



AllWays

VIVA Cruises, Europe

www.allwaystraveller.com



Seeing Europe in style with VIVA Cruises

VIVA Cruises is a premier operator of luxury cruising on the major rivers of Europe including the Danube, Elbe, Moselle, Rhine, Rhône and Seine.

It also offers cruises on the Main-Danube Canal and Baltic Sea.

VIVA TWO is the flagship in VIVA's eight strong river fleet and the second new ship, after VIVA ONE, to be launched within the year.

The ship offers five-day and seven-night river cruises on the Danube, from Passau or Vienna.

In the summer and late summer, there will be the chance to take a 16-day grand voyage to the Danube Delta and, during the first three months of 2024, VIVA TWO will sail from Düsseldorf on four-night city trips to the Netherlands and Belgium.

Whatever the river or ship of choice, a VIVA cruise offers those wanting an upmarket break afloat, the same standard of luxury and impeccable service.

It's also a hassle-free way to take in the great cities and charming towns that have grown up along each of the great rivers of Europe.

www.viva-cruises.com/en

Ashley Gibbins
Commissioning Editor
AllWays traveller





Making the most of every moment - on and off the water

Forget everything you may have heard about river cruising being the 'poor relation' of the ocean-going liners.

By Ashley Gibbins

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Or as it was put to me: "This is not ocean cruising's stepsister".

I am not able to give a personal comparison between river and ocean cruising, as the trip Ann and I took on the VIVA TWO, in early 2023, was our first taste of either type of cruising.

While I know the number of devotees of 'the cruise' runs into millions, I had always shied away from this type of holiday. For several reasons.

I have never been naturally drawn to the 'floating city' environment offered by the cruise liner.

Would I feel hemmed in with the thousands of other vacationing residents, albeit they will be having a collective whale of a time.

Then there is my really enjoy my food and drink, something that I am told can be almost overwhelming on board.

I harbour a genuine concern that my lack of willpower would see me tucking into a full breakfast, brunch, lunch and afternoon tea with then just a short break before dinner and a late supper.

And then there is the alcohol that would also be tempting me from noon to night.

It would take weeks the shed the pounds the voyage would put on.

And finally, I am not a one for the mass disembarkation process when cruise liners dock in port.

With these, maybe unfounded, reservations to ocean cruising, the river cruise seemed a good way to put the proverbial 'toe in the water'.

We were not disappointed, far from it.

VIVA TWO

This was in no small measure to us opting for our maiden voyage aboard the first sailing of VIVA TWO.

VIVA Cruises is a relatively new member of the river cruising fraternity, but one that is quickly gaining a real reputation for excellence.

A floating five-star

Checking to the VIVA TWO for our short cruise down the Rhine from Dusseldorf, was like doing so in an all-inclusive, five-star hotel.

For that is what the VIVA TWO is, a floating five-star hotel, but one that has Europe passing by the panoramic windows.

Making the most of a stay

I am a passionate advocate of making the most of one's accommodation.

If all one wants is a bed for the night, a good budget hotel is absolutely fine.

But if Ann and I are staying in a country house, luxury city or chic boutique hotel, we always build in time to make the most of where we are.

This was certainly true with the VIVA TWO, and not just because one is unable to leave the vessel when its moving.

Ann writes below of our time on board, and so for now I will just say that, without the changing scenery and the passing river traffic, one would not know one is on a ship - that is moving.



There is no rocking whatsoever, and it is almost unknown for passengers to suffer any form of 'seasickness'.

And river cruisers are, by their nature, smaller vessels with fewer passengers on board for any given trip.

VIVA TWO, for example has 95 cabins for up to 190 passengers and has an open lounge area and three restaurants on board.

As such the atmosphere is laid back and the dining always relaxed.

Impeccable service

This follows through with the service aboard the VIVA TWO, which is as impeccable as one would expect.

Yet, being a relatively small ship there is far greater opportunity to get to know the captain and crew and those providing the service.

Getting the chance to know those helping to make the trip memorable was a real bonus.



