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- Unsurpassed Luxury
- All-Inclusive
- Culinary Excellence
- Wellness
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LUXURY CRUISE FEATURE

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Creating Memories, In Uniworld Style



Uniworld has perfected the art of understated luxury—and is offering a growing number of Kiwi travellers the chance to step aboard for a journey laden with authentic experiences, indulgent on-board dining and spectacular service.

As the old adage goes it's quality not quantity that is ultimately the foundation of the brand, known more for offering a floating boutique hotel experience than a river ship stay. The attention to detail on board is awe-inspiring and under the careful eye of The Travel Corporation's Bea Tollman the brand boasts a robust offering for clients looking to really experience a destination through the people, the landscape, the local produce—and of course the local wines. Included experiences like exploring the quaint French town of Viviers with a delightful (somewhat over-the-top, local Frenchman who later shared a poignant story of how his family hid Jews during the war, really connect guests to the area and the local people. Likewise hearing the trials and tribulations of the truffle industry from fourth generation truffle farmer and his naughty dogs; or the slightly madcap antics of a

daughter breaking tradition and turning the local olive oil industry on its head in Provence create memories for a lifetime, and a connection to the area and the people.

Back on the ship the experience is really next level. And while the décor may be far from understated, there's no denying it works. Each of Uniworld's 17 ships sport a different, but carefully curated, look and feel offering welcome escape from the homogenous nature of many cruise ships and hotels.

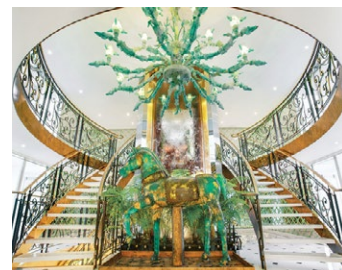
Brand Loyalty

Uniworld's passenger numbers from New Zealand continue to climb—but more important for agents, is the impressive repeat rate. "Once you get a Uniworld customer, you'll have them for life," quips Uniworld.

While that may sound too good to be true—on board a recent cruise there were multiple passengers cruising for the 10th time, one couple was on their 15th Uniworld trip, and another passenger has just celebrated her 40th sailing with the cruise line. Why? It's the combination of the crew, the incredible food, lavish ships and the genuine connections with the locals.

All-inclusive

The term all-inclusive can mean different things to different people. On Uniworld—it really means all inclusive. This includes the airport transfers at both ends of the cruise, daily excursions, buffet breakfast and lunch and the three-course a la carte dinners, paired with local wines nightly. There's also 24-7 room service included, there's washing machines onboard for passenger use, and the bar is always open. Beverages on offer range from espresso through to a comprehensive included bar. There's a selection of French Champagne on offer as well as snacks throughout the ship, throughout the day.



Ships Like No Other

Uniworld's second Super Ship, S.S. Catherine features a two-story lobby with a specially-commissioned Murano glass chandelier and whimsical life-size glass horse. A copy of the glass horse actually resides with the Japanese Royal family.



The Decadence Is In Detail

The word curated is overused these days—however there's no better term to describe the collection of décor and furnishings sourced from around the globe to give each Uniworld ship its own personality.

The attention to detail on the ships is second to none. Repeat passengers gush about their favourite aspects of the different ships—but there's also some constants. The ships house their own collection of artwork, each said to be worth around \$2 million, making them a talking point onboard. There's also a back story for many features of the ship's common spaces. From commissioned objets d'art, to the

furnishings there has been no expense spared. The lavish Savoir Beds (which can reportedly cost up to \$100,000) are all made to order for Uniworld.

All In The Family

A crucial but intangible part of the Uniworld experience is family. Many of the crew joke that they have grown up with the cruise line. They are employed by Uniworld direct, and a lot of the staff on board may be in their 10th year with the company. There really is a sense of family on the ships—so much so that some repeat passengers will select their next cruise based on where their favourite crew will be.



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Wellness On The Waterways

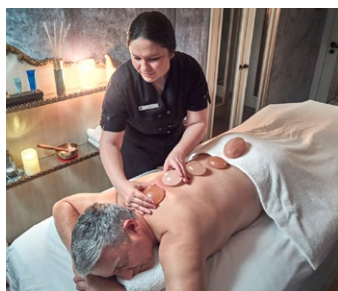


To cater to the changing expectations of river cruisers, Uniworld has made a conscious effort to introduce wellness elements across its river cruise experience.

These include the addition of an onboard wellness coach on every ship offering early morning classes ranging from vinyasa yoga to Nordic walking, through to an on board spa, personal trainer and a Travelling Lite menu.

