

It's the ship with an ice bar, water slides and bowling alleys

An Epic adventure



Floating resort: Norwegian Epic arrives in Southampton Picture: NCL

■ The new £800million cruise ship Norwegian Epic is being shown off in Southampton at a two-day press and trade event ahead of its naming in New York. Metro's Dave Monk had a sneak preview on its first passenger trip out of Rotterdam...

GIVEN what happened to the Titanic, you'd think cruise ships would steer clear of ice. But they love it – one serves 50 tonnes of cubes a day, others boast skating rinks and Norwegian Epic even has a bar made of it.

At -10°C, it's certainly the coolest place at sea to have a drink. Wrapped in a fake-fur poncho, I slid my gloved hand round an electric blue cocktail and sat on a frozen block of water as my breath steamed in front of me.

The 153,000-tonne ship is the latest attempt by owners NCL to change the face of cruising. From water slides to abseiling walls and ten-pin bowling alleys, this is a vessel built for fun.

Even her greatest friends would not call the exterior beautiful – she looks top heavy, as if someone's carried out an ill-fitting loft extension – but inside the 19 decks boast elegant restaurants, an atmospheric jazz club, an intimate comedy venue, a circus 'tent'



Ice breaker: The frozen bar

and lots to do for teens and children including SpongeBob SquarePants.

The highlight of the entertainment is the Blue Man Group, though there's also a tribute show and a wonderful rock'n'roll duelling piano act.

In this floating holiday resort, which will be based at first in Miami, the 4,200 passengers have a choice of dining venues including French, Italian, American steakhouse and Chinese.

But if you don't fancy that, you can always order a 24-hour pizza...

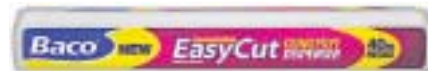
> Dopey thief fled with TV on bicycle

SOMETIMES police work can be taxing but once in a while a dopey thief makes the job so much easier. Officers caught a suspect who made off with a 32in TV on his bicycle after he stole it to watch the World Cup. Craig Docherty, 23, fled from a Sainsbury's store in Sittingbourne, Kent, on June 1 but officers easily spotted the suspect pedalling down the road. Meanwhile, in nearby Maidstone, Way-Lin To, 20, grabbed a 'free' alarm clock from a bank when told he was 'too old' to open a young investor account. He was fined £75 at Mid Kent magistrates' court. Elsewhere, police arrested a young drug dealer after finding a hand-written reminder in his pocket to 'sell push bike, go on the rob, sell weed, get a job'. Thomas Franks, 19, was arrested on May 7 this year after police found cannabis on him in Crawley, West Sussex.

> The facts and figures

- The ice bar uses 7,205 litres of water in its bar, walls, tables, stools, glasses and sculptures – enough to fill 36 baths
- The water slides would be 230m (750ft) high if stood end-on-end – twice the height of the Big Ben clock tower
- The on-deck TV has a 762cm (300in) screen
- The ship is made of 35,000 tonnes of steel
- There are 2,395 sunloungers
- The 20 dining venues will serve the 4,200 guests a total of 20,370 meals every day

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