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Vanessa Lee onboard MSC Seaside

TIM BOYLES PHOTOGRAPHY

ONE OF THE THINGS I cherish most about my lengthy travel career and involvement in the cruise industry, is being witness to so much remarkable innovation over the years. Cruise ships have certainly come a long way since I sailed on Royal Caribbean's *Song of Norway* in 1982!

This inventive segment of the travel industry has morphed considerably and it's more than just bigger and better ships being built. There has been a sea change including the arrival of simply glorious ship design, which for me is beyond compare. There are now numerous Celebrity Chefs at sea, wonderful partnerships in health, spa and wellness – Dr. Andrew Weil and Seabourn as an example – and also a deserved nod to the increase in green technology and to preserving our oceans and seas. Both river and expedition cruising are growing exponentially – a testament to the interest in smaller ships and

the benefit of reaching all corners of the globe in comfort while seeing some of the most breathtaking and out of the way places on earth.

Ships have been called 'game-changers', 'audacious', 'ground-breaking', 'spectacular' and 'imaginative' for good reason. Ship design has come a long way, baby, and it has been thrilling to watch the evolution. New cruise lines still appear relatively often – witness Virgin Voyages and Ritz Carlton Yacht Collection, both of whom will debut ships in the next few years. Favorites continue to evolve and bring us amazing concepts – such as Celebrity Cruises and their new vessel, *Celebrity Edge* launching in November. An exciting venue, to be used for various dining and entertainment options, dubbed the Magic Carpet, will rise from Deck 2 to above Deck 16 on the side of the ship – who could have imagined that?

One of the most creative and push-the-envelope line's is Royal Caribbean, especially with the introduction of their Oasis-class ships a few years ago. Next generation Oasis ships are still arriving with regularity and are phenomenal, with a bar that rises up from Deck 5 to Deck 8, Central Park in the ship's middle with thousands of living plants and trees and the AquaTheater pool at the aft of the ship for the most amazing diving shows. There's even the Royal Promenade that cuts through the middle of the ship almost from end to end.

Celebrity Chefs are plentiful and their influence on the cuisine offered by

many cruise lines has been tremendous. Nobu, Thomas Keller, Jacques Pepin, Curtis Stone, Roy Yamaguchi, Jamie Oliver, Jose Garces, Michael Schwartz and Guy Fieri – and more, have made a huge culinary impact. Long gone are the midnight buffets thankfully replaced by imaginative cuisine with an abundance of alternative restaurants from which to choose, as well as the most gorgeous main dining rooms with décor and menus that will amaze.

Ship architecture and design is nothing short of magical these days – the *Regent Seven Seas Explorer*, a most beautiful and exquisite ship is practically flawless, as is the remarkable Seabourn Encore with the unmistakable imprimatur of one of the world's most renowned interior designers, Adam D. Tihany. Small, beautiful ships are not as rare as they used to be, which is a joy to this woman's eyes. Even the large, very modern ships are providing areas which are absolutely stunning – witness aspects of the recently launched *MSC Seaside*.

Creative use of outdoor space with al fresco dining and cocktail areas was a big hit on Norwegian's Breakaway Class vessels and brought guests closer to the sea. And it has been embraced by a number of other cruise companies. Pushing the envelope is an everyday occurrence on the oceans and gives everyone at sea a better experience. When the *AmaMagna* river ship launches next year, she will be twice as wide as other ships and will have more features than seen before on the rivers – another pivotal moment.

Yes, innovation is alive and well and you are the fortunate recipients of these remarkable ships. After 37 years in the cruise world, I can still be happily surprised, delighted and awed, and find sheer joy and excitement when stepping aboard another new ship. It's a feeling I never want to lose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vanessa Lee', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

REMEMBERING TIN THOMAS

This issue of our magazine is dedicated to the memory of TIN Thomas who was our first Editor-in-Chief and a traveler extraordinaire. TIN, as he preferred to be called, using an acronym of his three names (Thomas Islwyn Newman) was a great raconteur, a proud Welshman by birth, an avid cruiser and a man who taught me much about the magazine and publishing business. TIN passed away in November 2017 at the age of 86 leaving his wife Marlene, who was his treasured companion on many of his journeys. We salute TIN who made an indelible impression, and left a body of work that will not be forgotten.





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Liz Fleming onboard MS Zuiderdam

THE HOTTEST BUZZ WORDS in the tourism world today are ‘transformative travel’, as cruise lines, hotel and resort companies, and tour operators strive to capture our attention with exciting new, educational, adventure-packed, horizon-expanding experiences designed to both entertain and change us.

It’s working.

Many of the life experiences that have dramatically altered my world view happened while I was in another country and another culture – in places where the language was different, the usual rules didn’t apply, and everything tasted, felt and sounded strange and wonderful. When travel challenges demanded new approaches, strange paths and new possibilities, I jumped in. When wonderfully welcoming hosts introduced new foods, I tried them – not always loving everything but certainly appreciating the spirit of the offer. When guides assured me I could surf (well...sort of...), ski the steepest double black diamond runs (ummmmm...), drive a Land Rover down the side of a sheer cliff (there’s a special gear for that...) and jump off a 40 ft. platform (hooked up to a cable, of course), I gave it my best shot. When safaris and wilderness tours offered the chance to see lions, rhinos, elephants, giraffes, whales, polar bears, narwhals, giant tortoises and more in their natural habitats, I crouched in hides, floated in Zodiacs, and hiked jungle paths, mesmerized and grateful for the twists of fate that made that all possible. Travel has changed me in ways I could never have imagined, making me more open, less afraid and more eager to stretch the boundaries. That’s one side of the important transformative travel coin.

Here’s the flip side.

If we are sensitive to preserving and protecting the places we discover – both ecologically and culturally – we have the power to make a difference. Though sustainability and preservation are by no means a new concept, as you’ll see when you read our article on UNESCO World Heritage sites in this issue, the concept of average travelers taking part and contributing to that cause is vital.

The natural disasters of 2017 were devastating – particularly for many of our favorite warm-weather destinations. From the hurricanes and flooding that pummeled Houston, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, Florida and many parts of the Caribbean, to the earthquake in Mexico, last year was heart-breaking. Devastating fires ravaged California and the wine country of Napa and Sonoma. China and South-East Asia also experienced horrific flooding, as did Peru while a massive landslide claimed hundreds of lives in Colombia. And on it goes. Though we contributed to fund-raising efforts, didn’t we all wish there was more that we could do to restore these places and help the friends there to rebuild their lives?

There is more. We can do more. We can return.

Instead of abandoning our usual fun-in-the-sun winter plans and heading for destinations spared by the bad fortune of 2017, we can return to favorite beaches and cruise to familiar, well-loved islands. We can spend our time and our vacation money there, helping to rebuild economies and lives. We can show our faith in the power of renewal and believe that the destinations we’ve always loved will rebuild and rebound, with our help.

The most powerful medicine any recovering destination can receive is an infusion of loyalty supported by vacation dollars – and that is the flip-side of transformative travel at its very best.

All the best,

Liz Fleming
Editor-in-Chief

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On the cover: Australia’s Great Barrier Reef

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AMA WATERWAYS

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. They set new standards in river cruising with innovative ship designs, spacious and stylish staterooms, exceptional cuisine and impeccable service. Included features on every cruise are shore excursions in every port, 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 and bicycles to explore on your own or join guided tours. Accommodating 154 guests, she will feature connecting staterooms and triple occupancy staterooms that are tailored specifically to the multi-generational family and group markets. AmaMagna, the widest ship to cruise the European rivers will debut in 2019, featuring an open water-sports platform (a first for river cruising) complete with recreational equipment and a large heated sundeck swimming pool with whirlpool and sky bar. **See page 1**

AVALON WATERWAYS, PART OF THE GLOBUS FAMILY OF BRANDS

www.avalonwaterways.ca www.globusjourneys.ca

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™ – offering healthy cuisine options at every meal, complimentary Wi-Fi, shore excursions led by Certified Local Guides, complimentary bicycles, Unique Local Favorites® and more! Avalon has one-of-a-kind Panorama Suites™ – with innovative Open-Air Balconies® and beds facing the views on Suite ships with two full decks of 200- and 300-square-foot suites. After unveiling two, 36-guest Suite Ships® on the Irrawaddy and Mekong Rivers in two years, Avalon will expand in the Far East with another Suite Ship on the Mekong River – the Avalon Saigon, launching in late 2018. **See page 13**

EMERALD WATERWAYS

www.emeraldwaterways.com

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. **See page 25**

ENCORE CRUISES

www.encorecruisesescapes.com

A cruise wholesaler with over 25 years of history in Canada, Encore enjoys close partnerships with many 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 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 their focus is on ensuring complete cruise vacation satisfaction. Whether you are an experienced cruiser or a newcomer, want an ocean or a river cruise, Encore has it all. **See page 3**

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 inside back cover**

HOLLAND AMERICA LINE

www.hollandamerica.com

For more than 140 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. Holland America's 14 ships offer more than 500 cruises to more than 400 ports in 98 countries. From short getaways to 113-day itineraries, the ships visit all seven continents with four annual Grand Voyages; sailings to the Caribbean, Cuba, Alaska, Mexico, Canada/New England, Bermuda, Europe and the Panama Canal as well as the Exotics. The line welcomed the gorgeous ms Koningsdam, in 2016 with another Pinnacle Class ship, ms Nieuw Statendam, arriving in December 2018. **See page 31**

MSC CRUISES

www.msccruisesusa.com

MSC Cruises is the world's fastest growing cruise line with a dazzling array of ships sailing in European waters as well as home-porting from Miami. The brand new MSC Seaside – a new class of ship – debuted in December 2017 offering year-round Caribbean cruises. A sister ship, the Seaview arrives in Spring 2018 and will sail in Europe. The Seaside is aptly named as she has a 360degree 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. The MSC Meraviglia was launched in May in the Med and features an exclusive Cirque du Soleil at Sea, expressly designed for MSC whose entertainment consistently wins awards. **See inside front cover**

PONANT CULTURAL CRUISES & EXPEDITIONS

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 ambiance of a private yacht while enjoying French-inspired cuisine, chic accommodations (many with private balconies) and world-class service. Ponant will welcome four new ice-class Explorer ships in 2018 and 2019, featuring 92 staterooms and suites for 184 guests. With the world's first underwater, multi-sensory lounge offering a unique perspective on the marine world, the ships will be equipped with state-of-the-art environmental preservation technology, be 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. **See page 11**

REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

www.rssc.com

Recently celebrating its 25th Anniversary, Regent Seven Seas Cruises is the world's most inclusive luxury experience with a four-ship fleet that visits more than 425 global destinations. Regent Seven Seas Cruises is undergoing a \$125 million fleet-wide refurbishment that will elevate the level of elegance found throughout the fleet to the standard set by the new and luxurious Seven Seas Explorer. A Leader in luxury, fares include all-suite accommodations, round-trip air, highly personalized service, exquisite cuisine, fine wines and spirits, unlimited internet access, sight-seeing excursions in every port, gratuities, ground transfers and a pre-cruise hotel package for guests staying in concierge-level suites and higher. Seven Seas Splendor, the second Explorer-class ship, will arrive in early 2020 and will embody and enhance the elegance, style and luxury that made sister-ship Seven Seas Explorer renowned as the most luxurious ship ever built when she launched in 2016. **See page 4**

SAGA CRUISES

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 ports and 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. 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. Saga Sapphire's 2018 departures also feature select drinks included in the fare for a more all-inclusive experience. Two new vessels, Spirit of Discovery and Spirit of Adventure, are being launched in 2019/2020 catering to a North American clientele on a host of inspiring destinations. **See page 15**

SEABOURN

www.seabourn.com

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 will introduce 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 page 7**

SILVERSEA CRUISES

www.silversea.com

An innovator in the ultra-luxury cruise line industry, Silversea Cruises offers guests large-ship amenities aboard its intimate, all-suite vessels: Silver Wind, Silver Shadow, Silver Whisper, Silver Spirit – and the new Silver Muse – all offering an inclusive atmosphere of conviviality and casual elegance. Also available are Silversea expedition ships Silver Explorer, Silver Galapagos, Silver Discoverer, and Silver Cloud which joined the Expedition fleet in late 2017 after a two month refurbishment to become an ice-class expedition vessel. Itineraries encompass all continents and feature cruises to the Mediterranean, Caribbean, both Polar Regions and 1000 fascinating destinations in between. Currently undergoing the biggest fleet-wide refurbishment in its history, worth US \$170 million, Silversea maintains high levels of excellence and a commitment to exceptional standards of comfort and elegance. A new 596 guest ship named "Silver Moon" will join the Silversea fleet in 2020. **See back cover**

STAR CLIPPERS

www.starclippers.com

Offering unique sailing adventures, Star Clippers are the world's tallest and largest clipper ships with an authentic yet thoroughly modern tall ship sailing experience. The three ships provide 7 to 26 plus day cruises to a variety of destinations in the Caribbean, Panama Canal, the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, Far East and ocean crossings. Hosting 170 to 227 guests, they offer the ultimate in a sea-going experience, balancing the grandeur, adventure and tradition of sailing with the superb service, amenities and accommodations of the finest modern yacht. There are no schedules and guests are free to do as they wish, day or night. Debuting in 2018, the Flying Clipper will join the fleet, as the largest sailing ship in the world, designed as a replica of France II and carrying 300 guests on board. Among her features are 4 Owner's Suites and 34 balcony staterooms, water sports platform and an 18ft dive pool spanning two decks. She will operate Mediterranean cruises in the summer and Caribbean in the winter. **See page 21**

TAUCK

www.tauck.ca

For more than 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, 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. Tauck has doubled its family river cruise departures for this year and added new itineraries. 2018 plans 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. Tauck Small Ship Cruising offers a variety of intimate sailings across the globe providing guests with more access and enrichment onshore. **See page 19**

UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISE COLLECTION

www.uniworldcruises.com

Uniwold Boutique River Cruise Collection—the world's most luxurious all-inclusive river cruise line™—features ships for an average of 130 guests, exclusive excursions, world-class gourmet cuisine, and the highest staff-to-guest ratio in river cruising. Every ship is a work of art designed to be as unique and inspiring as the destinations it visits. Uniwold offers truly all-inclusive itineraries in Europe, as well as voyages in Russia, China, Vietnam and Cambodia, India, and Egypt. Launched in 2017, U BY UNIWORLD is the first cruise brand to focus on the booming millennial audience aged 21 to 45, offering authentic travel adventure along popular European rivers aboard the A (formerly River Ambassador) and the B (formerly River Baroness) which have been completely retrofitted to appeal to the younger audience. This spring, the River Beatrice will re-emerge as Uniwold's newest Super Ship, the S.S. Beatrice, after an extensive bow-to-stern renovation. **See page 39**



Blenheim Palace - birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill

Stately Homes of Oxford & the Cotswolds - Meet the Owners

May 27 to June 3, 2018

We all dream of living in a stately home but what is the reality actually like? On this unique tour, we meet some of the owners who are lucky enough to call these historic houses their homes, situated in the one of the most quintessentially English regions of Britain. We are also given special access to other impressive properties as we take in the best of the Cotswolds, an area known for idyllic, honey-coloured stone towns and villages set against a picturesque rural backdrop of gently rolling hills. These are complemented perfectly by some magnificent stately homes around Oxford, the city of Dreaming Spires.

