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Which Cruise Lines Are Best of the Best?

[CRUISE LINE & CRUISE SHIP](#) | [MSC CRUISES](#) | [JASON LEPPERT](#) | DECEMBER 12, 2017



PHOTO: Regent Seven Seas was lauded by Cruise Critic for its luxurious offerings and more. (photo by Jason Leppert)

For the 10th year, reviews and community site Cruise Critic has revealed its [Cruise Critic Editors' Picks Awards](#) as selected by its international staff.

"More now than ever, there really is a cruise for every interest," said Colleen McDaniel, Senior Executive Editor of Cruise Critic, in a press release.

“You can sail to remote areas of the world aboard a small expedition vessel, or in the comfort of a luxury ship complete with spa treatments and gourmet food. You can travel to the Caribbean on a brand–new ship with bells and whistles like water parks and bumper cars, or on a five–masted sailing ship. The options are endless, and this list highlights the lines that have stood out as the best of the best over the past year.”

Ocean Category

—Best New Ship: MSC Seaside

—Best Ship Refurbishment: Holland America Line
Westerdam

—Best for Adventure: Lindblad Expeditions–
National Geographic

—Best Cabins: Celebrity Cruises

—Best Dining: Holland America Line

—Best Entertainment: Disney Cruise Line

—Best for Families: Disney Cruise Line

—Best Itineraries: Princess Cruises

—Best Nightlife: Norwegian Cruise Line

—Best for Romance: Celebrity Cruises

—Best Service: Carnival Cruise Line

- Best Shore Excursions: Celebrity Cruises
- Best for Solo Travelers: Norwegian Cruise Line
- Best Suites: Royal Caribbean International
- Best Value for Money: Carnival Cruise Line
- Best North American Homeport: Quebec City

Cruise Critic points out that MSC Seaside won Best New Ship of 2017 with its potential to become “one of the best Miami-based ships around.”

I have also had the rare chance to [sail onboard](#) the ship ahead of its christening, and I must concur with this glowing assessment. It is primed to be a game-changer.

The site also mentions the significance of Celebrity Cruises leading both the Best Cabins and Best for Romance categories just as Disney Cruise Line swept Best for Families as well as Best Entertainment.

I believe Celebrity will maintain each in 2018 with the highly anticipated Celebrity Edge looking to underscore its superiority. Disney is without a doubt a family and entertainment force to be reckoned with outside of the cruise industry, so of course, the company dominates at sea as well.

Carnival Cruise Line impressively took Best for Value for the fourth consecutive year and also this year’s new Best Service category for the first time. Initially, you might think that service would be bestowed on a luxury line, but an entire set of awards was reserved just for that market segment.

Luxury Category

- Best Luxury Cruise Line: Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- Best New Luxury Ship: Silversea's Silver Muse
- Best Refurbishment: Crystal Cruises' Crystal Symphony
- Best for Adventure: Silversea Cruises
- Best Cabins: Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- Best Dining: Oceania Cruises
- Best Enrichment: Seabourn Cruise Line
- Best Itineraries: Azamara Club Cruises
- Best for Romance: Windstar Cruises
- Best Service: Crystal Cruises
- Best Shore Excursions: Azamara Club Cruises
- Best for Solo Travelers: Crystal Cruises
- Best Spa: Viking Ocean Cruises
- Best Value for Money: Viking Ocean Cruises

Cruise Critic cites Silversea Cruises' Silver Muse as "offering nearly everything a luxury cruiser could crave" as the reason for its Best New Luxury Ship win.

While I have not yet sailed onboard, I agree with the line's Best for Adventure victory thanks to its wonderful expeditions label.

Meanwhile, Regent Seven Seas Cruises took the crown as Best Luxury Cruise Line overall in addition to winning Best Cabins. Having experienced the brand's newest Seven Seas Explorer, I can attest to the ship's magnificence extending to its super comfortable suites. The line's inclusive shore excursions are surely also a contributing factor in considering its high status.

Carving out a unique niche for itself is Viking Ocean Cruises, which received the awards for Best Spa and Best for Value. Indeed, the line is special for offering luxury products and services for a remarkably low rate. Like Regent, it too offers complimentary tours.

River Category

—Best River Cruise Line: AmaWaterways

—Best New River Cruise Ship: Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection's Joie de Vivre

—Best Ship Refurbishment: Scenic Diamond/Scenic Sapphire

—Best for Active Cruisers: AmaWaterways

—Best for Adventure: Pandaw River Cruises

—Best Cabins: Avalon Waterways

—Best Dining: Crystal River Cruises

—Best Enrichment: Viking River Cruises

- Best for Families: Adventures by Disney
- Best for First-Timers: Viking River Cruises
- Best Itineraries: CroisiEurope
- Best for Luxury: Tauck River Cruising
- Best Shore Excursions: Viking River Cruises
- Best for Solo Travelers: American Cruise Lines
- Best Value for Money: Emerald Waterways

READ MORE: [Viking Cruises Honored as Best Cruise Line for Luxury Ocean Cruises & Best Luxury River Cruise Company](#)

AmaWaterways was highlighted by Cruise Critic for receiving the Best River Cruise Line award for the second year running as well as Best for Active Cruisers. The site specifically refers to the line's "continued dedication to innovation" for the big win. That includes its partnership with Adventures by Disney, which itself took Best for Families.

I can personally say that [Disney aboard the AmaKristina](#) is an exceptional river experience as only both brands can pull off.

The site also called Uniworld's Joie de Vivre the Best New River Ship as the company's "finest yet" while giving the line the award for Best Service. So far I've only sailed on Uniworld once—aboard the Joie de Vivre, in fact—but the brand and riverboat made a similarly lasting impression on me.

Rounding out the site's river award highlights, Viking River Cruises won a trio of Best for First-Timers, Best Shore Excursions and Best Enrichment. Again, it's hard to disagree as Viking is so ubiquitous that there is plenty of choice for anyone wishing to dip their toes into the river market.

Its tours and programming overall are fantastic.