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**CATALINA EXPRESS:
A LEADER IN LUXURY BOAT TRANSPORT TO CATALINA ISLAND,
FERRYING MORE THAN 1 MILLION PASSENGERS YEARLY**

Today's visitors to Catalina Island might take for granted the high-speed, luxury service provided by Catalina Express, which whisks passengers between the mainland and the Island. They might be shocked to hear what the trip was like before Catalina Express pioneered service spanning the 22 miles of ocean. In the first two-thirds of the 20th century, steamships took up to eight hours to reach the Island, and even as more modernized vessels came on line, the trip still took hours.

Today, it takes just one hour (sometimes less) via a fleet of four high-speed catamarans and four mono-hull vessels from Catalina Express' mainland ports of San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point.

PIONEERING THE WAY FOR EFFICIENT ISLAND TRANSPORT

In 1981, founders Doug Bombard, with son Greg and colleague Tom Rutter, formed Catalina Express with one 60-passenger vessel carrying 3,256 passengers, seven employees, and three scheduled round-trips per day between San Pedro and the Catalina Island ports of Avalon and Two Harbors. Currently, its fleet of eight high-speed vessels carries more than 1 million passengers per year and each year anticipates more than 9,000 channel crossings. Since its first year in business, more than 33 million passengers have traveled aboard Catalina Express-operated boats. The company is the only service to operate daily service throughout the year.

But members of the Bombard family are natural hands at this: They've been welcoming Catalina Island visitors on board their boats for over a century.

Al Bombard, Doug's father and Greg's grandfather, established the Catalina Speedboat Company in 1921, using World War I aircraft engines in his speedboats. The boats, which he called Miss Catalinas, were attractions in their own right for visitors to the island. The most exciting ride was called "Meet the Steamer." The steamship passengers were enthralled by this tradition – not only by the power of the boats but also by the pretty girls who were often invited along for the ride. When movies were shot on Catalina Island, Al's Miss Catalina speedboats were used to transport "dailies," the film shot on a particular day's shooting schedule, back to Hollywood studios on the mainland.

Doug Bombard grew up working on and piloting the Miss Catalina speedboats, plying the Avalon and Two Harbors areas, the harbor and surrounding coves. One of his duties involved a young sports announcer who was on the island for the Chicago Cubs' spring training workouts: Ronald Reagan. When this aspiring actor was offered a screen test in Hollywood, it was Doug who sped him back to the mainland.

Doug Bombard went on to found Catalina Express with son Greg and Tom Rutter. The company, which employs around 400 people in summer and 300 during the winter, has emerged as a leader of marine transportation to Catalina Island, with approximately 96% of the Catalina ferry market.

Greg Bombard, 2007 recipient of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce's City National Bank Entrepreneur of the Year Award, is president/CEO of Catalina Express and a pioneer in marketing marine transportation to Catalina Island. He says: "In our 40-year history, we have a great source of pride with the ability to continually offer comfortable, personalized passenger service year-round."

A MAJOR INNOVATOR IN SAFETY, COMFORT & DESIGN

Catalina Express' concern for passenger safety and comfort has always been preeminent, and the company continuously upgrades its fleet. Over the years, Bombard has worked closely with boat builders to design 14 vessels that ensure optimal performance in the Catalina Channel. Catalina Express has introduced such features as computer-monitored ride control-systems for vessel stability, state-of-the-art

navigational equipment, airline-style cabin seating, and panoramic viewing windows and on-deck seating. Catalina Express operates the fastest, most comfortable vessels to Catalina Island, featuring sleek hulls, state-of-the-art stabilizers that smooth out 90 percent of the ocean's roll, and high-tech navigational equipment and radio communications systems for safe channel crossing.

Passenger comfort is a top priority of Catalina Express. Its boats offer both inside cabin seating and upper-deck seating; full bar, cocktail and refreshment service with light snacks; cabin attendant service; wheelchair accessibility; and private restrooms.

For premier accommodations on the trip across the channel, the Commodore Lounge, available on the Starship Express, Catalina Jet and Jet Cat Express, offers priority boarding, complimentary beverage and snack service. The Captain's Lounge, available on the Catalina Express, Avalon Express, Islander Express and Super Express, has seating for up to eight passengers, or can be used as a hostess center for larger groups. It includes priority boarding, plush, upgraded seating, and complimentary beverages.