... Let's Go

Passengers on all Uniworld cruises



Serenity River Spa

A range of spa treatments are now available on board Uniworld ships. Prices are available on application and urge clients to pre-book to avoid disappointment.

es now have access to wellness programmes—and the Let's Go on-shore programme is a popular way to burn off those incredible and explore the region.

Guided walks, gentle hikes and cycling tours are included excursions and are a great way to cover a lot of ground in a short period of time—while also allowing time to connect to a destination.

It's one thing to stop and take a picture of the famed Roman aqueduct Pont du Gare. However, it's a bucketlist experience to kayak down the Gardon River—and paddle under the ancient landmark.

There's host of options on offer, including golfing and gondola rowing, depending on the itinerary—and urge clients to at least give the Let's Go tours a try.

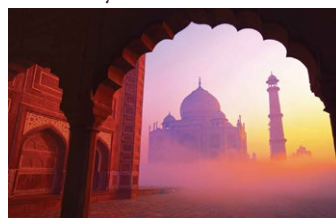
Given the main age demographic of passengers, there are active tours, but most suit a lower base fitness level.

... New Additions

New for 2020, Uniworld has also just released the details of two new well-being-focused cruises—the Rhine, Moselle and Blissful Baden-Baden, and the Brilliant Bordeaux sailing aboard the brand new SS Bon Voyage.

Spiritual India

In a bid to further connect passengers to the destination, Uniworld's India cruises are centred around wellness. Onboard the Indian sailings, Uniworld says the new wellness programme is designed around the destination's ancient tradition and practice of yoga. The complimentary Wellness Program is led by a certified and resident yogi and celebrates the holistic health benefits of yoga. Daily sessions introduce the different types of yoga, and there's group lectures and classes as well as individualised meetings, to ensure that guests at every stage of their yoga practice can participate in the culturally immersive programme comfortably.



An accompanying "Nutrition and Wellness Food" menu has also been developed especially for this programme. This includes organic items and guidelines for eating healthy. The menu will be available daily during breakfast, lunch and dinner service.



Indulge Guilt-free

There's no denying that the cuisine served on Uniworld is a key selling point—but for those looking to sample the local produce while watching their waistlines, the on board Travelling Lite menu features all of the flavour of Uniworld's traditional menu with fewer calories.

The healthier dining options change daily, and the chef still strives to use the best of the local produce.

A wide range of passenger's dietary requirements can also be satisfied, and both the waiting staff and chefs go to extreme lengths to meet passenger's requests.

Vegan and vegetarian meal options available and the on board waiters take the dietary requests seriously—first ascertaining if they are medical requirements.



In Your Own Space, At Your Own Pace

Enjoying a rooftop yoga class with an iconic backdrop is another memorable experience (and if the weather isn't cooperating classes still operate inside on one of the lower decks). However, for more independent clients who want to explore their own way, at their own pace, Uniworld offers a fleet of bicycles and sets of Nordic sticks. The crew can assist with maps and travel tips—just urge clients to allow plenty of time to get back to the ship—or they may be cycling along the river to the next port of call!

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Five-star Floating Dining



Fresh farm-to-table dining with Uniworld

With itineraries visiting some of the world's finest wine growing areas and offering the opportunity to visit iconic cooking schools, the expectations around on board dining are high for Uniworld passengers—and the brand does not disappoint.

Repeat passengers cite the food and truly all-inclusive product (including premium beverages) as a key selling point for them. And with what the cruise line says is one of the highest repeat rates in river cruising, they must be doing something right. Uniworld staff are trained by The Travel Corporation sister brand

New Recruit

The S.S. Bon Voyage is new to the Uniworld fleet this season and is designed to immerse guests in French culture, art and wine. There's an on board Le Salon Champagne and dining venues include La Brasserie serving traditional bistro fare; Le Grand Fromage offers regional cuisine, from locally-sourced ingredients, while at La Cave du Vin connoisseurs can gather for expert food and wine pairing dinners upon request.

Red Carnation Hotels, said to be the world's most exclusive boutique hotels.

As such the experience is more like dining in a five-star restaurant every night—where the wait staff interact as much, or as little, as the client indicates. A tidy, not formal, standard of dress is de rigueur which makes for a relaxed dining experience suitable for Kiwi travellers.

... Here To Help

Uniworld has a steadfast commitment to using fresh, local produce and offering dishes that reflect the local cuisine. However the cruise line also understands that there is no one size fits all for fine dining.