A unique experience

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 5 nights at the Macdonald Randolph Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 4 dinners and 2 lunches
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Bespoke guided walking tour of Oxford, guided tour of Buscot Park with Lord Faringdon, guided tour of Milton Manor House by the owner, guided tour and lunch at Waddesdon Manor, Upton House, guided tour of Chenies Manor House by the owners, guided tour of Stonor Park by the owners, private guided tour and lunch at Broughton Castle, private guided tour of Rousham House by a family member, Woodstock & guided tour and afternoon tea at Blenheim Palace

Full 2018 Tour Program

<i>Chelsea Flower Show & Hidden London</i> May 22 to 27, 2018	<i>A Journey through Glorious Yorkshire & the Lake District</i> July 21 to 29, 2018
<i>England's Finest Cathedrals</i> June 10 to 19, 2018	<i>Historic Royal Houses & Stately Homes of Kent</i> August 11 to 18, 2018
<i>The English Arts & Crafts Movement</i> June 13 to 20, 2018	<i>The Regal Estates & Jacobean Manors of Norfolk & Suffolk</i> September 2 to 9, 2018
<i>Historic Castles & Stately Homes of Wales</i> June 20 to 29, 2018	<i>Edinburgh, Glasgow & the Scottish Highlands & Islands</i> September 9 to 18, 2018
<i>Aristocrats & Manor Houses & a Grand Tour to the North</i> July 8 to 17, 2018	<i>Elizabethans in the Heart of England</i> September 16 to 22, 2018

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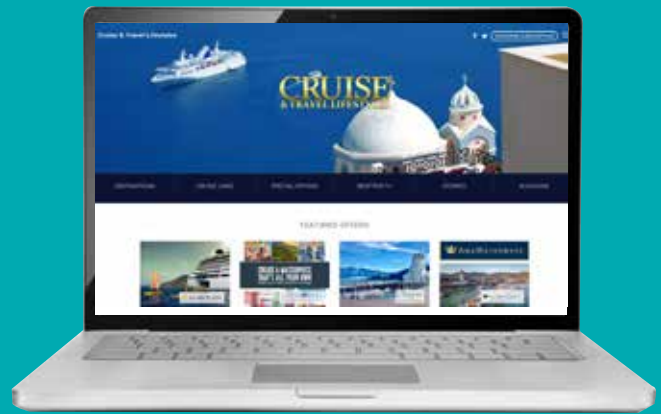
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Contest is open to all residents of Canada (excluding Quebec) and must be 21 years of age or older. Entries will be put into a random draw and become the property of Cruise and Travel Lifestyles. Information and names will not be sold. The prize consists of three \$100 Visa gift cards. Winner will be notified by email. Draw will take place on March 23, 2018. Cruise & Travel Lifestyles reserves the right to amend these rules at any time.

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CruiseandTravelLifestyles.com

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Ultimate Family Suite

Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas – familiar favorites and all-new innovations

If you've always loved **Royal Caribbean's** signature Rising Tide Bar, the Bionic Bar, Johnny Rockets, Izumi, Wonderland and Jamie's Italian, and are a big fan of strolling through Central Park, flying on the zipline, catching a wave on the Flowrider surf simulator or testing the scream-factor on the Ultimate Abyss slide, you'll be happy to find them all onboard when the brand-new **Symphony of the Seas** sets sail from Barcelona in April. You'll be even happier to discover a world of other entertainment, dining and accommodation treats you've never seen on any other Royal Caribbean ship – or perhaps anywhere else!

You'll use your new mobile app to check in from home, upload a security "selfie" and then find your key waiting in your stateroom. Travelling with family? You'll love the incredibly spacious, two-level Ultimate Family Suite for eight, featuring not only an indoor slide from

kid's room to living room, but also a floor-to-ceiling LEGO wall, 3D movie theater with popcorn machine and gaming systems, a bumper pool table, whirlpool, Royal Genie service and more.

From the popular Broadway musical *Hairspray*, to 1977 an ice-show extravaganza, to the air-inspired comedy *Flight*, to the world's largest laser-glow-in-the-dark-tag arena, to the new Boardwalk-area Playmakers sports bar and the Sugar Beach candy and ice-cream shop, you'll be entertained at every turn. Foodies will adore the raw bar, and fresh-shucked oysters at Hooked, a casual New England-style seafood restaurant, and the made-to-order tacos, burritos, and guacamole at El Loco Fresh in the open-air Sports Zone.

Beginning in November, *Symphony of the Seas* will homeport in Miami and sail seven-night eastern and western Caribbean itineraries.



El Loco Fresh



ARTISTS' RENDERINGS COURTESY OF ROYAL CARIBBEAN



.....

EXPLORATION IN MOTION

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ACTIVE DISCOVERY ON THE DANUBE

9 days | Linz to Budapest (or reverse)
Departure dates: Jun 14, 17, 28; Jul 1, 12, 15, 26, 29; Sep 6, 9, 20 & 23, 2018
Linz (Embarkation), Engelhartszell, Mauthausen, Grein, Spitz, Vienna, Visegrád, Budapest (Disembarkation)

New! ACTIVE DISCOVERY ON THE RHINE

8 days | Frankfurt to Amsterdam (or reverse)
Departure dates: Jun 3; Jul 15; Aug 12 & Sep 23, 2018
Frankfurt, Wiesbaden (Embarkation), Eltville, Rudesheim, Rhine Gorge, Boppard, Koblenz, Engers, Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Xanten, Amsterdam (Disembarkation)

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



Millennials set sail

The first of **U by Uniworld's** millennial-focused river cruise ships, **The B**, has enjoyed her grand debut in Paris on the Seine River. The first ship and the first cruise brand to focus exclusively on the booming millennial audience, *The B* - formerly Uniworld's River Baroness - has been completely retrofitted to appeal to those aged 21 to 45. The sleek, black 120-guest ship, now features four suites, 26 balcony staterooms, 29 studio staterooms and two studios with triple occupancy. There's also a single share rate where you'll be paired up with another guest of the same sex in a stateroom for two. All rooms are outfitted with Bluetooth speakers and organic BeeKind toiletries. In the dining room, guests can sit at communal tables and enjoy farm-to-table cuisine with dishes such as quinoa burgers, miso-marinated wild salmon and peanut butter bacon chocolate bars. Two meals a day are included in the fare - mostly buffet breakfasts and dinners. There's a casual café on deck for light dining for a cost. The great rooftop bar and lounge is enclosed by glass which can disappear into the deck giving everyone an open-air, fun experience. Mixologists serve craft cocktails in the bars and international DJs keep things rocking at night. To reduce paper use, WhatsApp and email are used for communicating with guests, menus are displayed on screens in the bar and restaurant, and news is available through a Press Reader app. There are also 50 U bikes for complimentary use and all gratuities are included in the fare. A new U by Uniworld app will soon connect travelers before, during and after their trips and a second ship - **The A** - will debut in 2018.



The silver lining in the Silver Cloud

Silversea's Silver Cloud now has a more beautiful 'lining' than ever before, having just completed an extensive, US \$40 Million, two-month refurbishment to become an ice class expedition vessel. The extensive upgrade, completed last November, involved a series of technical enhancements including extensive steel reinforcement to give the ship the strength and maneuverability required for expedition cruising. A guest capacity of 254 in non-polar regions and just 200 in polar regions ensures the highest levels of personalized and attentive service and makes it possible for all guests to disembark at the same time to explore each region. The ship carries 16 zodiacs in addition to 10 kayaks and voyages are led by a team of 20 expedition experts in non-polar regions and 22 in polar regions. The *Silver Cloud* now boasts not only the luxury, style and comfort synonymous with Silversea's classic vessels but also all the features needed to enhance guests' expedition experience. Guests will also enjoy a newly installed Photo Studio which enables content editing onboard and provides a vibrant, creative and inspiring space where guests can master the art of digital photography.

PHOTO COURTESY SILVERSEA

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Sales: David Morris International (DMI) is the exclusive sales agent representing Saga Cruises in the USA and Canada. DMI is a Texas based corporation whose registered office is at 2512 State Street, Dallas 75201. 239-272-4271

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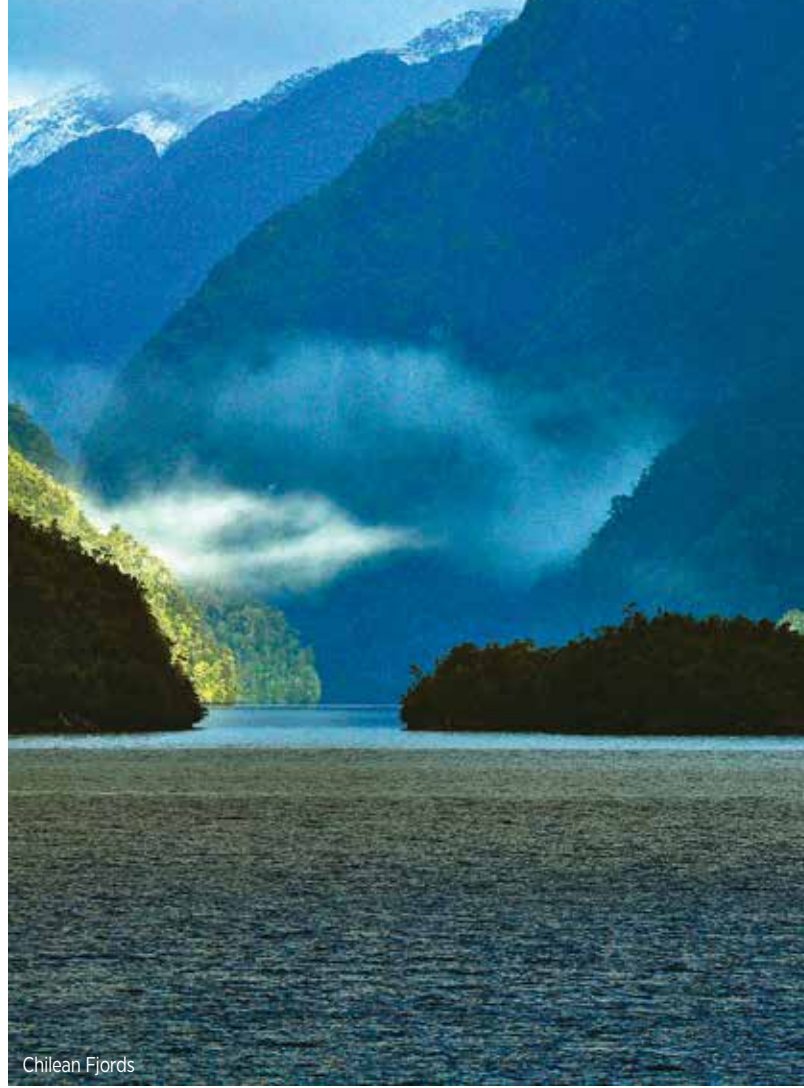
Virgin Voyages

PHOTO COURTESY VIRGIN VOYAGES



Celebrity Flora

PHOTO COURTESY CELEBRITY CRUISES



Chilean Fjords

Virgin Voyages offers a sea change

Virgin Voyages, the newest cruise line on the horizon, is getting ready to set sail, with construction underway on the first of three ships and a launch for the first planned for 2020. All will feature a sleek silvery-grey hull, with smoked glass, and of course, distinctive touches of red. The first major cruise line ever to offer a ship that is an exclusive 18+ experience – a direct result of listening to future “sailors” (as they call their guests) and travel partners – Virgin Voyages’ Adult by Design concept is anticipated to prove very popular. Environmentalists will be enthused about the company’s partnership with Scanship, whose new environmental technology developments will turn waste into energy and help make Virgin Voyages one of the cleanest fleets at sea. CEO Tom McAlpin shared specifics on the Virgin Voyages design philosophy and experience. “The entire ship will be built with an attention to detail, reflecting the craftsmanship and materiality inspired by super yachts. Designed to feel more intimate and connected to the sea, 86 percent of all staterooms will feature a sea terrace and 93 percent, an ocean view. Virgin Voyages is creating a sophisticated ship and a transformational experience that offers our sailors a place where rejuvenating day-life meets exciting nightlife and everything in between.”

Introducing the Celebrity Flora: redefining expedition travel

Celebrity Cruises will soon unveil the 100-guest **Celebrity Flora** – meticulously and expressly designed for sailing the Galapagos Islands and the first ship purpose built for **Celebrity Xpeditions**. She will be one of the most energy-efficient ships of its size in the diverse archipelago, and will use anchorless technology to maintain the ship’s position while protecting the sensitive sea floor. To reduce plastic use, the ship will use in-room water filtration stations and convert sea water and air conditioning condensation into pure, fresh water. The Marina will be the primary point of access to the ship, accommodating up to three Zodiacs at once, reducing transport time to and from land, and allowing more time for guests to explore the practically untouched islands. An innovative outward-facing design will offer 360-degree views of the islands, while personal suite attendants, new dining venues, an open-air stargazing platform, and expert-led ecological seminars will add to the luxury adventure. *Celebrity Flora*’s two Penthouse Suites will be the largest in the Galapagos with separate indoor and outdoor living areas, customizable lighting and shades, and a telescope for stargazing or sea lion-peeping. Guests will also find relaxation in Royal Suites, Ultimate Sky Suites with Infinite Veranda, Premium Sky Suites with Infinite Veranda and Sky Suites with Infinite Veranda.

