

Seatrade Cruise Review

The Rise of River Cruise in Europe



By Frederik Erdmann

Europe's river cruise industry is facing a capacity boost: 19 new riverships providing over 3,100 beds are due for delivery in 2019. Most of the capacity is destined to overseas source markets, with Viking River Cruises alone accounting for almost 40% of the additional beds.

2018 has been one of comparatively modest growth for Europe's river cruise industry, with just ten new ships

providing 1,500 beds added, the vast majority of them on the Rhine/Main/Danube waterways system.

In contrast to earlier years, however, no riverships left the market in return, which turned the 1,500 new beds into net capacity added.

After years of continuous capacity increase, market-leading Viking River Cruises took a break in 2018 and

added no further ships to its fleet. This will though be compensated next year, as it again resumes the frontrunner's position in terms of new buildings with no less than seven new ships to be inaugurated, corresponding to more than one third of the new deliveries. Six Viking Longships are due to be handed over by Germany's Neptun Werft to Viking River Cruises for operation on the Rhine/Main/Danube.

Rhine River



These ships are of a proven design with about 50 units built since 2012. The seventh new Viking rivership due for inauguration next year, Viking Helgrim, is somewhat smaller and destined to River Douro operation.

The vessel is under construction at West Sea shipyard in Viana do Castelo, Portugal for Douro Azul which will manage the vessel on behalf of Viking River Cruises. Douro Azul is also expecting two other riverships from West Sea, which it will manage for

AmaWaterways and German operator A-Rosa Flussschiff GmbH.

Douro Azul retains its leading position as managers/operators of riverships on the Douro, with just one new ship – CroisiEurope's Amalia Rodrigues – not under its management.

As far as shipyards are concerned, 2019 proves the leading positions of Neptun Werft and Vahali Shipyard, a Dutch enterprise with extensive presence also in Serbia.

Overall, Dutch shipyards clearly dominate the newbuilding sector for riverships, followed by Germany and, although currently for local use on the Douro only, Portugal.

Most of Europe's new riverships entering service next year are destined to the English-speaking overseas markets, but also the German source market will see capacity being added with Phoenix' Adora and Anna Katharina as well as A-Rosa's new Douro rivership.

Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking River Cruises, goes for another six 'Viking Longships' from Neptun Werft in 2019

The German rivercruise market grew 8% eight year-on-year from 2016 to 2017 and is facing a very successful 2018 season. Europe's newbuilding boost due for 2019 may pave the way for new offers along so far widely unexploited waterways to be 'tested' by older and smaller ships now due for replacement on the market's main rivers.

One of the exciting new ports is Papenburg in Lower Saxony, home to the Meyer Werft yard. This year it received 20 calls and in 2019 a first itinerary will start from the North German port.



Auto-Fischer-Reisen GmbH, a local tour operator from nearby Leer, has chartered 2001-built Saxonia for an eight-day itinerary in March from

Papenburg to Potsdam with calls among others at Hanover, Wolfsburg, Magdeburg and Brandenburg. Passengers will be sourced locally.

Papenburg



The 82mtr long Saxonia, accommodates 88 passengers and is under the management of River Advice.

The Papenburg-Berlin itinerary may perhaps serve as a blueprint for new offers to internationally sourced passengers in the future.

The exciting cruise combines Germany's leading cruise shipbuilding site in Papenburg with the country's largest automotive industry centre (Wolfsburg with the Automobile City, a visitor attraction adjacent to the Volkswagen factory) and the country's cosmopolitan capital, Berlin.

Berlin



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Riverships to be delivered in 2019 for operation in Europe

Name	Beds	Shipyard	Chartered / operated by	Rivers
Adora	190	Den Breejen Shipyard	Phoenix Reisen (1)	D
Amadeus Star	164	De Gerlien van Tiem Shipyard	Lüftner Cruises	D+R/M
AmaDouro	102	West Sea Viana Shipyard	AmaWaterways (2)	DOU
Amalia Rodrigues	132	Chantier Naval Meuse et Sambre	CroisiEurope	DOU
AmaMagna	196	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	AmaWaterways	D
AmaMora	158	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	AmaWaterways
Anna Katharina	172	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	Phoenix Reisen (3)	D+R/M
A-Rosa Alva	126	West Sea Viana Shipyard	A-Rosa Flussschiff (2)	DOU
Avalon Envision	166	Den Breejen Shipyard	Avalon Waterways (4)	D+R/M
Excellence Countess	178	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	Swiss Excellence River (4)	R/M
George Eliot	132	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	Riviera Travel (3)	D+R/M
Viking Einar	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co. KG	Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
Viking Helgrim	106	West Sea Viana Shipyard	Viking River Cruises (2)	DOU
Viking Sigrun	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co.	KG Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
Viking Sigyn	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co.	KG Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
Viking Tir	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co.	KG Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
Viking Ullus	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co.	KG Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
Viking Vali	190	Neptun Werft GmbH & Co.	KG Viking River Cruises	D+R/M
William Wordsworth	169	Scheepswerf & Machinefabriek Vahali	Riviera Travel (3)	D

(1) = Ship under the management of Dunav Tours
 (2) = Ship under the management of Douro Azul
 (3) = Ship under the management of Scylla
 (4) = Ship under the management of River Advice
 Rivers: D = Danube; DOU = Douro; R+M = Rhine/Main

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