

THINGS TO DO

Queen Mary chases the Chill with a vodka bar

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There will be plenty of chances to experience Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" during the holiday season, since a movie version is usually on TV or the classic is performed as a play by [local companies](#).

There's also a way to get inside the story and walk through a quaint, frozen town right into the scenes of the holiday tale.

And those of drinking age can even check it all out with a little vodka served very, very chilled.

The holiday story and a new ice bar are part of the Queen Mary's annual [Chill](#) attraction, which opens Nov. 20 and transforms more than 2 million pounds of ice into an interactive ice exhibit inspired by various [themes](#).

"This year's theme is 'A Christmas Carol' and we really went into something that is a bit more dramatic than what we've done in the past. It's very story driven," said Charity Hill, assistant director of entertainment for the Queen Mary and producer of Chill.

It's the biggest event of the year for the busy ship and is expected to draw about 200,000 visitors through Jan. 10.

"And of course we'll have the Queen Mary (in the ice exhibit), which we have every year, but this year it's being focused as our ice bar," added Hill, who was wearing two large blue parka coats at once after walking through the 9 degree 13,000-square-foot tent that's dubbed the Ice Kingdom.

The tent houses the ice exhibit inside the Queen Mary Dome.

Besides the Ice Kingdom, Chill includes a six-lane ice tube slide, an ice rink and a holiday-themed village outside the dome where Santa will be on hand along with holiday carolers.

The main draw, however, is the ice exhibit.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, less than two weeks before opening day, a team of more than 30 sculptors from China worked in the tent with hammers, chain saws, axes and chisels to create a replica of London circa 1840.

Ice shavings fell from above like snowflakes as one sculptor, dressed in a thick coat and wearing a helmet, stood atop an approximately 15-foot-tall ladder while working with a small chain saw to carve the finishing touches on a massive wall made out of ice squares.

Others swept away shaved ice that had fallen on the icy ground while other artists carved details onto various blocks that were beginning to give shape to the Queen Mary's version of London.

"We're trying to create this journey in ice," said Max Painter, designer and art director for Chill. "We're trying to make a story out of what is a very difficult medium to work with and to create beautiful magical zones that transform 'A Christmas Carol' into an icy wonderland for Christmas."

Just days before the opening, many of the walls were completed, as well as dozens of life-size ice figures meant to re-create a city street scene.

Approximately 20-foot-tall green walls decorated with doors and windows to create the illusion of storefronts and homes surrounded ice sculptures depicting men in suits and top hats, children reading books and stern-looking businessmen walking about in bright overcoats.

The exhibit includes re-creations from the Dickens story, such as scenes where Scrooge meets the three ghosts, a ballroom that looks at his past and a cemetery where he sees his future.

A massive 40-foot-tall re-creation of Big Ben is the centerpiece of the ice village, while the Queen Mary herself makes an appearance with a re-



The ice bar should be a hit since it's been on the Christmas wish list for a while, said Steve Sheldon, director of entertainment for the Queen Mary.

"We've had a lot of requests over the last few years for an ice bar," he said. "It's probably one of the most requested things we had not yet done."

The ice bar will cost an additional \$15 to enter for anyone over the age of 21, but that includes a three-drink vodka flight.

And that should be sufficient for most since it's not likely people will lounge around the bar too long in the 9-degree temperature.

If You Go:

When: Various dates and times Nov. 20-Jan. 10.

Where: Queen Mary Dome, 1126 Queens Highway, Long Beach.

Tickets: \$24.99-\$34.99. \$15 for ice bar.

Information: 877-342-0752, www.queenmary.com

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