

FREE

PHIL HOFFMANN TRAVEL ISSUE 21

 Phil Hoffmann Travel

cruise

The Rise of Regional Cruising for Australian Travellers

Extraordinary cruise adventures are now closer than ever for Australian travellers to explore.

The Value of Booking with a Travel Agent

Expert guidance offers reassurance far beyond what online portals can offer.





Welcome to cruising with PHT.

Dear Fellow Cruise Enthusiast,

I'm delighted to share some lovely news to start this edition: the Phil Hoffmann Travel team has been named Outstanding Travel Agency 2025 - our 13th time receiving this honour in the award's 20-plus-year history. I couldn't be prouder of our team; it truly reflects our experience, care, and genuine commitment to looking after our clients.

Since our last edition (Spring 2025), our travel team have been cruising all over the world and bringing back plenty of fresh ideas to share with you. We have taken in the crisp, awe-inspiring scenery of Alaska, the Norwegian Fjords and the Baltics, and even ventured into the polar magic of the Arctic and Antarctica. For those who love a little sunshine, we have also been sailing the Caribbean, the Pacific, Japan and the Mediterranean, some of our clients' all-time favourites. And river cruising continues to win hearts: from Europe's classic waterways to the wonderfully immersive Mekong journeys through Vietnam and Cambodia.

On a personal note, I recently travelled to Miami for the christening of two truly impressive ships. The first was Star Princess, the newest of Princess Cruises' next-generation Sphere Class ships. Its show-stopping glass dome creates a beautiful space for world-class entertainment, and there's no shortage of places to settle in and enjoy the atmosphere - from the full-size O'Malley's Irish Pub to the private Sanctuary retreat (with pools, bar, restaurant and full-service gazebos). With an incredible variety of dining and entertainment venues, Star Princess is a fantastic option for guests who love a modern cruise experience. The second was the elegant Oceania Allura, a luxury ship offering all-veranda staterooms and suites, exceptional cuisine and wonderfully refined onboard experiences. It has a calm, sophisticated feel, perfect for discerning travellers who appreciate the finer details. Simply stunning!

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, one of the trends we are seeing is more 'quiet season' cruising in Europe across both ocean and river itineraries. These sailings (often in March and April, and again in October and November) can be a real joy: fewer crowds, a gentler pace, and the chance to feel more connected to the places you are visiting. If you've ever wanted to wander those iconic streets without the peak-season bustle, these shoulder season months are well worth considering.

We are also seeing more guests leaning into luxury cruising and what's wonderful is just how many styles of 'luxury' are now available. From luxury river cruising and intimate small-ship sailings, to expedition and adventure-style journeys (and even elevated experiences on larger ships), there's something to suit so many different tastes. Our experienced cruise advisors can help you find the perfect cruise, whether you're dreaming of understated elegance, extraordinary destinations, or a little bit of everything.

I hope this edition inspires a few ideas for your next cruise holiday, whether you love life at sea or prefer drifting along the world's most captivating rivers.

Until next time, wishing you happy travels in the year ahead.

Peter Williams
Managing Director / CEO



The Value of Booking with a Travel Agent

In today's ever-changing world, the value of booking with a travel agent has never been more important. With global events, shifting travel regulations, and occasional disruptions impacting journeys, having an expert on your side provides reassurance that goes far beyond what online booking platforms can offer.

Travel agents bring a depth of knowledge that helps you navigate uncertainty with confidence. We stay up to date with entry requirements, safety considerations, and destination conditions, ensuring your travel plans are not only enjoyable but also well-informed. Our ability to tailor itineraries means you can travel in a way that suits your comfort level, interests, and budget.

Convenience is another major advantage. Planning a holiday can be overwhelming, especially when conditions can change quickly. A travel agent simplifies the process by researching, comparing, and presenting the best options for you – saving you time and removing stress.

The greatest benefit of all, is our 24-7 support. If flights are delayed, plans need to change, or unexpected events arise, you won't be left to manage it alone. We as travel agents act as your advocate, handling the details and finding solutions so you can focus on your experience rather than the logistics.

In many cases, travel agents also have access to exclusive offers, added inclusions, and trusted travel partners, delivering greater value than booking independently.

Ultimately, booking with a travel agent offers peace of mind. In a world where travel can be unpredictable, having a professional guide you every step of the way ensures your journey is smooth, supported, and truly memorable.



**AZAMARA[®]
CRUISES**

**2027-2028 Set
To Make Waves**

Downunder



As Australian travellers continue to seek richer, more meaningful ways to explore the world, Azamara Cruises is doubling down on what it does best: immersive, small-ship journeys that go far beyond the traditional port hopping experience. And for the 2026–2027 lead-in and the highly anticipated 2027–2028 season, all eyes are firmly on Asia and our own backyard.

What sets Azamara apart has always been its commitment to “Destination Immersion[®]” a philosophy that feels tailor-made for Australian cruisers who value depth over speed. In late 2026 and into 2027, that approach comes to life across Asia, with voyages that weave through cultural hubs like Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan’s coastal gems, before gradually transitioning south toward Australia and New Zealand.

The seasonal shift is deliberate and compelling. By August 2027, Azamara Pursuit begins her journey from Hong Kong, tracing a path through Asia that blends iconic destinations with lesser-visited ports. It’s a region where Azamara’s smaller ships truly shine, unlocking access to intimate harbours and culturally rich locales that larger vessels simply can’t reach.

For Australian travellers, this creates a rare opportunity: the chance to experience Asia in depth before seamlessly continuing into a home-region cruise. It’s not just a holiday it’s a curated journey across continents, with the flexibility to combine sailings into extended explorations.

By the time the fleet arrives Down Under for the 2027–2028 summer season, Azamara’s intent is clear: stay longer, go deeper, and deliver something genuinely different. With 23 itineraries across Australia and New Zealand, the line is making its most significant regional statement yet.

Two new ports—K’gari (Fraser Island) and Gladstone—signal a move beyond the expected. These destinations offer distinctly Australian experiences, from World Heritage-listed natural landscapes to emerging coastal communities. It’s a refreshing shift away from the standard capital-city circuit.