VIVA TWO cruise quells fears and exceeds expectations

This first experience of river cruising will certainly not be the last

By Ann Mealor



I have never been keen on water, either being in it or on it.

Not since my brother pushed me into a swimming pool at the age of 4 while on holiday in Jersey.

I also get seasick, dislike small spaces and set mealtimes.

So going on a two-night river cruise up the Rhine from Dusseldorf was very much out of my comfort zone.

Would I feel ill? Would the cabin be claustrophobic?

Would we have to eat at the same time every night and in the same restaurant?

I needn't have worried, on all accounts, and here's why.

Smooth sailing

I hardly felt VIVA TWO move throughout the whole journey.

Just a gentle nudge and rumble of engines as she pulled in or out of dock, and no need for my seasick tablets for the entire voyage.



The cabins

Our cabin was light, airy and spacious – I didn't feel at all confined. The décor, in sea-faring shades of beige, browns and soft blues was soothing and relaxing.

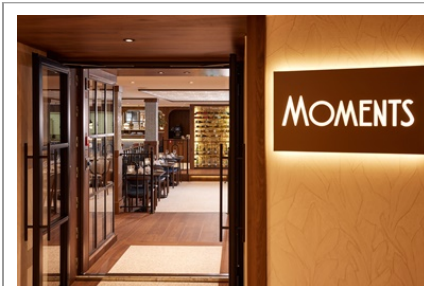
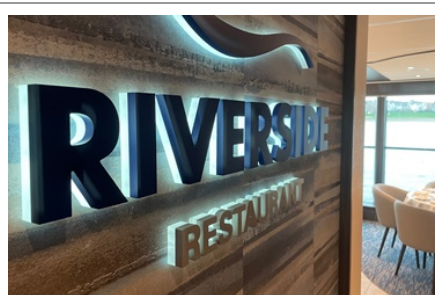
The floor to ceiling French windows opened-up completely giving wonderful views of the river and passing cargo ships.

It had everything we needed; lots of handy hooks for bags, clothes etc, plenty of hangers in the wardrobe, a well-stocked mini-bar, coffee maker, TV, and small table and chairs where Rhine and wine could be enjoyed of an evening.

Deluxe Ritual toiletries were in the bathroom and robes and slippers were available on request. I was very content with my lot.

There are re-fillable water bottles in each room that can be taken home at the end of the cruise.





Fine dining a highlight of our time on the river

VIVA TWO has three restaurants: Riverside, The Bistro and Moments.

There were no set meal times or designated tables.

We could dine where and when we wanted, although booking in advance was required for the smaller VIVA's Bistro and MOMENTS.

Riverside was the glamorous main restaurant offering a selection of tasty international and local choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Sweeping staircases were either end and there was a chic bar and lounge area where pre and post dinner cocktails could be enjoyed whilst listening to some delightful piano music.

The food here was exquisite – succulent scallops, plump prawns, fresh, crunchy asparagus, steaming hot, light and fragrant soup and ornate, delectable desserts. The presentation was superb.

Viva's Bistro, which had a great view from the back of the ship had a more casual atmosphere and specialised in fish.

On the menu were pan fried plaice, skipjack tuna, cured alpine salmon, paella and lobster bisque – all delicious.

MOMENTS served speciality, Mediterranean food with fine wine pairings. I had breakfast here and tucked into the light and fluffy, cooked to order, omelettes.

All dietary requirements were catered for, and the service was second to none.

All members of staff were well trained and very attentive, friendly and pleasant – no request was too much trouble.

To work off the food and drink there is a fitness centre on board and of course, guests can disembark and explore the cities en-route.

