

Travel &gt; News &amp; Advice

## Quantum of the Seas: inside the world's smartest cruise ship



Simon Usborne gets a preview of Royal Caribbean's latest enormous vessel before her maiden voyage

SIMON USBORNE | Wednesday 05 November 2014



During dinner at Wonderland, where the waitresses are dressed like Alice and the potatoes are made to look like stones, my head starts tipping gently to the right, as if an imaginary white rabbit were tugging at my ear. It keeps rolling and as I perch on a huge upholstered chair, I wonder if it is the drink, or if I am nodding off. Then it comes back to me: I am on a boat, and the barely perceptible motion tells me that we must now be sailing.

It's easy to forget where you are on a ship as vast and as mad as Quantum of the Seas. Longer than The Shard is tall, she rises 16 storeys out of the water and has beds for 4,000 passengers served by 1,500 crew. A running path around the top deck is 133 metres longer than an Olympic athletics track. Equal parts resort hotel, shopping mall and monospecific ark, she floats as solidly as any of those structures would in a biblical flood.

My fiancée and I went in two by two, hours earlier at Southampton, where, on Friday, Royal Caribbean's newest vessel dwarfed the nearby Ikea. Hundreds of journalists and industry people had gathered for a two-night cruise in an unseasonably sunny English Channel, aboard "the world's smartest cruiseliner" before she set sail on her maiden voyage to New York. The bars are free, including a robotic one, and so are the 19 restaurants. How fat will it be possible to get in two days?

Preview trips are a crucial front in cruise wars, a fierce industrial battle in which torpedoes worth millions come stamped with a ™ or an ®. The biggest weapons are the "firsts". Quantum offers



**PEOPLE**  
**How to stop a mugger – and reduce them to tears**

(according to Derren Brown)



**TV**  
**'Dapper Laughs is dead – and ITV didn't even turn up to his funeral'**

**Alice Jones:**  
Comedian's rise and fall is a lesson in how TV does not understand online



**NEWS**

the first dodgems at sea, the first trapeze, the first skydive simulator (Ripcord by iFLY®), the first Jamie's Italian (he's here, waving his arms at a camera crew), the first crane pod viewing thingy (North Star®) and the first robotic bar possibly anywhere (Bionic Bar®).

### On board the Quantum of the Seas 1 of 10



Bigger boats make bigger waves and Royal Caribbean now has six of the 10 longest cruise ships at sea. Twin giants Allure and Oasis (362m; 6,300 passengers) lead Quantum (347m; 4,000 passengers) as the new top three. But the Miami company is also presenting this latest class as the smartest in the industry as it tries desperately to appeal to the valuable "new-to-cruise" market. In short, the company is using tech to attract cruise sceptics like me.

An army of agents with tablets roam Southampton's notoriously queue-bound terminal, scanning passports and boarding passes, which can be printed after online check-in. I was on board in minutes, entering via the main decks four and five, where a Vegas-style promenade of restaurants, bars, and shops is rendered in browns, beiges and chrome (some of the decor decisions here are seriously suspect, not least the "art" in Quantum's 16 elevators).

Inside my "Superior Ocean View Stateroom with Balcony" on deck nine, chipped "WOWbands" are ready for action. Another hi-tech first, they open the door to my room, and can be scanned at bars to add drinks to my account (in my case, showing £0). They also link to the Royal iQ app on my phone, which allows passengers to track luggage as they board, as well as collect prints and CDs from the ship's official photographers. Additionally, they can be used to reserve restaurant tables and seats at the 1,300-capacity Royal Theatre, where Mamma Mia is the big show.

The equally cavernous Two70° lounge with its three-storey

#### PROMOTED VIDEO |



Golf Rules -  
The  
Interfering Ball  
**SCIENCE** Click  
On Golf)



RiRi and Miley  
in racy dresses  
at Aids event



Who shot Bin  
Laden?