Equally notable is the return to favourites such as Brisbane, alongside a strong focus on New Zealand’s scenic cruising routes. A round-trip New Zealand itinerary allows guests to fully appreciate the country’s dramatic fjords, vibrant cities and Māori culture without feeling rushed.

But perhaps the most compelling aspect of Azamara’s upcoming season is time—something increasingly precious in modern travel. With more than 150 late nights and 60 overnight stays, guests aren’t just visiting destinations; they’re experiencing them. Evenings in port open the door to local dining, performances and cultural encounters that daytime visits often miss.

A standout example is the two-night stay in Hobart over New Year’s Eve. Timed to coincide with the energy of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and Tasmania’s celebrated food and wine scene, it transforms a port call into a true event experience.

This emphasis on extended stays aligns perfectly with Australian travel preferences. Increasingly, cruisers are looking to slow down, connect and explore destinations with intention. Azamara’s approach smaller ships, longer stays, and thoughtfully designed itineraries resonates strongly with this shift.

Looking ahead to early 2028, the arrival of Azamara Onward in the region further strengthens the brand’s presence, offering even more choice and flexibility for local travellers.

For those considering their next cruise, the message is clear: this is not about ticking boxes. It’s about storytelling through travel, whether that’s watching the skyline glow in an Asian metropolis after dark, discovering hidden coastal towns in Queensland, or ringing in the New Year in Hobart.

In a market crowded with options, Azamara is carving out a distinctive space; one that feels increasingly aligned with the way Australians want to travel. And come late 2026 through 2027 and beyond, that journey begins closer to home than ever before.

BEST SELLING!

FOLLOW THE LIGHTS TOUR PACKAGE

OSLO - HONNINGSVÅG - ROVANIEMI - HELSINKI
ON THE COASTAL EXPRESS AND FLÅM RAILWAY
MULTIPLE DEPARTURES: SEPT – MARCH 2027

PRICE FROM \$9,599^{PP}

Join Hurtigruten on an unforgettable small-group adventure through the breathtaking landscapes of Norway and Finland. This fully escorted tour takes you on a once-in-a-lifetime journey to chase the Northern Lights while experiencing the best of the Arctic.

We begin in Oslo on this fully escorted Northbound search for the Aurora Borealis. During the tour, we cross Norway and Finland, visit charming hamlets, and sail through picturesque fjords, all the while making the most of plentiful opportunities to see the magnificent Northern Lights. Along the way, enjoy locally sourced ingredients inspired by the region and meet the huskies and reindeers of the region. Your trip also includes the amazing journey by rail, coach and ferry on the famous 'Norway in a Nutshell' route between Oslo and Bergen.

- Norway's Coastal Kitchen: Enjoy locally sourced ingredients inspired by the region.
- Travel the Flåm Railway through a winter wonderland: Scenic railway trips via Flåm and Voss.
- Chase the Northern Lights, the elusive solar phenomenon: Witness the vibrant, dancing colours while on board.
- Enjoy bucket-list excursions: Husky safaris, Santa Claus Village visit, overnight in Glass Igloo.
- The original Northern Lights Promise: If the aurora doesn't occur on your tour, enjoy a free 6- or 7-day trip*.

Be among the first to secure your spot on our best-selling Follow the Northern Lights tour for 2026/27.

Looking to explore Norway earlier? Last places on January - March 2027 departures are selling quickly. Don't miss out!

*T&Cs apply. \$300pp OBC on 26/27 season. See website for full details.



EXCLUSIVE ONBOARD CREDIT: RECEIVE \$600* PER STATEROOM



Best Seller

HURTIGRUTEN

17
DAYS

Follow the Lights Northbound Norway - Finland

For escorted small-group enthusiasts

NORTHERN LIGHTS
PROMISE

THE PERFECT PRELUDE TO AN ULTRA-LUXURY VOYAGE

THE
CONCIERGE COLLECTION
ELEVATED LUXURY ON LAND AND AT SEA



Imagine waking to the soft light of a Roman morning or the quiet calm of a Tokyo sanctuary, a sense of peace already forming. Free from the need to organise, every detail has been thoughtfully arranged, leaving you to fully immerse yourself in your destination from the very first moment. It is here that The Concierge Collection begins.

The globally expanded collection reimagines the traditional pre-cruise stay as something more meaningful: a three-night stay in a prestigious 5-Star GHA DISCOVERY hotel that sets the tone for the journey ahead.

Rather than treating the days before your Regent Seven Seas Cruises® voyage as a logistical step, it transforms them into a considered opening chapter, making the transition from land to sea feel both immersive and effortless.

ARRIVE IMMERSED

The Concierge Collection invites travellers to begin their voyage grounded in the character of the destination itself. It is designed to bring context and ease before stepping on board, allowing the story of the journey to unfold long before the first horizon appears.

Guests booking the Roundtrip Tokyo voyage (Epicurean Japan), departing 9 November 2027 can enhance their experience with the Tokyo GHA Concierge Collection pre-cruise programme. This journey begins high above the Shinjuku skyline at Bellustar Tokyo, a Pan Pacific Hotel, where expansive windows frame the neon city below. A private guide leads the way through the serene grounds of Meiji Jingu or along the moat of Himeji Castle, where cherry blossom drifts across jade-green water. Arriving early, before the crowds gather, history is shared in quiet detail.

Across the world in Rome, the experience unfolds differently from the Rome to Istanbul voyage (Spellbinding Mediterranean), departing 31 October 2027. Heightened with the Rome GHA Concierge Collection pre-cruise programme, your journey before sea is met at the palatial Anantara Palazzo Naiadi hotel. Here, dawn softens the domes and bell towers as a private, behind-the-scenes walking tour of the Vatican City begins. Your guide might pause beside a weathered fountain to reveal a story tucked into the stone, or lead the way to a chapel glowing with centuries-old frescoes. Later, perhaps a long lunch overlooking a sunlit piazza, followed by soaking in the charm of the Eternal City in a vintage Fiat 500, Vespa sidecar or golf cart.

TIME TO SETTLE IN

These moments sit at the heart of The Concierge Collection. Each experience unites an optional three-night stay at a prestigious GHA DISCOVERY hotel with a Regent sailing aboard The World's Most Luxurious Fleet™.