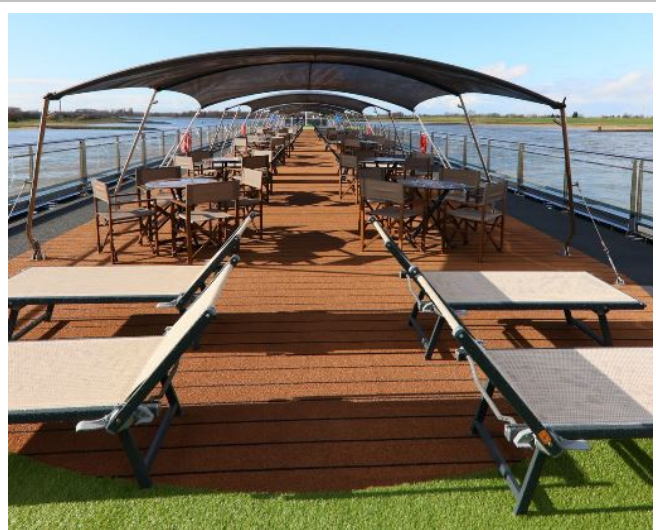
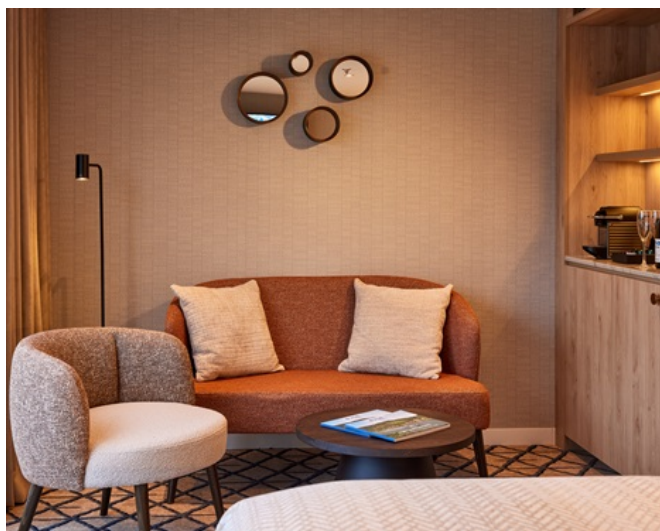


Food waste is also kept to a minimum as menu service, with smaller sized portions is always available in the restaurants.

This reduces the need for an over-large buffet and any wastage.

You will never go hungry on board, and you can always ask for more of anything if there is something you particularly like.





All one could wish for onboard the VIVA TWO

When the weather is good, sun beds on the top deck provide a great way to relax, take in the sites or just read a book.

There is also a spa offering a selection of facials and massages and a small but well-equipped gym for those looking to work out.

As the ship is not over large it enjoys a homely, friendly feel.

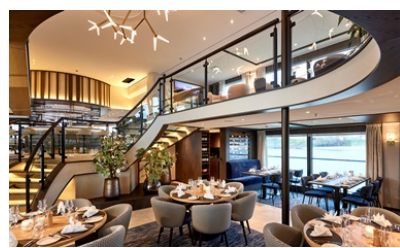
You quickly get to know the other passengers, so there is always the chance for a chat.

VIVA TWO also has worthy green credentials and is energy efficient.

The ship has 76 solar panels that supports its electrical system. And it meets the EU Stage V exhaust emission standard.

Going off ship

Excursions can be booked, or guests can pick up maps and advice from the Cruise Director and just head off and explore on foot as we did or take one of the ship's bikes.



With a maximum of 190 people on board, there is never the risk of a place being swamped or overcrowded by a sudden influx of visitors as sometimes happens on the larger cruise ships.

A fine first river experience

They say you never get a second chance to make a first impression and our first time on the VIVA TWO could not have left me with a better impression of river cruising.

Thanks to my experience on this ship, I now consider myself a fan of river cruising and am looking forward to setting sail once again.



Into the heart of historic towns and cities

The other major benefit of river cruising is that the ships can get into the heart of each destination on the itinerary.



Paris



Budapest



Amsterdam



Frankfurt

From medieval times, Europe's grandest cities and the smaller interspersing towns grew up around major rivers as these served as relatively safe and speedy trading arteries *writes Ashley Gibbins*.

The wharfs that once saw the loading and offloading of products and produce, now provide the berths for the river cruisers that get right into centre of these cities or next to riverside towns.

Mooring in the heart of say Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Frankfurt or Budapest there is no need to board an excursion bus.