Bizarre own  
goal from  
Christoph  
Kramer

Recommended by



**OUR FREE AND  
IMPROVED APP:  
THE INDEPENDENT  
DIGITAL EDITION**



**What happened  
when the world's  
tallest man met the  
world's shortest  
man?**

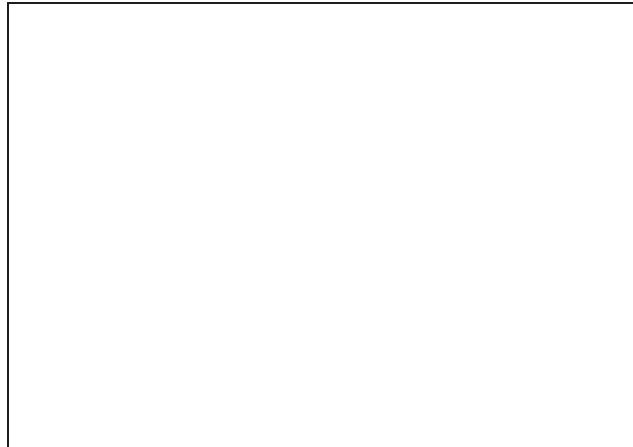
#### NEWS |



**Revealed: The best  
country in the  
world**

It's bad luck for

windows transforms at night into a stage with a "vistorama" projection display and six dancing screens mounted on robotic arms. But most of the fun goes on across the top decks. Adjacent surf and skydiving simulators lead to two swimming pools, a spa and giant gym. There are bars everywhere. North Star, essentially a London Eye pod on a fancy crane, carries camera-toting passengers 100 metres above Quantum, serving as her own giant selfie stick.



All of this is, of course, completely mad – a feeling that also strikes me when I took a strawberry daiquiri on a tub crawl of the ship's 10 Jacuzzis; when I look over the edge of a 10-storey lift shaft at the small figures below strolling towards the Bionic Bar; when I invent a rum cocktail on an iPad and watch a robot mix, shake and pour it for me; and when I take the wheel of a dodgem while at least two times over the drink-drive limit – on a boat.

At a media cocktail reception, I get talking to a wiry man who looks important. He turns out to be Adam Goldstein, President of Royal Caribbean and a serious amateur athlete. He is most excited about his new ship's connectivity. O3b, a communications company which started out by bringing the internet to developing countries, is now also directing its satellites at Quantum, beaming down super-fast speeds wherever she sails (to New York this week, from where she'll cruise the Caribbean before relocating to China).

But as the five-star general in this bizarre battle, doesn't Goldstein worry that, by launching ever more contrived experiences on ships that are so big that you don't even realise you have set sail, passengers are becoming disconnected from what used to be the main attraction – the sea? "We do try and bring the sea into it," he tells me, singling out the acres of window in the genuinely stunning Two70° lounge, and the lofty views from North Star. "But we have to appeal to new demographics."

Goldstein hopes Quantum's Wi-Fi, which is said to outpace that of all other cruise ships combined, will attract younger adults who don't get "offline", as well as families who cannot leave their jobs or devices at home. "Ten years ago, we could still market disconnectivity," he explained. "Today, that is a ludicrous concept."

I'm on my own voyage between those markets, and while I might not be convinced that cruising will ever be my thing, however smart or genuinely fun it can be, my newly rounded stomach and



#### 48 Hours in... European Capitals

To prove it's not just short break in 20 major cities  
**Why the homeless have any excuse to TV**



**Claudia Winkleman to miss third week**  
be strictly cover as website celebrates first title

Presenter's return up in the air after daughter's Halloween kiss 20 years since driver won first



**Coalition is more brutal to poor and As Britain cuts out imports than**  
of Afghanistan Thomas Cromwell's opium trade hits

**Heorth high** says UK has 'retreated into insularity'



**Saintsbury battles for penguins with a**  
criticised ad seen in the trenches to score

No fluffy penguins in this deepest, darkest How many roads they'll commit, scientists claim



**Bono 'cheats death' after door falls off private jet mid-flight**



I have no doubt who's winning cruise wars.

## Travel Essentials

Royal Caribbean's 'Quantum of the Seas' sails on a two-night sampler cruise from New York City on 21 November, with prices starting at £376 per person, cruise-only. She sails in the Caribbean until February (eight nights from £1,499pp with flights) before relocating to Asia.

Her sister ship, 'Anthem of the Seas' launches from Southampton in April 2015, with three-night no-fly cruises to Europe starting at £529pp (0844 493 2061; [royalcaribbean.co.uk](http://royalcaribbean.co.uk)).