Private airport transfers ensure a smooth arrival, while an exclusive welcome cocktail reception hosted by Regent offers an opportunity to connect with fellow guests.

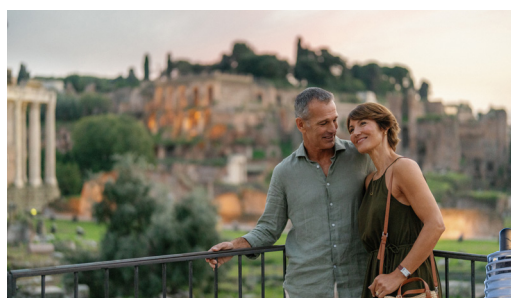
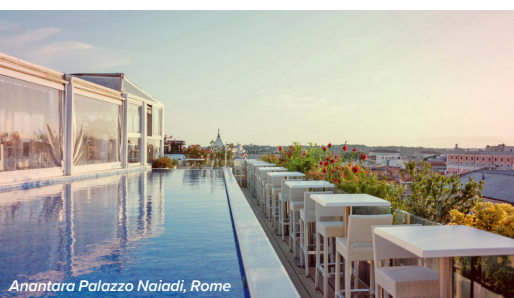
Across 11 cities, including London, Athens, Lisbon, Tokyo, Rome, Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney, travellers settle into renowned five-star hotels where daily breakfast, private guided touring and time to explore independently are thoughtfully arranged. A dedicated Regent host remains on hand throughout the stay, ensuring every transition – from airport to hotel; tour to ship – unfolds with ease.

ELEGANCE AT SEA

Once on board one of Regent's all-suite ships, the sense of calm established on land carries forward. Generous-sized suites with private balconies offer uninterrupted views, while open decks provide room to take in each new horizon. More than 3400 included and unlimited shore excursions across more than 550 ports allow exploration to continue with the same depth experienced ashore. Exquisite cuisine, complemented by fine wines, craft cocktails and speciality coffees, is also included in the cruise fare. Enrichment programs including expert lectures, hands-on culinary experiences and cultural workshops deepen each destination further, extending the sense of immersion that began on land.



Speak to the team at Phil Hoffmann Travel today to experience luxury cruising with Regent Seven Seas. Scan the QR code to find out more.



THE CHANGING FACE OF ANTARCTICA TRAVEL

Embark on APT Luxury Travel's Antarctica tours. Enjoy a luxury expedition cruise and encounter incredible wildlife on the world's last frontier

WORDS BY DANIELLE COWEN – THE APT TRAVEL GROUP

A land of superlatives, Antarctica is the coldest, driest, windiest, and highest continent on Earth. Despite the extremes, its beauty feels otherworldly. A palette of icy blues, a silvery shimmer that dances across frozen seas, and sculptured shades of white.

For centuries, the White Continent was a place of myth and mystery, a realm only heroic explorers could dream of reaching. But today, thanks to responsible expedition travel, Antarctica is no longer out of reach. APT offers guests the chance to explore this remote world in comfort and style, while ensuring its pristine wilderness remains protected for generations to come.

From the Heroic Age to Modern Luxury on an Antarctica Expedition Cruise

A little over a century ago, Antarctic exploration meant something entirely different to today. In the early 20th century, explorers like Ernest Shackleton and Roald Amundsen ventured into a world few had ever seen, with ships often trapped in the dense pack ice of the Weddell Sea, months of isolation, and no promise of return. They were driven by

the pursuit of mapping uncharted lands, scientific discovery, and the race to stand first at the South Pole, where the air is pure and the silence profound.

The ice and sea remain as dramatic as ever, yet the art of exploration has advanced to heights early adventurers could scarcely imagine. Modern travellers still follow in the wake of those early adventurers, but do so in quiet luxury aboard a purpose-built expedition ship, Seabourn Venture. While explorers once faced blizzards in woollens and relied on dog sleds, you can step out from a heated suite onto your veranda to watch penguins porpoising through icy waters.

What an Antarctica Journey Looks Like Today with APT



As your exclusive APT charter flight approaches Ushuaia — Argentina's "end of the world" — the journey to the White Continent begins. Like explorers of the past, you'll sail through the Beagle Channel with its brooding mountains and ever-present seabirds. But unlike those early adventurers, you'll do so with a glass of fine wine in

hand and floor-to-ceiling views from the Constellation Lounge.


Crossing the Drake Passage, once a place of legendary hardship, becomes an arresting opener to your journey. From your private veranda, you may glimpse the first sculpted icebergs glittering on the horizon — their shards of sunlit sapphire floating in still black water. The ship's agile size allows you to slip into secluded coves where gentoo penguins gather and humpback whales breach with astonishing grace.

On Zodiac landings, you'll discover why Antarctica has long captured the human imagination — witness geothermal steam curling along Deception Island's black-sand beaches, the ghostly relics of whaling stations looming through the mist, and glaciers calving with a mighty, echoing roar.

Back on board, the experience is as indulgent as it is insightful. Your expert Expedition Team shares stories of those who came before in The Discovery Center, and you can unwind in a heated pool or dine alfresco under the stars.



APT
Luxury Travel
since 1927



SEABOURN VENTURE

Everything to a T.

ANTARCTICA 2027

ANTARCTIC VOYAGE BUENOS AIRES RETURN

Set sail on an exclusive APT cruise through Antarctica aboard the ultra-luxury Seabourn Venture, purpose-built for exploring the Antarctic Peninsula. With only 132 all-veranda suites, world-class dining, premium beverages, and exceptional wellness spaces, every detail is designed for those who demand the finest. For a deeper discovery of the region, you can embark on an extended South America Land Tour, featuring Brazil, Chile, Peru and the Amazon.

APT Exclusive Departure on 9 February 2027

Incredible Experiences

- Encounter penguins, seals, and glaciers up close on thrilling Zodiac excursions and guided shore landings in Antarctica.
- Visit Argentina's Tierra del Fuego National Park, and enjoy a tango show in Buenos Aires.

Inclusions

- 10 nights aboard the ultra-luxury Seabourn Venture, with all-veranda suites, and four nights in luxury accommodation.
- The expert services of an APT Tour Director and a 23-person Expedition Team.
- An exclusive APT return flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia.

