

Viking River Cruises  
smashes world record

Heather Hapeta shares all the delights  
of a first time river cruise experience

## RECORD BREAKING

An unprecedented christening in Amsterdam



”  
It’s not often a  
dream trip exceeds  
expectations but  
this one did...

- HEATHER HAPETA

REASON #

1

TO VOTE  
VIKING RIVER CRUISES

Best Cruise Line: International Operations

**WORLD’S MOST AWARDED RIVER CRUISE LINE**  
with recognition by the travel industry and our guests.



Seatrade Insider  
CRUISE AWARDS 2011  
Rivercruise Innovation Winner

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TALES FOR THE RIVER READING LIST



**The Kingmaker's Daughter**  
by Philippa Gregory

The story of Anne Neville and her father the Earl of Warwick comes to life in this stunning novel, richly evoking Plantagenet era England.



**A Room at Guardian Angel Inn** by Countess de Ségur / translated by Stephanie Smee

Newly translated by Stephanie Smee, this much-loved French classic for children by the Countess de Ségur is the story of two young boys and their cheeky adventures at Guardian Angel Inn.

VIKING NEWS

# VIKING RIVER CRUISES SMASHES WORLD RECORD

## INAUGURATES MOST NEW SHIPS IN A SINGLE DAY

TEN NEW VIKING LONGSHIPS CHRISTENED BY TEN LUMINARY "GODMOTHERS" IN HISTORIC AMSTERDAM EVENT

River cruising is the hottest segment of travel right now, and in a fitting feat for the world's leading river cruise line, Viking River Cruises on the 20th March, 2013 set a world record with the christening of 10 new Viking Longships™. The first-of-its-kind simultaneous christening ceremony in Amsterdam debuted the ships – **Viking Aegir, Viking Atla, Viking Bragi, Viking Embla, Viking Forseti, Viking Jarl, Viking Rinda, Viking Skadi, Viking Tor and Viking Var** – and was certified by a **GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™** adjudicator as 'The Most Ships Inaugurated in One Day by One Company.' Playing an integral role in the event were 10 distinguished women from around the world, representing the key Viking brand pillars of history, art, education, exploration and discovery, to serve as ceremonial godmothers for the new ships.

"Today is a proud day for Viking and for river cruising. We are honoured to showcase 10 of our revolutionary new Longships and to have had such a celebrated group of women helping us christen them," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking Cruises. "Our guests are explorers, just like the ancient Vikings of our Norse heritage, which is why we deliver authentic and enriching travel experiences like no other cruise line."

Guests at the christening ceremony enjoyed remarks by each godmother and a presentation on the growth of river cruising by Hagen. A GUINNESS WORLD

RECORDS adjudicator also presented Hagen with an official recognition of the record breaking achievement, 'The Most Ships Inaugurated in One Day by One Company' – eight\* – breaking the previous record of two ships. A first in modern history, four of the christenings took place in front of a crowd of approximately 700 in Amsterdam, and the remaining six were conducted live via satellite from the Neptun shipyard in Germany. The celebration concluded with an onboard dinner and maiden voyage cruise around the Amsterdam harbour.

**VIKING GODMOTHERS**

With cultural enrichment and privileged access at the heart of every experience Viking offers its guests, 10 women of eminence from around the world were selected to honour that focus and serve as ceremonial godmothers for the new ships. They included:

**LADY FIONA CARNARVON**

Godmother of *Viking Skadi*, is the wife of George Herbert, 8th Earl of Carnarvon. A



*Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking Cruises, shows off a certificate of the company's new Guinness World Record.*



*A Guinness World Records adjudicator certifies Viking River Cruises as holding the new title of "Most Ships Inaugurated in One Day by One Company."*



*Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking Cruises, is joined on stage, left to right, by the 10 honorary "Godmothers" of the new ships: Sabine Rhabek, Geraldine Norman, Eszter Völner, Zhang Ling, Birgit Brandner-Wallner, Marit Barstad, Dertje Meijer, Agapi Stassinopoulos, Lady Fiona Carnarvon and Alexandra Lobkowicz.*

REASON # **2**  
TO VOTE  
VIKING RIVER CRUISES

Best Cruise Line: International Operations

**BEST VALUE OFFER** There is so much included in the price; meals, beverages, guided tours, tipping, onboard activities plus, save with our remarkable air offers.

