

Vol. 16 NO 2 SPRING / SUMMER 2018

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## Exploring by sea or land – immerse and engage!



TIM BOYLES PHOTOGRAPHY

Vanessa Lee  
onboard  
Norwegian Bliss

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT many of us are traveling more and more, seeking immersive experiences to ensure that we truly participate in our trips or cruises. We don't simply want to be observers. The massive growth in expedition cruising, which can take guests to fabulous, far away places, is a prime example of sight-doing and sight-being rather than sight-seeing. In this issue, we're introducing a new regular column about the hottest topic in travel – expedition cruising. The exponential growth and the arrival of so many new, small and lovely expedition/explorer yachts is amazing and – mark my words – you're quite likely to book a cruise on one of these in the next five years.

At *Cruise & Travel Lifestyles* magazine, we determined early on that river cruising would be a burgeoning segment of the overall cruise market and we knew it would be of great interest to our readers. In every issue we have one or – as in this instance – two articles on river ships featuring their itineraries and innovative onboard experiences. Smaller, luxurious ships are becoming ever more popular too, as people try cruising and then expand their horizons from rivers to the seas and the less traveled oceans of the world. Perhaps their hope is to visit every continent. After all, what might have seemed impossible to a number of us just 20 years or so ago, is now not that big a reach!

Why not travel to every continent in some fashion or other? Why not seek out gorillas in East Africa, King penguins in the Antarctic or the endangered polar bear in our own Arctic lands? Ships can take us to all of these places in great comfort and style, showcasing destinations and wildlife that we may never have imagined.

We can become sight-being explorers in our own right, kayaking amidst sea lions and ice on the White Continent, traveling to the Russian Far East, and watching the largest gathering of humpback whales in the far-flung Kimberley in Australia as they come to mate every August, or getting up close and personal with a blue-footed booby in the Galapagos. Why not?

Authenticity is a hallmark of what many travelers wish to experience these days. Yes, beach vacations and villas in Tuscany are still immensely popular – as they should be. But I find more and more of my peers are yearning for immersive and experiential vacation options. The cruise lines and tour companies are listening and have expanded their offerings to such a degree, it's mind-boggling. I know many people who have visited Africa or South America in recent years – as I have myself, adding another continent to my list, with just one more to go!

Our goal is to give you a really enjoyable read, to stimulate your travel senses, and to inform you of what's new, where you might want to go next and to ensure that you discover lesser-known areas, resorts, hotels and cruise ships of all kinds. We will continue to introduce new ideas and columns and will ensure that our wonderful editor and writers travel the globe to show us where we might want to journey next – whether it's a far away land or a new destination in our own country.

Enjoy your travels wherever they may take you.

Sincerely

PS – Please use our website as a valuable tool for our latest news, articles and views and do sign up for our monthly newsletter which we will mail to your inbox. [www.cruiseandtravellifestyles.com](http://www.cruiseandtravellifestyles.com).





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Liz Fleming painting in Amsterdam on an Avalon Discovery Cruise

FOREHEADS TOUCHING and eyes closed, we gently inhale one another's breath. The courtly gentleman in his traditional lei and sarong greets each of us in the same way as we walk up the pathway to his secluded home on the tiny island of Molokai. It's a welcoming ritual that's hauntingly familiar – and I know what to do instinctively – though I've never been to the islands of Hawaii before.

I recognize too, the sound of the conch shell he blows to herald our arrival – a sound that fills the leafy valley and reminds me of other greetings, on other islands, far away. I've shared the breath of life with other friends, in just this way, in the islands of Tahiti and again, with the warmly welcoming Maori people in a small village, in New Zealand, hundreds of ocean kilometers away.

As I breathe in, something in my brain goes 'click' and the connection is made.

Anthropologists would explain that New Zealand, Tahiti and Hawaii are the three corners of the Polynesian triangle. The people in each place were once connected by perilous canoe journeys over seemingly impossible distances – sometimes to trade and sometimes to make war. Bloodlines mingled and customs were shared with the end result being three very similar, yet far-flung cultures.

Travel is all about hearing that 'click' as we make connections between people, places, customs, thoughts and ideas. Today's uber-technological world makes it easy to know what's going on in any corner of the world, any time but it doesn't allow us to make genuine connections. A traveler will tell you that feeling the 'click' involves first-hand experiences – hearing the call to prayer in the souks of Marrakech, tasting a fresh mango picked from the tree, smelling the wood smoke from an open fire on a Rocky Mountain trail, or gazing into the eyes of a lion from the safety of a safari jeep in the Maasai Mara. Connecting means being there.

One of my earliest adventures was trekking through the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu, learning about the snakes, panthers and eagles worshipped by the ancient Incans. Years and many other explorations later, while wandering through the ruins of Mexico's Chichen Itza, I found Mayan and Aztec symbols that echoed their Incan counterparts – jaguar, condor and winged serpent gods. Separated by thousands of kilometers, two distinct cultures were links in the same chain and as I saw the symbols, I heard that 'click.'

What's best about travel is the chance it gives you to explore, to taste, to see and to feel, making connections between the places you've been, that part of the globe you're experiencing right now, and the next destination on your list. Open your mind to the possibilities and compare what you've learned, revel in whatever you're in the midst of, and allow yourself to wonder about what you're yet to discover.

Happy travels,

*Liz Fleming*

Liz Fleming  
Editor-in-Chief

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On the cover: Pena Palace, Sintra, Portugal

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## AMA WATERWAYS

[www.amawaterways.ca](http://www.amawaterways.ca)

Award-winning river cruise line AmaWaterways offers a fleet of 22 custom-designed river vessels in Europe, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Africa. AmaWaterways continues to set new standards in river cruising with innovative ship designs, spacious and stylish staterooms, premium amenities, exceptional cuisine and impeccable service. Included features on every cruise are shore excursions in every port, all dining on board, including The Chef's Table specialty restaurant; fine wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner; complimentary internet access and Wi-Fi as well as bicycles to explore on your own or join guided bike tours. The recently launched AmaLea features the most advanced design of any river cruise vessel currently in operation. Accommodating 154 guests, she features elegantly appointed staterooms, most with twin balconies (both a French and outside balcony) as well as connecting and triple occupancy staterooms that are tailored specifically to the growing multi-generational family and group markets. The 196-guest AmaMagna, the widest ship (twice the width of traditional European river ships) to cruise the European rivers will debut in 2019 and feature an open water-sports platform (first for river cruising) complete with recreational equipment, a large heated sundeck swimming pool with whirlpool and sky bar, a fitness room, gym and a spa including wellness offerings. **See page 1**

## AVALON WATERWAYS, PART OF THE GLOBUS FAMILY OF BRANDS

[www.avalonwaterways.ca](http://www.avalonwaterways.ca)  
[www.globusjourneys.ca](http://www.globusjourneys.ca)

Part of the Globus Family of Brands, Avalon Waterways offers river cruising on some of the newest ships to Europe, Asia or South America. Offering inclusions such as regional wines and beer at dinner, Avalon Fresh<sup>SM</sup> – offering healthy cuisine options at every meal, complimentary Wi-Fi, shore excursions led by Certified Local Guides, complimentary bicycles, Suites Local Favorites<sup>SM</sup> and more! Avalon has one-of-a-kind Panorama Suites<sup>SM</sup> – with innovative Open-Air Balconies<sup>SM</sup> and beds facing the views on Suite ships with two full decks of 200- and 300-square-foot suites. The new Avalon Envision, which will debut in 2019 marks the company's thirteenth Suite Ship in Europe and sixteenth Suite Ship worldwide making the fleet all Panorama-class. For guests who not only like to see new things, but also live new experiences, Avalon has expanded its popular Active Discovery on the Danube cruises to include two new Active Discovery on the Rhine departures. Travelers have the opportunity to bike, hike and explore their way through Europe. In 2019, FlexDining will be available allowing guests to dine at multiple venues such as Panorama Bistro or the Sky Grill for breakfast lunch and dinner, as well as take advantage of open dining times, more two-top tables for couples, bar service on the Sky Deck and daily night fare, on request, at the bar. **See page 15**

## EMERALD WATERWAYS

[www.emeraldwaterways.com](http://www.emeraldwaterways.com)

Launched in 2014, one of Europe's newest river cruise lines caters to the four-star-plus market with its state-of-the-art ships, top quality service and an array of inclusions such as all gratuities; transfers; all meals; complimentary beverages; exceptional onboard amenities; and extra special included excursions with EmeraldPlus and EmeraldActive. The line's Star-Ships feature deluxe suites and staterooms as well as new features, such as a sun deck swimming pool with a fully retractable roof, full-size cinema, gym, hair dressing salon and massage room. Last year three new ships launched; the Emerald Liberté sailing France's Rhône and Saône rivers, the Emerald Radiance on Portugal's Douro River and Emerald Destiny sailing the Danube, Rhine and Main river cruises. Emerald Waterways also offers itineraries in Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia. In 2019, Emerald will begin its first foray into ocean cruising with a brand new 36-guest yacht sailing along Croatia's dramatic Dalmatian Coast on the Adriatic Sea. **See page 3**

## ENCORE CRUISES

[www.encorecruisesescapes.com](http://www.encorecruisesescapes.com)

A cruise wholesaler with over 26 years of history in the Canadian marketplace, Encore enjoys close partnerships with many of the major cruise lines such as AmaWaterways, Avalon Waterways, Azamara Club Cruises, Carnival Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, Holland America Line, Hurtigruten, MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Int. Costa Cruises, Disney Cruise Line and Princess Cruises. Offering true cruise packages, complete with protected air and any pre- or post-cruise land stays, they also feature Encore Prestige, a high-end luxury division that offers dedicated, white-glove service. Cruise expertise, remarkable value, quality and reliability have long been Encore's hallmarks and as such, their focus is on ensuring complete cruise vacation satisfaction. Whether you are an experienced cruiser or a newcomer, want an ocean cruise or a river cruise, Encore prides itself on offering something for every style, taste and budget. **See page 25**

## EXCLUSIVE TOURS

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Proudly Canadian, Exclusive Tours specializes in unique, best in class, small ship cruising, offering a variety of cruise itineraries, departures and destinations around the world from the seven cruise companies they represent – AmaWaterways, Amadeus River Cruises, Celestyal Cruises, European Waterways, Hurtigruten, Star Clippers and Voyages to Antiquity. Choose from river, barging, expedition, yachting, luxury, world and learning cruises. An expansive selection of hotels is also available for pre-and post cruise as well as options including air, airport transfers, shore excursions and car rentals. **See page 41**

## HOLLAND AMERICA LINE

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For 145 years, Holland America Line has been a recognized leader in cruising. Providing award-winning service, elegant dining, extensive activities and enrichment programs and compelling worldwide itineraries. Fleetwide, the ships feature innovative initiatives and a diverse range of enriching experiences focused on destination immersion and personalized travel. Guests can expand their knowledge through an exclusive partnership with O, The Oprah Magazine; during an America's Test Kitchen show; and by taking a Digital Workshop powered by Windows. Outstanding entertainment fills each evening at venues including Lincoln Center Stage, Billboard Onboard and B.B. King's Blues Club. From short getaways to 113-day itineraries, the ships visit all seven continents with highlights including Antarctica explorations, South America circumnavigations and exotic Australia/New Zealand and Asia voyages; four annual Grand Voyages; sailings to the Caribbean, Cuba, Alaska, Mexico, Canada/New England, Bermuda, Europe and the Panama Canal. The line welcomed ms Koningsdam in 2016, with a second Pinnacle Class ship, ms Nieuw Statendam, arriving in December 2018 and a third Pinnacle-class ship will be delivered in 2021. **See page 7**

## MSC CRUISES

[www.msccruisesusa.com](http://www.msccruisesusa.com)

MSC Cruises is the world's fastest growing cruise line - the fleet will double in size with the introduction of up to 11 new mega-ships by 2026 - with a dazzling array of ships sailing in European waters as well as home-porting from Miami. The MSC Seaside – a new class of ship which debuted in December 2017, offers year-round Caribbean cruises. A sister ship, the Seaview will begin her inaugural season in Europe this summer. The Seaside is aptly named as she has a 360-degree promenade offering scenic views and a wide range of dining and entertainment options for her guests. Many restaurant choices will be found on Seaside including a pan-Asian venue from famous Celebrity Chef Roy Yamaguchi. A new flagship, MSC Bellissima which will debut in 2019, will have the same features as its older sister, MSC Meraviglia, which include an exclusive Cirque du Soleil at Sea, expressly designed for MSC whose entertainment consistently wins awards. **See inside back cover**

## PONANT

[www.us.ponant.com](http://www.us.ponant.com)

Established in 1988 and the only French-owned cruise line, PONANT specializes in all-inclusive 5-star luxury cruises and polar expeditions offering a variety of voyages with over 200 departures to 81 countries and all 7 continents. Carrying less than 264 guests, Ponant's five-ships maintain the intimate ambience of a private yacht while enjoying French-inspired cuisine, chic accommodations (many with private balconies) and world-class service. Ponant will welcome six new 184-guest ice-class Explorer ships between this summer and 2020 and will feature the Blue Eye – the world's first multi-sensory underwater ship lounge, be equipped with state-of-the-art environmental preservation technology, are ice-class ranked and still offer the elegance for which PONANT is known. The brand has also announced the first luxury electric hybrid icebreaker ship, scheduled for delivery in 2021. Ponant has recently introduced its Quintessential Collection voyages which have been designed exclusively for travelers who wish to engage with the world in order to better understand it. These voyages include exceptional activities ashore, relevant to the theme of the cruise including food and wine, gardens of the British Isles, classical music, current affairs, history and modern art. **See page 4**

## SAGA CRUISES

[www.sagacruises.com](http://www.sagacruises.com)

