

DESERT GOLF & TENNIS

Maury Povich & Connie Chung

"He's a golf addict, she's his understanding wife"

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for members and guests

A Nearly Historic Tennis Season
Hannah O'Sullivan, Amateur Extraordinaire | Cruising the Tahitian Islands
The Bentley Bentayga | Bighorn Institute 2015 Party and Golf Classic



In 1769, Captain James Cook arrived in Tahiti on the first of his three voyages of discovery across the Pacific. It took him eight months to get there. Today, you can discover the incomparable beauty of these Pacific islands on a much shorter timeframe but with no less a sense of wonder at the spectacular scenery and rich culture—and you can do it in first-class luxury aboard Paul Gauguin Cruises.

Paul Gauguin has two ships purpose built for cruising the shallow waters of French Polynesia, and several itineraries to choose from. One of its popular seven-night cruises is Tahiti, the Society Islands & Tuamotus, which includes stops in Tahiti, Huahine, Fakarava, Rangiroa, Bora Bora and Moorea, each with its own ambiance and striking setting, each with something special to offer. Passengers experience each island from the water and on land. Among the treasures to discover are lush landscapes, some of the clearest water on the planet and welcoming locals.



Utterly romantic and magical, these islands offset dramatic mountainous terrain with sweeping white-sand beaches and teeming coral reefs. The shallow waters provide ample opportunity for visitors to experience the reefs up close and to try a variety of water sports including snorkeling, diving, fishing, paddleboarding, kite surfing and jet skiing. Feeding and swimming with stingrays and blacktip reef sharks is a highlight of exploring here as

they're abundant in the waters around the islands, and there is always the chance of glimpsing eerie moray eels and massive manta rays. Pearl farming is a huge local industry and black pearls are a staple of the tourist market.

Tahiti is the largest island of French Polynesia. Shaped like a figure eight, it's divided into Tahiti Nui, the largest western section, and Tahiti Iti, the smaller eastern peninsula. With black and white sand

beaches, lagoons, waterfalls and two extinct volcanoes, it is one of the most exotic locations in the world. It was famously the subject of many paintings by French artist Paul Gauguin, who lived in Tahiti and other Pacific islands, hence the name of one of the cruise line.

Papeete, Tahiti, is a nine-hour nonstop flight from Los Angeles, making it easily accessible. To experience the welcoming Tahitian culture from the start of your



journey, book a flight on Air Tahiti Nui, which offers comfortable seating, plenty of legroom, excellent staff and new aircraft. Booked several months in advance, Air Tahiti Nui's round-trip fare from Los Angeles runs about \$1,500.

Take time to relax and acclimate before your cruise by booking a night or two at the five-star Intercontinental Tahiti Resort & Spa in Papeete. This lush resort sits on the water and features 253 large rooms in several categories. The most popular accommodations are the overwater bungalows, luxury accommodations with balconies on the water. Waterfall swimming pools, a 24-hour fitness center, spa services, live entertainment, two restaurants and a swim-up bar provide multiple ways to relax and enjoy Tahiti.

Paul Gauguin Cruises' two ships in the region are the *Paul Gauguin*, which first launched in 1998 and underwent a \$7 million renovation in 2012, and *Tere Moana*, which set sail on her maiden voyage December 29, 2012. The *Paul Gauguin* accommodates up to 332 guests and nearly 70 percent of its suites and staterooms offer private balconies. *Tere Moana* accommodates just 88 guests. Both ships specialize in personalized luxury.

Perhaps the best thing about sailing through French Polynesia is that you cruise to island after spectacular island but unpack only once. Then again, there are a multitude of luxuries that elevate the experience. All meals and beverages are included throughout the voyage. Every kind of drink and cocktail is available and a

variety of cuisines, including French, are served in *Paul Gauguin*'s three restaurants. Every palate can be sated with options from gourmet foie gras and rack of lamb to milkshakes and hamburgers.

The ship also offers numerous activities and services on board including a casino, shuffleboard, boutique shopping, a spa and massage treatments, workout facility and 24-hour room service. Off the ship, passengers have access to a private beach in Bora Bora and to Motu Mahana, the cruise line's exclusive private island. All snorkeling equipment and canoes are included with excursions and jet skis are available for a nominal fee.

Publishers Note: We know that many of our readers travel extensively. If you haven't been to the South Pacific this trip is a must, especially with the respected experts in the region, Paul Gauguin Cruises. Both the *Paul Gauguin* and *Tere Moana* offer year-round sailing throughout this unique island destination. Other destinations include Spain, Portugal, Panama, Costa Rica, Colon, St. Maarten and the Cook & Society Islands.

Timothy J. Pade is the publisher of *Desert Golf & Tennis*