Category 18: Vote Viking River Cruises



## TALES FOR THE RIVER READING LIST



### Agent 6 by Tom Rob Smith

Former Soviet Secret Service agent Leo Demidov has built himself a new life as a civilian with his family. But when a diplomatic mission goes horribly wrong, Leo's old instincts are reawakened.



### The Island House by Posie Graeme Evans

An unforgettable novel from the creator of McLeod's Daughters about a young archaeologist who unearths ancient secrets, a tragic romance, and Viking treasure on a remote Scottish island

former auditor at Coopers & Lybrand, Lady Carnarvon ran her own fashion label, Azur, and now successfully manages affairs at the Castle, including many special events such as the Egyptian Exhibition.

#### AGAPI STASSINOPOULOS

Godmother of *Viking Rinda*, was born and raised in Athens, Greece. While collaborating with her sister, Arianna Huffington, on research for her book about the Greek gods, Stassinopoulos' love for the gods and goddesses was ignited and led to two books of her own – "Conversations with the Goddesses" and "Gods and Goddesses in Love".

#### ALEXANDRA LOBKOWICZ

Godmother of *Viking Forseti*, is the chairman of the nonprofit that oversees the preservation of the vast Lobkowicz collections including thousands of works of art, a significant library and family archive spanning eight centuries. With personal input from Alexandra and William Lobkowicz, Viking has introduced a privileged access tour to Lobkowicz Palace in Prague.

#### ZHANG LING

Godmother of *Viking Embla*, is a dedicated educator at Cen He elementary school in the city of Jinzhou, Hubei Province, China – a school sponsored by Viking River Cruises.

#### MARIT BARSTAD

Godmother of *Viking Tor*, is the sister of Viking's chairman Torstein Hagen.

#### DEJTJE MEIJER

Godmother of *Viking Bragi*, is President

and CEO of the Port of Amsterdam, which is the fourth largest port in Europe, hosting more than 100 sea cruise ships and 1,300 river cruises ships.

#### GERALDINE NORMAN

Godmother of *Viking Var*, an expert in the history of The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. Norman co-created Viking's successful "Hermitage Behind Closed Doors" excursion, offering Viking guests privileged access to one of the world's greatest museums.

#### SABINE RHABEK

Godmother of *Viking Jarl*, is a founding member of the emergency room team at the General Hospital (AKH) in Vienna and a former nurse at the United Nations Mission Hospital in Iran.

#### BIRGIT BRANDNER-WALLNER

Godmother of *Viking Atla*, is the co-owner of a Brandner GmbH subsidiary that operates 38 piers in Austria and Hungary. In 1997, Brandner-Wallner was the first woman in Austria to acquire her ship's captain certification.

#### ESZTER VÖLNER

Godmother of *Viking Aegir*, is a Budapest native, and lives on the Danube's shore. Daughter of Dr. Pál Völner, secretary of the Hungarian State Ministry of National Development.

\*Two of the 10 Viking Longships ships to be inaugurated on March 20 entered service in the summer of 2012 without an official christening ceremony, but did not qualify for inclusion in the Guinness World Record.

## EXPLORE THE RIVERS OF THE WORLD IN COMFORT

The spirit of exploration at the heart of Viking River Cruises continues to inspire new journeys for the world's leading river cruise line in 2014. Celebrating the senses across the world are three magical new itineraries: *Memories of Mandalay*; *Chateaux, Rivers & Wine*; and *Portugal's River of Gold*.

*Memories of Mandalay*, a new 16-day itinerary in Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand, marks the company's first-ever offering on the majestic Irrawaddy River.