Launched two decades ago to cater to young at heart travelers, Saga Cruises offers all the luxuries of a traditional British cruise experience, but with a contemporary twist. Their smaller size ships, carrying no more than 999 guests on board, call at more unusual ports and out-of-the-way harbors that the larger vessels often sail past, and provide classic traditions of cruising such as daily afternoon tea and dinner served in one leisurely sitting. Plus, with a high proportion of dedicated single staterooms and a host of included single traveler activities, the ships are a great choice for those cruising solo. All cruises begin and end in Dover or Southampton, and a chauffeur to the port is included in the fare, together with all on-board gratuities, bar service charges, wine at mealtimes, on-board activities, and free bottled water on excursions. A new vessel, Spirit of Discovery will begin sailing from Dover in July 2019 with itineraries featuring the Channel Islands, the Norwegian Fjords, the Baltic and the Mediterranean. In the autumn she will sail from Southampton to destinations including the Canaries and a Christmas cruise to New York. Spirit of Adventure, will begin sailing in 2020. Both ships will cater to a North American clientele. **See page 53**

## SEABOURN

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As the newest ultra-luxury fleet in the industry, carrying between 400 and 600 guests, Seabourn's intimate ships offer elements that set the line apart: spacious, thoughtfully appointed suites, most with verandas and all ocean view; superb dining in a choice of venues including The Grill by Thomas Keller; differentiated evening experiences in partnership with Sir Tim Rice and Spa & Wellness with Dr. Andrew Weil. The inclusive experience offers open bars throughout the ship; fine wines poured at lunch and dinner, all gratuities, award-winning service and a relaxed, sociable atmosphere that makes guests feel right at home. The ships travel to many of the world's most desirable destinations, including marquee cities and UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In May 2018, Seabourn took delivery of Seabourn Ovation, a sister ship to the already prestigious Seabourn Encore, delivering a wealth of new concepts, a fresh vision and a host of illuminating ideas to delight the world's most discerning travelers. **See inside front cover**

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## TAUCK

[www.tauck.ca](http://www.tauck.ca)

For over 92 years, Tauck has been a leader in guided travel. Family-owned and operated, Tauck offers over 100 premium-quality land journeys, small ship cruises, river cruises, family travel adventures, and active, immersive small-group travel experiences to more than 70 countries and all seven continents. Canadian pricing is now being offered on their 2018 journeys and cruises along with Canadian brochures. Due to demand, Tauck has doubled its family river cruise departures for this year and added new itineraries. Plans for 2018 will see the launch of two all-new cruise itineraries, the debut of two radically redesigned river ships, and added enhancements to the shore excursions featured fleet-wide. In 2019, Tauck will add five new small ship itineraries as well as adding North America to its cruise portfolio with an eight-day 'Alaska Inside Passage' itinerary. Celebrating 25 years in 2018, Tauck Small Ship Cruising offers a variety of intimate sailings across the globe providing guests with more access and enrichment onshore. **See page 19**

## WINDSTAR CRUISES

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Recognized by Condé Nast Traveler as one of the world's best cruise lines, Windstar Cruises operates a six-ship fleet of small sailing and all-suite motor yachts known for unique voyages to the world's best small ports and hidden harbors - visiting approximately 270 ports sailing throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Asia, Alaska, Canada and New England, and cruising year-round in Tahiti. The boutique cruise line carries fewer than 310 guests on its small ships and takes travelers on cruises that are 180 degrees from ordinary. They are known for their immersive and authentic experiences, unique, port-intensive itineraries, exceptional award-winning service, and innovative culinary program as the Official Cruise Line of the James Beard Foundation. **See back cover**





Kathmandu, Nepal



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Rideau Canal, Ottawa

## Nine new adventures from Silversea

In keeping with their dedication to enabling guests to travel deeper, **Silversea** has unveiled the Signature Land Programs, an exciting new collection in nine breathtaking destinations around the world. Born from the success of the cruise line's Couture Collection, the Signature Land Programs will unlock spectacular experiences, beginning in September 2018. Led by Silversea's experience leaders, the Signature Land Programs will complement select voyages in Iceland, Sri Lanka, Canada's Great Lakes, Bolivia, Nepal, Chilean Wine Country, Beijing, Myanmar, and Vietnam and will include travel by helicopters, float planes, rickshaws and more. Highly experienced guides will introduce guests to culture, art, cuisine, geography and more. "With our new Signature Land Programs, we are expanding our range of land-based experiences to unlock the world's authentic beauty for our guests," comments Conrad Combrink, SVP Strategic Development Expeditions and Experiences at Silversea. To ensure that every guest will be able to share their Silversea experiences in the social media world, each of Silversea's fleet of ultra-luxury classic and expedition ships will now enjoy free Wi-Fi – a great innovation. "We know how important it is to catch up on emails or share photos on social media while on vacation," said Barbara Muckermann, Silversea's chief marketing officer. "Now, with free unlimited Wi-Fi in all suites, our guests can stay connected while they voyage to the most fascinating places on Earth."

## A new era for solo cruisers

Great news for solo cruisers! A steel cutting ceremony has been held for the elegant **Spirit of Discovery**, **Saga Cruises'** first bespoke-built boutique ship to mark the start of construction of the 999-guest vessel. Designed to include 109 staterooms and suites exclusively for solo travelers this extraordinary ship will sail from Dover in July 2019 with itineraries featuring the Channel Islands, the Norwegian Fjords, the Baltic and the Mediterranean. In the autumn, *Spirit of Discovery* will sail from Southampton, visiting destinations such as the Canary Islands, then offering a Christmas cruise to New York. All Saga cruises include all onboard gratuities and service charges, complimentary chauffeur transfer to ship, traditional British afternoon tea, complimentary Wi-Fi, wine with lunch and dinner and much more. There is an onboard Theatre, a choice of five dining venues and many beautiful bars and lounges for relaxing and enjoyment.

## Cruising the Great Lakes

If staying home in the summer and learning more about our wonderful Great Lakes appeals then look no further than a cruise literally in our own backyard. Cruising on the Great Lakes, especially Lakes Ontario, Huron and Michigan and the stunning Georgian Bay region is becoming a hot commodity and more boutique, niche cruise companies are sailing our way. Cruises come through the St Lawrence Seaway often stopping in Kingston and make their way up to such charming small towns as Midland, Little Current, Parry Sound and then over towards Thunder Bay and such celebrated US ports as Chicago and quaint Mackinac Island. Revel in the region's natural beauty and gorgeous scenery and immerse yourself in the interesting culture too. The season is brief but very popular and cruise lines such as **Pearl Seas** and **Victory Cruise Line** are cruising these waters now with **Ponant** coming in 2019 and the new **Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection** with its second ship, will have several itineraries on the Lakes in 2020.

## Le Boat comes to Canada

Longing for a watery escape? Always wanted to be the captain of your own ship? The European "self-hire" boat company **Le Boat** is setting up shop in Smiths Falls, Ontario and will be ready to offer a fleet of vessels designed for multi-day outings along the Rideau Canal. Working with Parks Canada, Le Boat will offer 16 boats, each equipped with a kitchen, bathrooms and sleeping quarters in 2018. Designed to allow renters to captain their own crafts, provided they have the right boating licence and take an orientation course, Le Boat currently operates in eight European countries including The Netherlands, Italy and England, and is popular with groups, families and older couples. The goal is to at least double the number of boats available over the next five years, according to Parks Canada.



## Windstar – sailing in the right direction

There's so much going on at **Windstar Cruises** it's hard to keep up. Their wonderful six-ship fleet sails all over the world and has just started cruising this summer in Alaska for the first time in 20 years with the **Star Legend**. A return to Asia is also coming this September for the same yacht with 27 sailings being offered through April 2019 with exciting journeys visiting Bali, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, China and many more exotic must-see spots. If food and wine is your thing then Windstar has you covered here too. With the renewal of their relationship through 2021 with the James Beard Foundation and the addition of Sommeliers to four of their small yachts, as well as beverage packages on certain itineraries, the cruise line is certainly paying attention to foodies and wine connoisseurs. There will be six culinary themed cruises between June and December of this year and dozens of signature recipes from award-winning James Beard chefs are featured on the menus across the fleet. Explore the world and its cuisine as you sail aboard one of Windstar's boutique small ships to hidden harbors and out of the way places.



PHOTO COURTESY WINDSTAR



### The Regal Estates & Jacobean Manors of Norfolk & Suffolk

September 2 to 9, 2018

\$5,642 (CAD) per person

A defining period of British history and culture; for the first time Scotland, Wales and England were united under one monarch, the Jacobean era left its indelible mark on many of England's historic houses.

#### 2019 Departures

<b>Queen Victoria 200: Regal Splendor &amp; an Island Getaway</b>	March 31 to April 9, 2019	\$6,435 (CAD) per person
<b>Glorious Gardens &amp; Grandeur of North Wales</b>	June 23 to July 2, 2019	\$6,877 (CAD) per person
<b>In the Footsteps of Shakespeare</b>	September 15 to 25, 2019	\$7,137 (CAD) per person

All prices are per person and based on two people sharing a double occupancy room. Prices are correct at the time of publication.

### Edinburgh, Glasgow & the Scottish Highlands & Islands

September 9 to 18, 2018

\$6,630 (CAD) per person

The dramatic west coast of Scotland is home to a swathe of unspoilt islands full of breathtaking natural beauty, ancient monuments and a diversity of wildlife, with every isle having its own distinct personality.

### Elizabethans in the Heart of England

September 16 to 22, 2018

\$4,680 (CAD) per person

The Golden Age is one of the most fascinating and rich periods in the history of England. Queen Elizabeth I's reign not only saw a huge revival in the arts but also in the architecture of the country.

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PHOTO COURTESY VIKING

Viking Sky



PHOTO COURTESY VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY

Aegean Odyssey



CYANO66 / ISTOCK

## Have it both ways with Viking

If you're torn between ocean and river cruising, you'll love the recent announcement from **Viking**, introducing its 2019 Ocean & River Voyages that will offer the unique opportunity to explore Europe's rivers on a Viking Longship before setting sail to Scandinavia on one of Viking's ocean ships. Debuting in May 2019, the "Grand European & Viking Fjords" itinerary will sail Budapest to Bergen, combining a 15-day river cruise on the Rhine and Danube Rivers between Budapest and Amsterdam, with an eight-day Viking Shores & Fjords ocean itinerary, which sails the North Sea. Additional departures of the fifteen-day Rhine & Viking Shores & Fjords combination itinerary, which debuts in June 2018 and sails between Basel and Bergen, will be offered in 2019. Said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking: "Only Viking can provide a destination-focused voyage that marries the river and sea into a single, unified journey. With one flight, our guests can experience both of our award-winning cruise products, making it even easier for them to explore the world." Starting in June 2018, Viking's first two combination cruises will set sail, allowing guests to explore even more throughout Europe with rich cultural experiences in each port of call. With the new Ocean & River Voyages, guests will experience sailing through the heart of Europe on a 190-guest Viking Longship, as well as sailing the high seas on one of Viking's 930-guest ocean ships.

## Small ship cruising and cultural immersion

Guests seeking enriching cultural experiences and destination-rich itineraries on a small ship should look at **Voyages to Antiquity** and its charming ship the **Aegean Odyssey**. Especially suited for single travelers with 36 dedicated singles staterooms at a low supplement, the overall onboard experience also offers great value with gratuities and sightseeing tours included in the price. The ship sails to many of the world's most exotic places in Asia and Africa as well as more familiar ground in the Mediterranean, Britain and Northern Waters. But it is the knowledge of the lecturers, archaeologists, historians, professors that bring each destination to life. You will delight in the in-depth view that these experts bring to each port or region as they speak to the civilizations and cultures therein. There are also some theme cruises from which to choose and the small size of the *Aegean Odyssey*, with only 350 guests aboard, allows the ship to sail up rivers in the heart of Europe, to call at smaller out-of-the-way places and to dock in the middle of some of the most fascinating places in the world. Join like-minded cruisers and set sail on an exploration all your own to awe-inspiring historic sites and so much more. The *Aegean Odyssey* has two dining venues, a range of public rooms, comfortable staterooms and a very-well stocked library.

## MSC wine therapy

Who doesn't enjoy a bit of wine therapy, whether for sipping or massaging? **MSC Cruises** has launched a signature collection of spa treatments, created with LAJATICA vinotherapy products from Bocelli Wines. Exclusive to the MSC Aurea Spa, the treatments have debuted on the Miami-based **MSC Seaside**, and will soon be introduced fleet-wide. Made with natural extracts from the Bocelli family vineyards and blended with Tuscan plants and essential oils, these luxurious facial and body treatments are strengthened by the anti-aging and firming properties found in grapes. Continuing the celebration of spirits, MSC has another treat for cruisers. Guests booking Caribbean cruises with MSC, now receive 'Drinks on Us' throughout their cruise! Set sail in the Caribbean on **MSC Seaside**, **MSC Divina** or **MSC Meraviglia** and receive unlimited drinks from a selection of bottled and draft beers, wines by the glass, house brands of vodka, rum, gin, whiskey, and non-alcoholic beverages for the duration of your cruise. It's the ultimate in convenience and value!



## Savor the world's flavors at the Edge of the sea

From an exhilarating, sky-high dinner cantilevered 16 decks above the ocean, to an immersive fusion of technology, animation and dining, like nothing guests have ever experienced at sea, and everything in between, the latest culinary hot spots will be found miles at sea on **Celebrity Cruises'** transformative new ship, **Celebrity Edge**. With 29 world-class, palate-pleasing venues – including four main dining restaurants, two exclusive Suite and AquaClass restaurants, seven brand-new specialty restaurants, five complimentary dining venues, and 11 bars and lounges – guests are invited to embark on a cross-continental culinary journey with more restaurant and bar options than ever before. With Celebrity Traditional Dining, guests choose early or late seating, which allows them to enjoy dinner at the same table with the same waiter every evening. With this option, they will be assigned to one of the four main restaurants, while having the ability to experience the others upon request. Celebrity has renamed its Celebrity Select Dining program "Celebrity Select Dining Plus." The cruise line anticipates that guests will revel in all of the amazing culinary options though and explore tastes suited to their palate at many of these remarkable dining spots. *Celebrity Edge* arrives in North America in November 2018 and there is already much anticipation about this ground-breaking ship.