**The Independent travel offers:** Discover a world of inspiring destinations



### Promoted stories



[9 Maps to Change How You See the World](#)  
(Goodnet)



[The Big Island by Air and Sea](#)  
(AFAR)



[Five Sun-Drenched Caribbean Islands to Visit This Winter](#)  
(MiniTime)



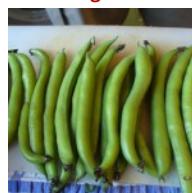
Simon Calder in Giverny



Simon Calder in St John's



### Travel blogs



Her Outdoors: Sowing broad beans



Her Outdoors: A line drawn in the soil



Her Outdoors: Herb Outdoors special 1. Lemon Verbena

### More from The Independent



[Virgin's new 6-hour advert is intentionally boring and pretty creepy](#)



[What's the French for flying sardines?](#)



[Five Family-Friendly Hotels in the Caribbean](#)  
(MiniTime)

Recommended by

### Ads by Google

#### Cheap Cruises

Save Up To 70%. Get The Best Deals Now!  
[www.top-cruise-deals.com](http://www.top-cruise-deals.com)

#### Imparare L'inglese Online

30 Classi di Conversazione Inglese, Ultimi Giorni a 1€- Iscriviti Ora!  
[englishtown.it/Offerta\\_1\\_Euro](http://englishtown.it/Offerta_1_Euro)

#### L'oasi del Mar Morto

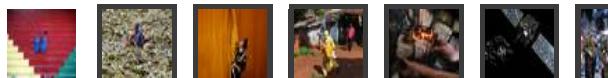
Il bacino più basso del mondo Sorgenti, piscine e piante uniche!  
[www.dead-sea-wonder-of-nature.com](http://www.dead-sea-wonder-of-nature.com)

#### Yacht Charters Bodrum

Budget to Luxury Bodrum yachts. Yacht Charter Turkey. Book Now!  
[www.bluecruiseturkey.com](http://www.bluecruiseturkey.com)

World News in Pictures

1 of 50





**Don't miss  
the sights  
and flights**

Get our weekly email  
round-up of travel  
news, features and  
great offers

**Sign up ▶**

## 6 COMMENTS

---



Post a Comment

[Login](#)

[TOP](#)

[NEW](#)

[OLD](#)

---



**ANTHONY PAPAGALLO** 8 days ago

its just a matter of time before one of these behemoths goes down with massive loss of life. One born every minute.

[REPLY](#)

[+ | o | -](#)



**THOMASLVALDEZ** 8 days ago

my friend's step-sister makes \$76 /hr on the laptop . She has been without work for five months but last month her income was \$12650 just working on the laptop for a few hours. visit the site.....

[WWW.JOBS-SPOT.Com](http://WWW.JOBS-SPOT.Com)

[REPLY](#)

[+ | o | -](#)



**TERRYMCMANUS24** 8 days ago

Looks great....Spent many a year on old oilers as an engineer going round the world...usually breaking down in the Indian or Pacific oceans in the middle of nowhere and a ship like this could get me back..shipside..as a passenger...and with wi..fi.....aye aye

[REPLY](#)

[+ | o | -](#)



**ITALIX** 9 days ago

Hideous ship. And the writing is almost as vacuously pretentious:

"Equal parts resort hotel, shopping mall and monospecific ark, she floats as solidly as any of those structures would in a biblical flood."

Monospecific ark? And er, how solidly does a shopping mall float in a biblical flood? Groan.

[REPLY](#)[+ | 2 | -](#)**CLIVE** 9 days ago

Nothing happening in the world today then?

[REPLY](#)[+ | 1 | -](#)**TRIBELESS** 9 days ago

What a hideous ship.

[REPLY](#)[+ | 1 | -](#)

Search The Independent 

[Advanced search](#) [Article archive](#) [Topics](#)

## i100 BETA

NOW TRENDING

-  1 The X-Men mansion now exists in the real world, according to Google Maps
-  2 We watched Ed Miliband's speech so you don't have to
-  3 The nine books deemed less valuable to humanity than the Bible
-  4 Just as Britain withdraws from Afghanistan, opium production hits record high
-  5 What happened when the world's tallest man met the world's shortest man

## CUBA

Follow Simon Calder's journey in Cuba

[VIEW VIDEOS >>](#)



[Most Shared](#) [Most Viewed](#) [Most Commented](#)

 Mecca under threat: Outrage at plan to destroy the 'birthplace' of the Prophet Mohamed and replace it with a new palace and luxury malls

 James McClean: Wigan midfielder explains decision not to wear remembrance poppy on his shirt

 Dollar store toy wand has hidden picture of demonic child cutting herself with a kitchen knife

 YouTube video of men trying to take 'drunk girl' home with them receives nearly 3 million views

 Kentucky gang rape: 15-year-old boy left in critical condition after sexual attack by group at party

# nnessic annull:

ie al server è stat  
camento della pa

bbe non essere c  
. Riprovare fra q

ssibile caricare a  
la connessione d

ter o la rete sonc  
o un proxy, assic  
ia i permessi per

L

**PROMOTED STORIES**



No Luxurious Detail  
Spared at Hotel...  
(AFAR)

The Unsolved Mystery  
of the Mary...  
(Learnist)



A Girl, an Airport and  
a Dance  
(Goodnet)

These Whales Were  
Alive When Moby...  
(OZY)

Recommended by

## INDEPENDENT IMAGES



**OUR FREE AND  
IMPROVED APP:  
THE INDEPENDENT  
DIGITAL EDITION**



**SPONSORED FEATURES**



**Business videos from commercial thought leaders**

Watch the best in the business world give their insights into the world of business.

