

# Royal Rendezvous in Long Beach

Pristine skies and balmy afternoon breezes marked the arrival of a royal visitor in Long Beach, California, this week. The *MS Queen Elizabeth*, the more than 90,000-ton luxury ocean liner and undeniably grandest of Cunard Line's fleet, arrived in the Long Beach harbor to pay homage to her sister vessel, the famed *Queen Mary*. Retired from the seas for 45 years, the *Queen Mary* has long made port in Long Beach, drawing thousands of visitors each year to enjoy her hotel, fine dining, beautiful vistas, and rich history. Many recall with pleasure her days as the monarch of the Atlantic when she shared the seas with the original *RMS Queen Elizabeth*, for whom the new liner is named.



Hundreds of enthusiastic spectators flocked to the *Queen Mary*, enjoying free access to the ship for the afternoon and claiming prime viewing spots on the Promenade Deck. Adding a sense of occasion to the affair, many came aboard dressed in classic, dapper attire from spats and bowties to sweet hats and fascinators of traditional Royal Red. Families roamed the sun decks, shot photos, and listened to jazz while awaiting the port call which took place on March 12th at approximately 6:30 PM. The affair was marked by whistle salutes and a delightful fireworks ceremony.

The Goodyear airship also arrived to escort the *Queen Elizabeth* into harbor. Today, we most readily associate these blimps with the coverage of major sporting events. However, Goodyear was once known for providing convoy escort to United States Navy ships during WWII. Resurrecting the role of aerial guardian, the airship circled overhead, silhouetted against the evening sun, to keep a watchful eye on the proceedings.



For 20 years the *Queen Mary*, a ship which surpassed the *Titanic* in both scale and grandeur, and the original *Queen Elizabeth* shared the waterways. The most magnificent liners of their time, the royal sisters often passed one another on their respective voyages across the North Atlantic. Their last meeting took place on September 25, 1967. While the *Queen Mary*, purchased from Cunard by the City of Long Beach, remained snugly in port, in 1972 the original *Queen Elizabeth* met an untimely fate in Hong Kong Harbor when a fire broke out onboard and caused her to capsize. The rendezvous with her namesake brought back fond memories of a time when grace on the sea was standard.

The new *Queen Elizabeth* was christened in 2010 by Her Majesty The Queen, in Southampton, England, during a Royal Naming Ceremony attended by some 1,500 guests. This liner, weighing in at a whopping 92,000 tons and stretching 294 meters in length, is second in size only to the *Queen Mary 2*, the largest of the Cunard fleet. Featuring "art-deco touches, elegant double- and triple-height public rooms on a grand scale...rich wood paneling, intricate mosaics, hand-woven carpets, gleaming chandeliers, and cool marbles," *Queen Elizabeth* pairs the best of traditional luxury and modern amenity while providing her guests with an experience that goes far beyond the average cruise. These voyages present unique opportunities to see the world in fabulous comfort.



We were privileged to venture out into the Long Beach Harbor on one of the Catalina Express fleet, which lent its services to the press and the *Queen Mary* for the day, to wave hello to this gorgeous vessel, a veritable floating palace, before she turned to the homeward stretch of her journey. Having returned from 36 days at sea traveling from Los Angeles through New Zealand, she will now make her way toward New York via the Panama Canal.

If you're looking to plan an unforgettable day for you, your family, or your friends, it may be time to arrange a rendezvous with the *Queen Mary* of your own. There's always something to do onboard, whether you come for a sumptuous Champagne Sunday Brunch in the Grand Salon, a proper spot of afternoon tea in the Tea Room, or a five-star, award-winning dinner at Sir Winston's Restaurant and Lounge—just don't leave before taking a self-guided tour of the ship. Better yet, book a stay in the hotel and experience it all, bow to stern.



The *Queen Mary* is Located at 1126 Queen's Hwy, Long Beach, CA. For information, call (877) 342-0738, Hotel Reservations: (877) 342-0742. To learn about dining, upcoming exhibits and annual events, visit [WWW.QUEENMARY.COM](http://WWW.QUEENMARY.COM). To book a Transatlantic Crossing, or to learn more about the *Queen Elizabeth*, visit [WWW.CUNARD.COM](http://WWW.CUNARD.COM).