

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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# Saigon River Slalom redux - May 3, 2023

Updated: May 5, 2023

## ***SUMMARY***

We'd cancelled our shore excursion for this morning (a Vietnamese food cooking class). The 6:30am start time and 10:30am four-course lunch just weren't appealing. We left Ho Chi Minh City a little before noon and began a half "Day at Sea". We lounged in our room and by the pool, had cocktails and a good Greek dinner, caught the late-night Cabaret performance and called it a day. - Karen

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## ***DETAIL***

Today's our last day in Ho Chi Minh City, and in Vietnam. Our flight home, in four days, looms large. We should be living in the moment but the impending end of our fun vacation continually forces itself to the front of our thinking.

We did have an excursion scheduled for today, a cooking class. We cancelled it a couple of days ago. The thinking was that we weren't crazy about going back to the outdoor market to buy vegetables and protein, and we're unlikely to be cooking Vietnamese delicacies at home. Also, Karen's already had one cooking class where she learned to make Vietnamese spring rolls (with or without a glove rolled in). So we get that money back (maybe it'll cover our outstanding balance on the ship) and we have more free time to relax.

We sail away, mid-day. Upon our departure the captain comes on the PA just to let us know what's going on. It's not strictly necessary, I'm sure, but it provides a few minutes of entertainment.

We learn the ship will be motoring 651 nautical miles to Singapore. Again the first fifty of those will be the Saigon River Slalom. Importantly, the local pilot is already on board as are all of the guests/passengers, so we'll be heading out immediately. Less critical is that it's sunny, 95° with 5 to 10 knot winds.

Karen and I strategically grab two chairs on the forward top deck, looking over the bow to wherever the ship is headed. The glass in front of us is angled, like a car windshield, from ceiling to floor, presumably for less wind resistance, but it does let in a lot of sun which bakes us as we sit. Watching the slaloming is fun, as is watching the variety of business on the shores.

Most fun are the boats coming the other direction. Some look like we're on a collision course, and occasionally the captain sounds the ship's horn to scold some craft for not getting out of the way quickly enough. We pass beneath impressive bridges and sail past others that are still a ways from completion. I wonder if Evil Knievel would have enjoyed jumping across the incomplete spans, were he still alive.

After a while Ho Chi Minh City has receded far into the distance and the narrow river has opened up onto the South China Sea. Show over, we head down to hang out in our cabin. Eventually we head up to the pool deck and hang out up there. It's busy as everyone is necessarily aboard and maybe bored. We have shifting winds, so when Karen takes her recommended pre-swim shower the wind at first keeps the water off her completely and then shifts and pelts her in the face. It's funny to watch (if you're not Karen).

After more cabin time and a proper shower we dress for dinner and have drinks back up in the crow's nest/living room (where we were earlier). We listen to the ensemble playing cocktail hour music. They ask for suggestions and Karen offers up Roy Orbison. They do a very passable Pretty Woman.

At dinner we eat inside, but pick up some of our meal out on the open air deck, not far from the pool. While in Ho Chi Minh City the chef picked up some gorgeous fresh tuna and they had two round Weber grills set up with glowing coals. They cooked tuna stakes on demand to people's liking while you wait. It is some of the best I've had, very fresh and tender with delicious flavor.

At nine we head to the cabaret (the main entertainment venue) to listen to two ladies who go by Viva La Diva. They play with the ship's band though they only had one measly hour to practice, but they do great. They perform songs by Adele, Cher, Tina Turner, Kiki D, and others. They tease the next song as being by the Scottish Pocket Rocket (a reference that many people seemed to know). It's Lulu and the song is "You know you make me want to shout". It was good and fun, but I don't think of it as \*her\* song.

Eventually we head back to our cabin for sleep time. We'd gained two hour over the previous couple of weeks. Tonight we give one of them back.

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## Photos



Breakfast with Ho Chi Minh City in the distance from the aft deck.



Watching the Saigon River Slalom from the crow's nest/living room (at the front of the boat). The greenhouse effect is somewhat cooking us. A pretty bridge coming up.



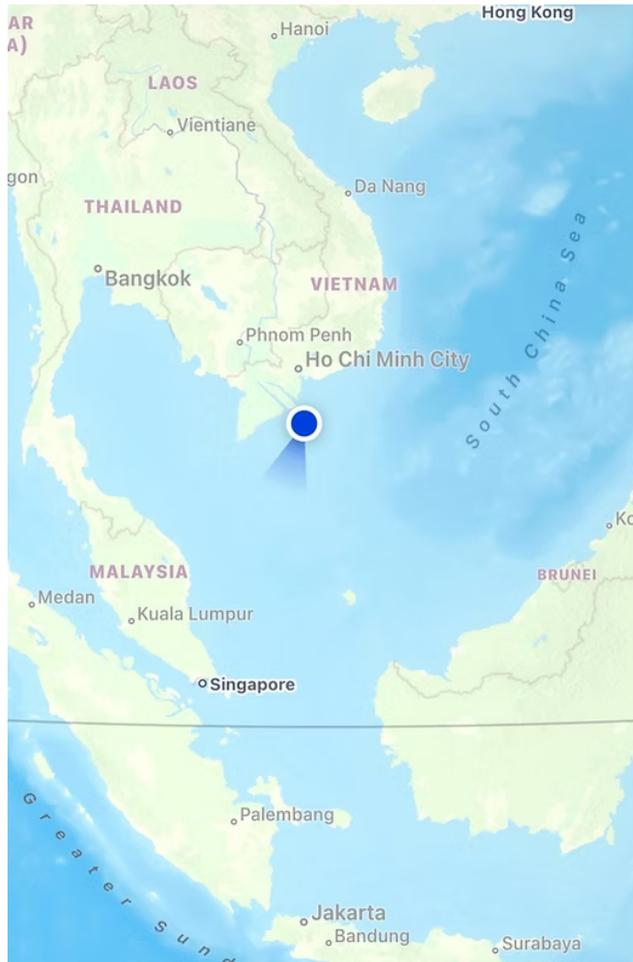
Passing an unfinished bridge. We think Evil Knievel would have loved to take a run at that.



Back in the Living Room with the lounge singers. Lemon Drop Martini and Old Fashioned partially consumed.



Maybe closest we've gotten to a proper sunset.



(Nautical) miles to go before we land in Singapore.



There's different styles of art sprinkled around the boat. This pair of 6' tall art is what you look at as you start down the stairs from deck 10 aft. As this is how you sometimes feel (with the movement of the ship) we question the choice.



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Looking down at the glowing coals in the Weber grills used to sear our tuna. So yummy.



One half of the duo Viva la Diva belting one out in the Cabaret.



The walk down this hallway to our cabin is always a study in vanishing points.

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