Visit Cuba      Rainbow List 2014      WISE Summit  
 Spread Betting      Vodafone      i100  
 London Pride      Wallonia      Winter sparkle  
 Prizes & offers

**SPONSORED FINANCIAL CONTENT** [What's this? !\[\]\(96407c3f85010637bf157ab4762568af\_img.jpg\)](#)

[Top 10 Trading Mistakes with CFDs - Free 5 page guide](#) Download Free Guide

---

[Increase your knowledge of CFD trading](#)  
Download Free Guide

---

[Top 10 Trading Mistakes with CFDs - Free 5 page guide](#) Download Free Guide

---

[Increase your knowledge of CFD trading](#)  
Download Free Guide

#### Ads by Google

##### Cheap Cruises

Save Up To 70%. Get The Best Deals Now!  
[www.top-cruise-deals.com](http://www.top-cruise-deals.com)

##### Imparare L'inglese Online

30 Classi di Conversazione Inglese, Ultimi Giorni a 1€- Iscriviti Ora!  
[englishtown.it/Offerta\\_1\\_Euro](http://englishtown.it/Offerta_1_Euro)

##### L'oasi del Mar Morto

Il bacino più basso del mondo Sorgenti, piscine e piante uniche!  
[www.dead-sea-wonder-of-nature.com](http://www.dead-sea-wonder-of-nature.com)

##### Corsi professionali

Creati un futuro gratificante col Centro Europeo di Formazione  
[centro-europeo-formazione.it](http://centro-europeo-formazione.it)

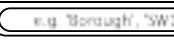
Show Me

Between:  and

Location:

By clicking 'Search' you are agreeing to our [Terms of Use](#).

**ES Rentals** Are you looking to rent a flat or house in London?

	St. Giles High Street, Covent Garden, London, Greater London, WC2H
	2 bed. £695 PW
	Goswell Road, Goswell Road, London, Greater London, EC1V
	2 bed. £625 PW
	Westking Place, London, Greater London, WC1H
	1 bed. £530 PW

e.g. 'Borough', 'SW10'

## iJobs

Argyll Scott International: Corporate Business Manager

£60000 per annum + ca: Argyll Scott International:  
Due to continued expansion ...

Argyll Scott International: Corporate Business Manager

£60000 per annum + car, bonus, benefits: Argyll Scott International: Due to co...

Recruitment Genius: Area Manager

£30000 - £37000 per annum: Recruitment Genius:  
This company is a progressive m...

Recruitment Genius: Delivery Driver - 7.5 Tonne

£19800 - £24000 per annum: Recruitment Genius: A fantastic opportunity has ari...

View the latest travel & hospitality jobs on iJobs

### DAY IN A PAGE

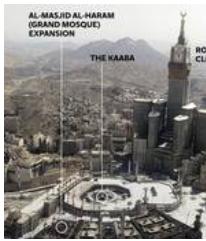
Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat



In the shadow of death, a few thousand Syrian Christians remain to defy Isis



Secret deal to tackle emissions ushers in a new era in the fight against global warming



Mecca under threat



Screen and not heard



Taking on the Trojan Horse

[Terms & Policies](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Cookie policy](#)  
[Code of Conduct](#)  
[Complaint form](#)  
[Email newsletters](#)  
[RSS](#)  
[Live Blogs](#)  
[About i100](#)

[Contact Us](#)  
[Subscriptions](#)  
[Syndication](#)  
[Apps](#)  
[Work for us](#)  
[Evening Standard](#)  
[Homes & Property](#)  
[iJobs](#)  
[News video](#)  
[Sport video](#)

[Advertising Guide](#)  
[Novaya Gazeta \(English\)](#)  
[ES Business Connections](#)  
[ES Rentals](#)  
[London Live](#)

[Advanced search](#) [Article archive](#) [Topics](#)

© independent.co.uk