RMS Queen Mary

In the 1930's the original Queen Mary was famous both for the speed at which she crossed the Atlantic and for the luxurious conditions in which she carried her passengers.

She set sail on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York on 27 May 1936 and within a year had carried a total of 56,095 passengers. In August 1938 she set records for both the east and westbound crossings and, for the second time, took the Blue Riband from her arch rival Normandie.

Withdrawn from commercial operations at the outbreak of war in 1939, RMS Queen Mary saw over six years active service with Allied forces and she travelled over 600,000 miles, carrying nearly 800,000 troops. She recommenced commercial sailing in 1947 but by 1967, due to the increased popularity of air travel, she was no longer profitable.

Cunard sold RMS Queen Mary to the town of Long Beach, California, where she remains to this day, functioning as a hotel and visitor attraction. She continues to be an icon of bygone luxury liners.
Queen Mary 2

In the proud tradition of the legendary ocean liners, Cunard’s new ship, Queen Mary 2, is the longest, tallest and widest passenger vessel ever conceived.

Constructed in the Abbot Chantiers de l’Atlantique shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France, the same shipyard that built great liners such as France and Normandie, Queen Mary 2 evokes the glamour and grandeur of a bygone age.

However the glamour of the new liner is contemporary in style and it is fitted out with 21st century amenities, incorporating the very latest technology. All passenger cabins have interactive televisions, enabling their occupants to send and receive e-mails at sea. The vessel houses the world’s first shipboard planetarium, a casino, a library and extensive children’s facilities.

The horn from the original Queen Mary has been restored for use on the new liner. When sounded, it will be audible 10 miles away.

Passenger capacity - 2,620
Top speed - 30 knots
Length x width - 1,132ft x 135ft
Height, keel to funnel - 236ft
Gross Tonnage - 150,000 tons
Number of decks - 17

Maiden Voyage - Southampton to Fort Lauderdale 14 day cruise
Crew - 1,253

Queen Mary 2 is only 117 feet shorter than the Empire State Building, which is 1,248 feet tall.

THE MAIDEN VOYAGE
- Southampton
- Funchal, Madeira
- Santa Cruz de Tenerife
- Las Palmas, Gran Canaria
- Bridgetown, Barbados
- Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
- Fort Lauderdale, Florida

IF TRAVEL IS MEANT TO BE SAVOURED, THEN CROSSING THE OCEANS SHOULD BE A MAJESTIC EXPERIENCE, NOT MERELY A HOP ACROSS THE POND.

Queen Mary 2’s first master, Captain Ronald W. Warwick, whose shipping history is telling in command of the same line that his father, the late Commodore W.E. Warwick (1912-99) commanded. The elder Warwick was the first master of Queen Elizabeth 2 in 1969, and captained the ship until his retirement in 1972. Commodore Warwick was the only man to captain all three Queens (Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Elizabeth 2). The captains Warwick did serve together, but this was only for one day.

The stern of the new liner, seen here prior to the painting of the hull, proudly displays its name and port of registry.

Queen Mary 2 is 42 times longer than a London double-decker bus.
Cunard’s Queens

With its striking looks and impressive turn of speed, Queen Mary 2 becomes the latest in a line of distinguished Cunard ships to bear the ‘Queen’ moniker.

The first Queen had an inauspicious start. Her keel was laid in January 1931 but within a year work was suspended due to the effects of the Great Depression. However in 1934 Cunard merged with the White Star Line and the British Government agreed to lend the new company the necessary finance to complete the ship. She was eventually launched on 26 September 1934 and named Queen Mary. After fitting out, she was handed over to Cunard in May 1936. With her sleek lines and sophisticated interiors she provided a tangible symbol of the end of the Depression. She also set the standard for the Queens which were to follow her.

The contract for her sister ship, Queen Elizabeth, was awarded in 1936. She was due to enter commercial service in 1940 but the declaration of war in September 1939 changed her destiny. Like Queen Mary she became a troop carrier and was painted a rather ignominious grey. However her service was distinguished and by the end of the war she had carried over 750,000 troops and travelled some 500,000 miles.

The maiden voyage of Queen Elizabeth 2 took place in May 1969 and from the start it was apparent that this was a ship for her times, which nevertheless managed to reflect the essence of traditional luxury liners. Like her predecessors before her, Queen Elizabeth 2 saw service as a troop carrying ship, this time during the Falklands War in 1982. Since then she has been re-engineered and has undergone several major refits to ensure that she remains pre-eminent in the increasingly popular cruise market.

Each of the pods weighs 250 tons (more than a Boeing 747’s take off weight) and are hydro-dynamically shaped in order to attain the speeds required of Queen Mary 2. At nearly 35 knots this will make her the second fastest ocean liner in the world - after her sister ship Queen Elizabeth 2.

But the pods are not just designed to be powerful, they also create very low levels of noise and vibration. This means that passengers will hardly be aware of the ship’s motive force as they tune up in the state-of-the-art gym or take the air on the 1/3 mile long teak promenade deck.

For those that wish to improve their minds, there is an Oxford Discovery programme, run by the University of Oxford with expert tuition on a broad range of subjects such as art and wine appreciation, computer skills, and languages. Guests may take dinner in the elegant dining room with its grand staircase or at one of the more intimate Grills before moving onto the Royal Court Theatre, the casino, or perhaps the disco. And when they finally make their way to their cabins, there is a good chance they will be able to stand by their own balcony and watch the moon rise over the horizon before retiring to bed.