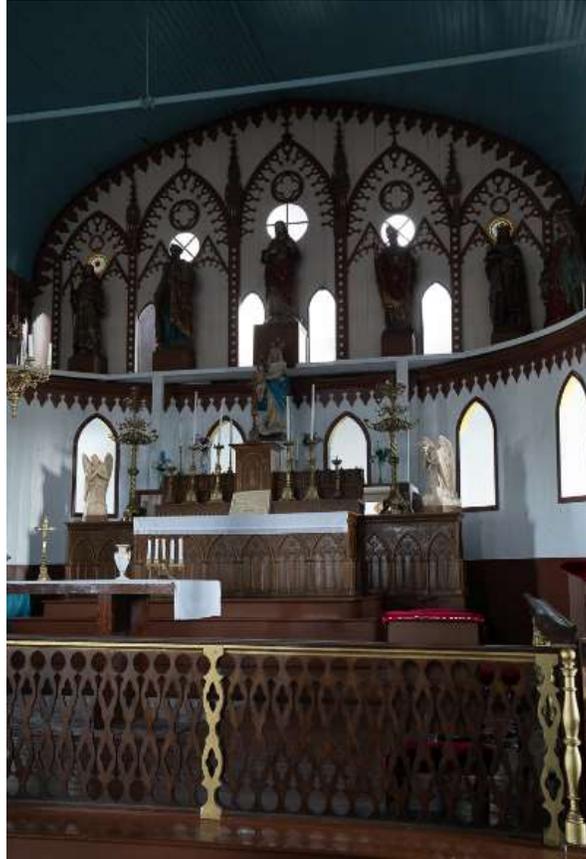
had 45 minutes to wait. There was small café where we had coffee and, of all things, pineapple upside down cake. Then back to the ship.



Catholic church on Ile aux Marins



Head stone at cemetery, Ile aux Marins.



Altar, Catholic church, Ile aux Marins.

We spent some time relaxing on the ship, then were shown the DVD that was created by Lacey (the ship's photographer). She is very skillful and had gotten some great videos of the local scenery and people and some interesting interviews.

After dinner, it was packing time as our suitcases needed to be out in the hallway by 11:00PM. We kept only what we would need overnight.

Sept 28

Back to St. John's. We were very sorry to have this wonderful cruise end. After an early breakfast we went thru a brief check from Canadian customs (on the ship) and then relaxed in the lounge until our group (about 25 people who were staying at the same hotel) was called. Off the ship, onto our bus, and off to the hotel. Even though it was early in the morning we were able to get into our room, which was nice.

With Kay and Bob, we took a taxi to the top of Signal Hill. This is the highest point in St. John's and has been used for military and communication purposes for ages. In fact, Guglielmo

Marconi used this site for the first trans-Atlantic radio broadcast. There were great views of the city and harbor, and it was VERY windy.

We walked down the hill a bit to the Johnson Geo Center, a very well-done museum about the geological history of this area. The museum was built into a hillside and a nice feature was the display of actual bedrock, still in place, that was excavated during construction.



At the top of Signal Hill



Entrance to St. John's Harbor from Signal Hill

We got a taxi down the hill to the Duke of Duckworth pub, a very atmospheric place with great fish'n'chips and a good selection of tap beers, including the local Quidi Vidi brewery (which makes beer using water from icebergs). Given the huge amount of fishing in this area, the fish dishes are always very fresh. Then we walked back to the hotel.

Bob found a nearby restaurant for dinner – Mussels on the Corner. As the name suggests, mussels — which are farmed extensively in this area — are the main attraction. Lovely dinner.

Sept 29

We had an early bus to the airport, then an uneventful trip back home. We landed at about 6:00 PM and went from the airport directly to a local restaurant for dinner. Then home and to bed.

-- *Fin* --