



VIKING STAR

Viking Cruises' Viking Star, the first of three new ships to launch the company's ocean cruising company, has been delivered from Fincantieri's Marghera shipyard.

The 47,800-ton, 930-passenger Viking Star will be joined by near-identical fleetmates Viking Sky and Viking Sea in mid-2016.

Key highlights of the new line, which is based on Viking Rivers' uber-successful series of riverboats, is its destination-oriented cruise experience, with few days at sea, long days in ports and more overnights in key places than offered by other lines. Features include value-oriented extras such as a selection of free shore excursions, complimentary Wi-Fi, and beer and wine served without charge at lunch and dinner. All cabins will have balconies and, the smallest, at 270 square feet, is larger than other cruise lines' average standard rooms. Top suites measure up to 1,300 square feet.

In designing the new ships, Viking has incorporated popular elements from its innovative river-oriented Longships design, such as the indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace dining venue and a design sensibility that reflects Scandinavia's penchant for a simple, airy and comfortable ambience. Ship traditionalists will appreciate Viking Star's walk-around promenade deck that fully encircles the vessel. Its Explorer's Lounge, an airy two-deck top-of-the-ship venue, offers an observation area -- a feature that many of today's newest cruise ships lack.

Nifty touches include its magradome pool, with a glass roof that opens in warm weather (and closes during inclement seasons) and a main restaurant that can be converted from an open-air venue to a cozy dining room with the push of a button that controls the windows.

Many new features reflect more of a boutique hotel feel, including a fire pit, an Armagnac bar, and a Nordic-influenced spa with snow room and sauna.

What's equally interesting is more traditional ocean cruise ship features that you won't find on Viking Star and its sister ships, such as casinos, lavish evening entertainment or elaborate kids' clubs.

The ship will have numerous restaurants, from a main venue to The Chef's Table, Manfredi's Italian Grill and The Kitchen Table, with plenty of alfresco options.