

# The New WAVE

Thirteen experiences you didn't know you could have on a cruise.

BY ELAINE GLUSAC



Up in the air: Parasailing with Paul Gauguin Cruises near Moorea, French Polynesia.

Penguin photography in  
Antarctica with Silversea.



**T**oday's cruising boom is good news for everyone, from aficionados who love setting sail to those ready to give a new vacation style a go. And as cruising's popularity grows – a projected 27 million people took a cruise in 2018 – cruise lines have diversified.

It's all about variety these days, not just in ship size – ranging from intimate 60-passenger yachts to next-level 6,000-person mega-vessels – but in style too. You can sip coffee on your balcony as you float down a European river, go searching for wildlife on an expedition ship, or get lost in a floating city at sea. Itineraries, too, are more creative: Onboard culinary academies and wellness centers, for example, pair well with surprising shore excursions, from hiking up mountains to attending orchestra concerts. These 13 experiences are offered by cruise lines that participate in Virtuoso Voyages – an exclusive program that offers complimentary benefits and perks to travelers who book cruises through a Virtuoso travel advisor – and they'll make you think twice about what you can do on your next cruise. Welcome to the new era of cruising, where almost everything goes.

## **1 GET YOUR DAILY CARDIO IN.**

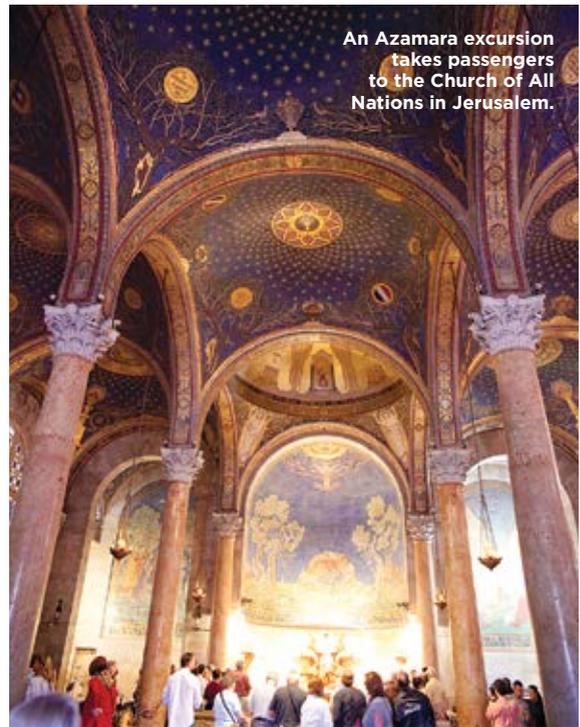
You've worked too hard to let your fitness routine slide for a week. Do as much (or as little) as you like with **AmaWaterways**, the river cruise line that stables bicycles for shore excursions and employs dedicated wellness hosts to lead core- and

circuit-training classes on board. On the new 196-passenger *AmaMagna*, which debuts in May and will be twice as wide as most river ships, cruisers can log a mile on the **top-deck walking track**, take a stretching class in the Zen Wellness Studio, hydrate at the juice bar, or get a massage. Disembark on an eight-day, Vilshofen-to-Budapest Danube River sailing to bike along the river or hike to a castle. *Departures: Multiple dates, May 5 through December 29. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard host and a guided tour of Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace.*

## **2 STAY OUT UNTIL 2 AM WITHOUT FEAR OF MISSING THE BOAT.**

**Azamara Club Cruises** pioneered overnight port stays, letting guests revel in the local nightlife in addition to the standard daytime scene. The boutique cruise line is amping up its after-dark experiences with a new series of exclusive **evening shore excursions**, such as catching the Saint Petersburg Symphony Orchestra in Russia or

taking in an acrobatics performance in Valencia, Spain. On an 11-day, round-trip-from-Athens sailing on the 690-passenger *Azamara Pursuit*, travelers can attend a traditional Jewish folk music performance by a klezmer group at Jerusalem's Ashdod Performing Arts Center. It's part of an immersive three-day stop in the holy city that includes visits to



An Azamara excursion takes passengers to the Church of All Nations in Jerusalem.