Fine Cut Steakhouse, Celebrity Edge

PHOTO COURTESY CELEBRITY



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Your river cruise then journeys along the Rhine and onto the Danube, passing by picturesque German countryside and ending in Passau. You will then transfer to the Czech Republic, where you will have two days in Prague to experience the City of a Thousand Spires.

### 🚢 Ports of Call:

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### ✔ What's included:

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- **Cologne:** one night 4-star hotel accommodation with breakfast and city tour
- **Prague:** two nights 4-star hotel accommodation with breakfast and city tour
- seven-night cruise onboard *Amadeus Silver III*

[www.amadeus-rivercruises.ca](http://www.amadeus-rivercruises.ca)

\*CDN\$ p.p. dbl. occ., taxes included. Not included: any personal expenses, such as insurance, passport fees, any meals, or items not mentioned. †CDN\$ p.p. dbl. occ., based on category C, taxes Included. Airfare available from most Canadian gateways, please enquire. ON-4499356/4499372 | BC-34799 | QC-7002238 | 111 Peter Street, Suite 200, Toronto, ON. M5V 2H1 | Canadian owned







Celebrating the 200th anniversary  
of the birth of Queen Victoria



Grand Dutch Café, Nieuw Statendam



Hvar, Croatia

## A deeper dive into Britain's rich heritage

If British history fascinates you, you'll love **Albion Journeys'** outstanding escorted tours. Carefully crafted itineraries are designed to unlock Britain's rich history, with behind the scenes tours, guest lectures and insights from the owners of the properties themselves. Albion's 2019 program will be the perfect way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Queen Victoria, Britain's second longest-serving monarch. The tour will take in famous palaces, castles and country houses frequented by the Queen throughout her reign and will offer real insight into her life and the people closest to her. Special extras on this tour include a guided tour of Windsor, Dimbola Lodge, Nunwell House, Avignon Park and a themed evening talk by a guest speaker. All tours will include transfers on arrival at London Heathrow (or the appropriate airport for the tour), welcome drinks and canapés, full English buffet or table service breakfast each day, some lunches and dinners as specified in each itinerary, services of a tour director throughout the program, travel to and from all excursions, all entrance costs and portage.

## What's new for the Nieuw Statendam?

When **Holland America Line's Nieuw Statendam** debuts in December 2018 guests will be impressed not only by all the hallmarks of Pinnacle-Class design: grand, light-filled spaces; visual drama; and sumptuous interiors inspired by the fluid curves of musical instruments but also by some very distinct stateroom enhancements. The newest 2,666-guest Pinnacle-Class ship will offer 32-family and 12 ocean-view staterooms for solo travelers and all categories will showcase thoughtful touches and innovative additions. Among the most noticeable are the reconfigured Family Staterooms and the redesigned Pinnacle Suite — the largest on the ship with a bedroom, living room, dining area, dressing room and private verandah with whirlpool. The *Nieuw Statendam* offers all stateroom hallmarks introduced on *Koningsdam*, including single-cruiser accommodations, as well as a wider range of suite configurations. Guests will also be able to enjoy innovative specialty restaurants — from the lovely *Sel de Mer* to the casual *Grand Dutch Café* — attend cooking classes and experience hands-on workshops at America's Test Kitchen's cooking classes and explore the Natural World with BBC Earth Experiences and presentations at the spectacular two-story World Stage. In the evenings, guests will love the entertainment at the incredibly popular Music Walk featuring Billboard on Board and BB King's Blues Club.

## Emerald embarks on ocean cruising

A long-time favorite of river cruisers, **Emerald Waterways** has recently announced its first foray into ocean cruising with an exciting, brand-new yacht. The sailing itinerary along Croatia's Dalmatian coast in the Adriatic Sea, will take in some of the most spectacular destinations along the Adriatic Coast enabling guests to learn about the unique topography of this region, comprised of thousands of off-shore islands and coastlines dotted with limestone mountains, ancient cities and towns. Scheduled to launch in 2019, the intimate 36-guest **MV Adriatic Princess II** will sail on the eight-day "The Islands of Dalmatia" cruise between Trogir and Dubrovnik with exciting highlights that will include the island of Brac — famous for its white limestone that was used in the building of the White House — and a visit to Krka National Park with its spectacular waterfalls. Other ports of call will feature the island of Hvar, noted for its lavender fields, and mainland Split, the largest city on the Adriatic coast with the Roman Diocletian's Palace. Emerald Waterways will be offering 22 departures from April through October, 2019.



### An Eclipse on the horizon

The world's first 'Discovery Yacht', the **Scenic Eclipse**, will begin her sailing career on August 31st, 2018. A '6-star' mega yacht carrying just 228 guests, (200 in the polar regions of the Arctic and Antarctica), will offer guests a whole new level of luxury, discovery, safety and world-class innovation. Because her sleek size will allow for docking in unique locations and smaller ports and her GPS dynamic position technology will enable her to 'anchor' in areas where the use of a real anchor would make it off-limits, the *Scenic Eclipse* will offer incredible opportunities for exploration. In addition, her onboard seven-seat helicopter and submarine will take guests to the furthest reaches of remote regions. The *Scenic Eclipse* will offer itineraries that include the European and Russian Arctic; Russia's White Sea; the Northwest Passage; Europe's Baltic regions; Southern Greenland; the Canadian Maritimes; the U.S. east coast; Cuba; the Caribbean; the coastline of South America and the Panama Canal. New summer departures to Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands are also being introduced.



PHOTO COURTESY SCENIC



PHOTO COURTESY PONANT

### Ponant celebrates 30 years in small ship cruising

**Ponant**, the only French-flagged cruise line, is celebrating its 30th year of operations with the announcement of the coming of two new ships in the Ponant Explorer yacht series, bringing their fleet to 12 ships by 2021. The new 184-guest, yacht-like ships, to be called **Le Bellot** and **Le Surville**, will launch in 2020 and will be carefully designed to comply with the international CLEANSHIP label (Bureau Veritas). Each ship will feature 92 elegantly appointed suites and staterooms offering warm and contemporary design with spacious balconies overlooking the sea as well as four suites with expansive bay windows and private terraces to allow guests to take full advantage of the extraordinary views. All six Ponant Explorer yachts – two coming this year and another two in 2019, will boast the extraordinary "Blue Eye" – a major technological development and the world's first multi-sensorial underwater lounge created to enable guests to discover and experience the underwater world via two portholes in the shape of a cetaceous eye. Guests will be able to look out onto the sea bed where non-intrusive underwater lighting and hydrophones will transmit the natural symphony of the deep water. Body Listening sofas equipped with technology that gently vibrates to create unique sensorial listening moments will enable guests to immerse themselves in an underwater experience unlike any other. New for 2019, is a series of departures dubbed the Quintessential Collection. Offering special cruises with guest lecturers and themes, these are already proving very popular with the North American audience. Ponant offers a distinctly European and all-inclusive onboard ambience with renowned French flair. They are the world leader in luxury expeditions, and sail virtually everywhere in the world with their soon-to-be 12-ship fleet of small, gorgeous yachts.

### Ten years of luxury expedition cruising for Silversea

The best way to celebrate a decade of sailing beautiful expedition ships is to add another to your fleet. **Silversea**, the world's first luxury cruise line to launch a range of expedition voyages in 2008, recently brought its original classic ship, the **Silver Cloud** into its Expedition fleet after a massive US \$40 million renovation late last year. She now has an ice-class hull which allows for navigation in polar waters and a popular Photo Studio which enables content editing onboard. The *Silver Cloud* still has all the comforts and luxurious amenities associated with every Silversea ship, as well as 16 Zodiacs for the ultimate in exploration along with 10 kayaks for those up close and personal moments. The other ships sailing on these exploratory journeys to all corners of the globe are the **Silver Discoverer**, **Silver Explorer** – which was renovated from stern to stern last year – and the **Silver Galapagos** which sails in those marvelous Ecuadorian islands offering fantastic opportunities for wildlife viewing. Silversea recently announced complimentary Wi-Fi for all guests on all ships and is now pricing all their cruises in Canadian Dollars at a very competitive exchange rate. The classic fleet is also growing with the announcement of two new ships coming in 2020 and 2021, the **Silver Moon** and **Silver Dawn** respectively.



PHOTO COURTESY SILVERSEA





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### ACTIVE DISCOVERY ON THE DANUBE

9 days | Linz to Budapest

Linz (Embarkation) • Engelhartszell • Mauthausen • Grein • Spitz • Vienna • Visegrád • Budapest (Disembarkation)

For more information or reservations, please contact your preferred travel consultant.

\*Book a select 2019 Avalon Waterways Europe river cruise to receive \$300 / \$600 / \$900 or \$1,200 off per person on the cruise/land or cruise only price. Booking must be made, under deposit and discount applied between February 7 and July 24, 2018 for travel at select times in 2019. Not applicable to custom tours. Not applicable on TBA space. Combinable with Journeys Club Repeat Traveller benefit. Select departures may be combinable with current air promo. Applies to new 2019 bookings only and will not be applied to pre-existing bookings. Offer reliant on space availability at time of booking and may be withdrawn at any time. Full cancellation penalties will apply. Additional restrictions may apply; see Travel Terms & Conditions for details. Offer applies to participating GFOB offices only. 3280 Bloor Street West, Centre Tower, 4th Floor, Suite 400, Toronto, ON M8X 2X3, TICO#1893755/50015835



## Blissing out on Norwegian

Norwegian's newest ship **Norwegian Bliss** arrived in the U.S. in early May, then sailed through the Panama Canal to her christening ceremony in her first homeport at Pier 66 in Seattle, Washington before departing for her first seven-day voyage to Alaska.

The third ship in the line's Breakaway Plus class, the *Norwegian Bliss* is the first cruise ship specifically designed with features and amenities for the ultimate Alaska cruising experience including the expansive and beautiful Observation Lounge offering 180 degree views. Guests are treated to great new features, such as the largest competitive Go-Kart race track at sea, an open-air laser tag course, and side-by-side Aqua Racer waterslides, one of which extends over the edge of the ship and loops down to the deck below.

Culinary enthusiasts will love the myriad dining options such as Cagney's, the Manhattan Room and Le Bistro as well as new specialty dining and bar concepts such as the Texas smokehouse – Q, the cruise line's first full-service Starbucks at sea, and Coco's – a chocolate and sweet treats shop.

Fabulous onboard entertainment includes the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Jersey Boys*, and *iHavana!* – an original musical theater show created and produced specifically for *Norwegian Bliss* as well as a new theatrical cocktail hour experience, *Happy Hour Prohibition – The Musical*.

There is also a Cavern Club with a Beatles tribute band bringing down the house on every occasion – and so many more spots including the fabulous Waterfront for al fresco cocktails and dining at a number of venues.

Staterooms range from luxurious suites in The Haven by Norwegian to studios for solo travelers with virtual ocean views, and plenty of connecting staterooms ideal for large groups and families.

*Norwegian Bliss* will spend her summer cruising seven-day voyages to Alaska, and the fall season cruising to the Mexican Riviera from Los Angeles. In winter of 2018, she will sail the Caribbean from Miami, and in the 2019 fall/winter season she will cruise from New York City to Florida, the Bahamas and Caribbean.





## Welcoming the fabulous Seabourn Ovation



The **Seabourn Ovation**, the fifth ship in the line's award-winning fleet and the newest ultra-luxury ship in the industry, was delivered to her proud owners in late April in Genoa, Italy. Another in the line's highly acclaimed fleet, *Seabourn Ovation* is a sister ship to the stunning **Seabourn Encore** and features 300 all-oceanfront suites, maintaining the line's high ratio of space per guest.

Fashioned by notable hospitality design icon Adam D. Tihany with gorgeous, contemporary interiors, modern design elements, and innovations, the all-suite *Ovation* offers a number of desirable in-suite amenities including a private veranda spacious enough for private alfresco dining, as well as a comfortable living area with sofa seating and a desk/dining table; elegant bedding; a walk-in closet; in-suite entertainment options with a wide selection of movies, music, broadcast television and radio channels. A superbly-appointed marble bathroom with separate bath and shower features luxury bath products, including the

exclusive Seabourn Signature Scents by Molton Brown. A personal bar and refrigerator is stocked according to guest preferences, coordinated before arrival.

