



RIVER NEWS BULLETIN

May 2017 | Jane Archer



Jane Archer is the UK's leading cruise journalist writing for trade titles including *Travel Weekly* and *Cruise Trade News*. She is also the *Daily Telegraph Travel's* cruise expert.

NEW VESSELS



AmaWaterways eyes family river cruisers

Cabins with connecting doors and sofa beds to accommodate families and friends travelling together will feature on the *AmaLea*, a new AmaWaterways' river ship launching in March 2018. The vessel will hold 158 passengers and sail the Danube between Budapest and Vilshofen. Features include a heated top-deck swimming pool with a swim-up bar, twin-balcony cabins with outside and indoor seating areas and a Chef's Table restaurant serving a five-course tasting menu. Bikes on board can be borrowed for guided tours or independent cycling trips ashore. The vessel is a sister to the *AmaKristina*, which was christened in March in the Rhine village of Lahnstein by her namesake Kristin Karst, co-owner and executive vice-president of AmaWaterways.

0800 520 2250; amawaterways.co.uk

It's going swimmingly for Amadeus

An indoor pool with a roof that can be opened in warm weather debuts on Amadeus River Cruises' new *Amadeus Queen* launching in 2018. The vessel will hold 164 passengers and be designed along the lines of the cruise line's popular Silver-class vessels, with cabins and suites with step-out balconies and horizontally-opening French windows, and a small café. In the evenings the pool can convert into a cinema.

Amadeus Queen will sail on the Rhine, Main and Danube starting next spring. Itineraries include a one-week Tulip Serenade cruise round-trip from Amsterdam departing April 27, and a 14-night Across Europe voyage from Amsterdam to Budapest leaving June 1. A 15% early-booking discount is in place until November 30.

0800 035 6411; amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk

More on the Mekong

There'll be more capacity on the Mekong River next year when Avalon Waterways launches the *Avalon Saigon*. A sister to *Avalon Siem Reap*, the vessel will hold 36 passengers and feature Avalon's signature wall-to-wall panoramic windows that open to form an inside balcony.

It will be sailing one-week cruises from Siem Reap in Cambodia to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam or vice-versa, that are packaged with extra nights in each city. Unusually, both vessels can sail all the way into Siem Reap and Ho Chi Minh City, avoiding the need for bus transfers at either end of the cruise.

0800 668 1843; avaloncruises.co.uk



NEW ITINERARIES



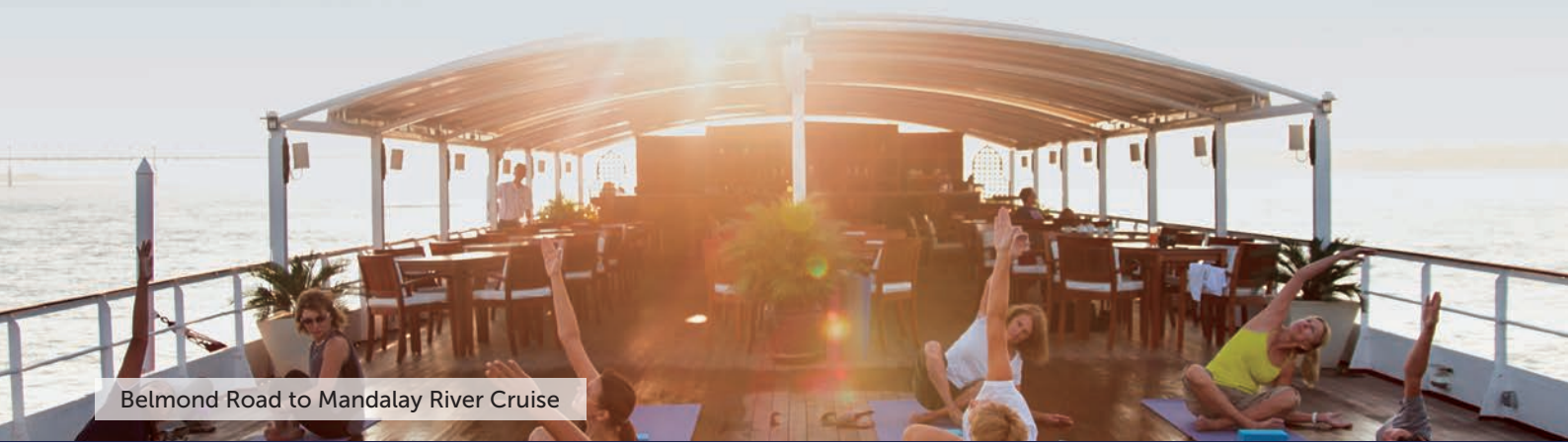
Emerald navigates the Mekong

Emerald Waterways is dipping a toe in the Mekong with a selection of one-week cruises between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap on the 68-passenger *Mekong Navigator* in 2018 paired with land stays in Southeast Asia.