"Burma is a magical destination in Southeast Asia, and we are pleased to offer our guests the opportunity to explore its rich history and spiritual wonders first hand," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking River Cruises. "We look forward to bringing our considerable experience and award-winning service to the Irrawaddy River in 2014."

The popular French itineraries have seen the introduction of Longships along its famous waterways as well as a new comer – *Chateaux, Rivers & Wine*. The eight-day cruise allows guests to enjoy the beauty and history of Bordeaux and the Aquitaine region, while exploring some of the world's finest names in wine.

Continuing with the Mediterranean theme, Viking has also introduced a 10-day itinerary in Portugal and Spain – *Portugal's River of Gold*. Stopping at ports of call largely unchanged for centuries with charming squares, colourful castles, baroque mansions and historic monasteries.

Comfortable and stress-free, river cruising offers a fabulous variety of destinations to explore. Little wonder so many people have fallen in love with this relaxing, immersive and enjoyable way to travel.



Viking River Cruises sets a Guinness World Record on March 20. Six of the ships were christened in Amsterdam while the other four were christened simultaneously with a live broadcast from Rostock.

REASON # **3**  
TO VOTE  
VIKING RIVER CRUISES

Best Cruise Line: International Operations

**HIGHEST CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

rating at 99.6% which means your clients will be coming back to book their next cruise.

Category 18: Vote Viking River Cruises



## VIKING TRAVEL STORY



Some individuals are just not people you want to travel with – well, not for long anyway.

I met some of them on a river cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest. Fortunately, they were not part of the 50- plus group I was with.

A virgin cruiser, I was looking forward to two weeks on a longboat. I could see myself unpacking, shoving the bag under my bed until it was time to leave, then lying on the sundeck. I imagined watching life pass by as we sailed through five European countries, exploring old cities, world heritage sites, and watching water pour into locks, or gush out of them.

**It's not often a dream trip exceeds expectations but this one did.**

I loved this "Grand European Tour" with all the connotations the name suggests: Luxury, leisure and indulgence, such as the traditional tours of Europe undertaken by rich, upper-class young

# CONFESSIONS OF A VIRGIN CRUISER

**HEATHER HAPETA SHARES ALL THE DELIGHTS OF A FIRST TIME RIVER CRUISE EXPERIENCE.**

men whose grand tours served as an educational rite of passage. A grand tour could last from many months to several years and was commonly undertaken in the company of a cicerone, a knowledgeable guide or tutor.

Our cicerone came in the form of Darinka, a constant ball of energy who, as programme director, co-ordinated all excursions and our on-board activities.

When anyone lagged she reminded us: "This is a cruise, not a holiday." We had places to see, things to do.

Perhaps Torstein Hagen, Viking Cruises' chief, was right when, at the blessing of this longboat earlier this year, he defined **ocean cruises as "a drinking man's cruise" and river cruises as "a thinking man's cruise"**.

Our lectures and demonstrations put old and current Europe in context. Many of the moaners did not attend these talks, or else talked throughout them.

The *Viking Njord*, named for the Norse god of the wind, was on its fifth trip and I savoured life on this fabulous five-star floating hotel. Early each morning I joined a few others on deck where, **with our cameras, coffee and straight-from-the-oven pre-breakfast pastries, we watched Europe come to life: Fishermen on the banks; cyclists using riverside trails; birdsong welcoming the new day.** Others on board were doing the same from the balcony of their cabins.

We had walking tours daily with local guides, while others came on board to give talks, demonstrations or concerts. Some did not value them.

"We live near Las Vegas and can see better shows than this any night of the week," one couple told me.

So, it seems river cruising is not for everyone, and some passengers said they took regular ocean cruises said they would not do another river cruise. It's personality-driven. If you like to be entertained all the time with movies, dances, casino and 24-hour food, river cruising may not be for you. I also heard complaints about there being no beauty shop or hairdresser, and, even, "too many cobblestones" on an excursion and "too many locks". Perhaps they had not read the website, or didn't realise that water cannot flow uphill.

