

FYI Travel: This cruise gets political

by Amy Winter

Once again this summer, Crystal Cruises mixes politics with pleasure.

Husband and wife James Carville and Mary Matalin, returning lecturers for the cruise line, will present their opposing political views on the 2008 election onboard the Crystal Serenity as it plies the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas from Venice, Italy, to Rome.

SET A COURSE FOR POLITICS - Crystal Cruises is offering more than just Old World cruising this summer. As part of its Crystal Visions Enrichment Program, power couple James Carville and Mary Matalin will be giving lectures on American politics and the coming presidential election. CNS Photo.

CRUISING CONSULTANT - Political strategist James Carville and wife Mary Matalin will be lecturing about the coming presidential election this summer onboard the Crystal Serenity as it plies the Adriatic and Mediterranean. CNS Photo.

Carville, a Democrat, and Matalin, a Republican, are co-hosts and guests of some of TV's well-known political talk shows. Guests will be invited to discuss the upcoming election and its many candidates as part of the lecture sessions organized by Crystal Visions Enrichment Program.

The 12-day cruise sets sail from Venice on July 26 and arrives in Rome's Civitavecchia Port on Aug. 7. The ports of call in between include: Dubrovnik, Croatia; Taormina and Sorrento, Italy; Cannes, France and Florence/Livorno and Portofino, Italy. The cost for this unique opportunity to learn more about New World politics in an Old World setting starts at \$5,495 per person with double occupancy.

FYI: For more information, or to book a spot on the cruise, call 888-799-4625 or visit the cruise's Web site at www.crystalcruises.com.

PASSION PACKAGE

Feel the heat of passion at the Mauna Lani Resort with its new Lava Love package. The romantic getaway includes a room and special treatment at the spa. The resort, voted as one of the best spas in the world by Travel (and) Leisure magazine, is located on the Kohala Coast on the island of Hawaii. The resort is only 20 minutes north of the Kona International Airport.

The spa day includes a session in the outdoor sauna, a lava flow body treatment and a dip in the lava watsu pool. The love package was featured on Martha Stewart's show as one of the gifts for a "Return to Romance."

Not only can couples relax in the spa, but the resort offers other romantic activities as well. The CanoeHouse allows guests to enjoy a meal overlooking white sands along the Hawaiian shore, an ideal place to watch the sunset. For some fun in the sun, guests can shoot a round on the 36-hole golf course or trade forehands at the tennis club.

Package rates starts at \$525 per night (based on double occupancy), plus applicable taxes. A three-night minimum is required. This package is available until Dec. 19.

FYI: For more information, visit www.maunalani.com or call 800-367-2323. ENJOY YOUR TAX RETURNS

With tax season around the corner, the Fairmont Copley Plaza hotel in Boston is offering a way to enjoy your tax refunds. The "Tax Refund Weekend Package" provides accommodations for two and gives guests back the 12.45 percent room tax per night.

Guests can explore historic Boston while staying at a hotel that has provided accommodations since 1912. The 383 rooms and suites have been recently remodeled with an additional club level floor called Fairmont Gold. Guests may upgrade to these elite rooms for an additional \$100 per night.

This package is available until May 31. It gives guests a relaxing way to spend their 2006 tax refund. Taxes on food and drinks are not included with the tax refund for the room. Rates on rooms begin at \$235 per night.

FYI: For more information, or to purchase this package, call 800-441-1414 or visit their Web site www.fairmont.com/copleyplaza.

FYI Travel: This cruise gets political by Amy Winter