



Last updated: 11:00 PM ET, Thu December 07 2017



DECEMBER 2017

# New Riverboats Appeal to a Growing Audience



*Some 11 riverboats are scheduled to debut around the world in 2018.*

VACATION AGENT | CRUISE LINE & CRUISE SHIP | CLAUDETTE COVEY



*PHOTO: American Cruise Lines' American Song rendering. (photo courtesy of American Cruise Lines)*

As the river cruise market continues to mature and flourish, lines are introducing vessels designed to appeal to an ever-increasing audience of travelers. And the 11 ships scheduled to debut during 2018 are certainly no exception.

An excellent case in point is [AmaWaterways'](#) AmaLea, an AmaKristina sister ship, which debuted in August 2017.

The vessel features connecting staterooms and triple accommodations, which will appeal to two nascent markets: families and multigenerational groups. The AmaLea, which is scheduled to operate on Rhine and Danube River itineraries, will also boast twin-balconies, a heated swimming pool and swim-up bar.

Suites have been enhanced with larger sitting areas and bathrooms with bathtubs and separate showers. The AmaLea will also include the many bells and whistles that have come to define the line, including the intimate Chef's Table specialty restaurant. New for 2018 is the "Sip and Sail" cocktail hour.

The 190-passenger American Song—the first of a series of riverboats in the [American Cruise Lines'](#) fleet—will appeal to your intellectually curious clients who like their creature comforts when vacationing. The vessel's accommodations include large balcony staterooms with full-size bathrooms. It will feature open-seating dining; six lounges, including the Vista Lounge, with 270-degree views from 40 feet above the water; a bow terrace; library and Chart Room.

The American Song is slated to debut in fall 2018 on sailings plying the Mississippi River. It will reposition to the West Coast during 2019, where it will operate on Columbia and Snake River itineraries.

[Avalon Waterways](#) is continuing its fleet expansion beyond the traditional waterways of Europe to Asia. Following on the heels of two vessels that inaugurated service on the Irrawaddy and Mekong rivers, next year Avalon will unveil the Avalon Saigon on 13-day "Fascinating Vietnam, Cambodia & the Mekong River" itineraries from Siem Reap to Ho Chi Minh City.

The Avalon Saigon will be equipped with 18 staterooms, a Panorama Lounge and an open-air observation lounge. The ship will offer open-seating dining with four-course dinners and lunch buffets with live cooking stations highlighting regional cuisine. Accommodations feature Avalon's Comfort Collection Beds, windows that open to create open-air verandas and large bathrooms with full showers with glass doors.

CroisiEurope—which by year's end will have introduced five new vessels—will launch another three in 2018. The 86-passenger Elbe Princesse II will join its identical sister ship, the Elbe Princesse, on itineraries between Berlin and Prague on the Elbe and the Vltava rivers.

The ship—which is being custom-built with a low draft to navigate the shallow waters of the Elbe River—will feature a spacious lounge/bar with large picture windows and a dance floor, a restaurant for one-seating dining, a sun deck and boutique. The 55-passenger Renoir is scheduled to sail on Seine River cruises and the 158-passenger Van Gogh on Rhone River voyages. Specifics on these two vessels were not available at press time.

Crystal River Cruises' identical sister ships, the Crystal Ravel and Crystal Debussy will inaugurate service in 2018 on the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers. The all-suite, all-balcony vessels, will carry 106 guests. Accommodations measure between 220 and 759 square feet while featuring butler service, walk-in closets, iPads, wall-mounted HD TVs, complimentary Wi-Fi and Nespresso machines.

The ultra-luxury vessels will offer open-seating dining options, including farm-to-table cuisine at the Waterside Restaurant, Bistro Café and Vintage Room. They will be equipped with spas and separate fitness centers, as well as Palm Court entertainment lounges. Ashore, guests are privy to an array of complimentary shore excursion options.

U by Uniworld—the new [Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection](#) brand targeting travelers ages 21 to 45—will launch two renovated Uniworld ships as The A and The B during spring 2018 on Seine, Rhine, Main and Danube River itineraries. The 120-passenger vessels are designed to provide guests with personalized, authentic vacation experiences and will feature communal public areas and rooftop lounges for such activities as yoga.

Itineraries will include overnight stays in port to enable guests to dig deeper into the destinations visited. Stateroom categories, measuring between 128 to 256 square feet, will include Suites, Balconies and Studios, which can accommodate three guests.

**READ MORE:** [American River Cruise Revolution](#)

Set to debut in March, [Viking River Cruises](#)' 48-passenger Viking Ra will offer 12-night "Pharaohs and Pyramid" packages that ply Egypt's Nile River and begin with a three-night stay in Cairo. Travelers will fly to Luxor for an eight-night roundtrip itinerary from Aswan.

The vessel is undergoing a stem-to-stern renovation to reflect the line's Scandinavian design. Accommodations will comprise three 291-square-foot stateroom categories, including 20 Veranda Suites with living room verandas and French balconies in bedrooms. The Viking Ra will also feature an aft pool and the first spa aboard a Viking River Cruises vessel.