

ANTIGUA

We are now approaching the island of Antigua at 8am on Monday morning, and in brilliant sunshine and heat - just as we did exactly one year ago! Yes, what a year it has turned out to be - will someone please wake us up from this fantastic dream!

We have a full day ashore today, the morning we will spend in town (last time here was on a Sunday with all places closed), and we have an excursion booked for the afternoon which will take us around the island, finishing with a spell on a local beach.

As we are visiting the same ports as last time (almost all anyway) we do not have much more to say about them, and which means our cruise reports will be quite small. Also, we are working much harder now - at our first meeting we counted 42 laptops! OK, we have split them into two groups, and that is working well. The passengers on this cruise seem a good bunch of folks, not quite so on the last cruise where we had some really "rough and ready and loud" types on-board.



Over the next week or so we will send a fuller account of this trip so far, and also a report, and also on the Van Gogh Computer Club and its members! Thanks for your emails and messages, thanks for looking after our affairs at home whilst we continue swanning our way around the world!

The Van Gogh sails into St John's in Antigua at 9 am. Our tour of the island does not start until the early afternoon, so we have plenty of time to wander the streets of the town, climb up to the cathedral, and return to the ship for the afternoon tour.

The last time we were here it was a Sunday, so most of the shops were shut. This time however, the streets are very busy with locals and passengers, the markets are colourful and frantic, and the many bars and restaurants are doing a good trade. The prices in the shops are not that cheap, so we do not buy any computer equipment, and in fact the "duty-free" prices in the shops are about twice the price of similar items in the UK.

Our trip of Antigua takes in some of the most famous of the island's landmarks, including the land locked English Harbour, where an 18th century "Nelson's

Dockyard" was developed to shelter English warships. Many of the original buildings here have been preserved, although most of them are now used for different purposes, such as a museum, gift shops and a hotel.



The trip back to St John's is via "Fig Tree Drive", a scenic and beautiful trip through the rainforest. The Antiguan word "Fig" actually means "Banana", and we can see all 4 varieties of the fruit that are grown on this island.

Our last stop on this tour is to one of Antigua's 365 beaches, where we relax on sun loungers, and take a dip in the lovely warm Caribbean Sea. We return to St John's in time to find a suitable Chinese restaurant for our evening meal. Sheila, our Bridge Lecturer friend, comes along with us, but her husband Tony is not a fan of foreign food, so he dines on the Van Gogh!

The ship leaves Antigua at 9 pm, bound for Point-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, where we arrive at 8 am the next day. The trip we have planned leaves at 8.30 am, so it is an early start for all of us.

