

River Cruise Insight

Courting Spanish speakers on AmaWaterways

By [Michelle Baran](#) / December 06, 2017

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There's no question that the river cruise industry is looking for ways to broaden its appeal.

Each river cruise line is taking a different approach to doing just that, whether it's U by Uniworld courting millennials or Avalon seeking younger, more adventurous travelers. And AmaWaterways is no exception.

The line opened up to the family market with its Adventures by Disney partnership and has courted younger travelers with more active itineraries and foodies with wine-themed sailings.

Now, AmaWaterways is looking to capture a larger share of the Latin American market with a line-up of Spanish-friendly departures called Sailings with a Latin Touch. They brought Norwegian Cruise Line vet Alex Pinelo onboard earlier this year to serve as director of Latin America sales as part of a larger effort to introduce more Spanish speakers to European river cruising.

"I see river cruising [in Latin America] like it was five to seven years ago in the U.S., where river cruising was growing and becoming the new sexy product," said Pinelo from his office in Mexico City, where he is working to market and sell the 10 new Latin Touch sailings.

They will be English-speaking cruises but hosted by a bilingual cruise manager who will deliver briefings in English and Spanish. The cruises will include one tour each day with a Spanish-speaking guide, daily cruise programs printed in Spanish, and Spanish menus available at all meals.

The effort comes as AmaWaterways has noticed an uptick in Spanish-speaking passengers in recent years. The company tested the Latin Touch product in 2017, and is now making its move into this market more official.

"This is the first time that we're really putting the focus behind [this market]," said Pinelo. "I must say, it's been very well received, so I have no doubt that they're going to be very successful and we're going to be able to evolve the program and see where we take it in 2019 and beyond."

This isn't the first time passengers from different linguistic backgrounds will be hosted on a river cruise ship. If you recall, one of the early pioneers of river cruising, Peter Deilmann Cruises, was often criticized for its attempts to bring English speakers and German passengers together onboard its sailings, something observers said just didn't always work well. French river cruise line CroisiEurope often hosts passengers from different linguistic backgrounds, but CroisiEurope is a more budget-oriented line. This is the first attempt since the Deilmann days (the company exited the river cruise market in 2010) by an upscale river cruise line to host bilingual cruises.

We'll see if they can prosper.