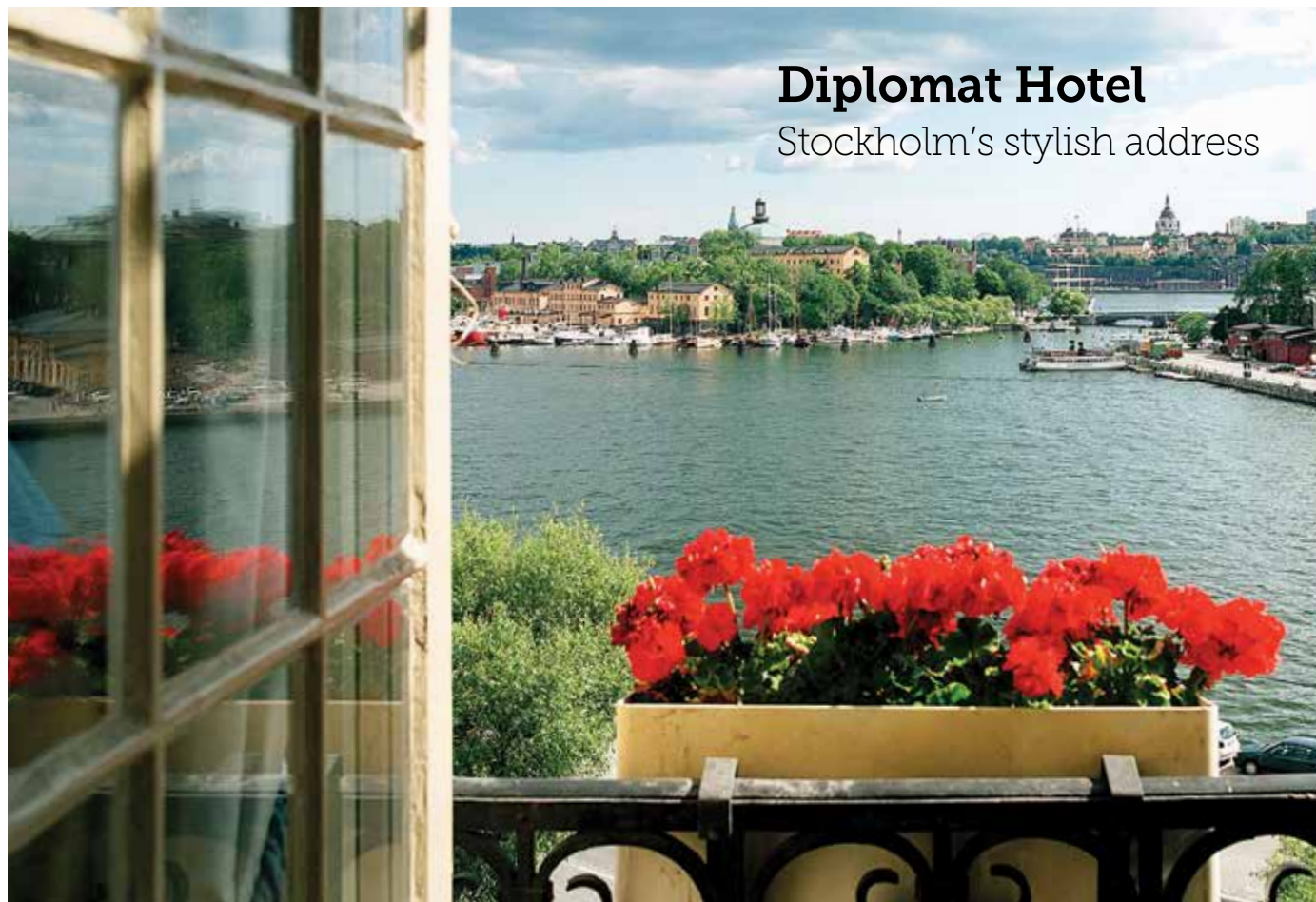
Features include innovative offerings and programs, such as 'An Evening with Tim Rice'; Spa and Wellness with Dr. Andrew Weil; and The Grill by renowned American Chef Thomas Keller, reminiscent of the classic American restaurant from the 50s and 60s. Seabourn is one of the finest cruise lines in the world and the *Ovation's* arrival will simply cement that high standing.

*Seabourn Ovation* began her maiden season with an 11-day inaugural voyage from Venice, Italy, to Barcelona, Spain, while her naming ceremony was held in the beautiful baroque harbour of Valletta, Malta. The ship will spend the majority of her maiden season on a series of seven-day Baltic and Scandinavian sailings between Copenhagen and Stockholm as well as on longer 14-day voyages, visiting the majestic Norwegian fjords and British Isles.



PHOTO COURTESY SEABOURN





## Diplomat Hotel

Stockholm's stylish address



FOR A GRACIOUS, old-world style hotel with a prestigious address in the heart of Stockholm, look no further than the Diplomat Hotel. The crimson awnings that automatically roll down over the windows in sunshine make it easy to spot from the street.

Check-in is deftly handled at the desk in the middle of the boutique hotel's T-shaped restaurant and bar. From there, an antique bird-cage-like elevator takes you up to your room. To return to the lobby, walk at least once down the

circular marble staircase with burnished gold railings, lined with stained-glass windows, that wraps around the elevator.

All 130 rooms are serene, decorated in ivory and dove grey colors, with blonde wood furniture and extraordinarily high ceilings. Some are small by North American standards. But book a junior suite like we did, and you'll delight in a spacious, octagonal-shaped room with two Juliet balconies overlooking boats and passenger ferries plying the Strandvagen waterfront. Bathrooms feature thick robes, slippers and lovely Argan bath products. While originally built in 1911, the Diplomat satisfies modern-day tastes with smart phones and flat-screen TVs.

Hungry for dinner? Pop down to the T-Bar restaurant, considered one of the best in the city. Just be sure you have a reservation – the buzzing bistro-style resto and bar with granite tables is hugely popular. In the mornings, a breakfast buffet (included in the rates) is offered here – try the traditional Swedish soured milk (like yogurt) with lingonberries. Then when you're ready to venture out sightseeing, most tourist sites are within walking distance.

— GEORGE AND JANICE MUCALOV





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## The return of the Queen Victoria's Fairmont Empress Hotel

Lobby lounge



When a Vancouver developer bought Victoria's historic Empress hotel in 2014 and announced plans to restore the landmark property, locals held their collective breath.

What would become of their beloved hotel that has entertained countless royalty and celebrities and where they themselves proudly take out-of-town guests for afternoon tea or for cocktails in the Bengal Lounge?

They fretted. They complained. They petitioned. And then they breathed a sigh of relief. With renovations complete, it was obvious the developer loved the grand old dame as much as they did. Yes, the venerable hotel is proof that while you can't turn back the clock, you can wind it up again with contemporary design and smart technology.

Let the hotel know on-line when you'll be arriving, for example, and a dashing grey-suited doorman will be waiting for you, keys in hand. Head up to your room, and discover new carpets, Edwardian wallpaper and updated bathrooms. Bedside technology includes reading lights that you can actually read by – but that don't disturb your partner – and plug-ins for your phone. Rooms are air-conditioned, but you can still open your window and breathe in the salty air that confirms you're on the Pacific Ocean.

Downstairs, the differences are grander in scale. A golden staircase circles a silver chandelier that floats overhead like petals in a breeze. The new restaurant Q – a nod to Queen Victoria – looks as fresh as its West coast cuisine tastes. Next door, Q Bar has already received a *Wine Spectator* award for its extensive selection.

The re-imagined Lobby Lounge with its potted palms, grand piano and two fireplaces is as elegant as ever. Overlooking the Inner Harbour, this is when you know you're at the Empress. Come for tea. Enjoy scones with clotted cream, dainty sandwiches, bite-size pastries, and a century of tradition.

— SUZANNE MORPHET



Q at the Empress



Fairmont Gold one bedroom suite





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TIM BOYLES PHOTOGRAPHY

Elegant and glamorous—  
MSC delivers a stunning ship

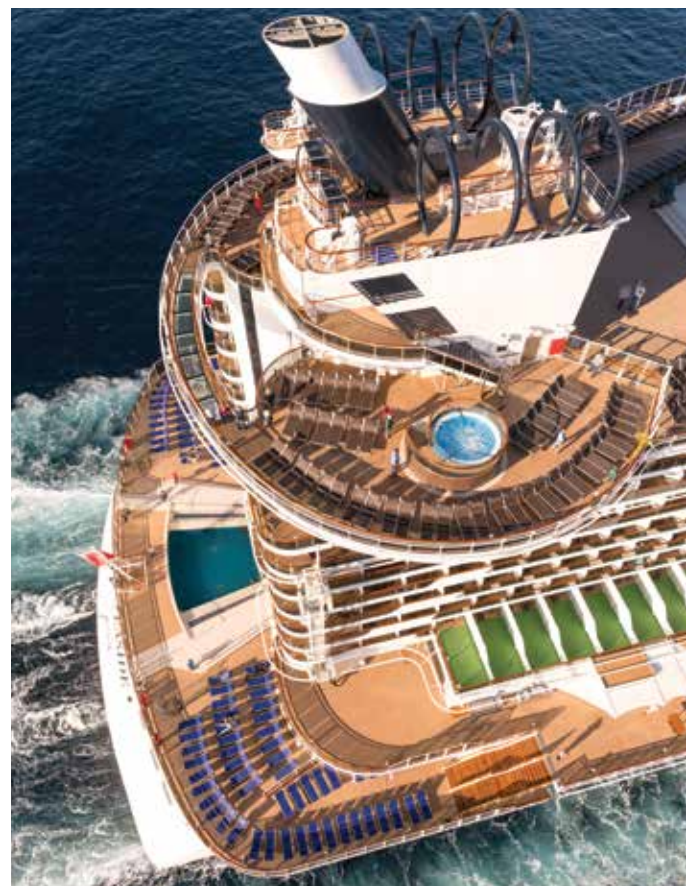
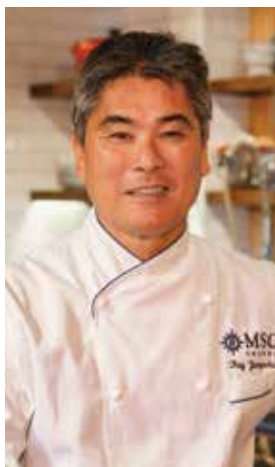
# MSC SEASIDE

This beautiful and innovative new ship is now sailing from PortMiami year-round on two different 7-day Caribbean cruises. She literally has something for everyone and is a great choice for a value vacation in the sun.

**VANESSA LEE**







ONE OF THE NEWEST SHIPS to grace our shores, the lovely *MSC Seaside*, which debuted in December 2017, is a ship specifically developed and designed for the North American market – and it's a winner.

The bold and innovative design, with a wrap-around promenade on Deck 8 offers guests many choices for outside dining and relaxing. Deck 7 aft has a small "South Beach" pool and bar but it's the Miami condo look – unusual but attractive – that sets it apart. With two panoramic elevators set between two towers of rooms it's quite impressive and topped by a catwalk dubbed "the bridge of sighs" affording phenomenal views.

The *Seaside* is ultra-glam but also has many attributes that will suit a wide and varied audience – including families of all ages.

One of the most magnificent spots is the mid-ship four-level Atrium anchoring decks 5 through 8 and connected by two sets of gorgeous, swooping Swarovski staircases. This space is vibrant and buzzing – the heart of the ship essentially. With a variety of bars and lounges created on each level, an ever-changing, fabulous backdrop of LED screens and a small "stage" for live musical entertainment, or a DJ playing favorite tunes, this is the place to be – at any time of day.

The Atrium is just one example where MSC has really upped their game in the overall ship design and décor of the *Seaside*. For the most part, the public spaces are attractive and appealing with virtually no jarring notes. The ship flows well throughout the interior, while the upper, outside decks are full of all kinds of fun for everyone.

Facing page:  
(top) Interactive screens and live music create a vibrant atmosphere in the Atrium.

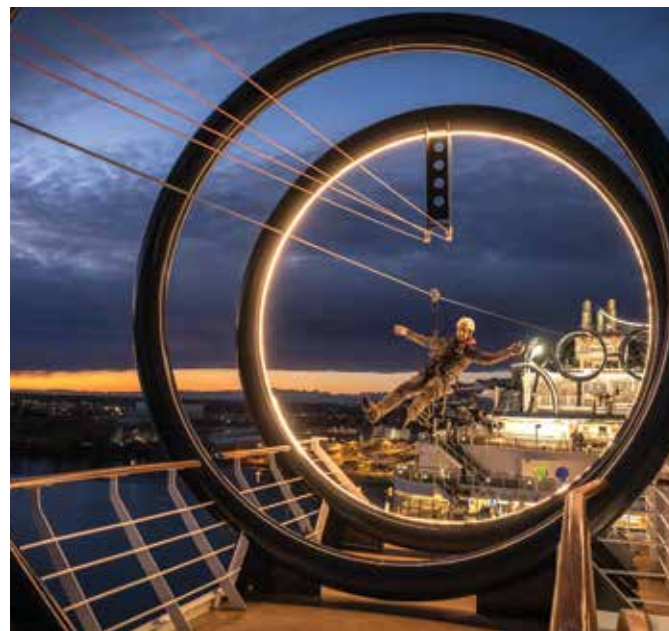
(left) *MSC Seaside* at sea.

This page:  
(clockwise from top left)

Ocean Cay signature seafood restaurant.

Celebrity chef Roy Yamaguchi and his Asian Market Kitchen.





The Seaside is ultra-glam but also has many attributes that will suit a wide and varied audience – including families of all ages.

The alternative restaurants on Deck 16 clustered around a welcoming and romantic cocktail lounge, include a Steak House, the really charming Ocean Cay for Seafood and the three-in-one restaurant space located on one side of the ship, created by celebrity chef Roy Yamaguchi. His Asian Market Kitchen offers a Teppanyaki room, a Sushi Food Bar and a main Pan-Asian venue. This is an alluring space with fabulous décor and a wide range of menu choices at reasonable prices. All dining spots on this deck are by reservation and each charges a fee – but they are well worth it.

Of course there are two large main restaurants and two casual buffet areas, with the smaller one dedicated to families – a great idea. The two main restaurants have also recently introduced three set times for evening dining rather than just two, which affords less crowded space and a more leisurely dining experience as well. As in all new ships, especially in the first of a class, (the second ship the *Seaview* comes later this year) there are always tweaks being made by the cruise line to ensure guest satisfaction.

This is a natural ship for families, with lots to do; the kids will love the bowling alley, the two ziplines, the fantastic water-park with its variety of slides, plus the terrific Jungle Pool and play area. Naturally there are Kids Clubs for all ages and a baby-sitting program as well.

And there's more – much more. The Sports Bar, the French Brasserie, the Champagne Bar and the elegant and popular Venchi, a coffee bar, Cioccolateria (chocolates and ice cream) and creperie that is delicious in every way. Add to this a wide range of award-winning entertainment in the theater every night plus music of all kinds in various lounges throughout the ship. There's a spacious Spa and the Yacht Club, the ship-within-a-ship concept is larger and even better than on other ships. A key factor here is that the restaurant for the Yacht Club guests (special key-card entry) is now contained within the several decks that this ship category occupies rather than being out in another area. For those discerning guests who want a more rarified on board atmosphere, consider the Yacht Club with its suites and many benefits and inclusions.



There is a wide variety of state-rooms, many with balconies and they are comfortable, have all the amenities necessary and most of all, the prices are very attractive. For a marvelous week of Caribbean cruising, this ship is a great choice.

The *MSC Seaside* is not just a ship that follows the Caribbean sun from its home port of Miami on a year round basis, it is a beautiful ship that is basking in the glow of a warm and bright sun and one that will appeal to many Canadians for years to come. ■

**IF YOU GO** The *Seaside* sails year round from Miami on two different 7-day Caribbean cruises. Ask your travel agent for information, pricing and special offers from the cruise line.