The waiting staff go to extreme measures to fulfil passengers' dining wishes—whether they be for medical reasons or preference.

In addition to the local fare and travelling lite options, a selection of standard dishes (such as steak) is offered every evening. If clients decide to be vegetarian for the night or just want a salad—nothing is too much trouble. And if passengers can't decide between two desserts—sometimes the crew just bring both!

Sommelier Notes

For those wine buffs looking to improve their knowledge, and palate, the on board sommelier offers pre-dinner tasting notes on the evening's wine selection. Often the wines are selected from local vineyards—or even the Tollman family vineyard. The sommelier is also available during the meal service to offer suggestions or more background about the wines on offer.

It's That Fresh

Passengers on a recent Uniworld cruise were surprised to see the executive chef shopping in the local market—ordering produce for that night's meal. It's that fresh. Uniworld's dedication to a farm-to-table-style dining means that it's a common occurrence to see the fresh produce being loaded onto the ship as they journey along the river.

Room Service 24:7



While meals are served in the dining room, for clients looking for a bite to eat at their own pace and their own 'place', room service dining is available around the clock. The options vary depending on the time of day, but there's a range of items to suit most tastes.

While it's a great way to interact with the staff and guests in the main dining room—there's nothing like enjoying breakfast in your cabin while watching the sun rise and taking in the riverside morning chorus before the nearby village comes to life.



Bea's Signature Dessert; Honeycomb Ice-cream

New Zealand may claim Hokey Pokey ice-cream, but Bea Tollman's honeycomb ice-cream has a global following. The ice-cream trolley is a decadent daily addition to the Uniworld buffet lunch.

Ingredients: 250ml corn syrup or glucose syrup; 250g granulated sugar; 15ml white vinegar; 15ml baking soda, sifted; 1L vanilla ice cream

Method: Dissolve the syrup, sugar and vinegar in a saucepan over medium heat. Turn heat to high and

boil until the syrup turns to a light caramel colour.

Take the pan off the heat and quickly stir in the baking soda. Pour the honeycomb mixture into a high-sided, lined, baking sheet pre-greased with butter. Leave to harden; don't refrigerate. Slightly soften the ice cream and break the honeycomb slab into pieces no more than 2 cm square, and fold half into the ice cream. Pour the ice cream into a mold or container and freeze again.

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It's The Little Things That Count

From the double espresso that appears on the breakfast table shortly after you sit down, to the glass of that Champagne you prefer (but can't pronounce) that the waiter suggests—Uniworld's on board offering re-defines the term 'all-inclusive'.

The fine dining, premium wines and spirits, daily excursions, wifi and pre- and post- airport transfers are all included—and are strong selling points in their own right.

Then there's the boutique hotel feel, the decadent Savoir beds and bedding, and one of the highest staff-to-guest ratios on the rivers.

However, it's the personalised experience offered by the crew combined with the truly all-inclusive product that turns a high-end holiday into a trip of a lifetime.

... Next Level

That personalised service includes everything from the crew addressing all passengers by their names



through to the housekeeper ensuring the specific chocolates you've been sneaking from the in-room lolly jar are discreetly replaced daily.

And thanks to some incredibly slick service training, all passengers are made to feel special.

"People come as strangers and leave as friends," says the SS Catherine's restaurant manager Todor Petronov. "[The staff] are encouraged to interact with people, and we have fun. We try to learn everything about people from the first day," he says. "We are the invisible shadow, you can't see us, but we are there—we have fun and people feel special. It's real hospitality."



Open All Hours

While drinking responsibly is always encouraged, one little-known fact is that Uniworld's on board bars do not have a set closing time. Instead, the closing time is when the last guest leaves the bar or lounge.

Loyal Following

Uniworld's product is high-end and many well-heeled passengers have sailed with the river cruise line numerous times. But it might pay agents to remember that the product also has a loyal following of passengers who save long and hard to go on their next Uniworld cruise.

A passenger on a recent Burgundy sailing shared how instead of retiring she continued to work part-time to fund her next Uniworld cruise. She said she had tried other river cruise options—but noted 'for me, it's only Uniworld'. "The crew make you feel special, they notice you—and sometimes they know what you want before you do. I save for a long time to go—I want it to be special."

Little Surprises

There's nothing like coming back from an evening of fine food and wine to a little surprise on your pillow. The nightly treats, which accompany the daily update, range from chocolates to L'occitane amenities, and are just another included extra for clients.



