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SUITE, SAFE & SOUND. THE SMALL-SHIP, RIVER CRUISE EXPERIENCE IN-DEPTH

TORONTO, Ontario – May 20, 2020 – In the last 10 years, river cruising has grown by 250 percent (250%), making waves in the travel industry and proving that, when it comes to bodies of water and ships, bigger is not necessarily better. Avalon Waterways has led the river cruise trend, unveiling for travellers an unforgettable fusion of distinctive sights, colourful cultures and enduring traditions while sailing aboard innovative and award-winning Suite Ships.

“Our guests know that it’s possible to cruise without a crowd, explore new cultures with ease and sail in intimate settings,” said Pam Hoffee, managing director of Avalon Waterways. “Aboard our spacious, state-of-the-art Suite Ships, travellers enjoy the company of an expert Cruise Director, appealing crew-to-passenger ratios, the personalized attention they deserve and seamless dock-and-go sightseeing with insider tips and experiences only the locals can provide. River cruising is the perfect way to see and explore the world.”

So, what makes river cruising so special? Avalon Waterways lays out eight reasons this travel style has become a preferred way to see, experience and explore the world.

1. Size is seismic. It matters.

River cruise vessels are built to slowly ply the world’s weaving and meandering rivers. To port in storybook settings. To sail under centuries’ old bridges and squeeze between 12-meter-wide locks. Avalon Waterways’ floating “boatique” hotels hold an average of 150 guests, although some are much smaller. Suite Ships on the Mekong River, for instance, have just 18 staterooms, accommodating 36 cruisers.

And, while fellow passenger numbers are low, Avalon’s onboard crew ratio is high. In fact, on every ship, the average guest-to-crew ratio is 3:1 which means travellers are privy to copious amounts of attention to detail with crew members easily and happily catering to guests needs, every moment of every day.

2. See not sea. There’s a (big) difference.

On a river cruise, travellers are not at sea. Instead, river cruises wind and bend through the heart of fascinating countries providing a panoramic view of the Old World. Always within a few feet of shore, on a river vessel, travellers pass clifftop castles, hillside vineyards, ancient villages, and capital cities. Every day – and night – travellers have quick and easy access to ports-of-call.

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3. Cruising focused on “to dos,” not crowds and queues.

River cruise itineraries are destination-focused, with local guides who help travellers experience – and connect with – the world around them. Most river cruise itineraries also sail off-the-beaten-path, visiting small fairytale villages, quaint village squares and family-owned wineries, bakeries and restaurants, along the way.

Further, queues are not news on the world’s rivers. Avalon Waterways’ excursions typically accommodate no more than 30 guests at a time, providing every traveller an immersive and authentic experience.

4. Fresh air and perspectives.

On board Avalon’s innovative and award-winning Suite Ships, guests on two full decks are welcomed with 200-square-foot Panorama Suites, each featuring a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows that open 7-feet wide (the widest-opening windows in cruising). This wall of glass converts into an Open-Air Balcony, but that’s not all. No Avalon Waterways ship has interior-only cabins. Instead, every Deluxe Stateroom and Panorama Suite offer guests natural light and most feature beds facing the views for which river cruising is famous.

Public spaces also provide guests room to move and views galore. And, Avalon’s Suite Ship Sky Decks run the length and width of each vessel (approximately 20 meters longer and 2 meters wider than a football field) with wide-open spaces, fresh air, and lounge chairs aplenty.

5. Warm “welcomes” along the way.

Avalon works tirelessly to engage with communities visited by hiring local drivers, guides and operators for land activities. This “give back” mentality extends to the purchase of local produce, wines, beers, and even bread, further connecting our guests to people, places, and culture. As a result of our partnership approach to tourism, Avalon Waterways has been actively pursued by new towns along the world’s rivers – always promising our passengers an authentic experience.

6. Charting a new course in sustainability.

The vibrant and beautiful natural surroundings of the world’s rivers are a benefit of river cruising. And, it is up to river cruise companies to preserve the precious environment and limit our footprint.

As a result, Avalon Waterways has taken great strides to improve monitoring and measurement to reduce our environmental impact, to save water, to limit waste and to foster a sustainability culture among our crew and guests. This work includes supporting Ocean Cleanup in its unprecedented efforts to clean-up the world’s river and oceans.

7. Ship-Shape Suite Ships.

The world has changed but what remains certain is Avalon Waterways’ steadfast commitment to guest safety, comfort and peace-of-mind. To that end, the company has developed a new **Avalon Assurance** program, with help from its Global Health & Safety team, dedicated to ensuring that the cleanliness of all operations exceeds today’s standards from start-to-finish.

The river cruise operator’s new Avalon Assurance program currently features seven major categories and protocols that span across guest experience touch-points – all of which are being shared, explored, reviewed and renewed, accordingly. **Details can be found at <http://www.avalonwaterways.ca/avalon-assurance/>.**

8. **Not Everything in the World Goes as Planned ...**

That's why Avalon Waterways is prepared to offer the highest standards in the lowest situations.

"Avalon Waterways understands that our value and our service is measured by what we do when things go wrong even more than when everything runs as planned," said Hoffee. "We are there for our guests, offering refunds for missed services, alternative sightseeing or the opportunity to rebook and try again another time. We are a long-term business, prepared to tackle short-term obstacles. Our hope is that travellers choose to explore the world with time and time again."

For more details, click here: <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/5f41a0a9#/5f41a0a9/1>

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ABOUT AVALON WATERWAYS

Travellers wanting to see the world need only cruise down its legendary rivers. For those interested in seeing more of the world, there's Avalon Waterways®. Our entire fleet of Suite Ships® proudly present Avalon Waterways' unique Open-Air BalconySM—cruising's only bed with a view, more space and 24/7 access to open-air cruising. When travellers pair panoramic scenes with the widest-ranging excursion choices in river cruising, they're in for an experience as wide open as the view.

On an Avalon cruise, schedules give way to whims, leaving travellers the freedom to do exactly as they please, when they please. Whether enjoying a guided walking tour of one of Europe's great cities, joining a cooking class or paddling a canoe, our *Avalon Choice*® selections of Classic, Discovery and Active excursions offer a wide range of possibilities. When travellers prefer to explore on their own, Avalon helps with recommendations, information and the gear they need, thanks to Adventure Hosts, an Adventure Center and AvalonGO mobile app. And when it's time to refuel, Avalon's *FlexDining*® program gives guests the choices they crave.

When travellers sail the world with Avalon Waterways, every day is an adventure and every adventure is up to our guests. For more information, visit www.avalonwaterways.ca; travel agents can visit www.agentlingo.ca. Avalon Waterways is a proud supporter of The Ocean Cleanup.