This page: (clock-wise from top left)  
The elegant and exclusive MSC Yacht Club.  
Seaside features the longest zipline at sea.  
Balcony stateroom.





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## Did you know...



### The average age of a Carnival guest is approximately 45 years old

Carnival's core demographic is people who are social, active and appreciate a tremendous value. Onboard there really is fun for all ages and all activity levels. Being the largest cruise line in the world, they carry all different types of vacationers who make their own fun wherever they go.

### The number of guests that sailed on Carnival in 2017 is approximately 5 million

Carnival Cruise Line is "The World's Most Popular Cruise Line®" with 25 ships operating three- to 16-day voyages to The Bahamas, Caribbean, Mexican Riviera, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, New England, Bermuda, Europe, Cuba and Australia.

### That Carnival carries more seniors than any other cruise line

Many sailings offer special rates for seniors who are 55 years of age or older.

### That Carnival offers a 110% money back offer in conjunction with our Great Vacation Guarantee

The Carnival Great Vacation Guarantee™ is the greatest guarantee your client will never need to use. If your client decides within 24 hours of the start of their cruise that it's not for them, they can simply notify Carnival's onboard Guest Services desk. Carnival will refund 110% of the fare and Guest Services will get your client back home, free of charge. With no hassles and no questions asked.

### Carnival offers more than 1,600 sailings annually and has an additional four ships on order for delivery between now and 2022

Carnival's newest ship, the Carnival Horizon made its maiden voyage April 2, 2018, with a 13-day Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona - the first of four round-trip departures from that port. Carnival Horizon will reposition to the U.S. with a 14-day trans-Atlantic crossing from Barcelona to New York May 9-23, 2018. Following its summer schedule of four-day Bermuda and eight-day Caribbean departures from the Big Apple, Carnival Horizon will shift to Miami and kick off a year-round schedule of six- and eight-day Caribbean cruises beginning Sept. 22, 2018.



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To make a reservation or for more information, please contact your travel agent.



# Céad míle fáilte...

## A hundred thousand welcomes

Dublin, Ireland's captivating capital city, packs a powerful historic punch while embracing the new and trendy in an eclectic mix of brimming-with-personality attractions. One of the friendliest cities in Europe, it has the advantage of being big enough to be cosmopolitan but small enough to maintain a friendly village vibe.

**ANNA HOBBS**







A friendly smile and a perfect pour  
welcome you to the Gravity Bar  
on the seventh floor of Dublin's  
Guinness Storehouse



Founded by the Vikings in the ninth century, the Irish government recognises 988 as the year in which the city that would become Dublin was settled. With both mountains and sea minutes away, it's a unique location for a national capital. Today it's one of Europe's most youthful cities, with an estimated 50 percent of the population under 25. It's an exciting place to visit not only because of its engaging attractions, but also because of its easy-going vibe and tradition of emotional stories to tell and people with a knack of telling them.



Ha'penny Bridge over the River Liffey

LEVERS2007 / ISTOCK



Dollard & Co. food hall

PHOTO COURTESY DOLLARD & CO.

**T**HE SMILING IRISH EYES and lilting voice that welcomed our group to Ireland belonged to Dennis O'Connor, the disarming gentleman who would be our driver and tour guide. "You are very welcome to Ireland," he said, shaking hands all around. And, knowing we were Canadians, adding, "You'll be glad to know there is a Tim Hortons here, but first, I am going to take you to Dollard & Co., our brand-new food hall, where you can have a cup of Dublin's finest, roasted from hand-selected beans by TwoFifty Square coffee company." Dubliners, we quickly discovered, are fiercely proud of their city – right down to a great latte. This trendy enterprise is a foodie's dream all under one roof. Bursting with the best Irish and international provisions, you can also grab a take-home meal, or sit and enjoy delicious fare for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

### Raising a glass at the Guinness storehouse

Well-fortified with coffee and fresh-from-the-oven pastries, we were off to one of the most-visited attractions in all of Europe. To be honest, beer is not my favorite Friday-night tittle. If I hadn't known about the popularity of Guinness Storehouse, and the fact that this 'black stuff' has colored Dublin's history for more than 250 years, I might have missed an extraordinary experience.

Arthur Guinness founded his brewery on the cobbled, inner-city streets in 1759. The building that is now a seven-storey, high-tech, Disney-style exhibition space once housed the company's fermentation plant. Our self-guided tour began at ground level in a giant atrium, shaped like a Guinness glass large enough to hold 14.3 million pints. On each floor, we experienced how the company's rich history unfolded while learning about the involved process that creates Ireland's iconic stout.

Stopping midway for a tasting, we not only discovered how perfectly certain foods pair with different brews, but also learned to pull the perfect pint – holding the glass at a precise 45-degree angle – and were presented with a diploma to prove we could do it. Seven flights up, our reward was the Gravity Bar with the best 360-degree view of the city skyline and the pint that's included in the 17.50 Euro price of admission. Even if you don't love the suds, this is a don't-miss attraction. [www.guinness-storehouse.com](http://www.guinness-storehouse.com)

### An EPIC Museum

EPIC, Dublin's newest museum is a fresh take on the stories of the estimated ten million people who have left Ireland over the centuries, as well as the legacies they have left behind. High-tech and family-friendly, this interactive experience is both a commemoration and a celebration. The restored warehouse that houses the museum is in Docklands, the original departure point for many of Ireland's emigrants. Their sad yet inspiring stories came to life as we meandered through 20 galleries, each with its own theme. [www.epicchq.com](http://www.epicchq.com)





Celebrating the “Black Stuff” ...  
Dublin’s extraordinary  
Guinness Storehouse is  
one of the most visited  
attractions in all of Europe.





BART KOWSKI / STOCK



PHOTO COURTESY GLASNEVIN CEMETERY

## The charms of Glasnevin Cemetery

Central Casting couldn't have picked a more charismatic storyteller than Paddy Gleeson who guided us around the 124-acre Glasnevin Cemetery on the 'Dead Interesting Tour'. Paddy, who could sell sand in a desert, spun weird, tragic and humorous tales of the famous and infamous people who rest underfoot. "Did you know," he said, "more people are buried here than are alive in Ireland today?"

Maria Higgins? She died once and was buried twice. Then there were the ghoulish grave-robbing, body-snatchers who started their excavations shortly after Glasnevin opened in 1832, selling their booty to medical schools. And the practical joker, Francis de Groot, the Dubliner who flew to Australia in 1932 only to be arrested, having decided he, rather than the local appointed dignitary, would cut the ribbon to open the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

"This stroll through the history of Ireland," Paddy said, "is a particularly meaningful experience for the 43 million North Americans who have Irish roots – especially those who want to trace those roots at our Glasnevin Museum." [www.glasnevintrust.ie](http://www.glasnevintrust.ie)

## A pint at the Gravediggers Pub

What do you do after spending two hours among the dead? "You do what the workers did after a long day burying people," Paddy tells us, "have a pint at the Grave-diggers Pub." Scarcely changed and family-owned since it opened 1833, this hidden treasure is a step back into another century. Conveniently located just outside the old cemetery gates, it serves up home cooking and the cozy feel of old-time Irish hospitality. Oh yes, and a pint.

## Indulge in the freebies

Among the best things the city offers travelers are the many free attractions. The National Gallery of Ireland, for instance, has an unmatched collection of Irish art, in addition to impressive European masterpieces. History buffs won't want to miss the collection of Celtic and medieval treasures in the National Museum of Ireland or the story of 20th-century Dublin that's told by the quirky Little Museum of Dublin. For more unnerving bits of history, there's Kilmainham Gaol Museum. As modern as tomorrow, the Science Gallery is an exploration of big, compelling, cutting-edge endeavors to appeal to all ages.

Dublin's Temple Bar district comes alive at night.

Paddy Gleeson entertains visitors on the 'Dead Interesting Tour' of Glasnevin Cemetery.

The Long Room, Trinity College Library.

The Literary Pub Crawl leaders outside the Duke Pub.

## The Literary Pub Crawl

A literary pub crawl, we agreed, was an essential night in a UNESCO City of Literature – designated in 2010. Books and beer marry happily at this hugely popular pub crawl, demonstrating that a Dubliner's affection for storytelling rivals that of their attachment to the city's some 800 pubs. The two-and-a-half hour trek through cobblestone streets was led by a pair of rambunctious actors, reciting bits of Irish literature, between brief stops for a pint at some of Dublin's oldest watering holes once frequented by the likes of James Joyce, Oscar Wilde and Jonathan Swift. What our guides called, "a quick cultural detour" through Trinity College, the city's most prestigious university, was tantalizing enough that we knew we would return to spend time in the library's Long Room. It's here where dusty shelves house an overwhelming collection including the Book of Kells, a breathtaking, illustrated manuscript of the four gospels of the New Testament in Latin. Created circa AD 800, it is one of the world's oldest manuscripts. [www.tcd.ie](http://www.tcd.ie)





ROB DUNSTON/FAUTE IRELAND



COURTESY DUBLIN REGIONAL TOURISM AUTHORITY

### Stroll the streets

With suggestions from Denis O'Connor, we discovered some of the finest examples of Georgian architecture, explored the shopping delights along world famous Grafton Street, and stopped for afternoon tea at the iconic Bewley's Grafton Street café. We toured the Temple Bar Food Market which is open every Saturday and everywhere we went, met friendly locals who, with their ready wit, were eager to share their stories, and make us smile.

We learned the meaning of the iconic 'craic' - getting together for fun and enjoyable conversation - and we discovered that a craic is more than reason enough to visit this enchanting city. ■

**IF YOU GO** Air Canada has direct flights from four Canadian and 11 US cities while Aer Lingus flies from Toronto and nine US cities. To get to and from the airport and into a vast number of attractions, the Dublin Pass is a cost-effective choice. [www.dublinpass.com](http://www.dublinpass.com). For a complete city tour with 28 stops at a host of attractions, try the Hop-On Hop-Off double-decker bus [www.hop-on-hop-off-bus.com/Dublin](http://www.hop-on-hop-off-bus.com/Dublin). Looking for a place to stay? The Dylan Hotel, a five-star boutique hotel, set in an eclectic building in the center of the city, is a delight. [www.dylan.ie](http://www.dylan.ie)





*Finding peace-and-love on*

# IBIZA & FORMENTERA

Our world has drifted frighteningly far from the flower power vibe of the 60s, but if you're longing for a return to the hippies, I know where to find them. They're on the sunny, relaxed Balearic islands of Ibiza and Formentera, just off the south-east coast of Spain.

**LIZ FLEMING**





Bay and beach at Cala Tarida, Ibiza





PHOTO COURTESY WALKING IBIZA



BARTU JUAN / SHUTTERSTOCK

## In the psychedelic sixties,

drawn by warm weather, an inexpensive lifestyle and relaxed policing, and with icons like Bob Dylan leading the way, young people from around the world descended on the small, sun-drenched islands of Ibiza and Formentera in happy, hippy droves. They bought old farmhouses and set up impromptu markets, selling everything from home-grown vegetables to hand-strung beads. It was a blissful escape from the world then and, the good news is, it still is.

Today, hippy markets, organic restaurants, a boom in agro-tourism and a generally laid-back lifestyle mix with the old stone buildings, rugged cliff faces and white sandy beaches of the island to make Ibiza and Formentera perfect escapes from the madness of the world. There, both the people and the climate are warm year-round – with the temperature rarely dipping below 15 degrees C even on the coldest days. It's a getaway from which you might never want to return.

Toby Clarke, owner of the popular tour company Walking Ibiza, is the perfect example of a man who couldn't resist the pull of the island. Born on Ibiza to counter-culture British parents, he spent his childhood happily roaming the beaches and attending an independent school run by hippy families. The smell of pot, he says, brings back fond school day memories!



LIZ FLEMING

Though his parents ultimately returned to a more buttoned-down life in England and Clarke finished his education in traditional boarding schools, he never lost his passion for Ibiza. After years of international travel as he searched for a career, Clarke realized his future was on the island of his birth and he returned with wife Belinda and their family. Since coming back, Clarke has dedicated his life to introducing guests to his beloved Ibiza through a series of guided hikes across and around the island. "It began a few years ago," he explains philosophically, "when I was searching for a new path in life, and thought a solo hike around the perimeter of the island would give me time to think."

The cliffs and rugged terrain of the island were seriously challenging, but Clarke decided to make things even tougher by taking along neither money nor provisions. "I thought I could rely on the generosity and hospitality of Ibizans," he said, and it turned out that he could. Throughout his multi-day trek, Clarke was welcomed, fed and sheltered by strangers – and that kindness convinced him to found his tour company, Walking Ibiza as a means of sharing the unique island vibe and promoting his home to others.

While it's possible for the ambitious visitor to do a week-long camping trek (note: food and shelter are provided – no cadging meals or beds from strangers required), shorter, less strenuous hikes are also available.

This page (clockwise from top left):

Toby Clarke of Walking Ibiza leads visitors on hiking adventures around the island.

Sunset on mysterious Es Vedra island.

The harbor at Ibiza's historic old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Facing page:

A young vendor shows off her perfume and jewelry at Ibiza's popular Hippy Market.





GREG BALFOUR/REUTERS / ALAMY

I spent a glorious afternoon with Clarke and wife Belinda, hiking to the top of a cliff to view the small, mysterious Es Vedra island at sunset. Though it's said to have magnetic properties similar to Machu Picchu and Sedona, what I felt was the pull of its beauty alone.

As we walked, Clarke pointed out fascinating treasures I'd have strolled right past, such as an ancient shelter – a circle of smooth rocks where a tired shepherd would have rested for the night as his sheep grazed nearby – and a sort of kiln where fires blazed hot enough to melt rock into the white, limey substance used to cover and protect farm houses and sheds. Medicinal plants, edible berries... everything we passed was

the inspiration for a story from Clarke, but best of all were his memories of growing up wild and happy on the island. Though his parents ultimately fell out of love with each other and the hippy movement, Clarke's heart remained in Ibiza. It's easy to see why. There's a gentle sense of welcome everywhere you turn.