15 DAYS
SMALL SHIP EXPEDITION
CRUISE AND LAND TOUR

From \$22,995 pp,
twin share*

Save up to
\$6,800 per couple*



*Conditions apply and subject to availability. From price for ISAA15 based on 9 February 2027 departure. Price correct as of 18 March 2026 but may fluctuate due to changes in availability, surcharges, taxes or currency. See: aptouring.com.au, search tour code and view tour for full conditions. Ship image courtesy of Seabourn. Australian Pacific Touring Pty Ltd. ABN 44 004 684 619. ATIA accreditation #A10825. APT-7297-CN

The Greek Insider

Cruise with Celestyal for an Authentic Aegean Experience

With its deep-rooted Greek heritage, Celestyal is uniquely positioned to deliver what today's cruise travellers increasingly want: a true insider experience. Modern travellers are prioritising authentic destination immersion, seeking meaningful connections with the places they visit and opportunities to explore like a local rather than simply ticking landmarks off a list.

While the Greek Islands are famed for their white-washed villas and azure waters, Celestyal gives guests a true back-stage travel pass into the picture-perfect postcard to get hands on with locals while immersing in the ancient culture. Think mosaic-making and home cooking classes in Mykonos, bee keeping on Rhodes and a traditional family-run winery on Crete.

The combination of Celestyal's insider knowledge and connections, their premium-casual offering and mid-sized ships, allows travellers to have a genuine heart-felt journey into each destination.

Carrying around 1300 guests, Celestyal Journey and Celestyal Discovery are small enough to access those rising star destinations while also visiting the unmissable iconic ports that make the Greek Islands such a popular destination to visit.

During Celestyal's action-packed four-night Iconic Greek Islands itinerary, guests linger in Santorini and Mykonos long after other ships have set sail, and can fall in love with a hidden gem like Patmos along the way.

Australians are also drawn to the popular seven-night Idyllic Greece cruises, which combine late night stays in Santorini and Mykonos with tantalising new Greek discoveries such as Milos and Thessaloniki.

For long haul travellers, Celestyal's 14-night Mediterranean Icons itinerary offers an easy and affordable way to explore Europe by sea, offering an all-encompassing adventure through the Greek Islands, Croatia, Italy and Montenegro.

From wandering Santorini at sunset with an ice cream in hand to savouring mussels and moussaka in a seaside taverna at Patmos, Celestyal's port-intensive itineraries, post-sunset stays, and authentic cultural connections make for unmissable moments both at sea and ashore.

Sailing roundtrip from Athens from April to November, Celestyal does the Greek islands like no other.

Contact the team at Phil Hoffmann Travel to explore the Greek Islands the Celestyal way or visit pht.com.au.





The Rhythm of the River

AmaWaterways invites travellers to discover the world's great rivers through unhurried days, local encounters and moments that linger long after the voyage.

There is something quietly special about travelling by river. The pace softens, landscapes unfold at water level, and each morning reveals a new town, vineyard or centuries-old cathedral just beyond the gangway. For guests sailing with AmaWaterways, the experience quickly begins to feel like being gently guided through the heart of a destination.

Life on board moves with an easy rhythm. With an average of just 156 guests, the ships feel spacious and calm, allowing room for both connection and quiet moments watching the river drift by. Thoughtfully designed staterooms, welcoming lounges and open decks create spaces where guests can settle in comfortably and let the journey unfold around them.

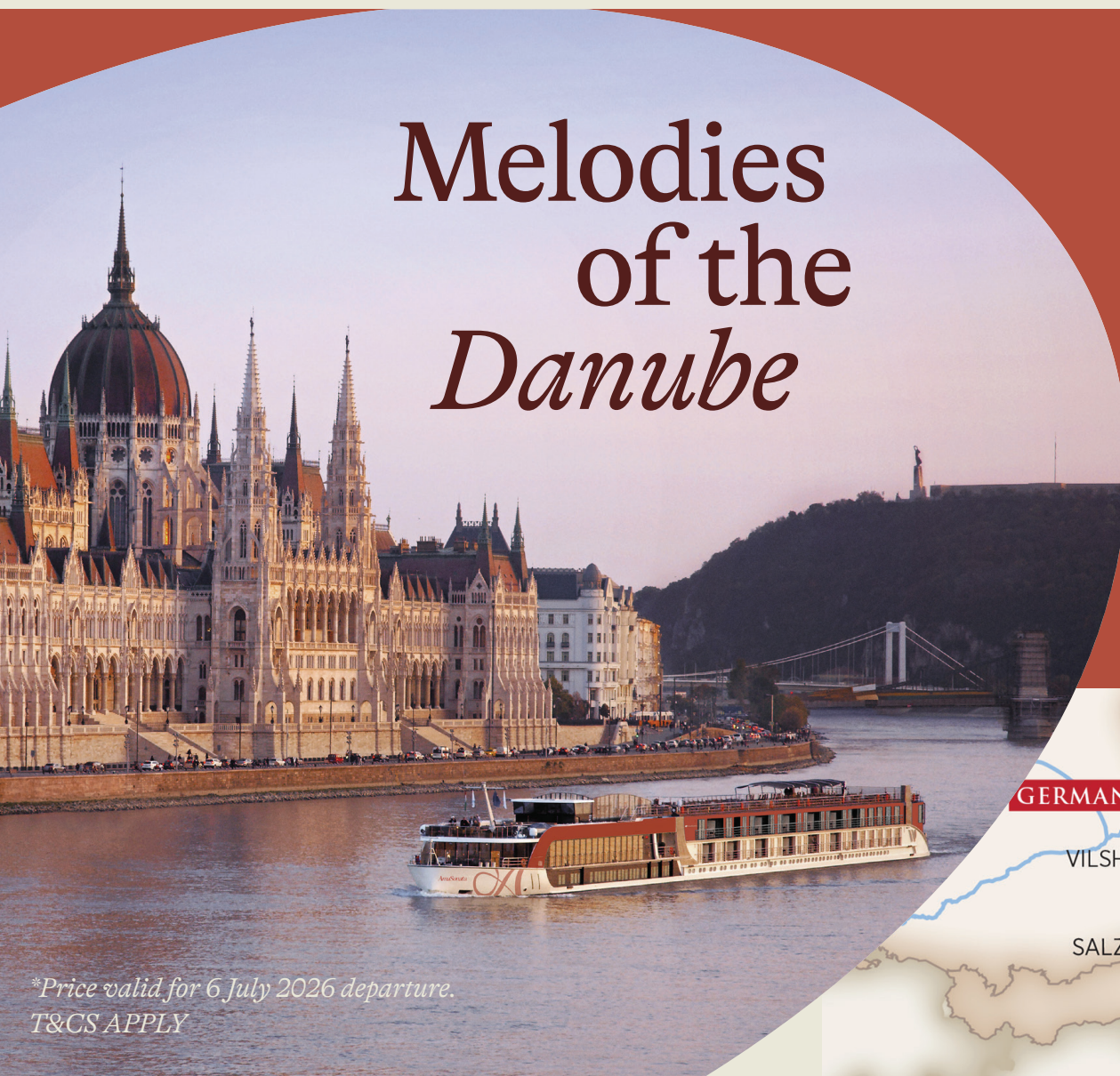
What stands out most, however, is the warmth of the people on board. Crew members and Cruise Managers take the time to get to know each guest personally — remembering a favourite coffee order, suggesting a scenic cycling path along the riverbank, or sharing a story about the region ahead. It's a genuine, unforced kind of care that helps explain why so many travellers return again and again.