Bicycle tours on the Danube with AmaWaterways.



From top: Dog days on board Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* and the *Crystal Esprit* submersible.



the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock. *Departure: September 4. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard host and welcome reception and a \$150 shipboard credit or shore excursion in Jerusalem.*

### 3 EXPLORE MARINE LIFE FROM INSIDE A \$3 MILLION SUBMARINE.

Realize your James Bond fantasies with a trip on **Crystal Cruises'** *Crystal Esprit*, a 62-passenger yacht that touts a **three-person submersible** as one of its water-based activity options. (Jet Skis, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards are also at the ready.) A pilot takes two passengers at a time on explorations 3,000 feet below

the surface, including on a seven-day, Dubrovnik-to-Venice sailing. The *Esprit* is an ideal vessel for scuba divers and snorkelers, and its small size means it can call on smaller ports, including the yacht marina in Kotor, Montenegro; Croatia's walled city of Dubrovnik; and all the way north to Venice. *Departures: July 7, August 25, and September 8. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include a \$125 shipboard credit. Submarine experience, \$350.*

### 4 SET SAIL WITH YOUR PUP IN TOW.

Crossing the Atlantic on **Cunard's** eight-day, New York City-to-Southampton jaunt is slow travel at its finest – rest,

relaxation, and enrichment, from tango lessons and yoga sessions to film screenings and music recitals. Share the adventure with your four-legged BFF on the 2,620-passenger *Queen Mary 2*, which has an **onboard kennel** for 24 pets. Like their owners, cats and dogs receive VIP treatment, including a portrait session, a fleece coat, and a "turn-down service" of freshly baked biscuits. The pet lounge and play area welcomes animals from both sides of the pond with a Liverpool lamppost and an NYC fire hydrant. *Departures: Multiple dates, January 3 through December 8. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include private port transfers in New York City and London and an onboard specialty dining credit.*

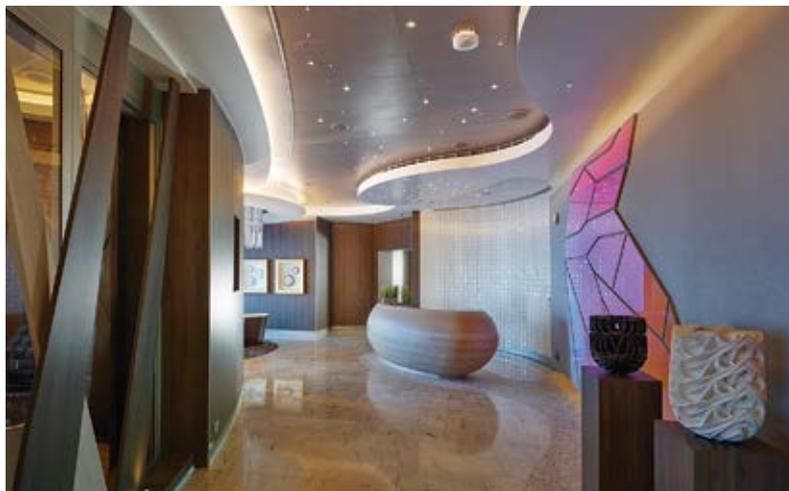
## 5 FINALLY FIGURE OUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A JULIENNE AND A BRUNOISE CUT.

Make tasty use of your time at sea on **Oceania Cruises'** 1,250-passenger *Marina* or *Riviera* ships by enrolling in a cooking class or three at the onboard **Culinary Center**. Kick things off with Slice: Mastering Chef Knife Skills to learn the basics of mise en place before trying your hand at making pasta or grilling. The 12-day, Rio de Janeiro-to-Buenos Aires voyage on the *Marina* offers a balanced diet of cultural excursions in Paraty, Brazil; beach time in Punta del Este, Uruguay; and food and wine tours in Montevideo and Buenos Aires. *Departure: December 7. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include prepaid gratuities.*



From top: An Oceania culinary class, the spa on board Regent's *Seven Seas Explorer*, and a Polynesian blessing ceremony in Moorea with Paul Gauguin Cruises.

