

MS Pacific Princess Sails Into History

MS Pacific is a cruise ship owned and operated by the Brazil-based Viagens CVC. She was built in 1971 by Nordseewerke, Emden, West Germany as *Sea Venture* for Flagship Cruises. She operated cruises between the United States and Bermuda, which had been settled by the survivors of the wreck of the original *Sea Venture* in 1609.

In April 1975, she was sold to P&O's newly acquired Princess Cruises along with sister ship *Island Venture*. The pair were renamed *Pacific Princess* and *Island Princess*, the latter now operating as *Discovery*.

In 1998, *Pacific Princess* was impounded by police in Piraeus, Greece after 25 kg of heroin was found on board, smuggled by two Filipino crew men. According to police sources quoted in the BBC report at the time, there was evidence the ship had become a major tool for drug smugglers in the Mediterranean.

Pacific Princess was sold in 2001, but was leased back and continued to operate as part of the Princess fleet until 2002, when the former Renaissance Cruises R3 replaced her and took her name. She made her final voyage with Princess Cruises in October/November 2002, sailing from New York City to Rome, Italy. She then began operating for Pullmantur Cruises of Spain as *Pacific*, sailing in the Caribbean. She was later operated by CVC in Brazil during the Southern summer and by Quail Cruises in Spain during the Northern Summer.

She was reportedly seized by the Italian Coast Guard in 2008 for a repair bill owed by her former owners. In order to satisfy the debt, Italian authorities tried to sell *Pacific* at auction three times between 2010 and 2011, but no bids were received. In March 2012, a sale for scrap fell through; the ship once again was up for sale, and in August 2013, it was announced that she was headed for the scrap yard.

Why is any of this of note, you ask....The *Pacific Princess* was the Love Boat! Princess Cruises agreed to have the ship featured in the television romantic sitcom "The Love Boat," which debuted in 1977. The term "Love Boat" was heavily used by Princess Cruises in their marketing, and became synonymous with *Pacific Princess*. The success of the show, 1975-1986, is largely credited with the increase in popularity of cruise ship travel.

