

Save the Best for Last!



At Eden Rock Beach Club in St. Barts

It's been a period of wine (some terrific Rose Champagne at the Eden Rock in St Barts), woman (my wife Carol) and song: interviews for my syndicated TV show MY GENERATION with Carly Simon, Charles Strouse, Judy Collins, and Michael Feinstein, and a backstage visit to my pal, singer/songwriter Peter Cincotti when he opened for Seal at Radio City. And there have been some truly beneficial trips. Carol and I enjoyed lingering while watching sunsets in Mykonos, Greece; and on the other side of the world in Moorea, Tahiti; and we went wild at the absolute beauty and grace of the Hotel Splendido in Portofino. But before I sail off into another sunset with details, let's sag Hobson, the new executive chef at Le Cirque in Manhattan, who has done a marvelous job with the cuisine at that fabled spot. If you haven't been to Le Cirque since Craig took over—GO!

I've made two spectacular ocean voyages on Crystal Cruises' Crystal Serenity, where I was on board as a "celebrity speaker." In the process, I met some wonderful guests, and worked with outstanding speakers like former Senator and Presidential candidate George McGovern. If you're considering a cruise look no farther than Crystal Cruises—their two ships (the other is The Symphony) are first class, award-winning, operations and you'll return from your travels renewed, refreshed and wishing you'd stayed on board longer. I guarantee.

Anyway, the trip where George McGovern and I spoke was a cruise all the way from Los Angeles to Tahiti. My memories—Rainbows in the South Pacific, dancing on board before black tie dinners, the light turquoise waters of the Pacific on the seldom visited island of Nuku Hiva, a phenomenal chocolate mousse cake



Rainbow over the South Pacific en route to Tahiti



Chocolate Mousse with all the trimmings aboard the Crystal Serenity

with sugar-coated grapes, and the wit, charm and flawless service of Leo Assimir, the maitre d' of the Serenity dining room. He has a brilliant knack for pairing guests for dinners that provoke stimulating conversations.

The other cruise Carol and I took found us in the Mediterranean. The stops included ports in Monte Carlo, St. Tropez, Turkey, Rumania, Greece, and Livorno and Portofino, Italy. The port in Portofino is like a movie set and not far from there is the Hotel Splendido, a member of the Orient Express Hotel Group. We ate lunch at the restaurant near their saltwater pool, and had fun with the charming headwaiter, Luca. Importantly, we vowed to return for a long stay. Life is too short not to return to places that are so beautiful they feed your soul.



Sunset with Carol in Moorea, Tahiti



Le Cirque Chef Craig Hobson

The Serenity also docked at a port that enabled us to drive to Rome for a one day whirlwind visit. We had lunch at Ristorante Alla Rampa. It's to the left of the Spanish steps and had the single best assortment of antipasto, arranged in one of the most sophisticated buffets that I've ever encountered. You're limited to a certain number of choices so there's no crazy overeating, or bizarre combos like sardines, rice and cottage cheese that happens all too often in the old buffet line here in the states.

Meanwhile back home in New York, we had a day at the races with my friend and birthday brother (we both share the lucky date of 7/11), Earle I. Mack. Earle owns and races horses all over the world, he's a passionate supporter of the sport, and a wonderful and generous host. So Carol and I were delighted to accept his invitation to go to Saratoga, N.Y. and take in all that is associated with the Saratoga racetrack—that fabled wooden grandstand, the Jockey Club, drinks and dinner at Siro's restaurant, and a full afternoon of races on the Traverse day. That afternoon Carol met a man (she was actually hyperventilating) she has long admired—the Olympic Equestrian champion and world class trainer (Barbaro) Michael Matz. Earle introduced her to Michael who was in the box next to ours at the finish line. Thank heavens I had my camera for that photo opportunity. A cell phone shot would not have done.



Carly Simon



Earle I. Mack, a man who knows horses

And a pleasure to be with you, if I see you out there while I'm living "The Good Life" for Black Tie International, please say hello—it could be our next photo opportunity. Meanwhile, please visit my newest web site www.billboggspeaks.com and check out some of the work I've been doing as a motivational speaker, inspired by my book, "Got What it Takes?"



At my restaurant pick in Rome.