I biked the quiet roadways, kayaked the spectacular shoreline at Benirrás Beach, and experienced the warmth of an agro-tourism inn at Cap Gazi, where a working farm has been transformed into an elegant retreat, complete with a horizon pool, spa, gym and outdoor yoga pavilion. The farm provides the freshest possible produce and the chef creates local dishes with flair.

Not leftovers from the age of Aquarius, these artists and vendors were latter day hippies – young Ibizans who've embraced the peace and love philosophy of their parents and spun it into a vibrant new lifestyle.

One wet evening, I drove across the island to the weekly hippy market, half expecting a plasticized, tongue-in-cheek spoof of the sixties, but what I found was anything but. A field full of tarpaulin-covered booths sheltered a group of serious artists – silver-smiths, leather designers, potters and more. Hand-embroidered necklaces hung beside shaggy sheepskin vests and fringed bags that had a definite Mamas and Papas appeal. Everything had a vintage feel – except the people. Not leftovers from the age of Aquarius, these artists and vendors were latter day hippies – young Ibizans who've embraced the peace and love philosophy of their parents and spun it into a vibrant new lifestyle.



Although the capital city of Ibiza is known for its hot clubbing scene – arguably one of the most famous in Europe – which starts at midnight with internationally renowned DJs keeping the dance floors packed until sunrise – it’s a relatively isolated phenomenon. Though I enjoyed my night of euro-cool living and loved the over-the-top amenities of the ultra-chic OD Talamanca Hotel, where the beautiful people recuperate around the pool in preparation for the next night’s excesses, I was happy to find that driving five kilometres outside the city took me back decades in time and lifestyle.

In the countryside, there are no jam-packed highways and few overcrowded resorts. Instead, a sense of peace descends as you roll along two-lane roads, through tranquil farmland, heading for some of the most beautiful beaches in Spain.

If Ibiza is laid back, Formentera, her sister island located just a short ferry ride away, is even more so. With just a few main roads and almost no stoplights, Formentera is a place that you explore slowly and savor joyfully. You could easily bike the whole island and many visitors do.



Ibiza old town

STANISLAV / ISTOCK

If Ibiza is laid back, Formentera, her sister island located just a short ferry ride away, is even more so. With just a few main roads and almost no stoplights, Formentera is a place that you explore slowly and savor joyfully.



Els Pujols, Formentera

TONG BALAGUER / SHUTTERSTOCK

The small beach town of es Pujols is a favorite escape, where you can stay at the friendly, family-owned Hotel Sa Volta, then enjoy fresh caught fish at the Capri, another family-owned establishment where the owner himself comes out to make certain that you’re enjoying every bite. Be sure to try the Formentera salad – a delicious mix of bread, dried fish, and tomatoes. You’ll be back for more the next day!

Because the island is so small – just 20 km long and two km wide at its narrowest spot – the ocean is always with you. Don’t resist her charms – surrender yourself to the waves.

My most fabulous morning was spent sailing a catamaran with a friendly local guide whose English was not much more extensive than my Spanish. It didn’t matter. We had the sun on our backs, the wind in our sails and the brilliant blue water all around us and as we crashed through the waves, salt spray in our faces, I understood not only what brought the hippies to these islands more than fifty years ago, but also what lures the rest of us here to share it with them today. ■

**IF YOU GO** For more information on Ibiza and Formentera, visit [spain.info/en\\_CA](http://spain.info/en_CA). To book a tour with Walking Ibiza: <http://walkingibiza.com>.

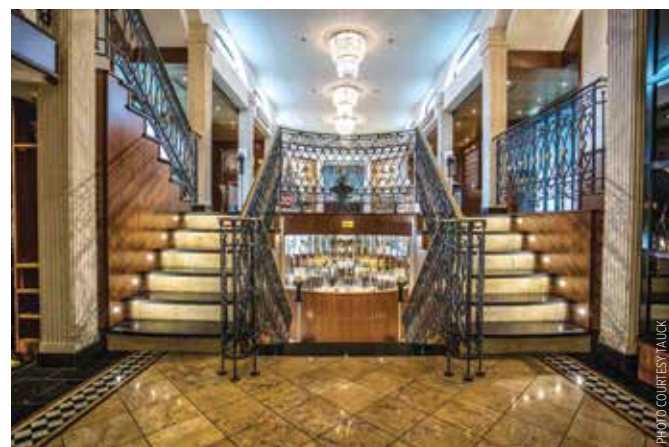


# MAKING WAVES *on the Seine*

From its exclusive private events offered on each of its river cruise itineraries to its understated and relaxed ships, Tauck strives to make every aspect of its boutique and luxurious river cruises an experience to remember.

**AARON SAUNDERS**





**I**N THE WORLD OF TRAVEL, it's all about more: how to fit more guests on a ship, squeeze more people into a plane, take more travelers onto tours. There's even a sexy financial catchphrase to describe this phenomenon: economy of scale. One company, though, is going in the opposite direction – and it's making waves for all the right reasons.

When American tour and river cruise operator Tauck decided to retrofit four of its oldest river cruise ships in Europe, it made all the right moves. Tauck announced that these rejuvenated ships would feature larger suites, better bathrooms, and more luxurious amenities in keeping with its all-inclusive, 'no-options-sold' mantra. And, most importantly, a critical detail: Tauck would be decreasing the number of guests aboard each ship, taking the entire guest complement down to just 98 people. As it turns out, space just might be the biggest luxury of all.

### This Sapphire sparkles

I noticed the difference as soon as I embarked Tauck's newly-refitted *ms Sapphire* in Paris: no lines. Queues aren't common on river cruises to start with, but you do sometimes find them on ships that accommodate more than 200 guests. With just 98 guests onboard I was able to walk right on, have a welcome drink, and complete check-in formalities with absolutely no waiting. The ease of it was almost disorienting. I looked around helplessly at nearby crew members as if to say, "What now?" Surely someone wants me to sit down or stand in line? No. Keycard in hand, I made my way to my stateroom, a mere five minutes after stepping onboard.

The *Sapphire* debuted her new look in time for the start of the 2017 season, and the changes were more than just a superficial sprucing-up here and there. The ship's corridors were completely redone with new

wall treatments and floor-level accent lighting. Soft furnishings had been replaced, and entire blocks of staterooms removed to make way for larger suites.

One of the features added during the refit was Arthur's, a new casual dining venue situated all the way at the stern on Diamond Deck. Incredibly, it's open for continental breakfast, lunch, and even casual dinner. No reservations needed and best of all, no additional charge.

After a few days onboard, Arthur's – named after Tauck's chairman, Arthur Tauck, Jr. – became a subject of much discussion. Even though Tauck offers spectacular multi-course dinners each evening, word spread around the ship that the hamburger at Arthur's was, as one guest put it, "To die for." He was right: it was superb. Just because you're on a luxury river cruise doesn't mean that the pleasures of less complicated cuisine can't be enjoyed.

This page (clockwise from top left):

Sunset on the Seine River in Paris.

Lobby of Tauck's Sapphire.

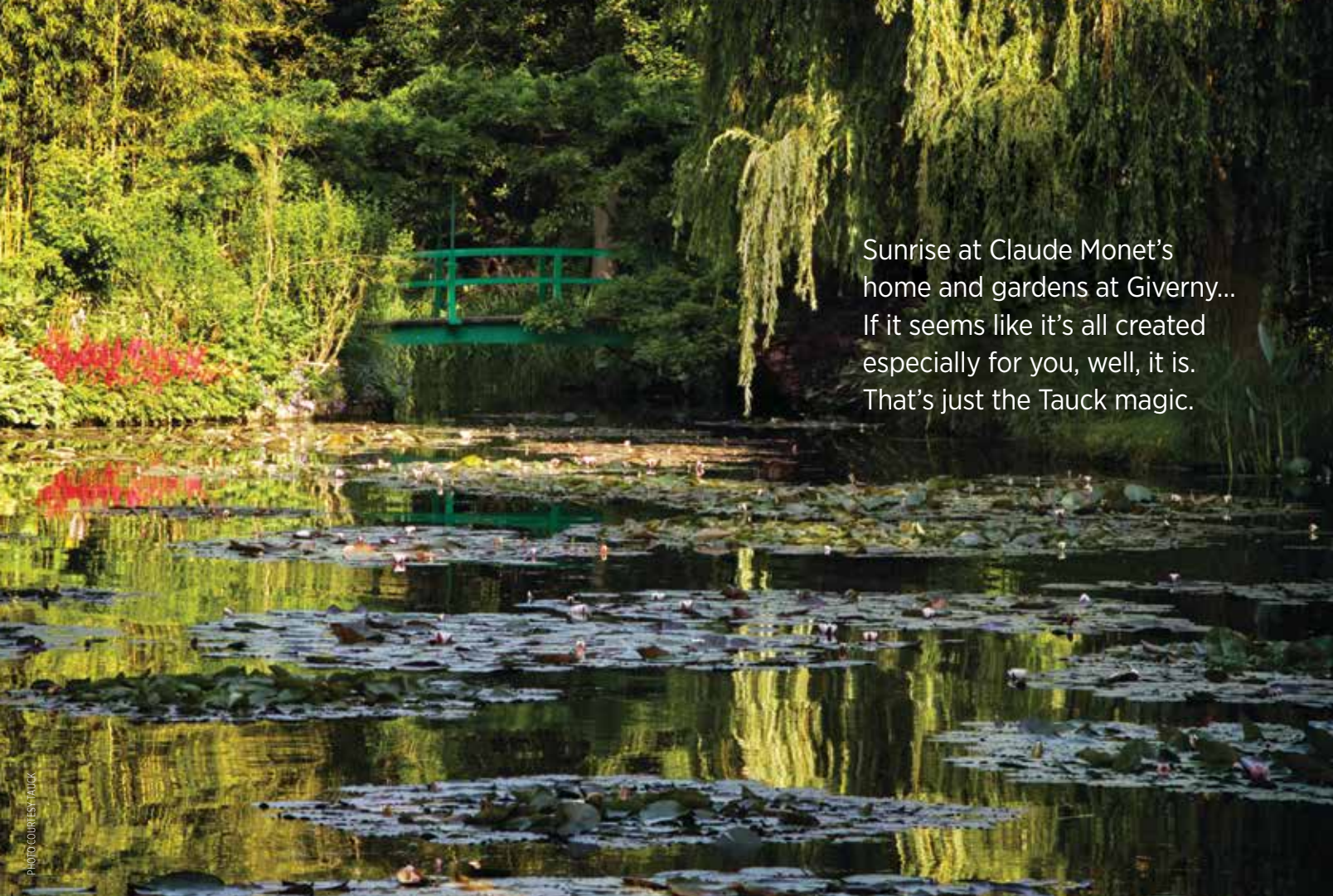
Arthur's is a new casual dining venue.

Facing page:

(Top) Monet's famous gardens at Giverny.

The historic harbor at Honfleur in Normandy.



A photograph of a pond at sunrise. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery and a small green bridge in the background. The pond is covered with lily pads, and the sky is a soft mix of orange and blue. The overall scene is peaceful and picturesque.

Sunrise at Claude Monet's  
home and gardens at Giverny...  
If it seems like it's all created  
especially for you, well, it is.  
That's just the Tauck magic.

PHOTO COURTESY TAUCK





### More suite life

Because Tauck reduced the overall guest complement aboard the *ms Sapphire* to just 98, it could afford to increase the number of suites. In fact, most accommodations come in at 225 or 300 sq. ft. – more spacious than the average river cruise stateroom, by far.

My Category 6 stateroom was one of the new 225 sq. ft. rooms. With a full-sized French balcony and a half-width floor-to-ceiling window, these rooms are as light and airy as they are spacious. A super-soft bed faces the French balcony, allowing you to enjoy a coffee from the in-room Nespresso maker while sitting in bed.

A small sitting area with a proper table and two chairs makes it easy to relax, and I was impressed at the amount of storage space that Tauck was able to fit into this new room. The award for most jaw-dropping improvement, however, goes to the bathrooms in these new suites: marble-clad affairs bookended by a rain-forest shower and stocked with Molton Brown toiletries. Don't be surprised if you catch yourself taking photos of it, along with the rest of this beautiful ship.

### The brilliance of Normandy

The *Sapphire* sails Tauck's nine-night Rendezvous on the Seine cruise-tour itinerary. With seven cruising days (plus two days at a luxury hotel in Paris), the company really pulls out all the stops on this fabulous cruise through France's Normandy region.

Known for its inclusive events, Tauck does not disappoint on the Seine. A welcome dinner at the Pullman Paris Tour Eiffel Hotel saw guests dining in the rooftop restaurant, just blocks from Gustave Eiffel's iconic creation. A few days later, a French country château, nestled into the hills by an off-the-beaten-path rural road, served as the setting for a traditional, candle-lit dinner that recreated the grand galas of times gone by.



PHOTO COURTESY TAUCK

These are events that you would not be able to purchase on your own, and they're exclusive to Tauck. And, with just 98 guests, these events are even more intimate and unique than they have been in the past.

As wonderful as this itinerary is, it was also sombre and reflective. A fog-filled day introduced us to the D-Day landing beaches, where Allied forces came ashore on June 6, 1944.

Particularly moving is the visit to the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, where over 9,000 soldiers are interred. The fog obliterated the landscape and I found myself in a sea of white crosses that disappeared over the hills in every direction, crushed by the weight of the past.

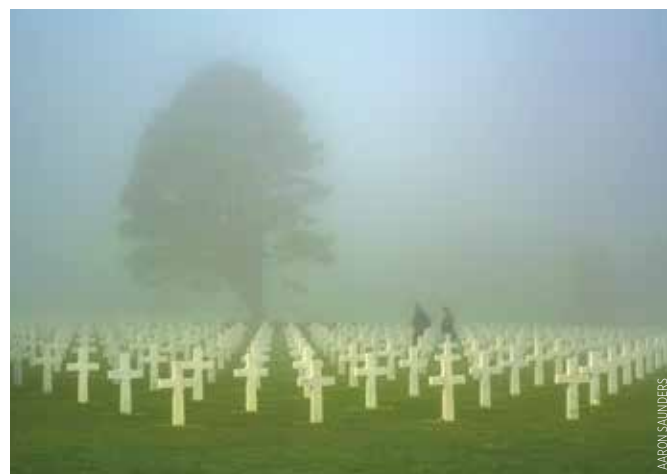
Tauck ends this river cruise on a high note, with a private visit to Claude Monet's home and gardens at Giverny. At sunrise. If it seems like it's all created especially for you, well, it is. That's just part of the Tauck magic.

