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RIVER CRUISES

Romantic River Cruises for Honeymooners



By Susan Young | February 12, 2016

Whether you popped the question this Valentine's Day or are simply looking for a romantic getaway, these river cruise itineraries offer options for wine lovers, epicureans and more.

Filed under : Cruises, mobile-feature, river cruises, Europe, Trip Types and Activities



Avalon Expression calls at Durnstein while cruising the Danube River.

Heading to **Europe** with your special someone on a river cruise can be romantic; couples view bucolic countryside and city sites “up close,” ships dock in the heart of such cities as **Venice, Budapest** or **Paris**, and guests head out to taste fabulous wines and dine at romantic sidewalk cafes or **Michelin**-starred eateries. Plus, river lines have “themed cruises.”

Romance in Italy: What could be more romantic than floating through **Italy**, exploring **Milan** and Venice and enjoying time in **Verona, Padua, Bologna** and **Burano**? **Uniwold's** new 10-day “**Gems of Northern Italy**” cruisetour on the 134-passenger **River Countess** begins in Milan, iconic for its fashion style and home to **Leonardo Da Vinci's** masterpiece, “**The Last Supper**.” Guests stay for two nights at the **Starhotels Rosa Grand** or a similar category hotel and they receive breakfasts and transfers. They board *River Countess* in Venice, staying multiple days in the city and cruising through northern Italy.



Uniwold's new 10-day "Gems of Northern Italy" cruisetour will give passengers a chance to explore Venice.

In Venice, Uniwold's guests choose between an exclusive “**Do as the Locals Do**” walking tour and a “**Venetian Painters at the Accademia**” tour with art-historian guide. During an included tour in “Verona, **City of Romeo and Juliet**,” couples will see Romeo's home and a 14th-century stone house where legend says Juliet listened to Romeo's vows; cruisers can snap a romantic selfie on or below the balcony.

Savory French Cuisine: Revealing fine French cuisine and village life, **Tauk's** 10-day themed “**Taste of France**” epicurean program starts in **Paris** with a reception and dinner at **Fouquet's** on the **Champs Elysees**. Guests also enjoy a chocolate demonstration and **Ecole Lenotre** pastry class. Then couples board the 118-passenger **Swiss Emerald** for an intimate, seven-night **Rhone River** cruise.

During an **Arles** port call, guests visit Roman sites, have free time and then are whisked to a private **La Camargue** ranch for a luncheon banquet of farm-grown Provençal specialties with a musical serenade. Here couples will also see Camargue's white horses, black bulls and a "gardian," or French cowboy demonstration.

Opera or Jazz: For couples who love opera, **Avalon Waterways'** 15-day opera-themed "**Magnificent Europe**" cruise on the 166-passenger **Avalon Illumination** departs October 28 from **Amsterdam** to **Budapest**. Onboard, professional Canadian opera singers will perform a selection of opera works. This itinerary includes Amsterdam's canals and the **Rhine Gorge**, as well as shore time in **Cologne, Rudesheim, Bamberg, Nuremberg** and **Vienna**. Guests also visit the inside of **Wurzburg's Bishop's Residenz**, and **St. Martin's Cathedral** in **Bratislava**; a **Regensburg** violin maker; the musical city of **Salzburg, Mozart's** birthplace; and a **Strauss** concert in Vienna.

A jazz-themed voyage is Avalon's "**Burgundy and Provence**" river cruise, 11 days from the **Cote d'Azur** to Paris on 138-passenger **Poetry II**, departing June 27 with evening jazz band performances onboard, plus free time for guests to attend the **Vienne Jazz Festival**. The voyage begins in Arles with calls at **Viviers, Tournon, Lyon, Chalon-sur-Saone** and **Beaune**. Then guests board a **TGV** train from **Dijon** to Paris for two overnights, guided sightseeing and free time in the "City of Light."



Cesky Krumlov in Czech Republic is an optional excursion on Crystal's Danube sailings.