Azamara Club Cruises announces a new ship and new destinations

Azamara Club Cruises, well-known for its Destination Immersion programming, has announced exciting 2018-19 sailings for the brand’s newest addition, the beautiful 690-guest **Azamara Pursuit**. Joining big sister ships **Azamara Quest** and **Azamara Journey**, the *Azamara Pursuit* will offer guests curated experiences and access to some of the most exotic destinations around the globe. Says Larry Pimentel, President and CEO of Azamara Club Cruises. “By expanding our destination offerings, guests will be able to experience even more regions of the world and revisit regions we haven’t been to in some time now.” *Azamara Pursuit* will add 61 more destinations, increase the brand’s destination offerings by 40 percent and enable guests to stay longer and experience more with 48 late nights and 26 overnights. Fifteen maiden calls will take guests to such exotic destinations as Agadir, Morocco; Antofagasta, Chile; the Chilean Fjords; Cruising Beagle Channel; Fowey, United Kingdom; Samos, Greece, Salaverry (Trujillo), Peru and many more.



PHOTO COURTESY SCENIC CRUISES

Scenic Eclipse



PHOTO COURTESY SCENIC CRUISES

Symphony's Silk Kitchen and Bar

A stunning rebirth for Crystal Symphony

Last November, **Crystal Symphony** emerged from a month-long dry dock - the most expensive makeover in her history - with a stunning new array of features. Brand new stylish restaurants will delight, including the new Waterside which has replaced the Crystal Dining Room, and, in place of the Lido Café, a Marketplace restaurant by day and Churrascaria - featuring Brazilian-inspired cuisine - by night. Also new is the Silk Kitchen & Bar, offering a delectable selection of Chinese-inspired fare. Silk Road and The Sushi Bar, the specialty dining venues by famed Master Chef Nobu Matsuhisa, have been rebranded as Umi Uma & Sushi Bar but both still serve the inspired cuisine of Nobu, prepared by his personally trained chefs - the only Nobu restaurants at sea. More spacious, butler-serviced Penthouse accommodations have been added, but while the conversion of staterooms into penthouse accommodations reduced guest capacity to 848, the number of crew on board remains the same. State-of-the-art technological upgrades have been installed, greatly enhancing guests' Wi-Fi connectivity and access to entertainment and news on demand. Crystal Cruises will continue its investment in its ocean ships with the equally extensive redesign for **Crystal Serenity**, set for fall 2018.

Scenic Eclipse - the world's first discovery yacht

The debut of **Scenic Eclipse**, the world's first Discovery Yacht from **Scenic Luxury Cruises and Tours** is drawing closer, with the "6-star" ultra-luxury mega yacht, carrying just 228 guests, (200 in the polar regions of Arctic and Antarctica), scheduled to launch in the Mediterranean on August 31. Featuring 10 dining options, an expansive Spa Sanctuary, and staterooms that range from the 345 sq. ft. Verandah Suites to the 2,660 sq. ft. two-bedroom Penthouse Suite. *Scenic Eclipse* will charm happy guests with eight bars and lounges serving complimentary beverages, butler service, and numerous pools. Tempting itinerary and all-inclusive shore excursion details are being released, just a few of which include: spending Christmas Day 2018 with South Georgia's nearly half million pairs of King penguins on a 21-day Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctica adventure. In 2019, 11-day Ultimate Arctic journeys will depart Bergen on June 16, 26 and July 6, to search for Svalbard reindeer, hike the upper reaches of the archipelago's area in search of unique flora, and sail in Zodiacs to view thousands of Arctic terns and even polar bears.

Shop 'til you drop...on Carnival

Carnival Cruise Line wisely realizes that travelers love to shop, so they're transforming their shipboard retail experience with renovated spaces and popular items from some of the world's best-known retailers, including Victoria's Secret, Swarovski, Pandora, and TAG. Some of the other well-known brands that will be featured include: Effy - one of the largest manufacturers of fine jewelry in the U.S.; Invicta a high-end retailer of fashion watches; and Los Cincos Soles - a Mexican-themed retailer offering sterling silver jewelry, souvenirs, T-shirts, and authentic arts and crafts created by local artisans. Special promotions, giveaways, and in-store parties will enhance the shipboard retail experience and select ships will also feature stand-alone kiosks with "wearable tech" accessories such as the latest fitness trackers, pedometers, and heart rate monitors by brands like Fossil and others. Over the past year, the shopping outlets on **Carnival Sensation**, **Carnival Elation**, **Carnival Conquest** and **Carnival Valor** have been completely renovated, with **Carnival Victory**, **Carnival Fascination**, **Carnival Legend** and **Carnival Paradise** scheduled for retail refurbishments in the coming year. **Carnival Horizon**, set to debut in spring 2018, will take the line's retail offerings to the next level with two decks of shops, boutiques and displays featuring top-name retailers.



LEONTIURA / ISTOCK



Alnwick Castle

STENE ALLEN PHOTO / ISTOCK



Spirit of Discovery

PHOTO COURTESY SAGA CRUISES

A return to Asia and Africa

Well-known cultural cruise line **Voyages to Antiquity** has announced an exciting lineup for the 2018-19 winter season, featuring year-round cruising and a return to Asia and Africa. Beginning in December 2018, guests will enjoy six new itineraries and five new ports of call including Ain Sokhna in Egypt; Trincomalee in Sri Lanka; Port Louis in Mauritius; Reunion Island; and Port Kelang in Malaysia. With very few repeated stops throughout the season, two or more cruises can be easily combined into Grand Voyages. The 'Grand Odyssey' sailing, a 129-day epic trip spanning half the world, from Athens to Malaga via Egypt, the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the islands of the Indian Ocean and Africa can be created by combining four cruises. From a desert island beach barbecue in the Maldives to sailing the Yangon River in the heart of Burma, exploring India by tuk-tuk and discovering the Skeleton Coast of Namibia – the winter 2018/19 program features 30 per cent more included shore excursions and overland adventures than previous seasons.

A very British tour company

Albion Journeys' partnerships with heritage organizations in the UK are the key that opens doors and provides privileged access to the iconic properties that are so much a part of Britain's history. Carefully crafted tours include meetings with some of the owners of stately properties and castles in Oxford and the Cotswolds, Wales, Kent, Norfolk and Suffolk and much more. Guests gain insight into the reality of living in a magnificent fairytale castle or stately home and often enjoy special treats such as a Devonshire Cream Tea at Chatsworth House, Afternoon Tea at Blenheim Palace, or High Tea at the Sandringham Estate. Albion tours depart between May and September, groups range from 10-30 travelers and include an airport transfer from London Heathrow, welcome drinks and canapés, full English breakfast each day, some lunches and dinners, services of a tour director throughout the trip, all entrance costs, transportation to and from all excursions, portage as well as an engaging and informative after-dinner talk by an expert in their field. Many properties are situated near idyllic towns and villages or in the most picturesque rural areas of Britain and certain amount of space on each tour is offered with no single supplement.

Saga Cruises announces new ship – Spirit of Discovery

Saga Cruises, now building its new ship, the **Spirit of Discovery**, which will launch in July, 2019, has announced the coming of a second ship, the **Spirit of Adventure** in August, 2020. Expressly designed for guests over 50, *Spirit of Discovery* will be an all-balcony vessel carrying just 999 guests. Of the staterooms and suites, 109 will be for solo travelers spread across various categories including the suites. Exclusive events and activities, single mingle cocktail parties and lunches as well as single group shore excursions will be available on each departure. The *Spirit of Discovery* will offer timeless, elegant public spaces and staterooms, each with a personality, bespoke artwork, high-end fabrics, furniture and fittings. All Saga cruises include private chauffeur service to the port, onboard gratuities and service charges, portage of luggage, free shuttle bus in ports, onboard Wi-Fi, wine with lunch and dinner and much more. With delectable dining options, including the Grand Dining Room, East to West (Asian-style), Coast to Coast (British and locally-sourced seafood), Grill and more, as well as such venues as The Living Room, Spa, The Playhouse theater, The Library and Verandah, *Spirit of Discovery's* onboard vibe will be distinctly British. Inaugural season itineraries include the Mediterranean, Baltic, Canary Islands, Britain/Ireland, Norway and Iceland.

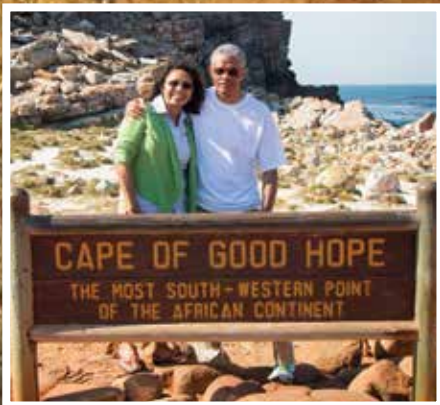
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**Prices now in Canadian dollars at tauck.ca.
Contact your preferred travel agent.**



Foodie paradise in PEI The Inn at Bay Fortune

FOR CELEBRITY CHEF Michael Smith, the Inn at Bay Fortune is both a dream come true and a labor of love. Early in his culinary career, Michael cooked here, filming his first TV series, *The Inn Chef*, and writing his first cookbook in 1998. He left to travel the world, producing TV shows and writing more books.

Returning to his culinary roots in 2015, Michael and his wife Chastity purchased the property, reimagining, renovating and relaunching the 15-room boutique inn. Nestled on a 46-acre farm way out on the eastern end of Prince Edward Island, it is the Island's only five-star country inn – and well worth the trek. Chastity is the innkeeper and Michael runs Fireworks, the one-of-a-kind restaurant named for his passion – cooking with fire.

The Inn reflects Chastity's creative ability, bringing the outdoors into a cozy, homey, contemporary setting. The accommodations provide a superb balance to the energy and excitement generated nightly at Fireworks, instantly enticing guests to experience the true Island experience – to slow down, relax and enjoy the beautiful seaside setting with its million-dollar view.

Many guests come specifically for the 'Feast.' Each evening at 6 pm with a drink in hand, diners are invited to stroll through the farm, stopping at grilling and smoking stations for hors d'oeuvres and all-you-can-eat oysters. At 7 pm everyone



ALEX BRUCE PHOTOGRAPHY

gathers at long, communal, butcher-block tables for a family-style, six-course dinner that serves up ingredients fresh from this organic farm and from a roster of local farmers, fishermen and culinary artisans. Michael and his team of young, passionate chefs, a.k.a. 'the Fire Brigade,' cook everything – even dessert – on "a 25-foot long, open, brick-lined, fire-burning beast", in view of the guests. While enjoying the culinary performance, everyone gets to know each other around the table.

You can sample this slice of Island paradise from May to mid-October.

—ANNA HOBBS



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Terms & Conditions: Cruise rates are in Canadian dollars, per person and based on double occupancy. Transfers, port charges and gratuities are additional. Solo travelers pay 50% supplement in cat 2-6, or 100% supplement in categories OS-1. Indonesia offer: \$800CAD air credit is per cabin [\$400CAD per person based on double occupancy]. Air promotional fares are offered on select Canadian gateway cities. Roundtrip air is subject to availability at Star Clippers' lowest contract rate and might not be offered during holiday season. Air offer does not include any checked baggage and may require the purchase of overnight hotel accommodations at guest expense. Offer valid for single occupancy paying supplement fees. Air offer is not valid for 3rd share passenger. Hotel Inclusive offer: 1 free night room pre or post-cruise is valid for select hotel in Phuket and Singapore and includes taxes, breakfast, and 1 transfer from hotel to ship (or reverse). Solo travelers are eligible for a reduced rate hotel stay (not free); not valid for third person rate. Offer based on a first-come, first serve and will be subject to hotel provider confirmation. Hotels may be substituted at Star Clippers' discretion but not valid on all dates. Cancellation deadlines and penalties apply for this hotel promotion. Other restrictions may apply for both Indonesia air credit and Thailand/Singapore Hotel Inclusive promotions. Offer is not combinable with other discounted cruise or air savings offers. Applicable for new bookings only, capacity controlled, subject to rates and availability, may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Not applicable with group bookings. Rates are valid for Canadian residents. Other restrictions may apply. Star Clipper GSA, Inc. dba Star Clippers America acts only as a sales and marketing agent for Star Clippers, Ltd. for purpose of booking travel arrangements on Star Clippers vessels. Star Clippers, Ltd. operates the vessels on which you will be sailing. © Star Clippers 2017. Ship's Registry: Malta. CST#37231.

The pride and passion of AMAWATERWAYS



Not all river cruises are created equal and it's important to understand the subtleties, inclusions and differences of each. Some are stand-outs in many ways, and it's fascinating to see how AmaWaterways has grown and changed over the last 10 plus years. If you're still considering your first river cruise in Europe or are a relative newbie to the wide range of river options available, read on.

VANESSA LEE

This page:
(clockwise from
above:

AmaKristina on
the Rhine River.

AmaWaterways
staff and crew.

AmaKristina lounge.

Facing page:

The Chef's Table.

Godmother Kristin
Karst at the christen-
ing of AmaKristina.

IFIRST CRUISED with AmaWaterways nearly eight years ago and loved my experience with them from the outset, in every way. There is a real sense of family with this river line and it shows in the onboard attention to detail, the feeling of belonging, and the sensibility of people who truly care. Several families own and operate the company and everyone involved is committed to seeing that guests are treated extremely well. Every time I cruise on AMA it feels like coming home. There's a comfortable and sincere atmosphere, and that certain "sparkle" from many of the staff you see again and again.

Last May, I was fortunate to be invited on a very special christening cruise on the *AmaKristina*, named for one of the owners herself – the lovely and charming Kristin Karst. The company decided to celebrate their 15th anniversary with a special Godmother cruise in celebration of many of the ladies who had previously served as godmothers for their ships – a rare honor. We were in very good company and felt as if we were with welcoming family and friends.

The *AmaKristina* sailed up the Rhine from Basel to Amsterdam and the ceremony was held on a sunny afternoon in the delightful town of Lahnstein in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the perfect backdrop for such an occasion. The Rhine River Gorge area has the highest concentration of castles anywhere in the world – 30 to be exact. It's a wonderful experience to be on deck as you sail through the gorge, castles on every side – one of the pure joys of river cruising. A lazy afternoon on a bucolic river, relaxing in the sun on the top deck with one of the best views in the world.

