

A U by Uniworld Cruise When River Levels Won't Cooperate

Nov 13, 2018



Construction on American Countess will begin at the end of 2018.
Credit: 2018 American Queen Steamboat Company

First things first: This is a story with a happy ending.

Flying out to Regensburg, Germany, I believed I was going to join U by Uniworld's The A for The Danube Flow itinerary. However, the titular river was not quite behaving according to navigational requirements. As it turned out, the water levels were too low to safely head toward Budapest, Hungary, as expected, but the fledgling brand — with great knowhow and support from parent company Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection — had an alternative. We would instead set sail on U's Germany's Finest itinerary, which concludes in Frankfurt.

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Here are the most recent developments by cruise line.

American Queen Steamboat Company

American Queen Steamboat Company will build another ship to join the U.S.-registered fleet and supply increased demand. The American Countess will be a 245-guest riverboat, constructed using Kanessville Queen's hull as a base. The 1995-built gaming craft will be transformed into a fresh paddlewheeler beginning in the fourth quarter of 2018.

While an exact delivery date and its itineraries have yet to be announced, it is known that the domestic vessel will maintain the fleet's existing vintage aesthetic while boasting modern accommodations. Gulf Island Fabrication, Inc. in Houma, La., will assemble the ship.

www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com

Avalon Waterways

Already setting sail as of early October is Avalon Waterways' newest Suite Ship: the Avalon Saigon. On the Mekong River, the intimate 36-guest vessel is a sister ship to the Avalon Siem Reap, featuring just 18 Panorama Suites. Each measures 245 square feet, featuring the line's signature Open-Air Balconies with 14-foot-wide, floor-to-ceiling retractable windows. Best of all, mattresses are turned toward the scenic vistas.

The Saigon can be booked on Avalon's 13-day Fascinating Vietnam, Cambodia & the Mekong River as well as new 18-day Heart of Cambodia & Vietnam itineraries.



Avalon Saigon is the line's newest riverboat sailing the Mekong River.
Credit: 2018 Avalon Waterways

www.avalonwaterways.com

CroisiEurope

Another new riverboat is on its way from CroisiEurope on the Rhone River. The vessel will increase the line's numbers on the Rhone to a total of four ships. No other details are known at this time other than its planned six-, seven- and eight-day routes, the weeklong of which will be brand-new.

www.croisieurope.com

Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection

Also looking ahead through 2021 is Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection with four new luxury ships scheduled for the Nile, Douro, Mekong and Volga rivers. They are set to replace existing ships in their respective destinations with enhanced comfort and design. In 2020, Egypt, Portugal and Vietnam will receive one ship each, and then in 2021, Russia will receive one.

Amenities will mirror those onboard the line's European Super Ships, such as the transformed S.S. Beatrice of 2018 and S.S. Bon Voyage of 2019. Guests can expect additional suites, dining rooms and palatial finishes. The line also announced its intention to refurbish and revitalize the current River Countess based in Venice, Italy, for 2020. For now, that means it's not yet earmarked to convert into The C for U by Uniworld (River Ambassador became The A and River Baroness became The B).

www.uniworld.com