In a world where travel is dictated by the numbers, Tauck's "less-is-more" approach is as refreshing as it is enjoyable. Let's hope it catches on. ■

**IF YOU GO** Tauck offers a wide selection of small ship ocean cruises as well as all-inclusive river cruises and extensive land itineraries, all over the world. Commencing this year they now offer Canadian Dollar pricing. For complete information, visit [www.tauck.ca](http://www.tauck.ca) or see your preferred travel advisor.



AARON SAUNDERS



AARON SAUNDERS

Category 6 stateroom featuring French Balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Tauck guests enjoy a candle-lit dinner in a French country château.

A sea of white crosses shrouded by fog at the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach.





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# Immersed and embraced by PORTUGAL

From the Fado clubs of Lisbon,  
to the Crayola-bright towers of the  
Pena Palace at Sintra, Portugal enfolds  
you in a welcome so warm – *bem vinda* –  
you'll find it hard to leave.

**LIZ FLEMING**

The medieval walled town of Obidos, Portugal  
is a UNESCO World Heritage site.





LUZ FLEMING



IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU MEET someone who's worked at the same job, in the same place for more than fifty years. José Diogo Vieira, concierge at the über elegant Hotel Palácio Estoril in Cascais, Portugal is an exception. The Palácio is José's home and he radiates hospitality – when he says 'bem vinda', it's a very personal welcome.

José began as a bell hop in the 1960's, and can tell you every detail of the hotel's history. In 1941, he explains, Ian Fleming, creator of the James Bond series, was a regular at the hotel bar, drinking with Serbian double agent Dusko Popov.

"He would sit right here", says José, patting Fleming's favorite couch in what is affectionately called the 'spy bar.' "You sit here too!" he insists.

In 1969, the movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was shot at the Hotel Palácio Estoril and José shared a scene with George Lazenby. He has the movie stills to prove it. "That's me," he says, pointing proudly "Just behind James Bond."







After my barefoot sunset wander on the Cascais beach, the Palácio is a contrast. In the polished-mahogany-and-crisp-linen world of the dining room, white-coated waiters hover, expertly recommending, presenting and serving. No matter how lean, green and minimalist your diet at home might be, you'll order the decadently delicious grilled foie gras with sweet figs and balsamic, rich shrimp and scallop risotto and crepes Suzette, flambéed tableside – of course. It's the highest-end, old-school comfort food imaginable and it feels incredibly welcoming.

The enthusiasm for hospitality is a hallmark of the Hotel Palácio Estoril and a reflection of an all-encompassing sense of welcome you'll find everywhere in Portugal. It's a country embraces visitors at every turn.

There's a different sort of hospitality in the ancient town of Obidos where the twisting cobblestone streets are lined with not only shops selling the expected souvenirs and gifts, but also tiny bars selling traditional ginja, a cherry liqueur served in tiny chocolate cups. As you wander, shop, admire the geraniums poking out of window boxes, and walk the ancient battlement wall that surrounds the old fortified town, you'll stop, sip and chat with the owners of the little bars, feeling the glow of the liqueur warming your belly. If you've had more than a little ginja, stay the night! The Obidos castle-turned-posada at the edge of the original village awaits but the small town nearby also offers another, slightly quirky and undeniably welcoming option – the Literary Man Hotel.

"We have 60,000 books in the hotel," the desk clerk tells you proudly as you check in, "and every one of them is for sale." In this small boutique hotel, books are everywhere – filling huge shelves behind the reception desk, waiting invitingly on the bedside tables in every guest room and lining the walls of every public space.

In the dining room, bookshelves cover the walls and piles of novels topped with simple candlesticks are the centerpieces on each table. As a talented jazz duo plays softly in one corner, guests flip through books, read books, touch books and savor books as much as they're savoring their meals. It's a bibliophile's dream come true. Don't be surprised if your luggage is heavier when you check out.

This spread (clockwise from top left):

José Diogo Vieira, concierge, Hotel Palácio Estoril in Cascais, Portugal.

The picturesque seaside village of Cascais.

Library Bar at the Literary Man Hotel in Obidos.

Traditional ginja, a cherry liqueur served in tiny chocolate cups.

In the movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, filmed at the Hotel Palácio Estoril, José Diogo Vieira (center), shared a scene with George Lazenby (right) as James Bond.



One world-famous welcome in Portugal has nothing to do with a hotel, a restaurant or even an earthly host. It's all about the embrace offered to believers at the shine at Fatima.

According to the story, on May 13, 1917, the Virgin Mary appeared to three young shepherd children. After returning to them on several other occasions, the Virgin is finally believed to have caused the sun to spin like a disc to prove that the children were telling the truth. The children now believed, an enormous sanctuary was built that has since drawn millions of people to one of the most important shrines in Europe.

Some simply sight-see, many take part in the daily masses, while others show their devotion by crawling across the massive paved courtyard and circling the church on their knees – a punishing feat. At nearby shops, many visitors buy armloads of candles, or wax effigies of the three shepherds, Christ or the Virgin while others buy beeswax representations of human body parts like arms, legs, heads, livers, kidneys etc. symbolizing the various illnesses they believe have been cured by divine intervention. Carrying their offerings solemnly, the pilgrims toss the wax effigies and candles into the flames of an enormous fire pit inside the shrine grounds, murmuring prayers of thanks for favors received and loved ones healed.

The gleaming white Basilica of our Lady of the Rosary, the smoking fires, the sweet smell of melting beeswax, faces of the devoted believers on their knees, the holy water fountain and the massive crucifix towering over the Basilica of the Holy Trinity all combine to create an experience you won't soon forget, regardless of your religious beliefs a place that offers a unique welcome.



Sintra's Pena Palace is a hedonistic mix of vividly painted terraces, decorative battlements and mythological statues

In the UNESCO World Heritage site at Sintra, where neo-Moorish, neo-Manueline and neo-Mogul architectural styles collide and blend with whimsical abandon to create the stunning Pena Palace, the most impressive areas are those where guests were entertained. Imagine how the ornately painted ceilings and richly tiled walls of the dining rooms echoed with the laughter of noble guests.

Like José of the Palacio Estoril, our Sintra historian guide Vitor Santos clearly takes a personal pride in the Pena Palace – from the delicate porcelain, crystal, and silver to the wealth of paintings on the walls. This, you feel, is his Portuguese heritage, his treasure and he is graciously sharing it with you.







This spread (clockwise from top left):

Sintra's Pena Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Cristiano e Sousa performing fado at Lisbon's Café Luso.

Religious pilgrims on their knees at the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima.

You might think that the warmth of the Portuguese welcome would be diluted by urban sophistication in the capital city of Lisbon but you'd be wrong. Coffee shops on terraces in every part of the city of the seven hills lure guests with some of Europe's finest pastries – like the Bolo de Mel da Madeira (honey cake), Travesseiro de Sintra (egg yolk-filled confections called Sintra's pillows) and of course, Pastel de Belém (the best of the traditional Portuguese egg cream tarts in a crisp, delicate crust.) It's impossible not to indulge, but the pastries aren't the city's sweetest treat. Lisbon, after all, is the home of Portugal's beloved fado tradition – music that tells of loves won and lost in a city and a country to which each singer seems completely devoted.

Fado is everywhere in Lisbon – playing on the radio, on the loud-speaker systems in the shops and most importantly, in the Fado clubs of the Alfama, Mouraria, and Bairro Alto districts of the city.

Visit Luso, one of the most famous fado clubs in Lisbon, and you'll be welcomed into a tightly packed dining room filled with fado fans. The menu features Portuguese specialties with lots of fresh fish and seafood options – but no matter how good the food, the meal will be secondary to the music. As you're sipping your first spoonful of soup, the lights will dim to darkness as the Fado singer and his or her guitarists arrive. All conversation will stop as the dramatic, tragic music fills the room and engulfs you. This is not sing-along, hand-clapping, finger-snapping fare – these songs tell of heartbreak, loss, despair and longing – for a loved one perhaps – but most importantly for Lisbon and Portugal.

Whether or not you understand the words of the Fado singer, the passion will be unmistakable and irresistible. As the songs rise to each heartfelt crescendo, you'll feel immersed, embraced, and endlessly welcomed into the very heart of Portugal. ■

**IF YOU GO** Portugal's history is rich and with so many sites to cover, you'll want a guide to explain the cultural significance of what you're seeing. One great choice is the Sintra-based Dialogos Itinerantes. Reach them at [dialogositinerantes17@gmail.com](mailto:dialogositinerantes17@gmail.com)

While you're in Lisbon, be sure to spend at least one gloriously self-indulgent night at the Pestana Palace Lisbon, where simply driving through the imposing gates will make you wonder if you're royalty. The ultra-luxe granite bathroom and princess-ready bed linens in your room will make you absolutely sure. [pestana.com/en/hotel/pestana-palace](http://pestana.com/en/hotel/pestana-palace)

Other recommendations: The Literary Man, Obidos [theliteraryman.pt](http://theliteraryman.pt); Hotel Palácio Estoril Golf and Spa [palacioestorilhotel.com](http://palacioestorilhotel.com); Luso Fado Club [cafeluso.pt/en](http://cafeluso.pt/en)

Note: Sintra is approximately a 30 minute drive from Lisbon, while Obidos and Fatima both take 90 minutes to reach by car.

Flights from Canada are plentiful with Air Canada and Transat, but another great choice is Azores Airlines, which also offers stops in the Azores for an altogether different taste of Portugal.

And your local travel professional can assist in any aspect of your Portugal vacation.



# RIVER CRUISING

*as you like it*

Sail, walk, bike, hike, explore...  
Enjoy your choice of active discoveries  
aboard the Avalon Felicity

**LIZ FLEMING**





The village of Bacharach on the Rhine River.





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## The late afternoon light must have

Above:

*Irises*, Vincent Van Gogh, May 1890, oil on canvas Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. (Vincent Van Gogh Foundation)

Facing page (clockwise from top left):

Avalon Felicity sails past Berg Castle on the Rhine.

Learning Van Gogh's techniques at an art workshop in Amsterdam.

Spectacular views from the cable cars near Rudesheim, Germany.

Cycling is just one of the active shore adventures available on this Rhine cruise.

looked the same to him, I thought, and irises, after all, are still irises, no matter what century they're viewed in. More than a hundred years after the death of famous artist Vincent Van Gogh, his influence lives on. As I picked up my palette and brush in the Amsterdam studio, near his old haunts, I could almost imagine Vincent himself looking over my shoulder. He wouldn't have been impressed by my painting skills, but I'd like to think he'd have been pleased to see the roomful of wannabe artists learning about his techniques from the resident experts at a tiny Amsterdam studio and trying our hands at recreating his style.

This unusual painting afternoon was just one element in the hands-on, full-on immersion into Dutch and German culture that characterized our Avalon Active Discovery cruise

from Amsterdam to Nuremberg. Though the itinerary of charming ports was familiar, Avalon's innovative approach to exploring and experiencing the landscape, the cuisine, and the culture was refreshingly new.

Recreating Van Gogh's brushstrokes was only the beginning. After we'd wiped the paint from our hands, our guide took us on a completely different voyage of discovery through the old streets of the city, to some of Amsterdam's finest foodie spots. We learned to hold a slippery pickled herring by its tail and lower it carefully into our mouths, as the Dutch do, and then discovered that we'd all been quite hideously mispronouncing the name of Holland's most famous cheese. Gouda isn't pronounced "goo-dah". It's "how-dah". No worries – it's delicious no matter how you say it. Transitioning from cheese to chocolate, our guide led us to a tiny shop where a wonderfully mad chocolatier

spends his days crafting tiny, delectable Gucci bags and other designer look-alikes out of chocolate. So beautiful, they were almost too precious to eat – almost. We gobbled every creative morsel, then washed them down heartlessly with a chaser of Dutch, salted licorice.

A fully-translated tour of Amsterdam's iconic canal system and an impromptu Indonesian 'rijstaffel' – a rice table dinner – an important part of Dutch culture, thanks to their long history with that part of the world – rounded out our first two cruise days and set the entertaining tone for the rest of the tour.

Each port offered a new surprise. We spent one glorious fall afternoon riding an open-air lift up a mountain-side near Rudesheim, Germany, soaking up the scenery and filling our memories (and our memory cards!), then strolling down through a lush vineyard, chatting with pickers, tasting sun-warmed grapes, and watching the exacting farmer and vintner as they carefully checked their harvest.

One morning, like crusaders storming the castle walls in Miltenberg, we hiked up a hillside to explore the ancient ruins, then returned to the town below where we were rewarded for our efforts with a tasting of the local wurst – which we thought was actually the best! Our tour in Wurzburg took us along Roman roads to the castle of the bishop with its gorgeous gardens and blood-curdling stories of what happened to those who displeased the mighty man – nasty but fascinating.

Along our various routes, we sampled local foods and even found ourselves in the tasting room of a family winery for a just-us sampling of their very best. A bike ride through Bamberg on our last day began with a very interesting introduction to the area's Salem-like history of witch-burning and was topped off with a giant hand-twisted pretzel and a glass of beer at an ancient brewery.









Clockwise  
from top left:  
Deluxe stateroom,  
Felicity dining room  
and bar.

Although the *Avalon Felicity* can accommodate 138 guests, not everyone joined us on the tours we'd selected. Avalon's Active Discovery program, after all, is about choice. Each day, three all-included options were available – one geared to the more active traveler (hiking, biking etc.), one for the guests interested in an immersion in the local culture or history etc., and a more standard guided walking or coach tour. Guests were free to decide which best suited their interests and the process of natural selection seemed to create a pretty even division, meaning that none of the tours felt overcrowded. Back on board each evening, dinner table conversation was always lively because everyone had a different story to tell about the day's adventures.