What were my favorite things about this ship and cruise line? One true standout was the Chef's Table, a small and intimate space at the aft of the ship on Deck 3. Dinners are served there each night to a maximum of 28 guests



with reservations required, but at no extra cost. The glass-enclosed open kitchen adds to the style and feel of this great venue and the tasting menu is delicious. The chef is Indonesian and he brings a pan-Asian focus to the meals. A fabulous chandelier anchors this bright, elegant room which offers great views of the river, as you dine, surrounded by glass. Most importantly, the cuisine is truly superb, as it is throughout the ship with a variety of options always available whether you dine in the main restaurant or choose a light lunch, tea or tapas in the main lounge. In keeping with the family feel onboard, the main lounge is often referred to as the “Living Room”. Entertainment in the evening is lively, with lots of fun things happening every night ranging from an Abba night that has everyone dancing to interesting lectures and piano tunes.

My stateroom was most comfortable, quite spacious and like most, offered a lovely balcony – a great spot for morning coffee. Each room has all the amenities, including Wi-Fi access, movies, some TV channels and a bathroom with a soaking shower. Cupboard space is generous – an important factor – and the room incorporates a sitting area and a small fridge. The arrangement works well and the bed is superb – always important!

AmaWaterways is proud of their passion, their enthusiasm and all they do for their guests – and rightly so.



JULIA LAVRENKO / DREAMSTIME

Clockwise from top left:
AmaKristina pool deck.
Twin balcony stateroom.
Views of Rudesheim in the Rhine Valley.

As on most river cruises, AmaWaterways includes wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner. This year, however, they are introducing the Sip and Sail program, which offers free drinks during ‘Happy Hour’ – a time when many guests come to the lounge to hear about the next day’s events and excursions before going to dinner. This is an addition I feel will be much appreciated!

The *AmaKristina* is the 20th ship in the fleet, most of which sail on a range of European rivers including the Douro in Portugal, the Seine and Rhône in France, the Rhine and Danube of course, as well as the Moselle and other smaller rivers. Asia also features prominently in the company’s offerings on the Mekong and the Irrawaddy.

The company is also launching the *AmaMagna* in 2019, the widest ship to ever be built and sail on a European river – the lower Danube. She will be remarkable – and we will tell you more about her soon.

Recent innovations include a focus on wellness which has already been launched on one ship and, thanks to its popularity, will be rolled out to more this year. Gentle exercise, yoga, circuit training, lectures and nutrition as well as stress management programs and more are included. Bikes are available for an easy ride along a river pathway or for longer, more strenuous exercise that goes well with the more active shore excursions that are also offered. AmaWaterways has a partnership with Back Roads as well as with Adventures by Disney and is happy to offer family-oriented vacations along with special family staterooms on certain ships.

On AmaWaterways, the care and attention you receive comes from the heart. It is at the core of how this company operates and permeates everyone who works there – whether on the ships, or those who design the itineraries, the website, the menus and the lovely ships themselves. They are proud of their passion and enthusiasm for all they do and how much they value their guests – and it shows. And most importantly they will make sure you have the best possible river cruise vacation. ■

IF YOU GO See your travel advisor for more details on river cruising and check out www.amawaterways.com to discover more about their ships and itineraries.



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Another jewel in
the Seabourn crown

SEABOURN *Encore*



Truly a rare beauty, the luscious and lyrical Seabourn Encore is a masterpiece of luxury design.

VANESSA LEE

IT'S NOT OFTEN that one embarks on a ship and has one's breath taken away. For me that was my overwhelming impression of the *Seabourn Encore*, launched just over a year ago. The ship is beautiful, elegant and glamorous but not over the top, nor is she particularly glitzy. She is simply stunning in every way and not only as a result of the remarkable work and vision of renowned luxury interior designer Adam D. Tihany. Her glory is as much about the onboard service, the delectable cuisine, the impressive attention to detail and the practically flawless execution.

As I explored all the swooping curves of this amazing ship – the stunning atrium staircase alone worth the price of admission – all I could think of was the John Legend lyric from *All of Me*. “Love your curves and all your edges. All your perfect imperfections.” The ship is both luscious and lyrical with not a single imperfection. You simply want to gorge yourself on

this dazzling and perfect example of ship building and design.

Come with me on a journey of exploration with *Seabourn Encore* – indeed a feast for the eyes and the senses. A remarkable ship, she represents the evolution of the three Seabourn Odyssey-class ships. While there's a certain aura of familiarity, it's as if three young teenagers – *Odyssey*, *Sojourn* and *Quest* have grown, with the arrival of the *Encore*, into full-fledged, sexy women, with curves and sensuality galore.

The *Encore* is a particularly tactile ship – you'll want to run your hands and fingers over every cushion, fabric, drapery and covering – and along the harder surfaces too – on every balustrade, piece of wood, sculpture and railing. You'll revel in the whole ship and also the charming and delightful service provided by a brigade of talented young personnel expressly recruited by Seabourn to ensure the highest levels of personalized service.



PHOTOS COURTESY SEABOURN





Seabourn Square



Penthouse Spa Suite

Much has been made of the impeccable design credentials of the remarkably talented Adam D. Tihany – and he has wowed in every detail. In the ceilings, the furnishings, the positioning of glass, the chandeliers and sconces and so very much more. The ship flows and the ease of getting around is wonderful – public rooms aft and suites mid to forward – each deck anchored by that gorgeous atrium staircase – which is the heartbeat of the ship in more ways than one.



Seabourn Moments

The intuitive super-yacht design is a gift to *Encore's* 600 privileged guests. Room after stunning room each enhances the other and affords a very special cruise experience. All accommodations are spacious suites with a verandah and a calm and serene atmosphere. A large bathroom with twin sinks and both tub and shower, large walk-in closet and a mini-bar stocked with beverages of your choice combine to define Seabourn's impeccable credentials. Add to that some really fine cuisine, attentive and thoughtful service from the staff and crew and you'll find yourself anxious to return time and time again.

It's the very special and sometimes surprising, Seabourn Moments, however, that really make this cruise line a stand-out. Consistently delighting the guests, the Moments can be caviar and Champagne in the surf, or poolside, or on ice (literally), depending on the itinerary and weather, at sail away, light opera on deck with a beautiful performance by the Seabourn Singers, or dancing on deck as the ship sails through a diamond-lit, starry and inky night.

The heartfelt farewell at the end of each cruise, dubbed "Officers on Deck" provides a marvelous way to say goodbye, until we meet again. It gives guests goosebumps and brings everyone together in a charming way – all souls at sea in the same time and space, experiencing each special moment. This is the magic spell that Seabourn weaves – unforgettable and memorable experiences that resonate for each and every guest.

There are a number of dining options, all of which are included in the cruise fare – with a highlight being The Grill by Thomas Keller, a remarkable new offering by the Michelin award-winning American chef. Reservations are a must for this popular spot with a focus on classic American dishes. Its accompanying glamorous art deco bar is a great venue regardless of where one dines.



Atrium staircase

I loved the main dining space – The Restaurant – another clever design moment, with gorgeous décor and lighting that never seems crowded or noisy. The classic menu offering is the same each evening, with specialties from Chef Keller and Seabourn Inspirations as well, designed to enhance the range of dishes. A new, intimate and very popular dining option on the *Encore* is Sushi, which is open for lunch and dinner.

Another perennial favorite on all Seabourn ships is the more casual indoor/outdoor dining space – the Colonnade. I love sitting out on deck here, especially on a sea day, for lunch or dinner. The menu changes often and theme dinners such as Indian, French, Pacific, Australian and such are offered each evening with an extensive buffet service for breakfast and lunch. One can also choose to dine In Suite for any meal with The Restaurant menu being presented for evening dining. If you want to loll poolside and have a light patio lunch, that’s available too. A small menu of some grill offerings, pasta, pizzas and appetizers, along with a vegetarian option are always available on deck where you can also dine in the evening.

Enjoy the re-imagined Seabourn Square – a meeting place for guests with a lovely, relaxing atmosphere. Sit and watch the world go by, check email; have a coffee and some delicious treats, curl up with a good book or plan a great shore excursion. Perhaps enjoy evening cocktails and a great view in the Observation Bar along with an expansive array of pre-dinner hors d’oeuvres. The Club on Deck 5, adjacent to the small casino, beckons for pre-or post dinner entertainment and an aperitif, and is always a popular spot.

For rest and relaxation, the Seabourn Spa with its newly introduced Spa and Wellness program from the highly-regarded Dr. Andrew Weil, the first of its kind at sea, is



Encore is a ship where elegant adventures and memorable Seabourn Moments are true touchstones of your cruise experience.

impressive. Be inspired and educated as you take part in a Mindful Living Program and further enhance your cruise experience and your mind and body balance, or spoil yourself with a massage and facial, or any of the extensive list of services.

Seabourn sails all over the world and can introduce you to regions and ports you may have never considered visiting – from the Far East to Antarctica and just about everywhere in between. With its partnerships with UNESCO, an extensive selection of pre-and-post cruise land-based options with Seabourn Journeys and the Ventures by Seabourn program which provides guests with remarkable shore excursions that enable them to engage in a

more interactive and experiential way, the cruise line takes you on adventures you will never forget.

The ‘Extraordinary World’ of Seabourn, with its all-inclusive sensibility, where all beverages, including premium liquors, wine and Champagne are offered and gratuities are neither required nor expected, is truly a luxury resort at sea. Extra touches are commonplace, names and preferences are remembered, the space on board is generous and the *Encore* is a ship where elegant adventures and those memorable Seabourn Moments are true touchstones of your cruise experience.

IF YOU GO Your travel advisor can tell you more about this award-winning cruise company or go to www.seabourn.com



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| UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES |

PRESERVING OUR WORLD *for the future*

WHEN I REALIZED the school shimmering ahead had spotted me, I swam faster. Fish are quick and I was sure they'd be gone in a flash. Instead, in a surprising shiver of orange and silver, the fish turned and swam toward me. Suddenly, I was surrounded, feeling as if I'd changed species.

Moments like these happen only when generations of wildlife are protected from the ravages of fishing and hunting – and only in places like the Galapagos Islands, the first area ever listed in the precious and remarkable collection of UNESCO World Heritage sites. From the ancient pyramids of Egypt to Australia's Great Barrier Reef, UNESCO World Heritage sites are the wonders of the world, created either by the hand of man or by Nature herself. All are protected and preserved, regardless of their location or the politics of the country in which they're found.

It took a frighteningly near miss to convince the world of the need to protect these treasures. When plans to build a dam in Egypt threatened the

ancient Abu Simbel temples, UNESCO launched an \$80 million dollar campaign involving 50 contributing countries. The temples were relocated and in 1978, the World Heritage List was born. The first twelve sites on the UNESCO list were in Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Poland, Senegal, Ethiopia and the United States.

Today that list has grown to more than a thousand around the world, and carefully selected sites are added each year. Many – like the Great Wall of China or Petra – represent mankind's most remarkable creations which would, without protection, be in danger of destruction or decay. Others, like Australia's Great Barrier Reef or Kenya's Mount Kenya National Park are home to spectacular land and water formations and are the natural habitats of endangered species which might teeter over the edge into extinction, if not for the UNESCO protection.

Whether you choose to visit the sites created by man or by nature, your experience will overwhelm you with a sense of gratitude that these wonders of the world are being protected for us and for those who will follow.



THE HAND OF MAN

PORTUGAL

Cultural Landscape of Sintra

The first center of European Romantic architecture, Sintra was the creation of Ferdinand II who turned a ruined monastery into a castle. Incorporating Gothic, Moorish, Egyptian and Renaissance elements, the imposing castle with its stunning yellow, pink, blue and white tiled turrets and courtyards is surrounded by intricately landscaped gardens and both local and exotic trees. So beautiful were these grounds and the other impressive buildings and gardens that surrounded Sintra, that they became models for the rest of Portugal and influenced the development of landscape architecture across Europe.



KAROL KOZLOWSKI / ISTOCK

TURKEY

Archaeological Site of Troy

It was the father of modern archaeology, Heinrich Schliemann who, in 1870, began the first excavations of Troy, a site with extensive remains pointing to more than 4,000 years of history that showcases the first contact between the Mediterranean world and the ancient civilization of Anatolia. The siege of Troy by Achaean and Spartan warriors in the 12th or 13th centuries immortalized in the Illiad by Greek poet Homer has formed the basis of great art and literature for centuries. Since 1870, excavation has uncovered 23 sections of the city wall – including a section of the first Trojan wall, 11 gates and statuary from the Roman city of Ilium, built on the site of Troy.



TEGMEV / ISTOCK

PERU

The Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu

Rising 2,430 meters above sea-level and covering 32,592 hectares, hidden in the heart of a tropical mountain forest, Machu Picchu was the pinnacle of the Inca Empire. An urban masterpiece of giant walls, terraces, ramps and aqueducts rising where the upper Amazon basin meets the Andes Mountains, Machu Picchu is not only the last vestige of the remarkable Inca civilization but also one of the most significant examples of creative land use, astronomy, art and architecture such as the stunning “La Ciudadela” (the Citadel) in the ancient world. Abandoned following the 16th century Spanish conquest of Peru, Machu Picchu was engulfed by the jungle until 1911 when explorer Hiram Bingham discovered the missing marvel.



PAVEL SVOBODA PHOTOGRAPHY / SHUTTERSTOCK

BY PERATI KOKSON / SHUTTERSTOCK

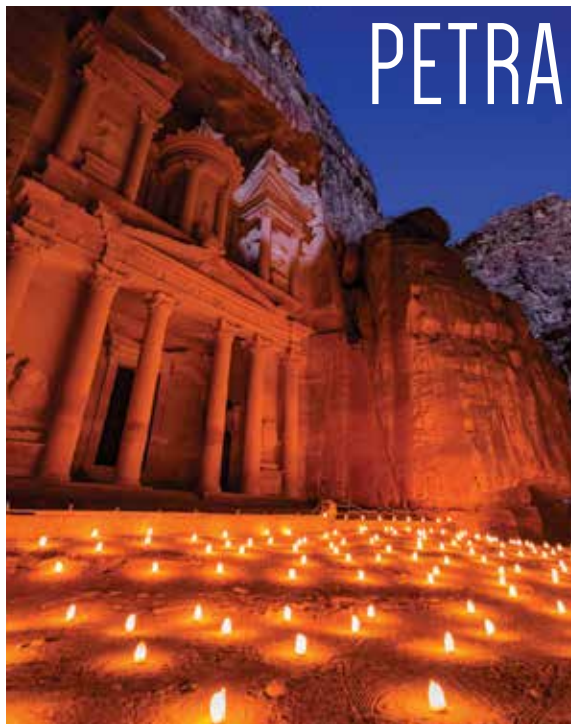


NIKKO

JAPAN

Shrines and Temples of Nikko

An 8th century Buddhist monk erected the first building on the slopes of the sacred Nikko mountains. Since then, the Shrines and Temples of Nikko - many built in the 17th century - have grown to 103 and are important examples of the centuries-old local traditions of conservation, restoration and preservation of religious practices linked to sacred sites. Closely associated with the great Shogun, Tokugawa Leyasu, the arrangement of the Shrines and Temples on the mountain slopes was designed to create fascinating visual effects and highlight the powerful relationship between architecture and nature.