Options include a 14-day Mekong Discoverer, which combines the cruise with extra nights in Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap. An 18-day Highlights of Vietnam and Cambodia cruise-tour additionally visits Hanoi and Ha'Long Bay, while a 21-day holiday adds Hoi An and Hue.

Emerald said April 2018 departures are already full but there is capacity in September and November next year. Some 40% of bookings are from the UK, with another 40% from Australia and the remainder from the US and Canada.

0808 115 0469; emeraldwaterways.co.uk



Belmond Road to Mandalay River Cruise

Love at first bite

A complimentary tour of creepy Bran Castle, the mythical home of Count Dracula, awaits Saga clients next year on two 11-night voyages that pair three nights in Transylvania with an eight-night cruise from Braila in Romania to Budapest in Hungary. The cruise is on the 150-passenger *Filia Rheni II*, which is reserved exclusively for Saga passengers. Passengers will transit the Iron Gates Gorge and visit Mohacs, from where an optional tour goes into the Hungarian steppe. Departures are on May 18 and September 11. Clients must be aged 50 or over to join this cruise.

0800 074 8021; saga.co.uk



Mind over matter

A digital detox is promised on Belmond's one-week mindfulness river cruise on the Ayeyarwady in Myanmar departing October 7. Over the course of seven days, there'll be complimentary Tibetan yoga and meditation sessions, including lessons on the top deck of *Belmond's Road to Mandalay* river boat as the sun rises and ashore in pagodas and under mango trees. When not practising mindfulness, passengers can join included tours to pagodas and cottage workshops to see local artisans and craftsmen at work. A three-day mindfulness cruise is alternatively available departing October 11.

0845 077 2222; belmond.com

PRODUCT UPDATE



Get active on the Rhine

Avalon Waterways is launching new active cruises on the Rhine on selected dates in 2018. The eight-day voyages are between Wiesbaden in Germany and Amsterdam in Holland, and include hiking, biking, a chance to go underground at the Zollverein Coal Mine and even a 4.6-mile running tour around Amsterdam or painting classes for those seeking their inner Van Gogh. In Xanten, Germany, tours visit the former Roman town of Colonia Ulpia Traiana, which was once home to more than 10,000 people. Keeping the Roman theme, that evening's farewell dinner menu will include dishes similar to those served in the days of Julius Caesar.

0800 668 1843; avaloncruises.co.uk



Pandaw goes in search of salties

Pandaw is offering two cruises through the wetlands, creeks and channels of the Ayeyarwady Delta in Myanmar next year. Sailing round-trip from Yangon on March 10 or 18, the voyages take passengers to remote parts of the country to see village life, markets, temples, churches and mosques. There are also plans to visit Mein-ma-hla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary, where saltwater crocodiles lurk amid the mangroves. Pandaw emphasises this is an expedition cruise aimed at those with a sense of adventure.

0208 326 5620; pandaw.com

Uniworld needs U!

Can young people be tempted to try a river cruise? Uniworld River Cruises thinks so and has launched U by Uniworld, a new brand offering half-board cruises aimed at holidaymakers aged 21-45. Two Uniworld boats, *River Ambassador* and *River Baroness*, will sail for the new brand as *The A* and *The B*. They will be painted black, refitted with open communal spaces and rooftop lounges, and offer mixology classes and yoga.

The A will cruise the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers, *The B* will be on the Seine in France. Itineraries will be slowed down so passengers can eat and drink in bars and restaurants ashore. Shop-with-the-chef trips, guided bike rides, rock climbing and white-water rafting are among excursions.

0808 168 9110; uniworld.com

PEOPLE



Scenic has appointed Colin Downing as UK general manager responsible for both Scenic and Emerald Waterways. He has previously worked for Riviera Travel, Legoland and Late Rooms Group. He replaces UK managing director Chris Townson.



Silvia Andreotti has joined AmaWaterways' UK office as head of marketing. She was previously Norwegian Cruise Line's Brazil-based marketing manager and prior to that worked for various river cruise lines.