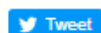




CroisiEurope: Sails the City of Light

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Soon after boarding, CroisiEurope's Seine Princess sailed into the City of Light, cruising under ornate 17th-century bridges and around flood-lit monuments while guests feasted on venison with wild mushrooms. After chocolate explosion cake for dessert, they headed to lounge chairs on the deck while the ship pulled up in front of the Eiffel Tower—just as its dazzling light show began.

You can tell your clients that they very well may have the best seats for the show in all of [Paris](#). You can also tell them that this could be a moment that they'll never forget—in a trip filled with unforgettable moments.

The itinerary also includes a visit to Claude Monet's home in Giverny, where visitors can explore the artist's gardens and water-lily-filled ponds—the inspiration for so many of his paintings. There's a tour through the Normandy D-Day beaches, where the history-buff guide—who's given his tour hundreds of times—is as enthusiastic as if it were his first trip. At night in Rouen, the crew leads passengers from the ship to the city's Notre Dame Cathedral for a sound-and-light show on the church's gothic façade.

"We want people to love being on the ship," said Steve Gillmann, the ship's entertainment director who grew up in the region. "But we don't want them staying on the ship when there's so much to see and do in Normandy."

Accommodations: In all, there are 24 cabins on the upper deck and 43 on the main deck. Cabins measure 140 square feet, except for the three 190-square-foot suites, which have a sofa and sitting area. (The sofa pulls out and can accommodate up to two children.) Cabins have satellite television and free Wi-Fi.

What's Included: Meals and all drinks, with the exception of champagne and cognacs, are part of the fare. Shore excursions and Wi-Fi are also included. At the end of the trip, passengers have the option to tip anonymously. Tips go into a box that is shared among the ship's staff.

What's for Dinner? CroisiEurope is known for its French-inspired cuisine. The ship offers a breakfast buffet from 7 to 9 a.m., featuring croissants, eggs, yogurt, cereals, deli meats, and fruits. The three-course, single-seating lunches and dinners are served on white linen tablecloths with a bottle of white or red wine. Meals featured duck, venison, salmon, veal and cod served up with regional sauces. Since there is a set menu on board, if your clients have special requests or special diets (glutenfree, vegan, vegetarian), they can inform the cruise line before the departure date. Although the ship will accommodate last-minute requests, more options are available if requests are made in advance.

Best Entertainment: There were local musicians on board who played French and American standards. Also, most nights there were trivia games focusing on pop culture with prizes. There was also a crew night, where nearly the entire staff danced, lip-synched and performed skits.

Favorite Excursion: History buffs will love the daylong tour through many of the D-Day beaches, towns and the Normandy American Cemetery. The local guide was incredibly knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Passengers were also treated to a traditional Normandy lunch in Arromanches, the site where the British built a concrete harbor to funnel goods to the Allied troops during World War II. After lunch, passengers had free time to explore the town and its beaches.

Who Books These Cruises? Passengers were mostly retired couples or single travelers in their 60s and 70s. Most were traveling with groups such as Rotary Clubs and tours. They were from countries such as Sweden, Germany, Australia, and England. A few years ago, CroisiEurope opened a North American call center to handle the U.S. and Canada. Now, approximately 17 percent of its customers are from North America, the company said.

Insider Booking Tip: If your clients are looking for one-of-a-kind excursions, recommend the optional tour through Paris in vintage Renaults, which is available at an additional cost. Also let your more active clients know that, in an effort to appeal to younger travelers, the line is offering more hiking and biking excursions.

Key Selling Points: What separates CroisiEurope from most of its competitors are its moderately priced fares. The company's ships have more of an international feel, since passengers and crew are mainly European. However, since English is an official language on board, your clients won't feel out of their comfort zone. Another interesting note: The crew views their jobs as careers—and most of the higher ranking staff started out as maids and waiters. Staff go out of their way to take care of passenger requests. Also, it isn't unusual for the cruise director to make a passenger a cappuccino or for the captain to carry luggage for passengers.

Agent Assistance: The agent loyalty program, the Mon Ami club, features Gold and Platinum levels. Once agents register, they automatically qualify for a 15 percent commission. Agents who close five CroisiEurope cruise sales in a year will be upgraded to Platinum status, receiving 17 percent commission on future sales.