PETRA

MITROGLISERIN / ISTOCK

JORDAN

Petra

One of the world's most important archaeological sites, Petra, ancient capital city of the Nabateans, has survived centuries of sand and wind. By night, ride a camel down the Sikkh, the narrow pathway between towering red sandstone cliff-faces to see the Treasury bathed in the light of hundreds of luminaria or come by day and view the Khasneh, the Urn Tomb, the Palace Tomb, the Corinthian Tomb, the Deir or Monastery, the remains of copper mining and an extensive network of cisterns and reservoirs - all must-see examples of elaborate tomb and temple architecture spanning from the first centuries BC to AD.

NATURE'S CREATIONS



NAVA FEDAEFF / SHUTTERSTOCK

NEW ZEALAND

Tongariro National Park

The best one-day hike in the world is the famed Tongariro Alpine Crossing in the Tongariro National Park, the oldest national park in New Zealand. The soaring central North Island mountains symbolize the connection between the environment and the indigenous Maori people and are of serious religious and cultural significance. In 1993, this area, a true link between mankind and the earth, became the first property inscribed on the World Heritage List under the heading “cultural landscapes.” Hike past extinct and active volcanoes, including Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, and Tongariro but be respectful of the summits. All are Māori religious sites considered tapu or sacred.



WRANGEL / STOCK

GREAT BARRIER REEF

AUSTRALIA

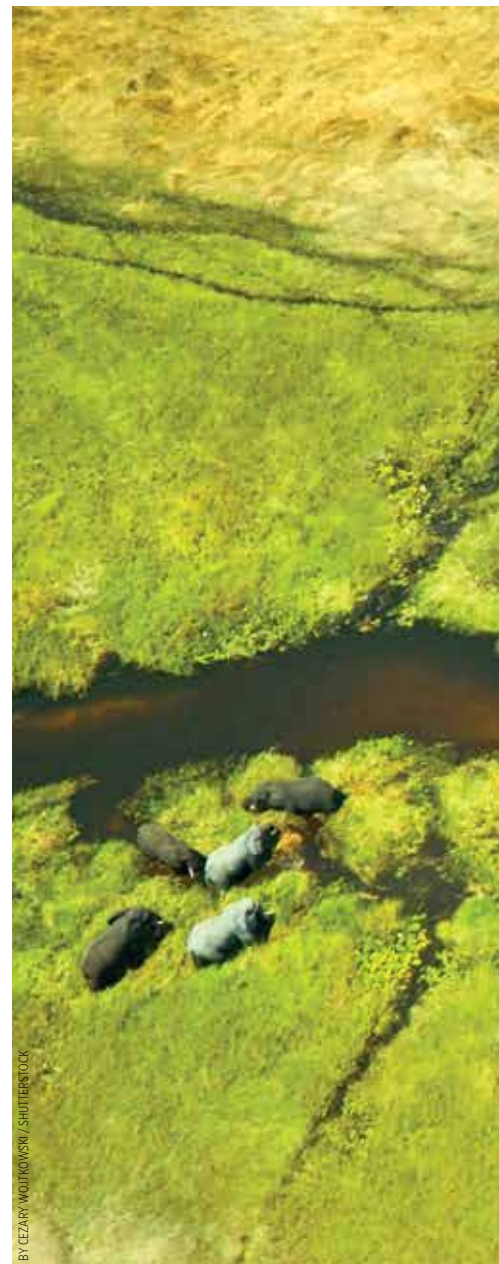
Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is the place where more than 2,500 reefs, tiny sandy bays and broad vegetated cays mingle with 900 small islands and their larger continental sisters rise as high as 1,100 meters above sea level to form the globe’s most extensive coral reef ecosystem. SCUBA divers from around the world come to swim with sponges, anemones, marine worms, crustaceans, more than 400 types of coral, 1,500 fish and 240 bird species, 4,000 types of mollusk, as well as endangered species such as the dugong (‘sea cow’) and the endangered large green turtle. Like the coral reef itself, in imminent danger of destruction as a result of climate change, the rare green turtles are protected from extinction by the UNESCO designation.

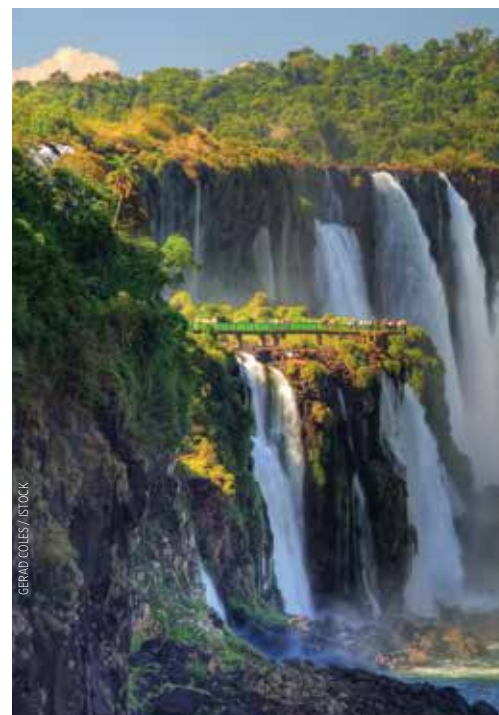
ECUADOR

Galapagos Islands

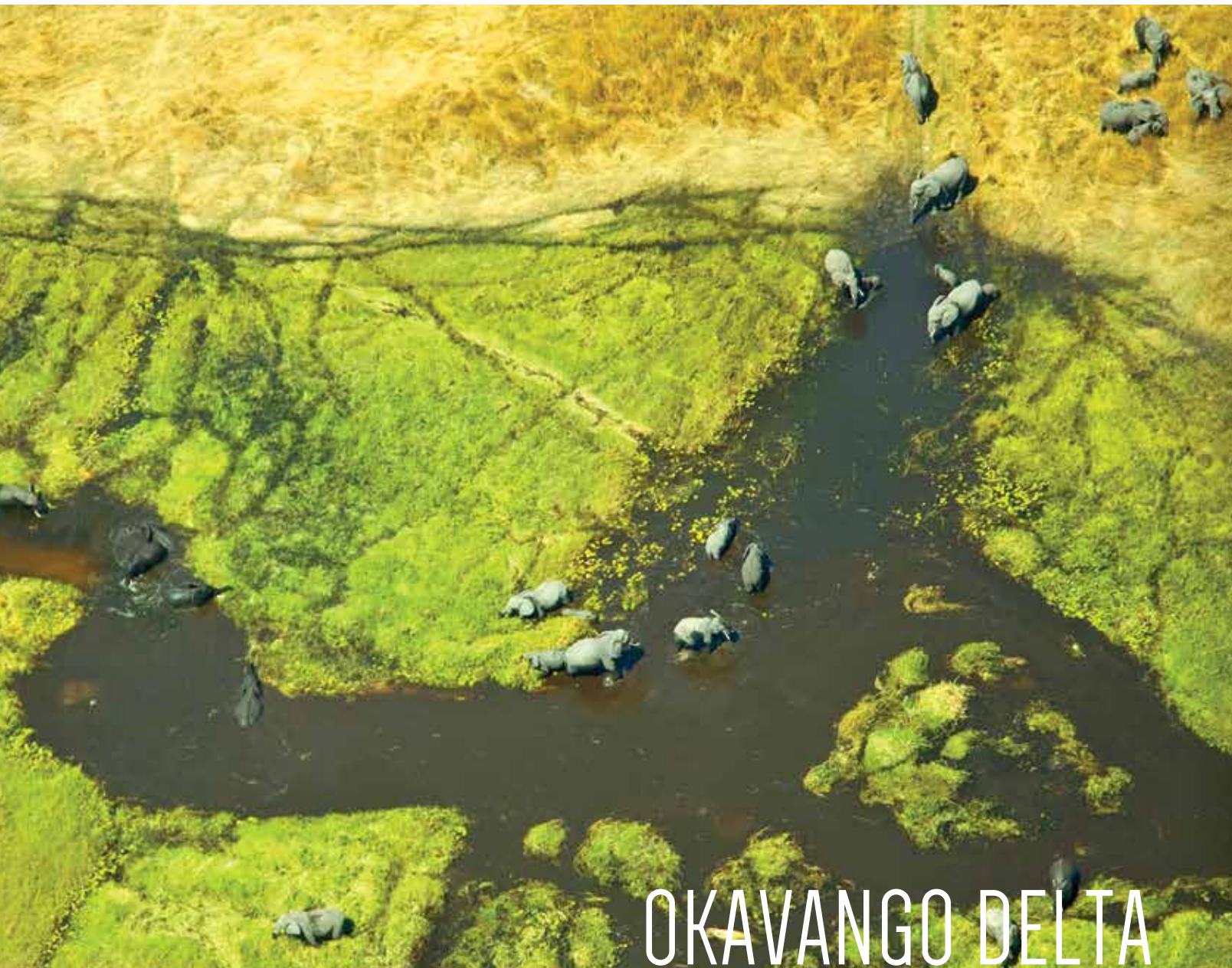
When Charles Darwin traveled to the Galapagos Islands in 1835, he discovered that the convergence of three major oceanic currents had given rise to an incredible mix of marine, reptile, bird and animal life. Distinct ecosystems on each island had fostered specific adaptations of the wildlife and that inspired Darwin’s *On The Origin of Species*. The first location given UNESCO World Heritage site status in 1978, the Galapagos Islands remain a flurry of red-balloon-breasted frigate birds, albatrosses, red and blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas, seals, sea lions, tortoises and much more, all living in blissful ignorance of even the possibility of human threat – just as they should.



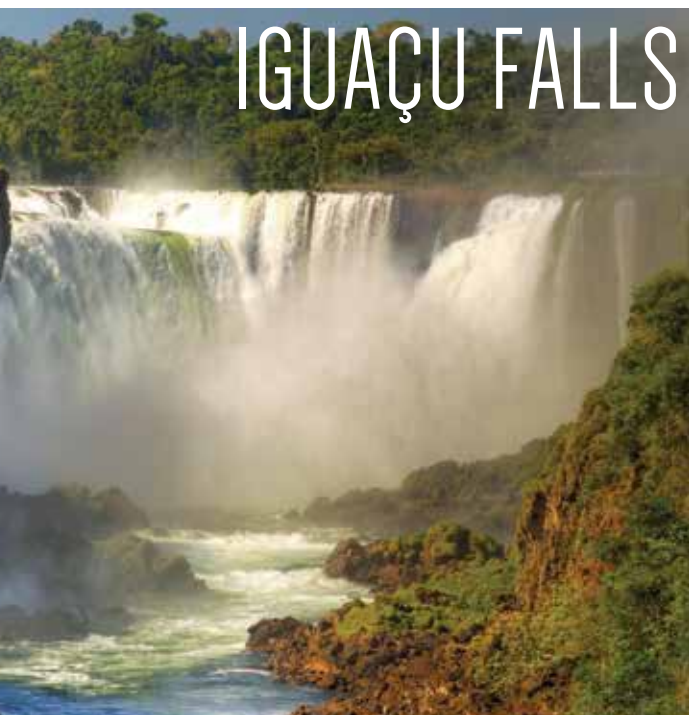
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GERARD COLES / STOCK



OKAVANGO DELTA



IGUAÇU FALLS

BRAZIL & ARGENTINA

Iguaçu National Park / Iguazu Falls

Celebrating perhaps the globe's most powerful eco-partnership, Brazil's Iguazú National Park and Argentina's Iguazú National Park share Iguazú Falls, one of the planet's largest and most impressive waterfalls. Extending to form a 2,700m wide semicircle, Iguazú Falls cascades from a height of 72m and, depending on the flow of the Iguazú River, boasts 150 to 300 waterfalls with massive clouds of spray that foster a lush habitat for such rare and endangered species as the giant otter and the giant anteater.

BOTSWANA

Okavango Delta

Cheetahs, white and black rhinoceros, African wild dogs and lions – all of these endangered species are found in northwest Botswana's Okavango Delta. One of the few pristine, largely untouched deltas in the world that doesn't flow into a sea, the Okavango is flooded by the River Okavango at the height of the dry season, and empties into the dry Kalahari Desert, turning it into a lush habitat for bird, mammal, marine and plant life. The variety of species is stunning but even more so is their lack of fear of humans. Generations of protection have convinced them humans pose no threat.

CANADA



Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

COURTESY TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA

L'ANSE AUX MEADOWS National Historic Site, the remote northern Newfoundland winter home of Leif Erikson and his Vikings was among the first ten sites on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Since then, Canada's Nahanni National Park, through which the famed Nahanni River flows; Dinosaur Provincial Park, where some of the world's most important fossils have been excavated; and Wood Buffalo National Park, the world's second largest national park, have all been added to the list.

Gros Morne National Park, filled with stunning cliffs, tablelands and waterfalls is another of the Canadian wonders on the UNESCO lineup as are the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks which include four national parks: Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho and three provincial parks: Hamber Provincial Park, Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park and

Mount Robson Provincial Park. These western Canadian parks are home to the headwaters of several major North American river systems and to stunning mountains, glaciers, and hot springs.

The Historic District of Old Québec City, another of Canada's representatives on the UNESCO list, was first chosen by Samuel de Champlain as the site of Fort St. Louis in 1608. It remains a stunning example of original Quebecois architecture, and retains the only original city walls north of Mexico City.

