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Star Princess

Princess Cruises

OVERVIEW: Launched in October, *Star Princess* is the second ship in the line's Sphere Class, after *Sun Princess*. Like its sister, *Star Princess* has a capacity of 4,300, a cool colour palette, lots of natural light provided by the Sphere atrium in the midship and The Dome venue at the forward and is powered by liquefied natural gas. However, *Star Princess* features a few modifications including a separate non-smoking casino area.

CABINS: About half of the 2,150 cabins are balcony staterooms, which sleep up to four and offer a convertible bed with cloud-like mattress toppers, premium Beekman 1802 toiletries, plus motion-sensitive floor lights that help you find the way to the bathroom without waking up your travelling companion. Exclusive to the Sphere Class are the 146 Cabana Mini-Suites. As well as their own private terraces, guests have access to a Cabana deck with hot tubs and cushioned cherry-coloured sunbeds. Sanctuary Collection suites include access to a private pool at the aft, relaxing bar and dining area, exclusive restaurant and lounge, plus a bell to call for a flute of champagne.

FOOD AND DRINK: There are 30 restaurants and bars in total. Complimentary dining outlets include a buffet, American-style diner, a grab-and-go cafe, three-storey à la carte restaurant and various alfresco options, from Detroit pizzas on deck nine to tacos and burgers by the pool. Casual dining includes two busy standouts – sushi spot Makoto Ocean and Alfredo's Pizzeria. Speciality restaurants carry a charge of \$60 per adult and \$30 for children. Ensure clients book in advance for the

heart-shaped dishes in Love by Britto or the entertaining chef commentary at Umai Teppanyaki – complete with sizzling hot plate and flying egg rolls at the latter.

FACILITIES: There are two main pools on the lido deck, an indoor-outdoor pool in The Dome, plus an indoor spa pool. A padel court and shuffleboard dominate the top decks, while the cross-trainers and spin bikes in the gym put me through my paces – though fitness classes are available only in the Princess Premier package. The entertainment offering on *Star Princess* includes two new shows: circus-themed *Illuminate* and Bridgerton-inspired *Meridian*, both staged in the 990-seat Princess Arena. Entertainment is dotted across the ship, from aerialists in the atrium to folk musicians in O'Malley's Irish Pub.

USP: There are only three places where you can experience the Magic Castle fraternity of magicians: the original venue in Beverly Hills and the Spellbound by Magic Castle bars on *Sun* and *Star Princess*. Spellbound takes on a new speakeasy theme on *Star Princess*, honouring vaudeville magician Richard Valentine Pitchford. The cost has also been reduced from \$149 on *Sun Princess*, which included dinner, to \$45, now including two cocktails and a magic show.

BOOK IT: A seven-night Inside Passage cruise (round-trip from Seattle) costs from £729 per person, cruise-only, based on two sharing an inside stateroom. Departs May 10. onesourcecruises.com

Reviewed by Alice Barnes-Brown