The ship itself is elegant and well-designed, with a gracious dining room and lounge, as well as a spacious

upper Sky Deck. Huge expanses of glass in all the public areas, in addition to the wall-to-wall panoramic windows in all staterooms seem to envelope the beautiful landscape you sail through. In the dining room, chefs eager to make each meal an experience, offer generous buffet feasts at breakfast and lunch, while at dinner a menu of wonderful choices, based largely on locally sourced recipes, make it hard to decide.

Beginning in 2019, Avalon guests will enjoy Flex, a new program that will offer open dining times, more tables for two, bar service on the Sky Deck and daily night fare at the bar. For those looking for a romantic get-away, the chefs will even be happy to pack picnic lunches!

Also beginning in 2019, as a special feature for the more active cruise guests on all European cruises, the company will add the services of an Avalon Adventure Host. Based in a new Adventure Center, the Host will help guests sign out bicycles, grab Nordic walking sticks, arrange a kayaking excursion on the river or find a complimentary fitness class on the Sky Deck. Another great 2019 innovation will be the introduction of the most dynamic special interest cruises to date, featuring in-depth tours of breweries and wineries, visits to Christmas markets and Jewish heritage sites, explorations of tulip gardens and castles, golfing at

great courses and more. Also in 2019 – the 75th anniversary of the Normandy invasion – there will be itineraries that honour our proud WWII history, and if you're a Jann Arden fan, you'll be able to cruise with this world-famous Canadian singer. In 2020 you can enjoy a once-in-a-decade performance of the Passion Play by the villagers of Oberammergau, Bavaria. In terms of passion, whatever yours may be, Avalon has a cruise for you.

On board the *Felicity*, the mood is immersive, as if the goal each day is to bathe us in all that's best and most interesting about the Rhine and her surroundings. While every day offers gloriously self-indulgent opportunities to slip into my luxurious suite, flop on the all-too-inviting bed and watch the shore glide by, my favorite afternoon onboard the *Felicity* is spent lolling on the Sky Deck as we sail through the jaw-dropping Rhine Valley. With an abundance of remarkable castles at practically every bend in the river, it's a regal way to experience Germany. ■

**IF YOU GO:** The Active Discovery cruises have proved so popular that Avalon has expanded to include itineraries on the Rhine, Danube and Rhône Rivers, offering guests "Classic," "Discovery" and "Active" options on each. A new AvalonGo App invites independent travelers to explore destinations on their own, with detailed, daily itineraries, a list of nearby attractions (featuring hours of operation, historical facts and more), maps, directions as well as local cafés, restaurants, bars and entertainment options. For more information, visit [www.avalonwaterways.com](http://www.avalonwaterways.com) and see your preferred travel professional.



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#### 2019 CRUISES

<b>JUL 23</b>	<b>A CHANNEL ISLAND HOP</b>	4 NTS
Dover, St. Peter Port, Brest, France, Portland, Dover		
<b>JUL 27</b>	<b>THE FJORDS IN FOCUS</b>	7 NTS
Dover, Bergen, Alesund, Haugesund, Kristiansand, Dover		
<b>AUG 3</b>	<b>GOURMET SPAIN</b>	14 NTS
Dover, Gibraltar, Cartagena, Sete, Barcelona, Alicante, Lisbon, Dover		
<b>AUG 17</b>	<b>NATURAL SCANDINAVIA</b>	15 NTS
Dover, Skagen, Stockholm, Lulea, Kemi, Pori, Fredrikstad, Dover		
<b>SEP 1</b>	<b>SUMMER SOIRÉES</b>	4 NTS
Dover, Ljmuiden, Heligoland, Zeeburge, Dover		
<b>SEP 5</b>	<b>FJORD ADVENTURER</b>	7 NTS
Dover, Bergen, Geiranger, Stavanger, Dover		
<b>SEP 12</b>	<b>LEGENDS OF THE BALTIC</b>	14 NTS
Dover, Gothenburg, Stockholm, Helsinki, St. Peterburg, Tallinn, Copenhagen, Aalborg, Dover		
<b>SEP 26</b>	<b>NORWAY ROCKS</b>	7 NTS
Dover, Kristiansand, Bergen, Alesund, Haugesund, Dover		
<b>OCT 3</b>	<b>DANCE TO FRANCE</b>	4 NTS
Dover, Cherbourg, St. Malo, Le Havre, Dover		
<b>OCT 7</b>	<b>FRENCH &amp; SPANISH FLAVORS</b>	10 NTS
Dover, St. Peter Port, Bordeaux, Bilbao, Leixoes, La Coruna, Southampton		
<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>CHIC MEDITERRANEAN</b>	18 NTS
Southampton, Malaga, Cartagena, Ibiza, Palma, St. Tropez, Toulon, Barcelona, Valencia, Gibraltar, Ferrol, Southampton		
<b>NOV 4</b>	<b>IBERIAN DISCOVERY</b>	14 NTS
Southampton, Lisbon, Funchal, Santa Cruz, San Sebastian, Puerto del Rosario, La Coruna, Southampton		
<b>NOV 18</b>	<b>ROMAN ITALY &amp; SARDINIA</b>	16 NTS
Southampton, Malaga, Porto Torres, Piombino, Rome, Salerno, Gibraltar, Ferrol, Southampton		



### A new take on Tauck

Tauck's **ms Treasures** and **ms Esprit** have been welcomed back into its riverboat fleet following a massive reconfiguration of the vessels' interior spaces that created enlarged staterooms while reducing guest numbers. *Treasures* and *Esprit* are the last of Tauck's four 110-meter ships to undergo the radical transformation – the other two 110-meter ships, the **ms Sapphire** and **ms Emerald**, were similarly reconfigured last year. Rather than maximizing guest count, Tauck's priority is creating roomier public areas for its guests as well as larger staterooms. Following their "down to the studs" refurbishment, the total number of staterooms were reduced from 59 to 49, with each ship's overall capacity being reduced from 118 passengers to 98 per vessel – a 17 percent reduction. Staterooms measuring 225 sq. ft. or larger now account for 69 percent of all Tauck ship accommodations – the highest percentage on any 110-meter riverboats in Europe.

Another great enhancement is the upgrade of the ships' second dining venue – now called Arthur's in tribute to company chairman Arthur Tauck Jr. – to include its own dedicated kitchen and chef. The renowned Tauck onboard experience



Panorama Lounge, ms Sapphire

PHOTO COURTESY TAUCK

and inclusions for guests continues with dedicated cruise directors, many included shore excursions and gratuities, transfers and wine served with lunch and dinner. "With this year's reconfiguration of the *Treasures* and *Esprit* – and with identical transformations last year of the *Sapphire* and

*Emerald* – we've reimagined and enhanced half of our riverboat fleet," said Tauck CEO Dan Mahar. The *Treasures* and *Esprit* will sail on Tauck's cruises along the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers, including its popular "Amsterdam to Budapest by Riverboat" itinerary.



EKATERINA PORROVSKY / SHUTTERSTOCK

### All about action on Avalon

On the heels of announcing Active Discovery itineraries on the Rhine, Danube and Rhône Rivers, as well as a new Avalon Choice program featuring included "Classic," "Discovery" and "Active" excursions every itinerary throughout Europe in 2019, **Avalon Waterways** has introduced plans to add an Avalon Adventure Host and new Adventure Centers, to all 2019 European cruises. "The river cruise demographic is changing and we're seeing more active passengers who want to keep up their fitness regime when on vacation – or maybe even discover a new activity," says Stéphanie Bishop of Avalon's Canadian office. Avalon Adventure Hosts will help travelers check out a bike from onboard their Suite Ship, or grab Nordic walking sticks for hiking. Whether cruisers are looking for kayaks or a complimentary fitness class on the Sky Deck, Avalon's new Adventure Host will make it happen. The company's new AvalonGo App will also appear in 2019 to help travellers independently explore each destination throughout their vacation with a detailed, daily schedule of their itinerary, a list of nearby attractions with hours of operation, historical facts and more, maps, directions as well as local cafés, restaurants, bars and entertainment options for further exploration.



AmaVida on the Douro River

PHOTO COURTESY AMA WATERWAYS

### AmaWaterways to add three new ships

In 2019, **AmaWaterways** will add three new ships to its European fleet – the most in a single year since the company's 2002 launch. Each of the ships will meet a different need in the quickly growing river cruise market. The revolutionary **AmaMagna** will be almost twice the width of traditional European river cruise ships, offering guests onboard far more space than ever before to enjoy their river cruise experience. Sailing the Danube river, this game-changing ship will welcome just 196 guests who will benefit from ultra-luxurious living spaces, with the majority of staterooms being 355 sq. ft. or larger. Multiple dining options will be offered – including an al fresco restaurant – and guests will love the enhanced onboard activities and expanded evening entertainment options. AmaWaterways will introduce two other ships – the **AmaMora**, sister ship to **AmaLea** and the **AmaKristina** – which will sail the Rhine river. **AmaDouro**, sister to **AmaVida**, will be a welcome addition to the Douro River as the region's popularity continues to grow.



Vanessa Lee recently met with Navin Sawhney, CEO of the Americas for Ponant to discuss their growth, new ships and views on expedition and exploration cruising to the far reaches of the globe.



**Ponant has a unique French heritage and style. Tell us about your company and the ships that make up your existing fleet along with Ponant's special, inclusive onboard experience.**

The company was founded in 1988 by a group of French naval officers, all of whom shared a sailor's DNA – a combination of adventure and discovery, and a dream of showcasing the art of travel at sea. As a world's leader in luxury expeditions, ours is a fleet of small ships, including seven new vessels debuting between 2018 and 2021. The intimate size of Ponant ships allows access to remote corners of the globe as well as to classic destinations, all in an unhurried, personal manner. Our onboard experience is one of elegant, yet casual luxury in an all-inclusive environment. Ultimately, we offer our guests the chance to engage in the world, making each destination an *experience*.

**You are expanding dramatically now and over the next two years with six new Explorer Yachts. Our readers are keen to hear more about these lovely small vessels.**

Each new Expedition vessel has just 92 staterooms and suites all with full balconies and the suites on Deck 6 also offer butler service. Every ship features the world's first underwater Observation Lounge, the amazing Blue Eye. Then there's a multi-function marina which offers an infinity pool, a watersports platform and a Zodiac launch for exploration ashore.

**Ponant offers fascinating and innovative itineraries to all corners of the Earth. What makes your company different in how you showcase all these destinations and ports of call?**

Our unique itineraries, catering to a variety of interests, are a signature feature of Ponant and these have been developed in concert with a global team of experts including our more than 175 Expedition Leaders. Our destinations include iconic Antarctica, the mythic Northwest Passage, magical Asia and Africa and coming next, the roof of the world in 2021! Plus, we go just about everywhere else in between.

**The Quintessential Collection is a series of special itineraries designed expressly for North American guests. How have these been curated?**

This special Collection of programs has been thoughtfully crafted for North America guests, with lectures and shore activities that cater to specific interests on this continent. The Collection offers the opportunity for enrichment and discovery in the company of experts on several subjects: art, cuisine, climate change, world affairs, history and more.

**The two polar regions are appearing more frequently on many bucket lists. Why should prospective clients choose Ponant for such Expeditions?**

Our ships are expressly built to provide an exclusive combination of luxury and comfort, combined with the efficiency of an expedition vessel. Ponant has positioned four ships in Antarctica and two in the High Arctic in order to provide our guests a greater breadth of destinations and tremendous choice of experience. Additionally, our programs operate under the expertise of more than 175 Expedition Leaders. And we work in partnership with scientific communities in order to share with our guests the most recent scientific developments and studies. Without a doubt, Ponant is the world leader of luxury expeditions.

**The amazing Blue Eye underwater lounge will be on the six new Explorer Ships. How did it come about and how will guests enjoy it?**

The Blue Eye lounges were conceived in partnership with architect Jacques Rougerie and were two years in the making. These six Explorer yachts will be the first ships in the world equipped with the Blue Eye, a window onto the spectacle of life beneath the sea. It allows guests to observe and listen to the underwater world without disturbing the ocean's natural cycles. This stunning example of bionic architecture incorporates biomimetic design, inspired by shapes found in nature. Forty-five guests at a time can enjoy this experience which is built into the hull design of these new yachts. It will be truly amazing and something very special.



## BARBERSTOWN CASTLE

Just west of Dublin, the castle ghost is waiting for you!

FOR THE TRUE IRISH EXPERIENCE, nothing tops checking into a 13th century castle that today is a four-star country inn – particularly if that castle has a storied past and a resident ghost. Barberstown Castle offers both in one luscious country inn.

Located 25 km west of Dublin in Straffan, Co. Kildare, the countryside hideaway sits on 20 acres of formal gardens and oh-so-green lawns.

The oldest section dates back to 1288, with additional wings added during Elizabethan and Victorian times. There have been 37 owners, including, from 1979 – 1987, Eric Clapton. Since purchasing the property from Clapton, Ken Heath, entrepreneur and jovial innkeeper, has embarked upon significant restorations. Considering it his duty to be the guardian of the castle's fascinating history, he has blended the age-old infrastructure with modern comforts and a dash of contemporary elegance. The result is luxurious lodgings that convey a country house ambiance. "It has just evolved over the last 30 years," Heath explains. "Each of the areas is different but they work."



Medieval banquet hall



A pleasant sitting area combines chic fabrics, striking colors and a playful aesthetic. Expansive windows overlook the well-manicured gardens and rolling lawns, while the beams of the candle-lit medieval banquet hall are draped in hops – a traditional symbol of good luck. The 55 high-ceilinged guest rooms, named for previous owners and famous guests, are furnished with original antiques, including regal four-poster beds and comfortable armchairs. No two rooms are alike.

As for the ghost – she is a nameless lady, wrapped in a cloak, who is reported to have visited Room Four, the Katherine Dillon room, not once, not twice, but three times. She smiles at the guests in bed, then turns and slips out the window.

"If there is such a thing as a ghost," says Heath, a twinkle in his eye, "this house definitely has one."

— ANNA HOBBS





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