Days are shaped by discovery. In every destination, guests can choose from a variety of small-group experiences designed to reveal the character of each place. Perhaps a guided walk through cobbled streets, a visit to a historic chateau, or a relaxed tasting at a local winery. Some prefer a gentle stroll through town, others a more active bike ride through vineyards. The beauty lies in the choice.

Back on board, the flavours of the journey continue. AmaWaterways places genuine care into every meal, bringing regional dishes and seasonal ingredients to the table. Local wines accompany dinner, often changing each day as the ship moves through a new landscape.

Across Europe, Asia, Africa and South America, the experience carries the same feeling: every detail thoughtfully considered, every welcome sincere. For many guests, it is not just the rivers they remember, but the sense of being personally looked after along the way — and the quiet joy of discovering the world at a gentler pace.

Experience River Cruising with AmaWaterways contact the team at Phil Hoffmann Travel on 13 11 00 or visit pht.com.au.



Melodies of the Danube



BUDAPEST TO VILSHOFEN

8 Days | 4 Countries | Danube River
Departs: Mar-Dec 2026; Mar-Dec 2027

From **\$5,874***
per person twin share

SAVE UP TO \$2,984
per couple

available Complimentary Land Extension Offer



**Price valid for 6 July 2026 departure.
T&CS APPLY*

A new Queen of the Mediterranean

Cunard, the world's most iconic luxury cruise line, unveiled a new-look Queen Elizabeth last year, boasting enhancements that compliment her new Mediterranean homeport season commencing in May 2027.



Grill Suite Terrace



Queens Room

Transformation

Queen Elizabeth's signature spaces such as the Commodore Club, Queens Room, Garden Lounge and The Pavilion have been thoughtfully revitalised, connecting guests to the ocean while providing the perfect space to relax or enjoy al fresco dining.

Outdoor decks have also been revamped to give guests better opportunities to admire gorgeous Mediterranean vistas, with more sun shades to the aft deck to accommodate warmer weather, for example.

And the story behind the Queens Room redesign, which exudes the elegance and luxury reminiscent of the golden age of ocean travel, takes inspiration from the Royal Palace's heritage of planting Mulberry trees since King James I, with its new carpet pattern replicating a lush garden shrubbery.

The Grill Suites experience – a hallmark of Cunard's luxury offering – has also been elevated to new heights. Guests staying in the exclusive Grill Suites will enjoy enhanced interiors and exteriors, featuring sumptuous furnishings, sophisticated detailing, and thoughtful design to deliver the ultimate in comfort and style. The Grill Suites Terrace also features new furniture for guests to enjoy sunset cocktails.

Mediterranean Itineraries

In May 2027, Queen Elizabeth will commence a spectacular 22-week season, featuring 65 new voyages ranging from seven to 28 nights, sailing from Barcelona, Civitavecchia (access from Rome), Trieste and Istanbul. With so many options, guests can choose the best embarkation and disembarkation port to suit their adventure, as well as making the most of the long travel distance by seeing so much of the region by sea.

Guests aboard Queen Elizabeth can immerse themselves in a variety of unforgettable destinations—from the turquoise waters of Ibiza's beaches and the medieval architecture of Valletta, to Napoleon's island home of Ajaccio and scenic cruising through the Messina Strait. A highlight of the journey includes an overnight call in Istanbul, Turkey, where guests can experience the mystical city after dusk and take in the glow of the iconic Hagia Sophia beneath the moonlit sky.



Mediterranean, by Cunard

Imagine standing on the decks of Queen Elizabeth as you sail to the most enchanting Mediterranean destinations. From the sunny shores of Barcelona to famous landmarks of Istanbul, explore hidden gems, wander cobblestoned streets and trace history through the ages. Queen Elizabeth is your perfect host to discover the region.

QUEEN ELIZABETH Italy, Greece and Turkey 14 nights

14 – 28 May 2027 ♦ Q711



QUEEN ELIZABETH Mediterranean, Greece and Croatia 14 nights

16 – 30 Jul 2027 ♦ Q715D



QUEEN MARY 2® QUEEN VICTORIA® QUEEN ELIZABETH® QUEEN ANNE®

Exploring our Backyard

The Rise of Regional Cruising for Australian Travellers

For many years, the dream cruise itinerary for Australian travellers involved travelling halfway across the globe. The glaciers of Alaska, the historic ports of the Mediterranean Sea, or the dramatic fjords of Norway have long dominated cruise wish lists. But a noticeable shift is taking place across the cruise industry. Increasingly, travellers are discovering that some of the most rewarding voyages are much closer to home.

