



Quality Report
Hotel Boat Standard

Operator name MV Edward Elgar

★★★★ Hotel Boat
Mobility One – Older and Less Agile Guests

Visit date: 3/05/16 and 10/10/16

QiT No: 575152

Executive Summary

| Hotel Boat | Star Rating |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| MV Edward Elgar | Four |

The MV Edward Elgar luxury cruiser was assessed under the VisitEngland quality grading scheme for boats and has once again comfortably achieved a Four Star rating.

A number of projects and upgrades have been completed this year with the ensuite bathrooms having had a major financial investment with exceptionally pleasing results.

The exterior of the boat continues to present to a really impressive standard, with new rubber compound matting added to the deck to improve guest safety and reduce the chance of slipping when the surface is wet.

The family run company has total commitment from all family members, with the quality of care from the crew being marked an impressive 100% on the in house questionnaires on aspects such as assistance, service, attitude and friendliness.

Further to upgrades and suggestions inputted from last year, only a few further suggestions made this year to build on the impressive progress made.

A further visit took place on the 10th October to do a rating under the National Accessible Scheme, with a M1 – older and less agile guests – rating achieved with some recommendations – see below.

Website Review

Impressed to note suggestions made last year have been acted upon, and on putting “English Cruises” into the leading search engine, the englishholidaycruises.co.uk page came up first, second, third and fourth in various guises, giving a really visible sales platform.

The pages loaded quickly, with guests invited to “take a tour” with a short three minute video, with four further videos having guests discussing the facilities, food, the crew, all of which are professionally produced and accurately portray the facilities on board. As discussed, since the time of the last visit EnjoyEngland has been rebranded as VisitEngland and I will forward the new logos and ask that you replace the current ones, both on the main home page and in the “take a tour” video with the updated versions.

Pricing is clearly noted on later pages, with the influence very much on “all inclusive” packages, thus guests have no hidden, unforeseen costs.

As discussed the page does have a Facebook “like” but no link through to the Facebook page, which does have up to date content and would prove to be a further marketing link as discussed.

No entry on Tripadvisor as the site does not have a category for boats, but the guest reviews on the site speak for themselves.

Lastly the www.englishholidaycruises.co.uk page was checked to see if it was mobile friendly, which it is, thus allowing it to be easily viewed on tablets or portable devices.

Deficiency Report

Standard: Hotel Boat Standard

Designator: Hotel Boat

To be recognised within the Visit Britain Quality Assessment Scheme an operator and its craft must meet all the minimum entry requirements and must also provide sufficient quality to meet the minimum requirements for One Star, in all areas of the Operation.

- All minimum entry requirements in place at the time of this visit

NB – the MV Edward Elgars policy on televisions in bedrooms is clearly detailed on the web page and in the pre-arrival information, thus guests know fully what to expect – a peace and quiet policy

National Accessible Scheme

Under the National Accessibility Scheme a rating of Mobility One has been achieved, with all requirements being in place, however the following recommendations are suggested as discussed (remember these are recommendations, not requirements).

The rating awarded will remain valid for Three Years.

- 8.1 Recommend the bedroom cabins are fitted with a horizontal door handle (rather than a turning knob handle)
- 14.15 Recommend the full length mirror in the bedrooms have a lower edge of 400mm and an upper edge of 1800mm (currently 640mm to 1720mm)
- 14.13 Recommend the provision of an emergency alarm call system in the bedroom – can be a portable bell
- 15.12 Recommend the provision of an emergency alarm call system in the bathroom – can be a portable bell
- 15.6 Recommend the provision of a vertical rail to one side of the wash hand basin in the ensuite bathrooms
- 15.11 Recommend the provision of a swing top or flip top bin in the bathrooms to replace the current pedal bin
- 17.2 Recommend the provision of a shower stool