Built more than 250 years ago, Old Town Lunenburg, is part of the UNESCO list in recognition of the commitment the Nova Scotia town has to her original street plans, architecture and use of common spaces. Recently named the Communities in Bloom's "Most Beautiful Small Town in Canada", Lunenburg is a must-see on any visit to the Maritimes. ■



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PHOTO COURTESY VIÑA VIK

Horseback riding through the vineyards at Viña Vik



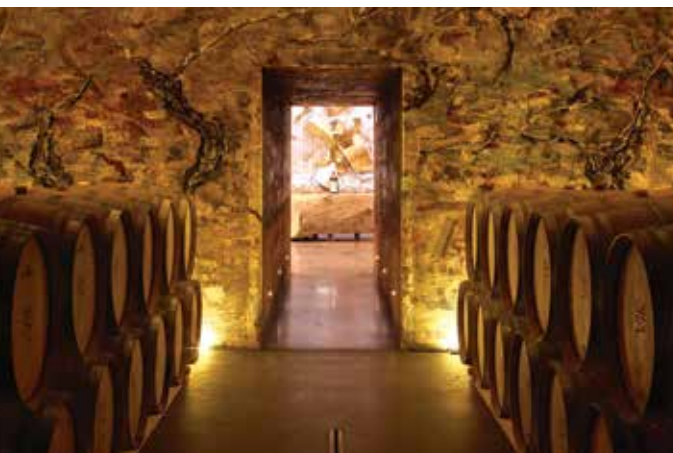
A taste of Chile

Chile's colorful countryside is a winemaker's paradise, and picture-perfect for outdoor-adventurers and wine-loving travelers.

JANIE ROBINSON

MY MOUNTAIN BIKE COASTS through the vineyard, gliding past grapevines bursting with purples, reds and greens; vivid rows rolling through the green valleys and sunnanned slopes. The sky beams brilliant blue, while white peaks lie ahead. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains, not only is the scenery spectacular here in Chile's Central Valley, but the geography, climate, and soil are perfect for growing a wide variety of grapes.

Traditionally known for its affordable, mass-produced wines, Chile is now one of the world's premier wine regions. "Our unique landscape and weather conditions play a key role for the production of high-quality wines," says our guide Gonzalo Moraga, a trained sommelier who started Wines and Barrels Handcrafted Journeys to give wine and food lovers a "true taste of Chile."



Place of gold in Millahue Valley

GLEAMING LIKE A golden spaceship that's landed in the vineyard-covered hills, Viña Vik's titanium-clad boutique hotel, state-of-the-art holistic winery, and the over 10,000 acre sprawling vineyard are dazzling. No wonder the indigenous people call this area "Millahue" – the "Place of Gold".

This no-expense-spared project of Norwegian entrepreneur Alexander Vik, features 22 suites that are all totally unique, each designed by a different artist. Part art gallery and part wine spa, my favorite spot in Vik's avant-garde retreat is lounging by the infinity pool – I feel like I'm on top of the world with panoramic vineyard views under clear blue skies.

Descending from my heavenly perch to the corral below, I saddle up with one of Viña Vik's resident

wranglers, Raul, for a horseback ride through the scenic vineyards. My sure-footed mount Manzanita carries me up the rocky trails for more breath-taking vistas. The playful Pacific wind blows through both of our manes in this gorgeous Mediterranean-like climate and our gallop back through the vineyards to the winery is giddy-up glorious.

Viña Vik's winery is designed to express their holistic concept, starting with a hypnotic flowing instillation known as the 'mirror of water'.

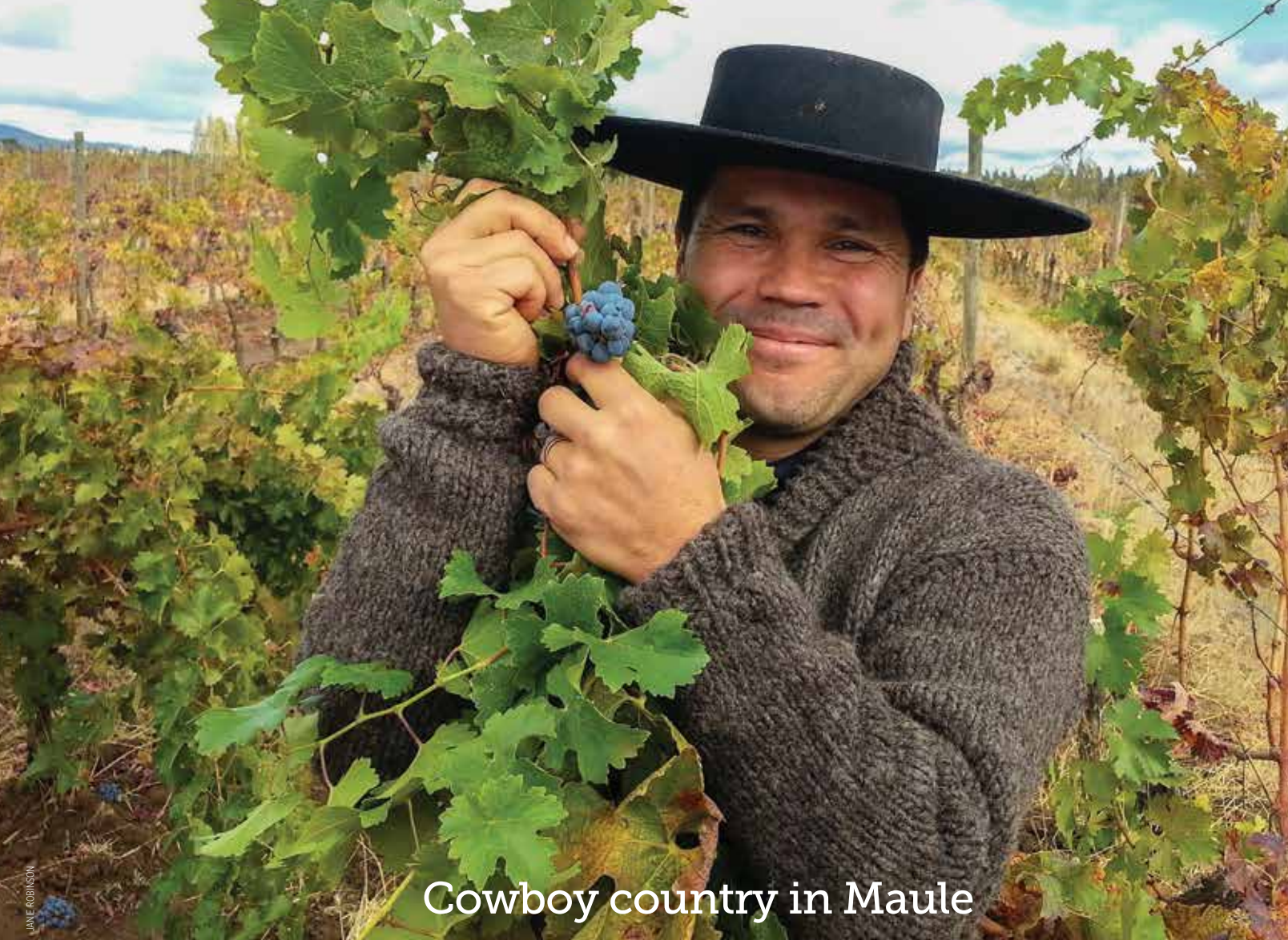
"The idea of this place is to relax you," says viticulturalist Cristian Vallejo of the giant reflecting pool, running like a mountain stream, strewn with big boulders and scattered stones. "When people arrive here, they can feel like free

spirits" he continues, explaining how this Zen-like reflecting pool also works as a cooling agent for the barrel rooms below. In typical Vik fashion, there is stunning contemporary artwork throughout the winery and in the tasting room too.

Next, we're off to meet Canadian-trained Chilean chef Rodrigo Acuña Bravo who welcomes us to his organic kitchen garden, picking produce for tonight's all-fresh, all-local dinner at Vik's restaurant Milla Milla.

Bravo's farm-to-table menu includes delicious grilled calamari fresh from the Pacific and slow-cooked lamb shanks sourced from one of the chef's favorite local farmers. Both are perfect paired with a glass of the elegant VIK wine. Rodrigo even sends us home with gift bags filled with local olive oil, sea salt and his own special mixture of Merkén – the classic smoked spice of Chile.

Clockwise from top left:
Vik Chile's infinity pool offers panoramic vineyard views.
The luxury retreat at Vik Chile.
Tasting Room at the Winery at Viña Vik.



Cowboy country in Maule



I DIDN'T GET TO RIDE with them, but *huasos* – Chile's traditional cowboys – still roam ancient Caliboro, the oldest wine region of Chile where Erasmo Winery follows the region's historic traditions on its 136-acre organic vineyard.

"I let nature do its thing," says Erasmo's general manager César Opazo of his biodynamic vineyard, adding with a laugh, "Some think we're crazy."

From the top of his traditional broad-brimmed huaso hat to his infectious smile, this cowboy shares a spiritual connection with the organic winery, where grapes are handpicked according to the lunar cycle, sheep roam the vineyards after harvest, and wild yeast is used to ferment the wine.

As we walk with César through his remote dry-farmed vineyard and along the curves of the gently



Above: From the top of his traditional broad-brimmed huaso hat to his infectious smile, Erasmo Winery's fun-loving César Opazo shares a "spiritual connection" with this organic and biodynamic winery.

Far left: Huasos (Chile's cowboys) still roam the ancient land of Caliboro, the oldest, most traditional wine region of Chile.

Left: Fermenting grapes at the organic Erasmo Winery.

flowing Perquiuaquén River, the winemaker's passion for this place beams as bright as his smile.

"This is a spiritual place to me. It's all about the land. As a Chilean, as a Maulean, as a peasant of this region, it makes me proud to work in this land because people here have an experience inherited from their grandparents and their parents".

Rural charm in Almahue Valley

I'M CHARMED BY everything at Alchemy Wines, from the winery's sweeping valley views and rustic waterwheels, to its passionate young winemaker and his popular wine-making workshops.

"Alchemy winery was the old cheese factory here many years ago," says 31-year-old vintner, Eduardo Camerati of his rural enterprise. "In fact, one of the cheesemakers now works here at the winery." Eduardo proudly shows us how everything is done by hand to create his artisanal wines, from picking and processing only the best fruit, to hand-labelling every single bottle.

Some of the oldest Carménère vines come from the fertile Almahue Valley. In fact, Alchemy Wines has vines of this variety – once thought to be extinct – that date back to 1945.



JANIE ROBINSON

Clockwise from above: Alchemy's Eduardo Camerati is one of the youngest winemakers in Chile. Everything is done by hand to create Alchemy's artisanal wines, from selecting only the best fruit, to hand-labelling every single bottle. The Almahue Valley is home to the oldest Carménère vines in Chile.

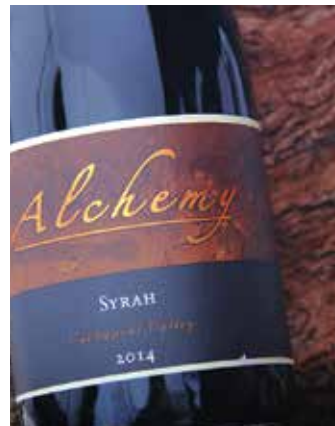


PHOTO COURTESY/ALCHEMY WINES



Lush oasis, paradise for stargazers and New Age vibe in the Andes

CHILEAN WINE-GROWING has also spread up into the Elqui Valley, 420-kilometres north of the colonial capital city Santiago and an hour and a half from the popular Pacific beach resort city of La Serena. The vast valley is a lush oasis in Chile's sun-baked landscape, stretching from the Pacific Ocean eastward into the rugged Andes Mountains and the Argentinean border.

The Elqui Valley's famous clear skies are home to some of the most important scientific observatories on Earth. Named the world's first



PHOTO COURTESY/ALCHEMY WINES



international dark sky sanctuary in 2015, it's a stargazing pilgrimage for astro-tourists from around the globe. The valley is also known for its mystical new age communities and seekers of the cosmic energies. And maybe not surprisingly, frequent UFO sightings too.

With an average of 300 sunny days per year, solar cooking makes a lot of sense here. Villaseca restaurant in Vicuña cooks everything on their menu in solar ovens, taking up to four hours to cook tasty traditional dishes like pastel de choclo – ribs and lamb.

With all that sunshine, warm days, cold nights, and irrigation canals fed by the Puclaro and La Laguna dams, everything from papayas to oranges and avocados flourish in this scenic valley. Grapevines love it here too, producing the country's northernmost wines, as well as the area's traditional pack-a-punch piscos (grape brandy).

Viña Falernia was the pioneer when it came to making fine wines in the once-desert Elqui Valley. The winery estate nestles on the shores of windswept Puclaro Lake – a reservoir created in 2003 when a dam was built – now a popular place for kitesurfing.

Elqui Valley is also home to Chile's highest altitude vineyard – Viñedos de Alcohauz. We stroll this stunning winery, past grapevines thriving in the Andes Mountains at 2,200 meters above sea level in a wild landscape where quaint mountain-side villages share the stony slopes with vine-covered valleys.

Alcohauz's partners, Juan Luis Huerta and his wife, Helia Rojas, know this remote corner of Elqui intimately. Both born in the valley, they have obviously dedicated their lives to the land on which they live.