Cruise lines are now expanding their focus on regional experiences, encouraging Australians to look beyond traditional long-haul itineraries and explore the extraordinary destinations within their own corner of the world. From tropical islands and vibrant Southeast Asian cultures to rugged Australian coastlines and remote wilderness regions, the Asia–Pacific region is rapidly becoming one of cruising’s most exciting frontiers.

REDISCOVERING OUR OWN REGION

Australia sits at the gateway to a remarkable range of cruising destinations. Within a relatively short sailing distance are thousands of islands, diverse cultures, and some of the most spectacular natural environments on the planet.

The islands of the South Pacific remain a perennial favourite, offering crystal-clear waters, coral reefs, and relaxed island cultures. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia continues to captivate travellers with its rich history, vibrant cuisine, and dramatic landscapes. Countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand offer a fascinating blend of ancient

traditions and modern energy. Closer to home, Australia itself provides extraordinary cruising opportunities. The remote wilderness of the Kimberley region has become one of the world’s most sought-after expedition cruise destinations. Towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, ancient rock art and abundant wildlife make it a journey unlike any other.

The appeal of these regional itineraries lies not only in their beauty but also in their accessibility. With shorter travel times and a wide variety of voyage lengths, travellers can explore remarkable destinations without the long flights often required for European or North American cruises.

THE SHIFT TOWARD EXPERIENCE

Another reason regional cruising is gaining popularity is the changing expectations of modern travellers. Today’s cruise passengers are increasingly interested in experiences that go beyond simply visiting a port for a few hours.

They want to understand the places they visit — the culture, the cuisine, the history, and the people who call these destinations home.

Cruise itineraries are evolving to reflect this demand. Shore excursions are becoming more immersive, allowing travellers to explore local markets, meet artisans, sample regional dishes, or visit historic sites with knowledgeable guides. Culinary experiences have become particularly popular, reflecting the growing interest in food as a gateway to understanding culture.

In Southeast Asia, travellers may explore bustling street-food districts or take cooking classes featuring regional ingredients. In Australia’s northern regions, excursions often focus on Indigenous heritage, wildlife encounters, and the unique geology of the landscape.

These experiences help transform a cruise from a sightseeing holiday into a deeper cultural journey.

SMALLER PORTS, BIGGER DISCOVERIES

Another key trend shaping regional cruising is the increasing popularity of itineraries that visit smaller ports and lesser-known destinations.

While major cities will always remain important cruise stops, many travellers are now seeking places that feel more authentic and less crowded. Small coastal towns, remote islands and hidden bays are often where the most memorable travel moments occur.

Ships visiting locations such as Kangaroo Island or the tropical gateway city of Darwin provide opportunities to experience wildlife, dramatic landscapes, and distinctive regional cultures.

These destinations often offer experiences that larger tourist hubs cannot match — from walking among sea lions on remote beaches to witnessing spectacular tidal phenomena in remote coastal gorges. For many travellers, these unexpected discoveries become the highlight of the journey.





AUSTRALIA AS A CRUISE DESTINATION

While Australia has long been one of the world's most enthusiastic cruise markets, it is also increasingly recognised as a destination in its own right.

Major ports such as Sydney and Melbourne continue to welcome cruise ships from around the world, while a growing number of other ports are stepping into the spotlight. Among them, Adelaide is fast emerging as a sought after step, featuring more prominently on itineraries that showcase the beauty and diversity of Australia's southern coastline.

These visits bring significant benefits to local communities, supporting tourism operators, restaurants, and cultural attractions. For travellers, they provide an opportunity to experience a side of Australia that many international visitors rarely see.

From world-class wine regions to pristine wildlife habitats, Australia's coastal diversity makes it a natural fit for cruise exploration.

THE ROLE OF EXPEDITION CRUISING

One of the fastest-growing segments of the cruise industry is expedition cruising — voyages designed to explore remote and environmentally sensitive regions.

Expedition ships are typically smaller and designed to access places that larger vessels cannot reach. This allows travellers to visit isolated islands, narrow waterways, and pristine natural environments.

In the Asia–Pacific region, expedition cruises might include voyages through the remote reefs of Papua New Guinea, journeys through Indonesia's vast archipelago, or exploration of Australia's rugged northern coastline.

These voyages often feature onboard experts such as naturalists, historians and marine biologists who help passengers understand the destinations they visit. Zodiac landings, wildlife encounters and guided nature walks are common elements of the experience.

For adventurous travellers, expedition cruising offers an unparalleled way to explore the world's most remote corners.

SUSTAINABILITY AT SEA

As cruising expands into more environmentally sensitive regions, sustainability has become a central concern for both travellers and cruise operators.

Modern ships are increasingly designed with improved energy efficiency, advanced waste management systems and technologies that reduce environmental impact. Many cruise lines also partner with conservation groups and local communities to promote responsible tourism practices.

Protecting fragile ecosystems — from coral reefs to remote island environments — is essential to ensuring that these destinations remain accessible for future generations.

Responsible travel is now an integral part of the cruise experience, particularly in regions where natural beauty is the main attraction.

A NEW WAY TO EXPLORE

The growing popularity of regional cruising reflects a broader change in how people travel. Increasingly, travellers are seeking meaningful journeys that offer depth, authenticity and connection.

Exploring destinations closer to home does not mean sacrificing adventure. On the contrary, the Asia–Pacific region offers some of the most diverse and fascinating cruising opportunities anywhere in the world.

From the turquoise lagoons of the South Pacific to the dramatic wilderness of northern Australia, remarkable journeys are waiting just beyond Australia's shores.

For today's cruise traveller, the world may still be vast — but sometimes the most extraordinary discoveries are found right in our own backyard.

Contact Phil Hoffmann Travel to find your next perfect cruise or visit pht.com.au.

Truly All-Inclusive on the Mekong

Scenic's Immersive Journey Through
Vietnam & Cambodia with Japan extension

Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours delivers an all-inclusive approach to river cruising, and its Mekong River journeys through Vietnam and Cambodia are among its most immersive experiences.

Sailing aboard the purpose-built Scenic Spirit, guests travel along one of Asia's great waterways in a boutique setting of fewer than 70 passengers. The ship itself is designed as a 5-star floating hotel, offering spacious suites, butler service, premium beverages and world-class dining—all included. With an almost 1:1 staff-to-guest ratio, service is highly personalised, reflecting Scenic's "ultra-luxury" philosophy.