Romance on the Blue Danube: New luxury entrant, **Crystal River Cruises**, begins sailing on the **Danube** this year with the 160-passenger **Crystal Mozart**. Throughout the season, the vessel sails roundtrip from Vienna with pampering onboard perks for couples, including butler service and gourmet onboard cuisine. *Crystal Mozart* calls at Durnstein, **Melk** and **Linz**, Austria as well as Bratislava, Slovakia. Given strong bookings by the line's **Crystal Society** members for this new product, check with the line for the latest availability. Four new river vessels, **Crystal Bach**, **Crystal Debussy**, **Crystal Mahler** and **Crystal Ravel**, will launch on European rivers in 2017.

On *Crystal Mozart's* 2016 "**Danube's Capitals and the Wachau Valley**" sailing, the vessel overnights at Passau, Germany; Budapest, Hungary; and Vienna. In Linz, cruisers might book an optional excursion to **Cesky Krumlov**, a medieval, fairytale-like town crowned by a castle in the **Czech Republic**. It's a great place for strolling cobbled lanes, enjoying wine tasting and admiring **UNESCO World Heritage Site** architecture.

Viking River Cruises and other lines also offer Danube itineraries. Viking's eight-day "**Romantic Danube**" sails between Budapest and Nuremberg on multiple modern-styled **Longships**.

If clients want a contemporary product, **CroisiEurope**, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, offers six-day romantic "**Blue Danube**" sailings between Budapest and Passau on either **La Boheme** or **L'Europe**. Calls include Melk, Durnstein and Vienna, Austria, and **Esztergom**, Hungary. Desire a good deal? For all new European bookings, including those on the Danube made through February 29, those booking a balcony suite on **Emerald Waterways** voyages departing through August 31, 2016, will receive free round-trip airfare from the U.S./Canada (for balcony suite bookings) or a reduced \$995 U.S./Canadian rate (other staterooms).

Red, White, Sparkling or Port: Most European river lines have wine-focused voyages or designated wine sailings. **AmaWaterways'** 13-day "**Taste of Bordeaux**" features two nights pre-cruise in Paris; a TGV train ride to **Bordeaux**; a seven-night roundtrip cruise on the 146-passenger **AmaDolce** from Bordeaux; two nights in the **Loire Valley** and one night in Paris.

As the capital of **Aquitaine**, Bordeaux is surrounded by chateaux, vineyards and stunning scenery. *AmaDolce* sails along the **Garonne River** and its surrounding estuaries, with calls at such port cities as **Cadillac**, **Bourg** and **Libourne**. Cruisers will tour **Pauillac**, a small village town, and enjoy a **Médoc** wine tasting. They'll also tour **St. Emilion** and **Pomerol** and enjoy wine tasting in a cave, among other included experiences.

Other wine-focused regions in France, Germany and other European countries also await romantic travelers. In **Portugal**, for example, this year **Scenic Cruises** will launch its new 96-passenger **Scenic Azure** on round-trips on the **Douro River** from **Porto**, Portugal to **Vega de Terron, Spain**. It's also possible to combine this voyage with Bordeaux and **Seine** river cruises, an extension in **Lisbon** or a **Porto-to-Madrid** land tour. The ship operates eight- and 11-day Douro River options, as well as the robust 13-night "**Unforgettable Douro with Lisbon**" itinerary that includes three, pre-cruise nights in Lisbon. Special perks include an exclusive "**Sundowners**" event, giving couples stunning views of the **Regua** area's vineyards and a port wine tasting from the **Douro Museum's** terrace.

Christmas Markets: Nothing is more romantic than strolling with your sweetie through a winter **Christmas** market in Europe, sipping on hot chocolate or hot mulled wine, with the smell of gingerbread and good cheer in the air. One of many choices for clients is **Abercrombie & Kent's** eight-day "**Christmas Markets on the Rhine**" itinerary, which departs December 10; it includes a five-night cruise on **Amadeus Silver**, a pre-cruise night in **Basel** and a post-cruise night in **Cologne**. Guests will visit Christmas markets in Germany and France, explore **Freiburg** and **Strasbourg** on exclusive excursions and view the **Lalique Museum's** glassworks.

Shorter Cruises: For clients wanting to try out river cruising and take only a week (plus two weekends on either side) off from work, shorter river cruises are an option. **A-Rosa's** five-night "**Romance on the Rhine**" cruise operates from Cologne, Germany on **Silva** or **Viva** with calls at **Koblenz**, **Mannheim**, **Strasbourg** and **Mainz**. It's a good way to get a taste of a romantic river experience.