Sailing the sunny seas

A Caribbean cruise you can afford

By Michael Patterson

The calypso-reggae band struck up a lively tune as the Bahamas-bound cruise ship rolled gently through the clear blue waters of the Straits of Florida. The carefree passengers amused themselves by dancing to the band's Afro-Caribbean rhythms, or talking and sipping on cool drinks at the various tables near the bandstand.

If you have, from time-to-time, found yourself day-dreaming of this type of scenario, with you and a favorite companion as the passengers, but have always found that you lacked either the time or the money to embark on such an odyssey, the Norwegian-Caribbean Line (NCL) may have found a way for you to enjoy your dream vacation within a suitable time frame and at an affordable price.

NCL's three- and four-night cruises to the Bahamian Islands of Freeport and Nassau are tailor made for vacationers who want to experience a fun-filled cruise without emptying their bank account or taking a full two weeks off from their place of employment.

Cruises offer several advantages over other types of vacations. When you are talking about cruises, the main word and the desired state of mind is carefree.

Most cruise lines offer land and sea packages in which passengers and their baggage are picked up at the airport in Miami, transported to their cruise ship and returned to the airport when their trip is completed.

Passengers don't have to worry about catching cabs from the airport, hotel reservations, finding suitable restaurants and hunting up local entertainment once they arrive at their destination.

The ship provides entertainment in the form of a gambling casino; a disco; a nightclub, which usually features live entertainment; several bars, located at various strategic points throughout the vessel; athletic facilities, including a swimming pool, weight room and sauna, and various activities, such as concerts by the resident band, movies and bingo games.

The ship used by NCL for its Bahamian cruises, the Sunward II, provides all of these amenities as well as excellent cuisine, which

Continued on Page 5

The cruise ship Sunward II is anchored just a short ferry ride away, as passengers enjoy a day on NCL's private out island.

ical beach scene of an island in the Caribbean, one of the Bahamas chain, where the cruise ship puts in so that the sengers can enjoy tropical vacation life.

Continued from Page 4

rved four times daily (three squares and a midnight snack) in lly abundant quantities. In other words, bring along the bonate.

e food, entertainment and use of all of the ship's facilities are ded in the basic price of the cruise. Tickets for the three-night e begin at $325. Prices for four-night cruises begin at $425. ices for land-sea packages vary depending on the distance of departure point from Miami. For example, a land-sea package the Baltimore-Washington area would cost $475 for a three cruise and $575 for a four-day cruise.

e three-day cruise on which this writer chose to embark began iami at 4 p.m. on a Friday. The ship cruised east throughout night, while the passengers after dinner, amused themselves by g part in a variety of activities aboard ship.

hen we (my wife and I) awoke at about 9 a.m. Saturday morn- the Sunward II was docked at Nassau's popular and colorful cruise . We spent the morning browsing through the city's shops and ng purchases in the bustling straw market that adjoins the port.

r our afternoon excursion, we chose to take a ferry from the to nearby Paradise Island, where Nassau's most beautiful beaches otels are found. While bathing on the beach at Paradise Island, an into several passengers from the Sunward II, who evidently also decided to enjoy the sun and surf.

uring the evening hours, most of the passengers, ourselves in- ed, decided on an evening out on the town. Nassau's night at- tions include several lively nightclubs, discos and casino's.

e popular location, the Paradise Island Resort and Casino, ures all three — a nightclub with a spectacular floor show, a h casino and a lively disco. Other hot spots include the Palace otheque and the King and Knights nightclub.

e ship departs early Sunday morning for a short trip to our uninhabited Bahamian Island owned by the cruise company. The passengers are ferried to the island from the ship in lifeboats for a magic day in the sun.

Activities at the "Out Island" include an open air barbeque, limbo and reggae dancing to the beat of a live band, swimming and snorkling with an added twist:

You can rent an easy-to-operate underwater camera and take pictures of the colorful tropical fish, which abound in the coral reefs that surround the island. All of these activities are enhanced by well-prepared tropical drinks.

The Sunward II departs the Out Island and begins steaming toward Miami late Sunday afternoon, and after a special farewell dinner that ends with a flaming baked Alaska dessert, the passengers begin enjoying another fun-filled evening aboard ship.

The ship arrives at the Port of Miami at 8 a.m., just in time to allow local residents an opportunity to get back into their 9-to-5 routine, and early enough for out-of-state passengers to catch an early flight home.

The itinerary for four-night cruises is very similar. The ship departs from Miami at 4:30 p.m. on Monday and arrives in Nassau Tuesday morning. Passengers are able to enjoy Nassau until 6:30 Wednesday morning, when the ship departs for a day on the "Out Island." Thursday morning and afternoon are spent in Freeport. The ship cruises Thursday night and arrives in Miami at 8 a.m. Friday.

Three-day cruises are ideal for those who can get away only for a long weekend. The four-day cruise makes an ideal mini-vacation. Both cruises are unique, exciting and relaxing vacations that should be experienced.

Further information on these and other cruises can be obtained by contacting your local travel agent.

Bon Voyage!