The Mekong experience is defined by contrast. It weaves between bustling cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and serene riverside villages where daily life unfolds on the water. Guests can explore ornate temples, floating markets and traditional communities, gaining insight into centuries-old

cultures and belief systems that still shape life along the river today.

Itineraries typically range from 7 to 9 nights on the river, often beginning or ending in Siem Reap, gateway to the iconic Angkor Wat, and linking seamlessly with curated land journeys. Scenic's exclusive "Freechoice" excursions allow guests to personalise their journey, whether that's a relaxed cultural visit, an active exploration, or an in-depth historical experience.

A highlight of Scenic's Mekong program is its "Enrich" experiences—private, once-in-a-lifetime events such as gala dinners at temple locations or special cultural performances, designed to provide deeper access beyond standard tourism.

Beyond Southeast Asia, Scenic also offers extensions that broaden the journey, including Japan Land Journeys. These extensions showcase the contrasts of modern and traditional Japan, from vibrant cities to historic temples and landscapes,

allowing guests to combine the tranquillity of river cruising with immersive land touring in another culturally rich destination.

Scenic's Mekong River cruising blends luxury, cultural immersion and seamless travel, creating a journey that connects the heart of Vietnam and Cambodia with curated experiences both on and beyond the river.

Contact Phil Hoffmann Travel on 13 11 00 for your next Mekong & Cambodia experience with an incredible Scenic Japan Land Journey.



SCENIC[®]
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

ASIA RIVER CRUISING & LAND JOURNEYS

Mekong, Vietnam, Cambodia

EVERYTHING INCLUDED IN YOUR 'TREASURES OF THE MEKONG' ITINERARY

- Exclusive Gala Dinner at an Angkor temple
- Champagne breakfast at an Angkor temple
- Tethered balloon ride over Angkor Wat
- 3 exclusive Scenic Enrich experiences
- Buddhist monk blessing and alms giving in a temple
- Choice of 23 Scenic Freechoice activities
- Vespa foodie night tour of Saigon
- Tour to the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh
- Nighttime remork (tuk tuk) tour with distillery visit
- VIP seats to Phare Circus in Siem Reap
- 2 Scenic Sundowners events
- 1 memorable Scenic Special Stay
- Up to four on-board dining options
- 32 meals – 12 breakfasts (B), 10 lunches (L) & 10 dinners (D)
- Complimentary beverages all day throughout your 7-night cruise
- Butler service for all guests during your 7-night cruise
- Same Scenic Tour Director from start to finish
- Scenic Cruise Director and Tour Director with expert local guides
- Complimentary Wi-Fi during your 7-night cruise
- All tipping and gratuities

13 Day Treasures of the Mekong

Includes 7 Day Mekong River Cruise

Inspired by temples & traditions:

Breathe in the essence of Southeast Asia during this enchanting journey from Siem Reap in Cambodia to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam



\$8,785 per person*

Departing 19 September 2026
Super Earlybird Savings \$2500pp

*Terms & Conditions Apply

Savour *the* Journey

Stepping aboard a Holland America Line ship is like entering a world where every moment is meant to be savoured. With more than 150 years of experience, the cruise line has perfected voyages for travellers who want to immerse themselves in each destination. Onboard, it's not about ticking experiences off a list - it's about slowing down and taking in the moments that unfold along the way.

With thoughtfully-curated itineraries, every voyage with Holland America Line is designed to create memorable moments at sea. From the Norwegian Fjords to the wilderness of Alaska, some of the world's most breathtaking destinations are best experienced by ship, where you can enjoy the view from the comfort of your stateroom.

Founded in Rotterdam in 1873, the cruise line brings the signature "Dutch Touch" onboard, offering guests a taste of Europe, both at sea and in port.

As the longest-running cruise line in Alaska, Holland America Line combines its European heritage with decades of regional expertise.

Renowned for its premium, mid-sized ships, the fleet visits nearly 470 ports across 114 countries worldwide. Striking the perfect balance between comfort and intimacy, Holland America Line offers a range of amenities - from pools and spas to gyms amenities - while providing easy access to ports. Onboard activities cater to every interest, including pickleball, basketball, ping pong, trivia, Broadway-style performances, origami and more. Overnight stays and pre-and post-cruise tours allow travellers to explore at a relaxed pace, while partnerships with the likes of the History Channel and National Geographic bring destinations to life through expert insights, guided tours and immersive experiences.

Dining onboard Holland America Line is a journey in itself. The Global Fresh Fish Program brings seafood from port to plate in under 48 hours and, as the only cruise line triple certified in sustainably-sourced seafood, every dish is both fresh and responsibly sourced. All food is made with locally-sourced ingredients, which showcase the flavours of each destination, while culinary ambassadors including Chef Masaharu Morimoto and chocolatier Jacques Torres help bring global flavours to life.

With nearly one crew member for every two guests, twice-daily turndown service and tailored recommendations throughout the voyage, guests feel genuinely cared for onboard. A journey with Holland America Line is centred on creating meaningful connections and unforgettable memories.



*Experiences with us
too good to hurry through.*

Holland  America
Savour *the* Journey



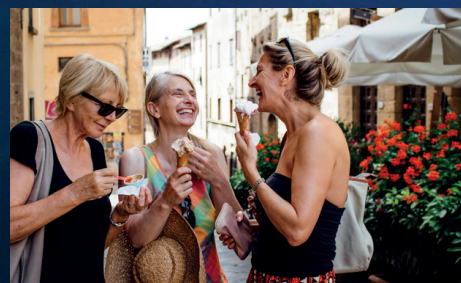
THE JOURNEY IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE DESTINATION

We are for those who feel the journey is as important as the destination and that cruising with us is the best way to experience a leisurely travel lifestyle.



CONNECT TO THE WORLD AND EACH OTHER

We deliver experiences for the curious who seek new perspectives and deeper connections to the world and to each other.



DESTINATION DINING™ FRESH LOCAL FLAVOURS

We believe cuisine is a door to different cultures – filled with history, traditions, and sometimes adventure.



