

CRUISE SHIP QE2 TO BECOME A FLOATING HOTEL



After years of indecision, speculation and proposals it appears that the cruise ship QE2 will finally have a new home in Singapore as a floating hotel. The Financial Times has produced a rather vague report that suggests that - as of January 17th - the QE2 has been sold by Istithmar in Dubai to Oceanic for \$1m and that after ten years they will purchase it outright for at least \$35m.

The idea of the luxury, British liner becoming a hotel, may not be a surprise to many but the fact that it is moving to Singapore could make people a little more confused. There seems to be a sense of denial in London with Rob Lightbody of QE2 London believing that they can "show Dubai that QE2 London is still the best proposal", however there is already a site called QE2hotels.com showcasing plans for the ship in her new, Asian home and Cunard - the ships original owner - refuses to say anything definite except that plans are progressing.

The decision, if true, will be a large blow for British fans of the iconic ship, the government officials that backed a strong proposal and the tourism industry. There were plans to bring the ship back to her homeland to be moored on the Thames as a tourist attraction but, even with the backing of Mayor Boris Johnson, Singapore and Oceania appear to have something that Istithmar cannot resist.

There are two ways of looking at this announcement; some will hold on to the hope that it is as much of a fabrication as the idea that she was going to be scrapped by the Chinese, others will just be glad that the liner finally has a home and can be used to her full potential after being in a state of limbo following the economic crash. Either way, the story of the QE2 is far from over.

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