



EUROPE

THE DANUBE

www.vikingrivercruises.com.au

For lovers of iconic European charm, it is hard to look past a river waltz upon the Danube. From its origins in the Black Forest of Germany, through the grandiose architecture of Vienna, the imperial style of Budapest, and on to lesser-known haunts of Europe's east, each day is sure to bring new delights. Viking River Cruises is a world-leader in river cruising in both Asia and Europe, and its boats are sleek in design and particularly renowned for onboard culinary flair and shore ventures that take you right inside the heart of a destination. On its various itineraries along the Danube this entails soaking in the Art Nouveau Gellért Spa in Budapest, touring the cobbled streets of Salzburg and feasting in grand Hungarian fashion.



THE AMERICAS

THE AMAZON

www.delfinamazoncruises.com

The Amazon Rainforest accounts for more than half of the world's remaining rainforest, thriving around the mighty river that runs from the Andes of Peru to northern Brazil where it disperses into the Atlantic. Delfin Amazon Cruises is passionate about preserving this unique jungle while also opening it up for eco-minded guests.

Aboard the rustic beauty of either *Delfin I* or *Delfin II* guests are invited to experience the magic of the Upper Peruvian Amazon. The ships have capacities of 12 and 30 respectively with gleaming windowed walls everywhere you look, Peruvian cuisine to tantalise all tastebuds and activities that truly promote cultural immersion – from swimming with dolphins and fishing for piranhas to visits with local communities.



A WORLD OF WATERWAYS

Succumb to the fastest-growing cruising trend taking luxury travel by storm and set sail in style on one of the world's awe-inspiring rivers, writes Madeline Hoskin.

AFRICA

THE CHOBE RIVER

www.zambeziqueen.com

A voyage aboard the *Zambezi Queen* is a river safari experience more so than a cruise. Herds of elephants dip their trunks into the shallows of the Chobe; hippos and crocodiles send ripples across its surface; magnificent birds flutter above – and you saunter through it in ultra-modern luxury. Each of the boats 14 suites is air-conditioned with sliding blinds and private balconies, and instead of venturing out on game drives, you set sail in smaller tenders, getting up close to the wildlife stirring on the water's edge. In the evening, watch dusk descend as you enjoy dinner in the restaurant on the upper deck.

EUROPE

RIVER MEUSE

www.avalonwaterways.com.au

As one of the five oldest rivers in the world, the Meuse wends its way through ample historic beauty as it passes from inland France through Belgium and into the North Sea of the Netherlands. Its scenery ranges from looming grey cliffs such as Les Rochers de Freÿr to canals and banks lined by canal houses. Come 2016, Avalon Waterways will open up these waters in supreme style with 'Essential Holland and Belgium' and 'Enchanting Belgium' itineraries that use its smaller Suite Ships – perfectly suited to visiting towns and rivers that large vessels cannot reach. These river cruises boast cabins that are 30 per cent more spacious than the industry standard, panoramic windows and open-air balconies, guaranteeing unrivalled views and encounters of the windmills of Kinderdijk, the grand city of Ghent, the port of Antwerp and the battlefields of Ypres.





Image © Ken Hayden Photography/Sanctuary Retreats

ASIA

THE IRRAWADDYwww.sanctuaryretreats.com

Myanmar and the golden-spire temples that speckle the verdant shores along its Irrawaddy River are increasingly mesmerising the imaginations of river wanderers, and luxury tour operators are rapidly boosting their presence here. Perhaps the most notable entrance was that of *Sanctuary Ananda* back in November 2014, a 21-suite floating refuge fitted out with luxe silks, traditional textiles, L'Occitane-stocked ensuites and hi-tech convenience. The Owner's Suite provides the ultimate experience, with patrons enjoying a private guide and butler service as they bask in monsoon showers, spacious interiors and an expansive verandah. Four dining options ensure you are never left wanting, and sightseeing spans everything from the palaces of Yangon to the forgotten villages along the Chindwin. In 2016, Scenic will also bring its new *Scenic Aura* to the region, adding to the river's booming luxury landscape.



EUROPE

THE GARONNE & DORDOGNEwww.scenic.com.au

For lovers of wine, few regions hold the allure of vineyard-laden Bordeaux, and the waterways of the Garonne and Dordogne deserve to be taken slowly and savoured. In 2015, Scenic has not only undergone a sublime redefining of its brand, it has also introduced these rivers into its vast and divine French itineraries. The 11-day Bordeaux River Cruise not only lets you languish amid the vines of Cadillac, Libourne, Blaye and Pauillac – and, of course, the heritage-listed wonders of Bordeaux – it lets you do so while enjoying the experience of a Scenic 'Space-Ship', complimentary beverages, private butlers and all. Indeed, as you delight in Scenic Sundowners at Château Soutard amid the rolling scenery of Saint-Émilion, or feast on delicacies such as foie gras in Bergerac or brandy in Cognac, it will be hard to fathom ever bidding adieu.



Images © Sanctuary Retreats

AFRICA

THE NILEwww.oberoihotels.com/nile-cruise-zahra
www.sanctuaryretreats.com

The land of tombs and pyramids has centuries-worth of stories centred upon the Nile, and modern-day travellers can enjoy passage through the region with lavish aplomb similar to the palm-fanned luxury of pharaohs past with either Oberoi or Sanctuary Retreats. The *Oberoi Zahra*, Luxury Nile Cruiser, uniquely upholds the brand's standards as it travels back and forth between Luxor and Aswan. Its 25 cabins and two luxurious suites offer elegant bases from which to venture out to the full-service spa, Library and Cigar Lounge, outdoor pool or to the restaurant serving up a selection of international and Egyptian specialities. *Sanctuary Zein Nile Chateau* (pictured above) is perhaps even more decadent, with the bespoke *dahabiya* (traditional sailing boat) available for exclusive charters ensuring each day's tailored itinerary is precisely as you wish. It caters for a maximum of just 12 guests, encasing them in white interiors that toe the line between plushness and simplicity.