WELCOME TO YOUR CYBER LIBRARY

P&O Cruises offers a range of library services. Neitika Reddy introduces us to Britannia's boutique library and explains how you can stay connected on board

WORDS **SAMANTHA WHITAKER**
PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL MITCHELL**

Even though many of us now simply download new books with a swift tap on an e-reader screen, there's still nothing better than browsing through real books to inspire your next read. The tactile pages, the shiny covers, the smell of fresh paper. And on Britannia, that's exactly what you'll find in the library. Just like everywhere else on board, the design is super-stylish and sophisticated, with soft light filtering through the vast windows and brand-new, glossy tomes neatly lined up, ready and waiting for the first passengers to delve into.

'The best things about the library are the location and the ambience,' says librarian Neitika Reddy. 'It's quiet, peaceful and there's a beautiful sea view.' Neitika has previously worked on Azura, Oriana and Ventura, where she was awarded Performer of the Month. The appointment on Britannia was hotly contended and Neitika is extremely proud to be responsible for establishing the library in its maiden season.

'I'm particularly looking forward to cruising along the Norwegian Fjords and enjoying the stunning views from my desk when it's quiet,' she adds.

If you need help choosing your next read, Neitika knows every book on the library's shelves: 'We've got an amazing collection of authors – you'll find everything from romantic novels to thrillers and murder mysteries – so, depending on the mood of the passengers, I can quickly show them something they might like.' Neitika will also be keeping a note of the books passengers request and order the most popular ones to be on the shelves for future cruises.

As well as managing the books, Neitika also looks after the passenger internet service – in fact, she's Britannia's first Cyber Librarian, or 'Cybrarian'. 'I help passengers create an account so they can get in touch with their family back home from anywhere on the ship,' she explains. Wi-Fi connectivity is provided throughout the ship via a satellite connection, and passengers can either connect using their own devices or use the computers in the library.

Time packages of 100 or 250 minutes are available to buy (plus a £2.50 activation charge), or there's a Pay As You Go service, which works out at about 50p a minute. 'The first three days of a cruise are always very busy, as the passengers want to get connected, understand the packages and learn about any special offers that are available. Then, once they know what they're doing, it gets a little quieter,' says Neitika.

As technology is important to passengers who are keen to stay in touch with loved ones and news from home, crew members will happily help with anything from sending an email to downloading a newspaper to read on your tablet. And if you're keen to use your free time on board to boost your IT skills, they'll even set up informal one-to-one sessions or a small tutorial group if enough passengers express an interest. Just ask on board for more information. ■

WIN HOLIDAY READS

If you need inspiration for a good holiday book, turn to page 74 for recommendations from crew and some of this issue's contributors. You could also be the lucky winner of this great collection of holiday reads.