Quality Report

Service and Management Efficiency

- (no change since the last visit)
- Good pre-arrival information supplied, the joining instructions being clear and easy to follow.
- An Access Statement for less agile guests is well thought out and comprehensive, covering all aspects of the guests stay on board.
- The boat, safety and cabin information being comprehensive and covering aspects of safety, an introduction to the facilities in the bedroom and bathroom, with all meal information provided.
- Good to note an extensive environmental policy in place. An environmental policy being in place on the cabin towels also. The family being sure that all cleaning chemicals used on board are environmentally friendly.
- A very friendly welcome on arrival with refreshment offered. Hospitality experienced during this visit was to a very high standard. Good to note free flow tea and coffee available from the dining area most of the day for guests to help themselves.
- Feedback forms for the year were produced, the assessor being able to select several at random, with exceptionally positive comments noted about all aspects of the stay – headings of specific questions included making the booking, food and meal arrangements, boat facilities, cleanliness, crew standard, cruise entertainment as well as a more general heading of cruise enjoyment, which could have been a little more subjective, but again had very positive comments noted
- Evidence that overall cleanliness throughout the boat is to a high standard, again with excellent comments noted on the feedback forms regarding this, with four areas marked – cleanliness of cabins / daily cleaning / saloon and bar cleanliness and external areas – all scoring an impressive 100% on the forms.

Exterior of boat

- The boat is attractively presented, with the name being clearly displayed in addition to the website address, assisting the guest arrival process.
- The upper deck continues present well, with the seating and cushions being in very good repair.
- A new double glazed wheelhouse has been added, ensuring the view from the top deck of the boat, or the facilities is very good indeed.
- No revisit from the EHO this last year, with the previously held rating for “Scores on the doors” being clearly displayed

Saloon, Dining area and corridors

- The spacious saloon/dining area is well presented with separate areas for the bar and restaurant noted
- The bar area which had been renovated at the time of the last assessment continuing to present well, new lighting to this area working well.
- New dining tables and leather chairs present to a very high standard, with new lighting also noted to this area, with all windows having been refitted.
- A wider range of hot beverages is provided on a “free flow” basis, as discussed could consider removing the cafetieres and ground coffee and moving to a coffee bag provision (similar to a tea bag, but filled with fresh ground coffee) which may be easier and less messy for guests to use.
- The library area has been extended with further books and games provided. The jigsaw table no doubt being well utilised.

Sleeping cabins

- Cabins seen at the time of this assessment – 1, 4 and 11.
- The boat has 11 cabins, all of which are twins, which are fitted to the same high standard
- As the tap water is not recommended to drink, fresh drinking water is supplied daily.
- New blackout curtains have been fitted since the time of the last assessment, with beds being dressed to a high standard with crisp white stripe bedding and attractive bed cushions co-ordinating with the new curtains.
- Clever storage options under the beds, with a good level of hanging space noted.
- Cabins are kept comfortably warm or cool via air-conditioning and heating, with the new lighting added this year being particularly effective.

Bathrooms

- An impressive and comprehensive refit since the time of the last visit, with new Altro flooring, new wet walling, new multi jet showers and fittings, and lastly new basins with further storage space underneath in the cupboard.
- Whilst cosy in size, good use has been made of the available space in each of the bathrooms.
- As discussed the liquid soap, shower gel etc. needs to have the ingredients listed somewhere so any guests with allergies are aware of the constituents of the products used to fill the dispensers. Wrapped bar soap as seen at the time of the visit already has the ingredients listed on the back of the pleat wrapped packaging.
- Improved lighting levels, and thanks to the vents cut into the new bathroom doors, a very good level of ventilation noted.
- The new doors giving improved privacy over the previous slatted style doors.

Dining

- A menu folder was seen at the time of the visit, with a different menu noted for each night of the week, impressive too to note a different breakfast served every morning.
- Guests with dietary requirements are very well catered for, with chef having a weekly briefing sheet to ensure he is fully aware of allergies and personal preferences.
- Complimentary wine continues to be served with dinner and pricing of other drinks is now clear, as suggested last year. Understand a further after dinner drinks menu is being compiled.

Notes for Proprietors / Managers

The copy of our Quality Assessment Report provides information on our assessment of your accommodation and services. The form may be amended from time to time if we discover that this information can be presented in ways that are more helpful. When making quality assessments the assessor is assessing each aspect against the standards of excellence established by Visit Britain. Assessors are trained to ignore their own personal preferences and prejudices when making these assessments. This report is provided in confidence and its contents may not be displayed in any printed material or via electronic media, or indeed quoted verbally. This restriction also implies to any verbal comment made by the assessor at the time of the visit.

The observations in the Quality Assessment Report are intended to be helpful by drawing particular points to your attention. There is no implication that it was these aspects alone that influenced the overall assessment, or that, if they are acted upon, a higher overall grade would be necessarily achieved. Should a proprietor/manager disagree with the grade given, there is an Appeal Procedure, details of which are available from Quality in Tourism (QualityInTourism@uk.G4S.com, Tel 0845 300 6996). A separate charge is made for an appeal assessment.