Travelling up or down about 60 locks was, for most of us, fascinating. I often heard someone say, "There's a boat going down ahead of us". Luckily it was merely being lowered into the next part of a river or canal – not sinking. The trip was some 1600 kilometres up the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers, and along the Main-Danube Canal. Over the 600km that needed locks we climbed more than 400 metres.

As communities grew around rivers, and a dock was the heartbeat of the area, Europe is perfect for cruising. We usually **stopped right in the centre of the old city or town.** This meant we crossed the gangplank and our guided walk started immediately; sometimes we travelled by buses to fairytale castles perched on hills overlooking the river.

On tours, **our guide was equipped with a microphone that brought their voice right into our ears,** which meant we did not need to stay very close to hear the history, stories, and cultural or personal anecdotes along the route.

Some of the fabulous places we stopped at included Wurzburg's Bishops' Residenz, one of Germany's largest and most ornate Baroque palaces, and Bamberg, with its medieval city centre and picturesque city hall on a tiny island.

REASON #

4

TO VOTE

VIKING RIVER CRUISES

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**NEWEST & LARGEST FLEET** with over 25 new Longships operating on Europe's waterways in 2014

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## AVERAGE WEEKLY FOOD CONSUMPTION ON A VIKING SHIP



2,600  
eggs



450 bottles  
of wine



136 kg  
of beef



600 bottles  
of water



It's easy to become overloaded with history but with the past balanced with other activities, the trip was not overwhelming. In Passau, with its narrow streets and Italianate architecture, we listened to a concert on Europe's largest pipe organ. And in Vienna – well, what can I say? It's a fabulous city: The Opera House, a concert, and, of course, a coffee with a piece of famous Austrian chocolate cake, sachertorte, at Hotel Sacher were a must.

Nightly, just before dinner, Darinka would tell us about the next day's excursion. She peppered her language with words such as "most appealing", "delightful", "delicious", "divine", "scrumptious", "yummy", "gorgeous", and "delectable", words I used to describe the food.

The evening meal was **fine dining at its finest** and always started with a tasty appetiser, such as a carpaccio of salmon and caviar, to whet our appetites for the three courses that followed. And, unlike ocean cruises, wine was included with all meals. Tables seated four to eight and we were free to sit where we wanted – the moaners on the trip didn't like that, either.

**Food is essential to culture** and the choice of a more informal lunch setting on the front deck appealed to me. These meals specifically focused on the local region's food – sausage, kraut, and beer featured one day and, of course, on other days strudel or black forest cake appeared mid-afternoon. We were told: "Hungarians, Austrians and Germans do not count

calories. Butter and full-fat milk rules."

On these **eco-friendly vessels, as well as the chess set and sun loungers on the upper deck, there were solar panels and an organic herb garden** where I often met one of the chefs cutting a few herbs for our next meal. The little group of grouchies were also very upset that this sundeck was lowered for a few days so the boat could sail under low bridges.

As a nosy writer, just as I'd asked fellow travellers about their cruising preferences, I also asked the crew. Not one favoured the sea cruise. **With low passenger numbers on the longships** they got to know their guests better. They also told me that at sea there were queues for everything. They never got to talk to passengers, just dealt with an issue and then it was on to the next person in a long line.

**The flat-bottomed ship was amazingly quiet** and most of us did not read as much as we expected we would as we were always watching life along the river. There's a saying, that it's the journey not the arrival that matters, and river cruising epitomises that. This is life in the slow lane, sailing along at a gentle pace, soaking up the scenery, and learning as you go, seeing the highlights of places and meeting – mostly – great people.

So, if you fancy dawdling down the Danube, relaxing on the Rhine, or meandering along the snake-like Main, I can well-recommend this way of exploring. Perfect.