**6 SPEND ALL DAY AT THE SPA.** Bookending stops in Sint Maarten, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Antigua, and Saint Bart's, four of the 11 days on **Regent Seven Seas Cruises'** round-trip-from-Miami journey on the 750-passenger *Seven Seas Explorer* are spent at sea, offering prime time to find some inner peace in the ship's full-service **Canyon Ranch spa**. This at-sea outpost mirrors the famous destination retreat, with yoga classes, seaweed wraps, hot stone massages, reflexology, and hydrotherapy features ranging from saunas to cold rooms. Between oxygen facials and pedicures, check out the ship's impressive art collection, including several Picassos, or learn about the healthful secrets of Mediterranean cooking in the Culinary Arts Kitchen. *Departure: January 8, 2020. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard welcome reception, and a \$150 shipboard credit or a private shore excursion and lunch in Saint Bart's.*



## 7 CELEBRATE YOUR ANNIVERSARY WITH A POLYNESIAN BLESSING CEREMONY.

Cast away to the South Pacific for the most memorable of occasions aboard the 332-passenger *Paul Gauguin* with **Paul Gauguin Cruises**. During an eight-day, round-trip-from-Papeete sailing through the Society Islands – full of archaeological sites, lagoons fit for snorkeling, and white-sand beaches – local onboard hosts known as Les Gauguines and Les Gauguins can bless couples in a traditional Polynesian ceremony by reciting a love poem, singing, and, after a **Champagne toast**, wrapping celebrants in a traditional patchwork *tifaifai* quilt. They'll also teach you how to say "I do" in Tahitian, dance island style, and make a basket out of pandanus leaves. *Departures: Multiple dates, January 5 through December 28. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard host and welcome reception and a \$150 shipboard credit or a private shore excursion in Moorea.*



## 8 DISCUSS ASIAN HISTORY WITH A COLLEGE PROFESSOR.

There's nothing like sailing with an astronaut, scholar, or filmmaker to vanquish the shuffleboard-and-buffets cruising stereotypes. **Seabourn** raises the intellectual bar with its **Seabourn Conversations series**, featuring notable guests who don't just lead onboard lectures, but engage with fellow passengers over meals and excursions as well. Ben Taggie, a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, will educate guests on the 599-passenger *Seabourn Ovation* during a 14-day, Hong Kong-to-Singapore cruise around Thailand and Vietnam. Passengers will tour energetic Bangkok, barbecue on an unspoiled Thai beach, and more. *Departure: March 2. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard welcome reception and a \$150 shipboard credit or a shore excursion in Da Nang.*

## 9 TURN YOUR EXPEDITION PHOTOS INTO MASTERPIECES.

Go beyond VSCO and your smartphone's filters: The fully equipped Photo Studio aboard **Silversea Cruises'** 254-passenger *Silver Cloud* offers master classes in composition, editing, and **Adobe's Lightroom and Photoshop programs**. High-tech printers encourage shutterbugs to create postcards and panoramic prints, regardless of whether they were taken using an iPhone or a DSLR. Photograph the wildlife that inhabits the bottom of the earth on a ten-day, round-trip-from-Ushuaia expedition to Antarctica. The ship's resident photo manager will coach passengers on adjusting shutter speeds so they can capture images of seabirds in the Drake Passage, penguins on the South Shetland Islands, and otherworldly icebergs in the Antarctic Sound. *Departures: Multiple dates, January 16 through December 10. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include a \$300 shipboard credit per person.*