This makes river cruising an excellent way to get a first taste of, or reacquainting with, some of Europe's finest cities.

Having now realised what river cruising, in general, and VIVA Cruises in particular is able to offer I have become one hell of a convert.

This first taste of river cruising has whetted our appetite for many more trips on the rivers of Europe, and maybe even further afield.

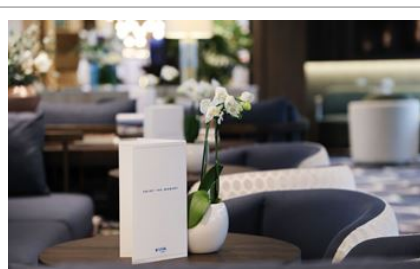
One leaves the ship at one's own time of choosing and remaining and can explore alone, which invariably helps to get a real cultural feel for a place.

There is the chance to spend longer ashore including taking a stroll around in the evenings.



Vienna

Cruising European rivers with VIVA



www.viva-cruises.com/en/ships

Plying Europe's major waterways in style

VIVA Cruises has an eight-ship fleet sailing on major European rivers including the VIVA ONE and VIVA TWO



The Baltic

The Danube

Starting in Germany's Black Forest the Danube, Europe's second longest river, winds its way through 10 European countries to the Black Sea.

The Seine

The Seine in northern France takes its name from the Latin Sequana, the Goddess of the River and flows through Paris and into the English Channel at Le Havre.

The Rhône

Beginning as an outflow of the Rhône Glacier in Valais, Switzerland, the Rhône flows through Lake Geneva and into France before flowing into the Mediterranean.

The Moselle

The Moselle has its source in the Vosges Mountains of eastern France before flowing through Luxembourg and into Germany, where it is called the Mosel.

The Rhine

The Rhine, one of the major European rivers, begins in the Swiss Alps and flows through Germany and the Netherlands to the North Sea.

The Main

The Main River, the longest river lying entirely in Germany, flows through Bavaria and cities including Frankfurt, Offenbach and Würzburg.

The Baltic Sea

The Baltic is an inland sea, the meeting point of several rivers, connects with the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus Strait and then through the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles Strait.



Danube



Seine

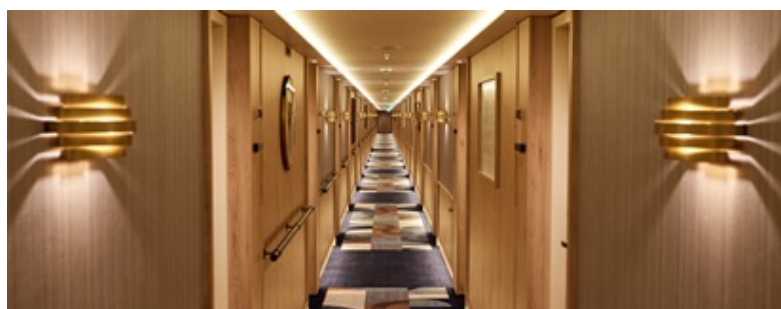
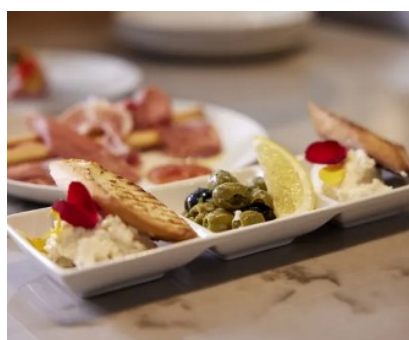


Moselle

More information :

www.viva-cruises.com/en/river-cruises

A snapshot of VIVA Cruises



AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



AllWays traveller is the consumer travel magazine from the International Travel Writers, providing independent travellers with views of the world from Alliance travel journalists.

www.allwaystraveller.com



The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

www.itwalliance.com



Ann Meador is a professional travel writer and photographer and Managing Editor of *AllWays Traveller*



Ashley Gibbins is a professional travel writer and photographer and Managing Director of the International Travel Writers Alliance.