

Float Your Way Through Europe Aboard the AmaSerena

By Dana Rebmann

European vacations are exciting and exhausting at the same time. When you've traveled a long way, you want to see and do it all, but living out of one hotel to the next can take the excitement out of any trip. How do you make vacation easy and entertaining? Keep fun afloat along the Danube River aboard AmaSerena.

River cruising is growing in popularity, but it's still a new concept to many travelers. Along with the clear benefit of un-packing once, when you dock, instead of looking at a touristy port, it's the destination you see from your cabin balcony. In one week, AmaWaterways Melodies of the Danube itinerary took me to four countries: Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany. AmaSerena has 82 staterooms and three suites and can carry 164 passengers. Its not-too-big,

not-too-small size means you can get to know numerous passengers or easily enjoy quiet stretches to yourself. Cabins make great use of space, with luxurious touches that make you feel spoiled. On the Violin and Cello decks, cabins offer twin balconies. Along with a sliding glass door to a balcony big enough to seat two, there is a second set of sliding glass doors that open to a false balcony. The result is a wall of windows that let in fresh air and an abundance of natural light.

An inside window that can change from opaque to clear allows the light to reach and brighten the bathroom. There's a comfortable amount of space to store toiletries above the sink area, but design details give the bathroom extra shine. Multi-jet shower heads and room to move, make the shower a place you might linger. Towels have a loop sewn on the end, so when you hang them on



Bike aboard AmaSerena



Macarons



Cheese plate

the hooks and shut the door, they actually stay put, instead of instantly falling to the floor.

The desk area is large enough to open a laptop and still have room for power adapters and the assortment of electronics in the typical carry-on bag. On-demand cabin entertainment includes music, television shows and a variety of movie options. Along with plush bedding, you'll find expected amenities like a hair dryer, safe and refrigerator with complimentary bottled water that's replenished daily.

All meals are included and offer a variety of regional specialties and local ingredients. Unlimited wine, beer and soft drinks are served at every lunch and dinner. The Chef's Table is a quieter alternative to the Main Dining Room, where diners can watch the chef prepare their multi-course meal. All passengers can dine at The Chef's Table one evening during their cruise, at no additional charge.

Regardless of the time of day, something tasty is being served somewhere aboard AmaSerena. A colorful multi-tiered fruit bowl and fresh baked cookies provide constant temptation in the Main Lounge. A complimentary specialty tea and coffee station is stocked and available round the clock.

The heated pool has a popular swim-up bar. A walking track and fitness room is available to help you sneak in a few vacation workouts, but even better is the fleet of bikes available for exploring stops on your own or with a guided tour. A majority of the shore excursions, including the bike tours, are included in the cost of the river cruise.

Internet access is complimentary and available throughout the ship. Along certain stretches of the Danube and during peak use, connectivity can be slow. But when it comes to the basics, like checking email or sending a picture or two home, you should be fine. If you want to stay in touch with family and friends, think about sending a postcard; AmaSerena has some beauties on board. They're complimentary, stamps and all. Your only job is to write them, the crew will get them mailed and headed home.

REVIEW AND PHOTOS BY DANA REBMANN. DANA WAS A GUEST OF AMAWATERWAYS, BUT AS ALWAYS HER THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ARE HER OWN.



AmaSerena in Linz



AmaSerena Stateroom