## 10 LEARN HOW TO STEER A SAILBOAT.

Sixteen sails bound to four masts help power the 360-foot *Star Flyer* clipper ship, one of three throwback vessels in the **Star Clippers** fleet. Nautical culture meets luxury aboard this 170-passenger vessel, which has two swimming pools on its teak decks. Friendly deckhands, who hoist the sails manually each time the ship leaves port, offer **knot-tying classes**, ship-maneuvering lectures, and demonstrations on navigating with a sextant – a tool to measure angular distances at sea. Test your newfound skills on a 15-day, Barbados-to-Panama voyage, which visits the Grenadines, Grenada, the ABC Islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao), and Colombia, and culminates in a sailor's dream transit through the Panama Canal. *Departure: November 23. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include a \$150 per stateroom shipboard credit.*



From left: Crew members of Star Clippers' *Royal Clipper* prepare to help a passenger climb up to the crow's nest and a Seabourn lecturer.



## 11 TRAVEL BACK IN TIME ON THE NILE RIVER.

From the hand-built pyramids at Giza to tranquil Nile excursions aboard a traditional felucca, travelers will revel in the ingenuity of past centuries during their time in Egypt. Seven of the 12 days on **Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection's** round-trip-from-Cairo itinerary are based on the elegant 82-passenger *River Tosca*. **Egyptologist-guided excursions** decode the colossal statues of Memnon, the mummified remains of King Tutankhamun in his Valley of the Kings tomb, and the hieroglyphics adorning temples from Luxor to Aswan. Changing pace, ride a felucca and take tea at the hotel where Agatha Christie set *Death on the Nile*. Go now, while tourism is growing, but before the masses return. *Departures: Multiple dates, January 5 through December 28. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include a \$200 shipboard credit per person.*

## 12 FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOZART AND OTHER COMPOSERS.

Was it something in the Danube River's water – in the ripple of the waves or the movement of its current – that inspired some of Europe's greatest classical composers? Explore music theory visually and aurally on **Tauck's** 12-day, Budapest-

to-Prague Danube River adventure on the 130-passenger *Savor* or *Joy*. The seven-day sailing, which visits ports in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, begins and ends with a pair of two-night **stays in Budapest and Prague**. Passengers can catch an orchestra rehearsal at Vienna's Palais Auersperg and learn about Mozart's life in his birthplace, the Baroque city of Salzburg. *Departures: May 27 and October 7. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard welcome reception and a private shore excursion and lunch in Vienna.*

**From top:**  
An excursion in Vienna with Tauck and Uniworld's *River Tosca* sails the Nile River.



## 13 STOCK UP ON OLIVE OIL WITH A CELEBRATED CHEF.

The James Beard Foundation ships out its award-winning chefs and sommeliers on culinary-themed **Windstar Cruises** sailings, which are crammed with cooking demos, beverage pairings, and market tours. Chef Jamie Leeds of Hank's Oyster Bar in Washington, D.C., headlines a seven-day, Rome-to-Barcelona sailing aboard the 310-passenger *Wind Surf*,

which plies the Italian Riviera and the French Riviera. The chef will host a **wine-paired dinner**, lead a shopping trip, and demonstrate how to prepare some of her signature dishes. Work off the meals at Italy's Tuscan Archipelago National Park or along Cannes' Promenade de la Croisette. *Departure: June 22. Virtuoso Voyages benefits on select sailings include an onboard welcome reception and a \$150 shipboard credit per person or a private shore excursion and lunch in Monte Carlo.*

**Culinary fun with Windstar Cruises.**



**VIRTUOSO  
VOYAGES**

ENHANCED CRUISE EXPERIENCES

Virtuoso's innovative cruise program offers complimentary benefits on some of the world's finest cruise ships. When you book a Virtuoso Voyages cruise through your travel advisor, you'll receive a cache of perks, which can include dedicated hosts, welcome cocktail receptions on the ship, onboard credits, and exclusive shore excursions and experiences – such as a private car and driver in some ports. Many of the itineraries highlighted in this story are Virtuoso Voyages sailings; and with hundreds more annual departures, your travel advisor can find a destination and date that work for you.