"The true agronomer, the one who falls madly in love with his land, knows that – as with any true love –

"The true agronomer, the one who falls madly in love with his land, knows that – as with any true love – one must first and foremost be humble, for in the end it is Earth herself who decides the outcome of all our endeavors."

one must first and foremost be humble, for in the end it is Earth herself who decides the outcome of all our endeavors" says Juan Luis, to which his wife Helia adds: "With each bottle of wine that leaves the winery, we see how a little piece of the valley itself travels to new shores, meets new people and, in some way, transcends." ■

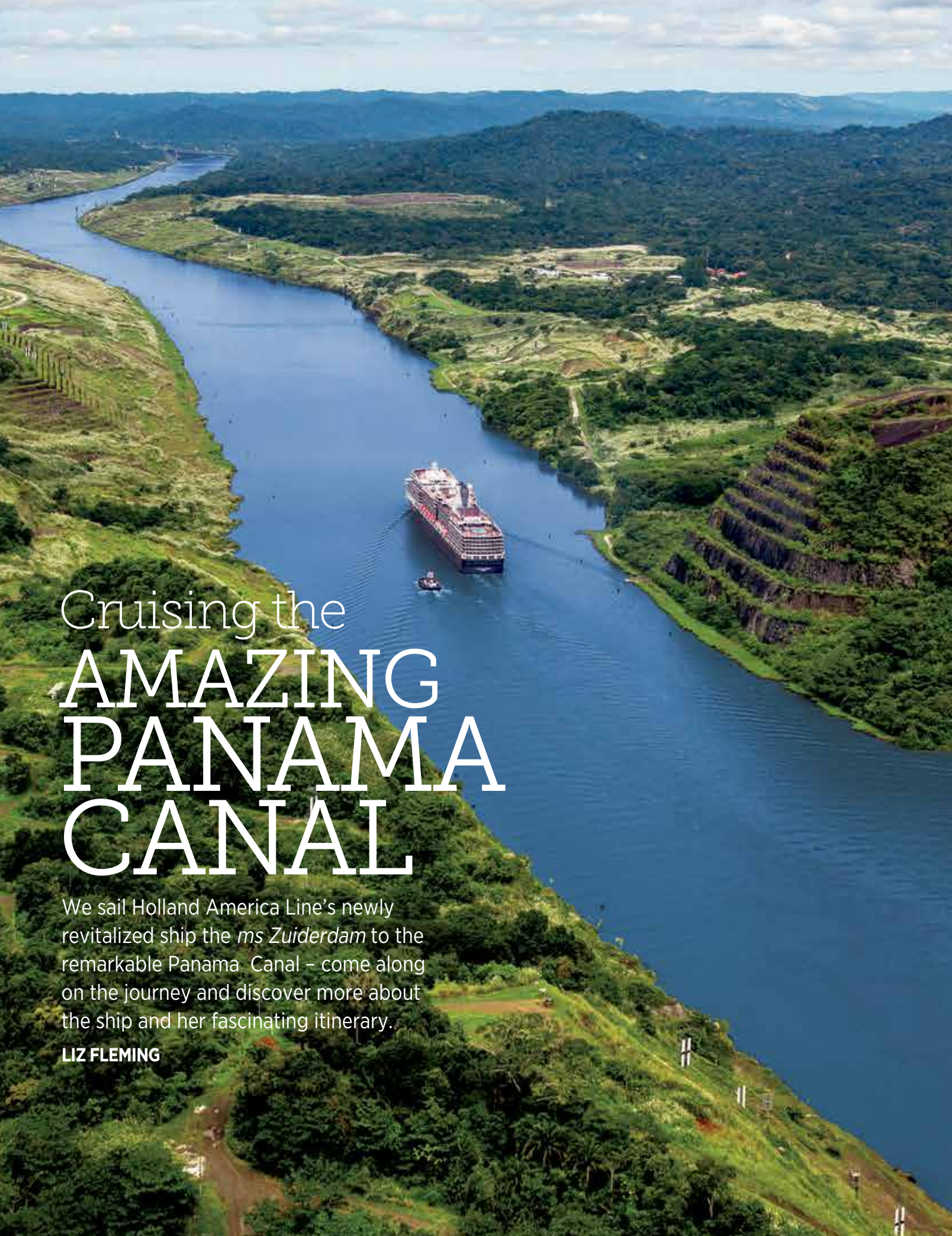
IF YOU GO Air Canada has five direct flights per week from Toronto to Santiago, an 11-hour non-stop journey of 8610 km with a one-hour time difference. www.aircanada.com The currency is Chilean Pesos, and \$1 Canadian dollar is worth around 500 Pesos. You'll find Scotiabank Chile ATMs throughout the country. For more Chile Tourism information go to chile.travel/en/ and see your preferred travel advisor.

Clockwise from above left:

Chile's Elqui Valley is home to the first international dark sky sanctuary, a stargazer's paradise.

Viñedos de Alcohauz is Chile's highest altitude vineyard at 2,200 meters above sea level in this stunning, Andes landscape.

Winery partner Juan Luis Huerta stands on the stone pools, where grapes are crushed by foot and fermented at Viñedos de Alcohauz.

An aerial photograph of a large cruise ship, the ms Zuiderdam, navigating through a section of the Panama Canal. The canal is a deep blue waterway that winds through a lush, green landscape of hills and valleys. The ship is positioned in the center of the frame, moving towards the viewer. The surrounding terrain is a mix of dense tropical forest and cleared areas, with some terraced fields visible on the right side. The sky is bright with scattered clouds.

Cruising the
**AMAZING
PANAMA
CANAL**

We sail Holland America Line's newly revitalized ship the *ms Zuiderdam* to the remarkable Panama Canal - come along on the journey and discover more about the ship and her fascinating itinerary.

LIZ FLEMING

I'M NOT A MORNING PERSON. Most days, the sun rises on its own – with no supervision from me. But on the morning of November 22nd last year I bolted out of bed, raced up six flights of stairs to the elegant cabanas of The Retreat on Deck 11 of the *ms Zuiderdam* to be in a prime position to watch our journey through the locks of the Panama Canal.

It would, I was sure, be the highlight of a fantastic cruise that included everything from a day at Half Moon Cay, Holland America's private island in the Bahamas, to a snorkeling safari in windy but wonderful Aruba. We'd also spent a fascinating morning learning everything we'd never imagined about ostrich ranching in Curacao, laughed and joked and bargained with the street vendors in the old walled city in Cartagena, and were still looking forward to an up-close-and-personal monkey-watching adventure on the islands of Gatun Lake, Panama, and a morning of zip-lining over the tree-tops in the Costa Rican rain forest.

In addition to great shore excursions, our time on the ship had offered four sea days filled with pool lolling time, onboard movies viewed from the plush seats of the Screening Room, cooking classes in the new America's Test Kitchen facility, digital camera sessions, fitness classes and plenty of opportunities for shameless self-indulgence.

We'd dined royally at all the specialty restaurants, enjoying succulent steak and lamb chops at the elegant Pinnacle Grill, spicy sun-dried tomato and sausage rigatoni at Canaletto and snapper at Rudi's Sel De Mer, the one-night-per-cruise culinary masterpiece of Chef Rudi Sodamin. The Main Dining Room had also been a great choice both on the nights when we dined in romantic solitude and when we joined chatty tables of equally happy guests. Casual poolside lunches of grilled chicken,



hot-from-the-oven pizza, Asian grilled tuna salad bowls, or a range of other treats from the Dive-In Grill and Lido Market had also made for great, healthy dining.

To work off the calories, we took full advantage of Holland America's 'music walk' – a completely new series of entertainment venues just added to the *ms Zuiderdam*, having originally debuted on the gorgeous *ms Koningsdam*.

We loved it all: Lincoln Center, an elegant small theater featuring brief but lovely classical music performances several times each evening; Billboard on Board – a sing-along dueling pianos bar that offered three different themed

sets each night and had guests singing their hearts out; and our big favorite, BB King Blues Club, where an eight-piece stage band pumped out blues, rock, Motown and more, packing the house for three nightly sets.

The Main Stage shows were a mix of big song and dance productions, witty comedians, and innovative magicians but the hands-down hit of the cruise was Island Magic, a group of wildly talented steel drum musicians from Trinidad who play classical music by ear – and mesmerize entire ships with their sound. With that kind of entertainment tempting us, it was rare for our heads to hit the pillows before midnight – any night!

Above: Zuiderdam's newly redesigned Explorations Cafe and the cabanas at the elegant Retreat on Deck 11.



We were lucky to be aboard the *ms Zuiderdam* following her fall 2017 dry dock rejuvenation in Freeport, Bahamas. Part of a \$300 million investment by Holland America in updating not only suites and staterooms, but also dining and entertainment venues across its fleet of Signature-, Vista- and R-Class ships, the *ms Zuiderdam* now has a cool new vibe.

Already alive with impressive touches like the stunning Waterford crystal seahorse dominating the atrium and the elegant art deco elevator doors on every floor, the well-designed ship has been refreshed throughout. From fresh carpeting, tile and wall treatments, to redesigned public spaces like the Music Walk and Crow's Nest – a sunny combination library/coffee bistro/ casual entertainment venue – *ms Zuiderdam* is a ship reborn. In addition to new couches and mattresses, one of the most popular new stateroom

features were highly interactive television systems that offer not only complimentary on-demand movies, television shows, news, cooking shows and more, but also constant access to the ship's daily program, shipboard restaurant information, spa services and billing information. With their ship looking her best, the staff and crew were understandably proud. Said Hotel Director Darren Lewis, "The *Zuiderdam* has a soul... and you feel it emanating from the staff."

Topping off the dynamic itinerary and revitalized ship was the chance to sail into the Panama Canal. At 48 miles long, this three-lift-lock system is able to raise and lower ships an incredible 85 feet, depositing them into a mid-point, man-made lake, and making it possible to sail from one ocean to another. A symbol of man's unwavering dedication to a seemingly impossible cause, the Panama Canal project was begun with great enthusiasm by





the famous French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps who, in 1800 envisioned the creation of a sea-level passage. Disasters of every kind followed as de Lesseps attempted to fight the challenging landscape and the punishing climate, until finally abandoning the project in disgrace. It was not until 1914, after more than a century of struggle, that the Americans finally completed the Canal.

I hadn't known much about the Canal's history until I settled into the *Zuiderdam's* Screening Room and became immersed in films that showed how this engineering wonder had been achieved at a terrible cost. Tens of thousands of lives – French, American and West Indian – were sacrificed in the building of the Canal – lives lost to explosions, rock slides, train derailments, malaria and the dreaded yellow fever.

Carved through dense jungle, in stifling heat and endless rain, the Canal's construction destroyed one of

The Panama Canal is a fascinating place that changed the face of global travel forever.

France's most brilliant engineers and outlasted two U.S. presidents. It's a fearsome and fascinating place that changed the face of global travel forever. Through it, ships can glide from ocean to ocean in hours, rather than the days once required to sail around the tip of South America.

When the big morning came for our sailing of the Canal, we were determined not to miss a second. Because Holland America knows how to mark an occasion, the Canal passage was celebrated in style with extra early morning coffee ready on deck and large platters of 'Panama buns' – a sort of soft donut bursting with a creamy, orange filling that was a reward for an unnaturally early rising.

All around us in the drizzly morning waters were other ships – container vessels, tankers and tugs – all waiting their turn. Though certainly not a wild ride, our gentle three-part rise through the locks was stately and our final arrival in Gatun Lake felt like a celebration. As we slid into the quiet waters, cheers from a nearby oil tanker surprised us. At first, we couldn't hear what they were shouting as they waved insistently from the deck of a ship flying the Panamanian flag. Whatever it was, they seemed very anxious to be heard over the throbbing of the engines. Puzzled, we waved back, straining to catch their words until finally, we got the message. They were shouting, "Welcome to the Panama Canal." ■

IF YOU GO Panama and nearby Costa Rica – two important calls on the Canal itinerary are both very wet during the rainy season, so the best timing to sail is between the end of November and the end of April. For more information and the full selection of cruise itineraries, visit www.hollandamerica.com and see your preferred travel advisor.

Above: *Zuiderdam's* sister ship *Westerdam* makes an early morning entry into the Gatun locks.

Facing page: (clockwise from far left)

Popular B.B. King's Blues Bar pumps out blues, rock, Motown and more.

The redesigned Gallery Bar.

Billboard on Board is a sing-along dueling pianos bar.

America's Test Kitchen offers live cooking shows and hands-on workshops.

Baked Alaska in the elegant Pinnacle Grill.



I WAS SIPPING a late day *café au lait* and munching warm, sugary beignets at Café du Monde when I heard it. Long before the marching band came into sight, a mournful dirge filled the hot afternoon air – a sound that, in New Orleans, signals a ‘second line’ carrying souls to their final rest. Trumpets and tubas, clarinets and saxophones, slide trombones, bass drums, snare drums and cymbals, brass flashing and drumsticks clicking, they marched, one slow foot rolling after another.

I joined the crowd winding slowly down Decatur Street. At a spot overlooking the somnolent Mississippi, the procession stopped and the band assembled on a wide set of stairs. The black-hatted band leader spoke to the crowd.

“In New Orleans,” she said, “Folks don’t go to their graves alone. We help them on their journey.” She explained the New Orleans tradition that sees second-line bands leading funeral processions through the winding old streets. “Now, I’m guessing there are people in this crowd who’ve lost loved ones so I want you to call out their names. Go on, now...call ‘em out.”

And people did, slowly at first, then more quickly. The names were spoken, whispered, even shouted, in voices choked with emotion. After a moment of silence for the dead, the band leader spoke again. “There, we’ve remembered our losses and we’ve had our sad time. Now, we’re goin’ to cut those precious souls loose.” With that, the band erupted into *When the Saints Go Marchin’ In*. Trumpets blaring, drums pounding, hands clapping and voices raised...in that moment, you could feel throngs of cut-loose souls flying heavenward.

New Orleans is like that, a rich mix of the serious and the anything-but, of French and English, of sophisticated and flat-out fun. From the darkly mysterious voodoo shops in the old French Quarter, where you can buy

Easing into the *Big Easy*

New Orleans is the party that never ends and this year, as she celebrates her 300th anniversary, you’ll be sure to connect to your own special vibe in the Big Easy.

LIZ FLEMING



all the dolls, pins, potions, lotions and amulets imaginable, to the rollicking Zydeco bars of Bourbon Street, to über-elegant French restaurants, this is a city of contrasts.

Known around the world for its Mardi Gras parades and parties, NOLA has been rolling out the red party carpet for generations – and they start preparing for this biggest-party-of-the-year months in advance. A two-week extravaganza of parades, parties and endless music, Mardi Gras is far more than a matter of simply showing up and marching.

Participants join ‘krewes’, receive detailed lists of dances to learn and often expensive costume elements to assemble so they can join one of the elaborately decorated floats.

One woman we met told us that she was a ‘high priestess’ in her

krewe – a great honor – and happily paid several thousand dollars for her costume each year, spending more than \$1000 for her elaborate head-dress alone. Because her husband’s rank was less prestigious, he had a lesser position on their float, and sat behind her – a concept she seemed to enjoy far more than he did!

Though Mardi Gras is New Orleans’ best-known event, it’s only the beginning of what she has to offer so start by gaining an appreciation of the city on foot. Absorb the romance of the old French Quarter with its ornate, wrought iron balconies, dripping with bougainvillea, tour the exhibits in the Contemporary Arts Center in the Warehouse District – and maybe enjoy a ‘bam’ kind of lunch at Emeril’s New Orleans, the first restaurant opened by famous

NOLA chef Emeril Lagasse. If you love classic southern cooking, book a table at Brennan’s – an institution in the city – and dive into a plate of crispy fried green tomatoes and a big bowl of spicy seafood gumbo. Maybe you’d prefer to give new-age creole cuisine a try at Commander’s Palace where the rum-basted pork belly is to die for and the bread pudding soufflé will never leave your dreams. Once your belly’s full, stroll the Garden District where sweeping stretches of manicured green lawn edge lush floral beds surrounding the elegant, plantation-style homes. Then make your way to City Park – a 1,300 acre oasis of green lawns and ancient trees, as well as a fabulous art installation – massive sculptures that celebrate New Orleans people, history and, perhaps most importantly, her future.

