

Great Ships of the Seas: *MS Europa*

This was not the first *Europa*, nor was it the last, but it was the most well-known. The North German Lloyd Line could not have found a better acquisition than Swedish American's smart *Kungsholm* of 1953. She went on the sales lists in 1965, just as the Swedes were preparing for their newest (and last) liner, the fourth *Kungsholm*, completed in 1966.

The earlier *Kungsholm* was a dream ship—beautiful, mechanically sound, finely maintained, supremely well thought of, and she had the perfect ability to work either the two-class North Atlantic or sing-class luxury cruises. The Germans rechristened her the *Europa*. The liner offered a pre-war ambiance of glistening veneers and soft lighting, with everything polished to perfection.

She first crossed to New York in January 1966 and then went directly into winter Caribbean cruising. By the late sixties, however, along with the larger *Bremen*, she faced increased operational costs and a declining passenger trade. In 1970, when North German Lloyd merged with the Hamburg American line, adjustments were made. After a century, the Atlantic service was dropped in 1971. The *Bremen* was sold off, leaving the *Europa*. Again, her wonderful interiors proved popular.

The *Europa* continued in German service until 1981, when she was replaced by a newer, larger *Europa*. The older ship was then sold off to the Italian Costa Line for service as the *Columbus C*, and later the *Costa Columbus*. In July 1984, she rammed the breakwater at Cadiz, Spain. Badly holed, she made her pier just in time to safely offload her passengers and then capsize. She was damaged beyond economic recovery. [Reprised from 1996]