### VIKING RECIPE

## Sachertorte

Here is one of the recipes we have collected while travelling through Austria – Sachertorte. While the dessert is found in many of Vienna's coffeehouses, it can also be sampled on many of our ships. Here is a delightful interpretation of this Viennese treasure.

Visit Vienna on a *Danube Explorer* or *European Odyssey* cruise.

### INGREDIENTS

140g soft butter	2/3 cup of flour
1/2 cup sifted powdered sugar	1/2 cup sugar
8 egg yolks	2 tbsp apricot jam
8 egg whites	<b>Glaze:</b>
140g bittersweet chocolate	226g bittersweet chocolate
	2 tbsp butter

Preheat oven to 190°C. Cream the butter and powdered sugar. Add 1 egg yolk at a time, mixing until creamy. Melt the 140g chocolate in a double boiler or microwave; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Fold in flour. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites and sugar until stiff. Fold into chocolate mixture. Pour batter into a lined 9-inch springform pan. Bake for 50–65 minutes. Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack. Heat apricot jam and smooth over entire torte, including the sides. For glaze, melt the 226g chocolate with butter and frost the cake. Serve with whipped cream.



For more tantalising journeys,  
[www.vikingrivercruises.com.au](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au)

REASON #

5

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**GREAT AGENT SUPPORT** Fully commissionable bookings, flexible air deals, quick and informative webinars, Dare to Compare tool.

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## THE VIKING LONGSHIPS

# A new class of river cruising

Viking River Cruises, the world's leading river cruise line, led by Norwegian-born CEO and Chairman Torstein Hagen, offers the largest and youngest fleet of river vessels with 20 inspiring itineraries across Europe, Russia and China. The new Viking Longships, named after Norse Gods, herald in a new era of river cruising with spacious suites and staterooms, alfresco dining and much more.

The Viking Longships are a new class of vessel marked

by sophistication and inviting design coupled with high tech and patent pending features. Designed by celebrated maritime architects Yran & Storbraaten, the team behind the Disney Dream and the Yachts of Seabourn; and Los Angeles based Rottet Studios, the team behind the Beverly Hills Hilton's Penthouse, the new ships integrate cutting edge technology with amenities that reflect guest preferences and recent travel trends.

- A revolutionary new all-

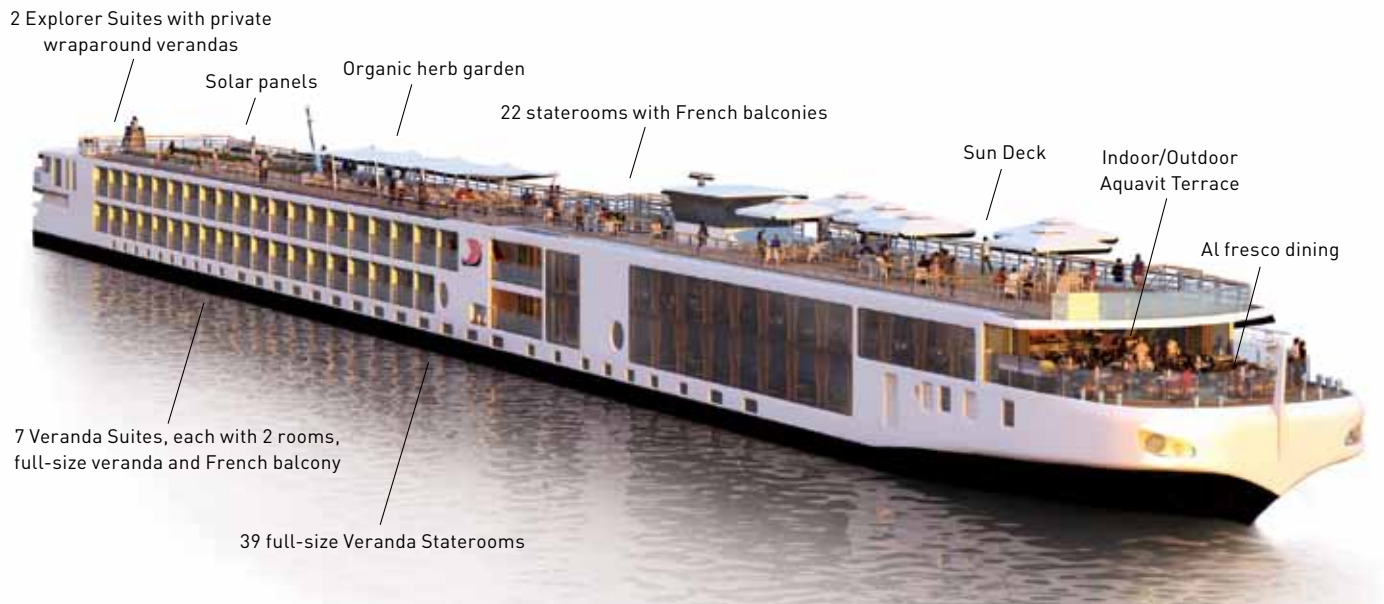
weather indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace

- Two Explorer Suites, the largest river cruise suites in Europe at 445 square feet, all are with separate living room, bedroom and private wraparound veranda offering 270-degree views.
- Asymmetrical corridor design allowing for more space, hence more Veranda Suites and Staterooms.
- Sustainability upgrades, such as solar panels, on board organic herb garden

and energy efficient hybrid engines for a smooth ride with reduced vibrations.

- Premium in-cabin amenities including heated bathroom floors and mirrors, Sony HD TV's and L'Occitane bath products.

In 2014, Viking plans to break its own record with the launch of 12 more new Longships. Viking will have invested over \$400 million in its fleet development, maintaining its crown as the world's leading river cruise line.



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- ✓ Fly to Europe or Russia for just \$995<sup>^</sup> per person return Economy-class
- ✓ Valid with any stateroom
- ✓ Fly to and from any major European gateway
- ✓ Fly with one of eight airlines; Qantas, Singapore Airlines, Emirates, Thai Airways, Cathay Pacific, British Airways, Scandinavian Airlines or Finnair.<sup>^</sup>
- ✓ Fly any date they desire<sup>^</sup>
- ✓ Plus, they can include an en route stopover at no additional air cost.

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Call 1800 131 744 to make a booking

<sup>^</sup>Viking \$995 Air offer is strictly limited, conditions apply, subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time. Prices are listed in Australian dollars, per person. Guests booked on a Viking 2014 cruise / tour itinerary can receive economy class airfare from Australia/New Zealand (from AKL/ADL/BNE/MEL/PER/SYD) to Europe return for \$995.00, with a reputable carrier chosen by Viking. Non-refundable full airfare payment (\$995 per person) is due at the time of booking. Guests may choose date for travel and major European gateway destination. For full list visit [www.vikingrivercruises.com.au](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au) or request at the time of booking. Excludes travel between 21 November 2014 and 10 January 2015. If guests want to specify airline, stopover city or if guests want to travel together with another couple on the same flights Custom Air will endeavour to meet their needs for a fee of \$200 per person. Offer is non-changeable, not redeemable for cash, non-transferable and non-redeemable for cruise credits. Price is in Australian dollars, per person and includes seasonal surcharges, all government fees and taxes and air fuel surcharges. Full airline terms and conditions will apply. Additional conditions apply, visit [www.vikingrivercruises.com.au](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au).

VIKING PROMOTION

## Win a signed copy of The Varnished Untruth!

Viking River Cruises are giving 1 lucky reader the opportunity to win a signed copy of Viking traveller, Pamela Stephenson's latest best-selling memoir, *The Varnished Untruth*.

For your chance to win, simply name a Viking Longship and submit your answer at [www.vikingrivercruises.com.au/promotion.aspx](http://www.vikingrivercruises.com.au/promotion.aspx)

Hurry as entries close on 19th April 2013.