Clockwise from far left:
Jazz is everywhere in New Orleans.
St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter.
Getting hitched in the French Quarter.
The paddlewheel steamboat Natchez.

BIG FUN ON THE BAYOU AND BEYOND

As wonderful as New Orleans is, there's far more to Louisiana. From the tranquility of the nearby Northshore to the Cajun rhythms of Houma's downhome musical welcome, this is the deep, wonderful south at its best.

CAJUN JUMPIN' AND JIVIN'

The Jolly Inn in Houma, Louisiana is the place to be on Friday nights and Sunday afternoons when the band's tuned up and the dance floor is full. The music is Cajun – a sort of spicy country sound that's bound to get you moving. Not Fred Astaire? No worries. The band will welcome you to the stage, strap on a Cajun rhythm vest that looks and sounds a lot like an old washboard, and make you part of the entertainment!
www.thejollyinn.com

GOTTA GET A GATOR

You can't go to Louisiana without going gator hunting – with your camera, of course. The best way to get out on the bayou is with Annie Miller's Son's Swamp and Marsh Tours, just outside Houma, where guide Jim Miller will not only take you deep into the bayou to see everything from bald eagles to alligators, but will also share incredible stories of his snake-collecting, alligator-charming mother.
www.annie-miller.com

YOUR LAKESIDE RETREAT

Lake Pontchartrain is the glittering blue body of water that separates NOLA from the idyllic peace of the Northshore. Drive over the causeway to find a collection of idyllic cottages in the Fontainebleau State Park offering both a refreshing change of pace and great family-friendly accommodation. Each beach-front, cottage-on-stilts is different, but all offer multiple bedrooms, living and dining rooms, fully equipped kitchens and – best of all – a broad screened porch just begging you to sit and stay awhile.
www.reserveamerica.com/.../fontainebleau-state-park

GET A LITTLE LITERARY

If you haven't read James Lee Burke's mystery novels, set in rural Louisiana, you haven't lived – but if you're a fan of Dave Robicheaux and his buddy Clete Purcel, make a stop in New Iberia Parish, do the James Lee Burke tour, and have breakfast where they would, at Victor's Café.

SEAFOOD SAVVY

Louisiana is all about seafood and you won't find any better than at Fremin's in the small town of Thibodeaux. There's an old-school charm about the place, with heavy leaded windows and gracious table service but it's the cuisine that's truly magical. Try the soft shell crab Lafourche – the crab is fresh and sweet, but it's the brandy-cream reduction that puts the whole thing over the top.
www.fremins.net



Commander's Palace
pork belly with oysters

PHOTO COURTESY COMMANDER'S PALACE

Life in New Orleans is easy – Cajun and Creole food so delicious every bite has to be savored slowly, and a streetscape punctuated by almost constant music.

Make a stop at the New Orleans Historic Voodoo Museum to gain an understanding of this ancient tradition – and to pick yourself up a 'gris-gris' amulet for protection from any spells that might be cast your way! To balance your voodoo experience, visit the Old Ursuline Convent, the oldest building on the Mississippi River – don't miss the incredible hand-carved cypress wood staircase inside.

If you're of a literary bent, you might want to take a guided tour that will show you the homes and haunts of such giants as Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Ann Rice and Eudora Welty.

NOLA is a big place to explore so if your feet start to complain, I'd recommend retreating to the rooftop bar of the Jax Beer building for a great view of the river. If you still want to explore, hail one of the many horse-drawn carriages that roam the old streets or hop on board the *Natchez*, a traditional NOLA paddle-wheel-powered steamboat that takes guests on a two-hour jazz-filled Mississippi river tour. You'll feel just like Huck Finn. While you're sailing, be sure to order a Sazerac, NOLA's official drink. Originally made with cognac – a vestige of the city's French roots – bitters, sugar, absinthe or pastis, and a lemon twist – it's now also offered with rye whiskey.

NOLA has been called the Big Easy since the early 1970s when newspaper columnist Betty Guillaud used the term to distinguish the city's laid-back lifestyle to the frantic world of New York's Big Apple. Betty was right. Life in New Orleans is easy – days and nights so warm, it would be crazy to think of hurrying anywhere, Cajun and Creole food so delicious every bite has to be savored slowly and a streetscape punctuated by almost constant music.

From Sunday morning jazz breakfasts where the diners come dressed in their finest, to the open-air nightclubs of Bourbon Street where the music comes right out onto the street and grabs you, NOLA rocks and rolls and pitches and swings.

It's a city that has rebounded and rebuilt after the horrors of Hurricane Katrina – and its resilience is infectious. No matter what troubles you may bring with you, they'll seem smaller somehow, once you have a Jax beer in your hand and the sound of a great jazz band in your ears.

The Big Easy will make it difficult for you to even think about leaving. ■

IF YOU GO: Choose a cooler month – July and August get pretty steamy – and be sure to visit www.neworleanscvb.com and discuss your trip with your travel advisor.



Bourbon Street



Old mansion in the Garden District



Riding the historic St. Charles streetcar

| RIVER CRUISING

Get active with Tauck

Recognizing that many river cruise lovers are active travelers eager for adventure has inspired **Tauck Cruises** to offer a whole new style of shore excursions for the 2018 season. Beginning in April, 2018, they'll be offering not only a choice of eight to 15-day itineraries exploring 10 different countries on the Danube, Rhine, or Seine rivers, but also an exciting lineup of explorations ashore. "Guests can now also choose shore excursions that fit their interests and lifestyles," says Tauck CEO Dan Mahar. "We're thrilled to offer guests a second activity option and make their Tauck river cruise even more memorable because of the choice." For example, on "The Blue Danube" itinerary guests can choose from two full-day excursion choices to two different countries: Salzburg, Austria or Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic. On the new "Rhine Enchantment" itinerary, the choice is between a visit and wine tasting in Riquewihir (one of "The Most Beautiful Villages in France") or a guided bicycle ride in the Black Forest. Options such as private wine tastings, castle tours, a nearly 7,000 ft. ride straight up Mt. Pilatus on the world's steepest cogwheel train – the choices are endless and endlessly exciting!



PHOTOGRAPHER / ISTOCK



PHOTO COURTESY GLOBIS FAMILY OF BRANDS

Avalon expands Active Discovery touring

Building on the success of the 2017 season, **Avalon Waterways** has announced an expansion of the popular Active Discovery program to include not only departures on the Danube River but also two new departures, both on the beautiful Rhine River. Each day, guests on these innovative cruises will have the choice of three different shore excursions: an Active tour, which might be a guided run, bike ride or hike; a Discovery tour such as a culinary walk, meeting a local vintner or other producer; or a more classic shore excursion, usually a walking tour with a local guide with the focus on culture, history and architecture. "We've found that more and more of our passengers love the idea of an active, fitness element to these cruises," says Stéphanie Bishop of Avalon Waterways' Canadian office. "The new 9-day cruises – between Amsterdam and Frankfurt – offer a whole menu of fun, active and engaging shore excursions." Guests aboard the **Avalon Luminary** on the Danube cruise will enjoy such treats as a Van Gogh-inspired painting class, foodie tours, bike hikes and winery visits while those who choose the **Avalon Felicity** on the Rhine instead, will have the chance to participate in a re-enactment of the Roman Games, complete with costumes, conduct an orchestra, play nine holes of golf or help with the harvest in an apricot orchard. Clearly, the toughest task will be choosing between the two rivers! (Be sure to watch our May issue for Editor-in-Chief Liz Fleming's take on the Avalon Active Discovery on the Danube.)



PHOTO COURTESY EMERALD WATERWAYS

Emerald Waterways sailing into new territory in 2019

If exploring exotic South East Asia by river ship is on your must-do list, you'll love **Emerald Waterways'** newly released 2019 itineraries. Each immersive Southeast Asia itinerary features either a 7-night Mekong cruise onboard the luxurious **Mekong Navigator**, or a 9-night Irrawaddy cruise on-board the elegant **Irrawaddy Explorer**. Both the *Mekong Navigator* and the *Irrawaddy Explorer* offer all the comforts of modern river ships with elegant traditional furnishings to create an authentic cruising experience, with all the on-board facilities and features needed for a journey of discovery. No matter which itinerary you choose, all onboard dining is included in the price, as well as complimentary selected alcoholic and soft drinks served with lunch and dinner. Onshore excursions and experiences, hotel stays, transfers, return flights and even all tips are included, leaving guests to simply relax and enjoy your journey.

Cruise and Travel Lifestyles' publisher, Vanessa Lee recently sat down with Nathalie Tanious at Encore Cruises to talk about Encore's role in selling cruises in Canada and their expansive portfolio and offerings.



Can you tell us about Encore Cruises and its goals for the cruise business in Canada?

Encore is Canada's premier cruise provider and has been for over 25 years. Although we are a specialized brand with a dedicated team of knowledgeable cruise specialists, Encore Cruises, via its mother ship Travel-Brands, also offers a variety of products and services that help travel agents complete the ultimate cruise vacation for their clients. So we also sell air seats to go with the cruise vacation and pre or post hotels, a variety of excursions and of course transfers to and from the airport to the ship and to hotels too – an all-encompassing experience! We pride ourselves on being a one-stop shopping experience for our travel partners as they seek the best vacation value for their customers.

What would you say is the driving force behind Encore Cruises' ongoing success?

We have a team of specialists who live, breathe and embrace cruises in all shapes and sizes. Our partnerships with some of the world's leading cruise lines – from luxury to mainstream, small to mega ships, traditional to ultra-modern – means that our selection is unbeatable and allows Encore to provide exclusive offers that are unparalleled! As we primarily focus on selling cruises, our

expertise is truly very impressive. We know which ships are best for certain vacationers from honeymooners to couples celebrating a special occasion, families and of course multi-generational cruises too. And we do have a ship for everyone!

Encore offers an amazing array of cruise options on both ocean and river. Which cruise lines are represented?

We offer Azamara Club Cruises, AMA Waterways, Avalon Waterways, Carnival Cruise Line, Costa Cruises, Celebrity Cruises, Cunard Line, Disney Cruise Lines, Holland America Line, Hurtigruten, MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruises and Royal Caribbean. This is obviously a wide and expansive choice and within these cruise lines we have many ships that will suit a variety of guests and budgets as well. From a transatlantic crossing on an iconic ship such as *Queen Mary 2*, to beautiful small river ships, and to some of the biggest and most innovative ships in the world – we can select something suitable with the client's travel professional. Our long list of ships also sail literally anywhere in the world people may want to explore including the Galapagos Islands, coastal Norway, the Far East and Australia, the Med and Baltic and more.

How has Encore Cruises weathered the industry storms in the last 10 years?

Our primary commitment is to travel agents and working with them solely. To expand our offerings, we have diversified our portfolio of cruise lines and expanded into selling other travel products such as air seats, hotels and a variety of excursions. We believe that providing great tools and technology helps our travel partners to sell cruises quickly and efficiently to their clients, our ultimate customers. And, we reward them appropriately. In return our travel partners are extremely loyal to us and we work together to ensure that the customer gets the best of everything in their cruise vacation.

What is Encore's greatest asset?

We have a remarkable and dedicated team of cruise specialists who make customer service their primary focus, thereby ensuring

that the travel advisor and our mutual client find the best cruise for their vacation. Our excellent relationships with our cruise line partners enable us to provide the best offers and promotions – we deal only with the finest cruise companies with superb ships whether ocean-going or on rivers. Working closely with an expansive network of travel professionals across the country enables us to ensure they have the knowledge and ability to offer the right cruise at a great price, to each and every client.

What do you consider to be the next must-haves and innovations in cruising?

The cruise industry needs to rally together and keep promoting and encouraging travel agents to sell cruises! With lots of capacity in the marketplace, we have a cruise for every taste and every budget – now we need to get people cruising! It's truly one of the best vacation options out there, especially with so many amazing new ships arriving every year. It's a very exciting segment of the travel industry – there's incredible growth and choice, including an extensive array of entertainment and dining options. Ships will arrive this year at an exceptional pace and they all offer a fantastic onboard experience in every aspect with some of the best service as well – always an important factor.

I hear you have a really terrific protection program for your extensive Air Program – tell me more.

Yes, we have an excellent Air/Sea Protection Program which is very popular indeed. It covers flight delays and schedule changes as well as flight cancellations, a missed cruise and also if there is a delay in disembarkation from the ship. If guests purchase this program we vow to get them to and from their ship without hassles or worries. Essentially the flight will be rebooked depending upon the next available flight and without extra costs. I highly recommend this especially with the kind of weather we have been having lately!



THE PINK SANDS CLUB

A new island treasure in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

JETSETTERS have a new place to indulge in the lap of luxury at The Pink Sands Club. Located on lush Canouan Island, this new five-star hotel of St. Vincent and the Grenadines aims to lure A-list travelers to this southern Caribbean outpost.

Opened in November 2016, The Pink Sands Club is adjacent to The Grenadines Estate Golf Club, a Jim Fazio-designed 18-hole championship golf course and the recently opened Glossy Bay Marina. The 26 suite, six villa resort hotel resides on 1200 acres and is managed by Mandarin Oriental, their first foray into the Caribbean region.

The Penthouse Suite features a custom mosaic marble entry leading into a light-filled living room. Overstuffed cream couches are piled high with signature pink patterned pillows beside dark wood side chairs and storage pieces, while the balcony offers generous wicker chairs overlooking the beach.

Crisp white and cream textiles and touches of PSC pink are found throughout, along with handcrafted Murano glass lighting, Italian marble flooring and contemporary art. A spacious bedroom

features a king bed, piled high with pillows and silky-soft PSC monogrammed sheets, while touch-pad technology and bedside iPad help create the perfect environment to alter temperature, adjust lighting and choose entertainment.

The immense marble bathroom features all the bells and whistles from an endless array of bath amenities to luxe dressing gowns and slippers, and is adjacent to an expansive dressing room for beachwear and baubles. The opulent Penthouse Suite also includes an elegant 10 seat dining room with in-wall wine cellar and a contemporary granite kitchen and pantry.

Dinner is offered nightly in either the Romeo or Juliet dining rooms, featuring internationally-inspired menus and a curated wine list sourced from both the Old and New World while breakfast or lunch can be enjoyed at the Mediterranean-styled Lagoon Café or the Pool Bar and Grill. And make time for the Amrita Spa, choosing a therapy in a hillside palapa spa suite or in one of two over-the-water treatment suites.

— WAHEEDA HARRIS



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