Each of the eight Catalina Express vessels has been re-engined to reduce NOx emissions, a project partially funded by a grant from the Port of Los Angeles Air Quality Mitigation Program. In spring 2017, Starship Express was re-engineered, and re-launched with Tier III engines. The Port of Los Angeles reports that Catalina Express has reduced 800 tons of NOx emissions and 10,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions and 30 tons of particulate matter emissions – the equivalent of 10,000 cars.

The company's first catamaran, named Cat Express, was put into service in 1997 from San Pedro, with three passenger decks, including a top deck for open-air seating. The catamaran carries up to 300 passengers at speeds of 28 knots. Today, Catalina Express operates a modern fleet that runs on published schedules from all of its terminals. In the summer of 1999, a new generation of high-speed catamaran came on line. The Starship Express takes 300 passengers at speeds of up to 33 knots and has reduced channel crossings to well under one hour. In 2001, the Jet Cat came on line and carries 381 passengers at top speeds of 42 knots. In fall 2019 to spring 2020, Jet Cat received interior and exterior upgrades including LED lighting, new flooring and wall covering, water jets overhauled, vinyl wrap to cover the exterior and much more. The final boat to join the fleet was Catalina Jet in 2004, which takes up to 450 passengers at

speeds reaching 37 knots. In fall 2018 to spring, Catalina Jet had extensive interior and exterior upgrades including LED lighting, new ceiling and wall covering, restrooms, replacement fire main system installed, top end engine work and much more.

In June of 1998, the company began operating two new 40-foot water taxis named AquaBus I and II in connection with Long Beach Transit. Taxis carry up to 49 passengers and link the major visitor attractions of Long Beach Harbor, including the Catalina Express/Queen Mary Port, the Aquarium of the Pacific, the Rainbow Lagoon development and Shoreline Village. The AquaLinks water taxis, also a service of Long Beach Transit, are 68-foot catamarans that comfortably ferry up to 75 passengers to the most popular attractions in Long Beach Harbor and on down to Alamitos Bay Landing.

MARKETING & JOINT PROMOTIONS KEY TO SUCCESS

Because of Catalina Express' three-generation legacy with the island, its passion for everything Catalina, and its status as one of the most important components of a visit to Catalina Island, it is more than just a company that provides transport: It has become a major destination marketing force, a one-stop source on all that Catalina Island has to offer. Catalina Express is a leader in initiating joint promotions with hotels, tour companies, dining and shopping businesses and the Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, enabling the Island to maximize its marketing dollars and increase its level of awareness in the highly competitive tourism market.

Like many progressive companies, Catalina Express relies on a customized reservations system to expedite passenger service. In 2018, Catalina Express introduced an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that allows customers with Catalina Express accounts the convenience to book their passage to Catalina Island over the phone 24 hours a day. IVR is an automated phone call operating system that answers a call, asks qualifying questions to callers and routes the call according to the answers. In spite of advances in passenger boat technology and instant communications via the Internet, the company credits good old-fashioned friendly service as keys to its success.

As president Greg Bombard sums it up, "From the reservation agent to the captain and his or her crew, our goal is to offer passengers more than just a boat ride

but a total travel experience. Our repeat business and increasing passenger loads through the years are proof that it works.”

For reservations and information, call 800.429.4601, or visit

CatalinaExpress.com.

About Catalina Island and Catalina Express

Located 22 miles off the coast of Southern California, Catalina Island is accessible by boat from three ports via Catalina Express: San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point. Catalina Express offers up to 30 departures daily and year-round service to Avalon and Two Harbors, transporting more than one million passengers annually. It offers comfortable airline-style seats and grouped table seating. Traveling to Catalina Island in as little as one hour, each vessel was designed and built/purchased specifically for comfort and speed. Catalina Express is an unparalleled resource in Southern California, and one of the world's most respected ferry fleets. For information and reservations, call 800-429-4601, or visit Catalina Express.

[Catalina Island's](#) clear blue waters and Mediterranean climate and ambiance are a Shangri-La. This laid-back island town is chock full of places to eat, drink, shop. Catalina has a wealth of natural and cultural resources, unique animals and plants found nowhere else on earth. Sightseeing opportunities are numerous and varied from escorted tours around town, adventure rides into the interior, jeep eco tours, hummer rides, to zip lines, rock climbing and undersea adventures. Independent activities are plentiful, camping, hiking, snub, diving, snorkeling, kayaking, spa treatments, beach lounging, golf, motor boating, parasailing, fishing, boat rides down the coastline and more.

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