The Suite Life

Butlers are a definite perk of sailing in a Uniworld Suite. Like all crew on board the butlers are employed by the company (as opposed to a crew agency). However, Uniworld's butlers are trained at England's prestigious Ivor Spencer Butler School—and they are employed as full-time butlers.

This means clients in a standard room can also benefit from a little butler service, as room service (available 24-7) is included for all passengers and is served by a butler.

Daily Special

Urge guests to watch out for the daily breakfast special. While there's plenty to choose from at the buffet, the a la carte eggs benedict complemented by local produce is a must-try.

Fun For All Ages With Generations Departures



In response to increased demand from inter-generational groups, dedicated Uniworld Generations family cruises are now offered on five of its itineraries. The family-focused cruises feature all the inclusions of a standard Uniworld sailing as well as two dedicated family hosts on board to cater to special interests of the Junior Cruisers (aged four-12 years) and Teen Cruisers (13-17 years). There's also a host of extra child-friendly activities such as pizza making, helping the pastry chef make dessert, a ship tour with the captain as well as access to a kids lounge stocked with snacks and games.



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A Fleet Of Floating Boutique Hotels



In a world full of homogenous hotels and ships Uniworld prides itself on offering 17 completely different on board experiences across its luxury ship fleet.

Created to offer passengers a boutique hotel style stay, the ships are also designed to reflect the destinations which they are operating in. Some of the opulent interiors of the European ships may not appeal to all tastes at first. However, set on a river with a backdrop of passing castles and quaint villages—the

fine furnishings add another level of decadence to a European sailing.

And in-keeping with the Tollman family's attention to detail, perfected with its Red Carnation Hotels, each ship features unique statement pieces, styled to local character by Bea Tollman.

There's also rumoured to be around \$2 million plus work original artwork from the likes of Picasso, Matisse and Degas on board each ship.

... Oh Yes They Did

Some of the quirkier items aboard the Uniworld fleet include indoor waterfalls, the Queen Isabel has a helicopter landing pad, while the S.S. Antoinette features a chandelier that once hung in New York City's famed Tavern on the Green restaurant. Several of the ships have heated indoor pools (with underwater music) while the new SS Bon Voyage features what is said to be the only infinity pool on the rivers.

Goodbye Plastic

Uniworld is committed to eliminating all unnecessary single use plastics onboard its ships by 2022. The brand says it has already reduced plastic waste by 27,374kg in the last year by removing all plastic straws, water bottles and related plastics from all of the Uniworld ships.

Keeping It Ship Shape

In-keeping with The Travel Corporation's wider commitment to sustainability all of Uniworld's Europe ships are painted with a special hull paint which creates less drag caused by bio-fueling.

Uniworld says its fleet also sports especially-designed ship propellers that increase the ship's performance and efficiency.

In addition, energy-efficient on-board LED light fixtures are complemented by automatic air conditioning controls to optimise cooling resources.

The ships' on-board water cooling air-conditioning systems save energy, and there's also state-of-the-art waste water treatment plants on-board.

At the same time, the on-board garbage is separated and recycled on all of Uniworld's sailings.



That's Commitment

Uniworld is cautious about overcrowding, which means it takes a sustainable approach to cruising on Europe's rivers—with a focus on the quality not quantity of its ships.

So much so that the cruise line has re-purposed some of its Uniworld ships as its hip new U ships, such as the A (pictured above). U has a fresh approach to river cruising. "Our cruises are designed for those with a passion for exploring and a taste for authentic adventures," says U. "We're not your average vacation."

Extra eShips



Uniworld's newer Super Ships, including the SS Joie de Vivre and SS Catherine, feature modern and efficient diesel electric propulsion systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These features will all also apply to the line's new Mekong Jewel, due to launch on the Mekong River in 2020, and the newly-renovated SS La Venezia, scheduled to set sail on Italy's Po River in 2020.



It's A Super Future

By 2020, more than half of Uniworld's fleet will be Super Ships. New ships debuting in 2020 include the SS Sphinx (Egypt); the SS Mekong Jewel (Vietnam); the SS Sao Gabriel (Portugal) and the SS La Venezia (Italy- Renovation of River Countess). In addition a new, yet-to-be-named, super ship is planned for Russia in 2021.

The ships will each draw inspiration from their surroundings. Uniworld says it will be the only luxury river cruise line in Egypt and when it launches the SS Sphinx on the Nile in Jan 2020.

The all-suite Mekong Jewel, based in Vietnam and Cambodia (pictured above), is also set to launch in Jan and will feature interiors inspired by the French Colonial-era manor homes that once lined the streets of Old Saigon.



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