A TRADITION OF GENUINE HOSPITALITY

We are for those who appreciate genuine service – convivial, friendly, and cosy hospitality that cannot be copied or imitated.

CHARGES APPLY FOR SHORE EXCURSIONS. CHARGES MAY APPLY FOR SOME ACTIVITIES, VENUES AND FOOD OFFERINGS.

SILVERSEA®

THE TIMELESS TALES OF ASIA.



Explore the lands of resilience, beauty and legacy with Silversea.

Here's to the eternal wonders and unforgotten stories that endure in Asia. To jade rivers that wind like silk threads through emerald valleys, and golden pagodas that rise proudly toward the sky. Venture deeper to uncover gilded temples, bustling markets fragrant with spices, and landscapes that feel like living poetry. The continent is written in a verse of cherry blossoms that bloom on a Japanese spring day. A haze of Chinese lanterns that float above a festival night. A veil of bamboo that bends but never breaks in the storm. On board a Silversea ship, discover dishes inspired by regional flavours and curated by world-class chefs with the S.A.L.T. culinary program — a rite of passage that transforms your every meal. And beyond the table, Asia reveals itself in its beauty and honoured traditions. From the golden temples of Thailand to the cultural capitals of Japan and the towering groves of Singapore, journey through past and present as you claim your place in the epic of timeless discovery.

EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS, INCLUDED

All-inclusive means more with Silversea. Destination-inspired dining, premium beverages, complimentary Wi-Fi, a cutting-edge fitness centre and spa, and engaging experiences that inspire and entertain are all part of your voyage. Unwind in Otium Spa's sauna as you glide past fascinating scenery. Expand your perspective with guest lectures after exploring ancient temples. Delight in brilliant performances that bring local culture from shore to ship. Every comfort you could imagine is included — along with countless touches you'd never expect.

SERVICE THAT'S SECOND TO NONE

Service on a Silversea voyage is as personal as it is intuitive. On board, butlers anticipate your every need, bartenders recall your favourite cocktails, and each interaction reflects Silversea's pride in the art of hospitality. A ratio of nearly one crew member for every guest ensures your journey feels tailored to you, while a bespoke pillow menu or a hot bath drawn after a day of discovery make even the smallest details memorable.

Discover Asia's timeless tales with Silversea. For further information or to book your Asia voyage, please contact Phil Hoffmann Travel on 13 11 00.



WORLD OF WONDER.



IN FULL BLOOM.

SILVERSEA®
TO FINDING MORE

SILVER NOVA, HONG KONG

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STAFF ENCOUNTERS

Our staff have been travelling the world and creating moments they'll never forget along the way.

Read about some of their inspiring travel stories and experiences.



SUE CUK

HURTIGRUTEN - FOLLOW THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

I was fortunate to experience a true bucket-list journey through Norway and Finland on Hurtigruten's Follow the Northern Lights tour - an expertly curated blend of unforgettable moments and breathtaking natural beauty.

A highlight of the trip was the variety of travel experiences, each offering a unique perspective. From the iconic Flåm Railway to two contrasting cruises - one gliding silently through fjords on an electric vessel from Flåm to Gudvangen, and another along Norway's dramatic coastline - every leg was memorable. The journey continued through Finland by coach and rail, seamlessly connecting diverse landscapes.

Norway and Finland's cities and towns are rich in history, distinctive architecture and culture, yet feel refreshingly different from the rest of Europe. Beyond the urban charm, the wilderness stole the show: ever-changing scenery and abundant wildlife at every turn. Witnessing the ethereal Northern Lights in Saariselkä was a lifelong dream realised - an indescribable, humbling spectacle.

Cultural experiences added depth, from visiting the Sami Cultural Centre to meeting gentle reindeer and enjoying an exhilarating husky sled ride. Accommodation throughout was excellent, including a magical night in a glass igloo - perfect for aurora viewing from bed.

For an added historical gem, extending your trip to Tallinn's UNESCO-listed Old Town is not to be missed!



ROBYN HAYES

PRINCESS CRUISES - DISCOVER PRINCESS

My recent 12-day Discovery Princess cruise was nothing short of unforgettable. From the moment we stepped aboard, we were struck by the ship's glamorous and elegant interior, which set the tone for the entire journey. What truly stood out, however, was the crew - every member we encountered was warm, genuine, and always ready to help, creating a welcoming atmosphere throughout the trip.

Entertainment onboard was diverse and lively, ranging from 60s and 70s cover bands to comedians, magicians, acrobats, and the ship's own talented singers and dancers. Each day brought a packed variety of activities, including trivia, Zumba, bingo, and even outdoor movies, ensuring there was something for everyone.

Dining was equally impressive, with a wide variety of delicious options and thoughtful inclusions like vegetarian and gluten-free stations. Our itinerary included visits to Suva and Lautoka in Fiji - where the cheerful greeting "Bula!" was everywhere - and the charming Mystery Island in Vanuatu. With well-organised excursions and innovative onboard features like the medallion system, it was a truly seamless and enjoyable holiday.

I highly recommend a journey aboard the Discovery Princess through the South Pacific!



CHARLOTTE HANDLER

TRAVELMARVEL - EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISE

Experiencing a European river cruise with Travelmarvel exceeded all my expectations. From the exceptional onboard service and comfortable river cruise vessel to the stunning destinations along the way, the entire journey was incredible and such an easy, relaxed way to travel.

I embarked in Nuremberg and disembarked in Amsterdam, stopping along the way in many traditional medieval villages that looked as though they'd come straight out of a fairy tale. Travelmarvel includes one shore excursion in every port, led by knowledgeable local guides who proudly showed us around their hometowns. We enjoyed beer tastings, German meat sandwiches, fascinating museum visits, and leisurely walks through the beautiful places we visited.

One of the highlights for me was the proximity of the ship to each town. After the included excursions, we often had free time, and exploring independently was effortless since the ship was always within walking distance.

To top it all off, the Christmas markets opened a week early, allowing us to soak up the festive atmosphere along the river. The twinkling lights, fragrant mulled wine, and traditional stalls added a magical touch to an already unforgettable journey.

If you would like to find out more information about these experiences, please contact Phil Hoffmann Travel on 13 11 00

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