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# Neighbours Of LEASIDE & BENNINGTON HEIGHTS

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# RIVER CRUISING FROM A UNIQUE POINT OF VIEW...YOURS!

BY SCOTT WALDRON, CTM, FOUNDER & PERSONAL EXPERIENCE SPECIALIST, GRAVITATE TRAVEL

If you have never been on a cruise before, a river cruise is the perfect place to begin. If you have—well, you're in for a treat. Although river cruises in areas like Europe, Asia and South America have been operating for decades, more modern ships and captivating itineraries are tempting more intrepid travelers than ever before.

Aside from being onboard a ship, river cruising is actually quite unlike ocean cruising in most respects. Here, you'll find much smaller groups (100-200 passengers, as opposed to thousands), elegant dining, spacious staterooms with windows or balconies, and personal attention. What you won't find is large swimming pools with waterslides, long sea days, and endless arrays of on board activities.

Though families and groups are welcome on most river cruise lines, river cruising tends to be a more elegant experience than a traditional ocean cruise, with fine dining, well-appointed staterooms, and plenty of time for enriching, guided shore excursions at a leisurely pace. Most river cruise lines have minimum age restrictions in place, and thus tend to attract couples and mature adults as



opposed to families with young children.

As for costs, while “included” is a word that you don't often tend to associate with touring or cruising, in the case of Avalon Waterways, a river cruise means the end of extra costs and unexpected fees. From sparkling wine with breakfast and specialty coffees throughout the day, to regional beers and wines with dinner, and robes and bath amenities, you won't find hidden costs onboard a river cruise of this caliber.

Part of the Globus family of global travel brands, Avalon's excursions are led by certified local guides, with VIP access into the must-see sites. And unlike many other river cruise lines, Avalon's suites feature panoramic windows and beds that face outwards, perfect for enjoying the views river cruises are famous for.

Speaking of which, on a river cruise, the view is often considered the whole point. As you meander past towns and landscapes along inland waterways, the relaxed pace offers incredible views that change every day, which can be enjoyed from your room, or while dining or relaxing in a well-appointed bar or lounge.

Dining options are typically extensive, with buffets, 4 course-dinners, Continental breakfasts, and al fresco lunch, made with fresh, quality ingredients and prepared by expert chefs. Your health and wellness are top of mind too with on board fitness, salon services, premium mattresses, and much more.

If your river cruise appetite is whet, keep in mind that pre-and post-cruise touring is the perfect way to extend and complement your vacation experience. Monograms, for example—also part of the Globus family—offers escorted tours that match Avalon's arrival or departure cities, and offer the best of both worlds. Often, booking both together will save money and simplify your travel arrangements.

Whether you'd like a romantic mini-break, an extended family exploration, or something in between, you can choose the river cruise that reveals the very best of Europe, Asia, or South America - welcome aboard!

*Bio:*

*Scott Waldron, CTM, is the founder and Personal Experience Specialist at Gravitare Travel, a Leaside-area custom travel agency specializing in Adventure, Luxury, Family and Corporate Travel. Gravitare clients enjoy personalized service and many exclusive supplier benefits; Scott is always happy to make house calls and meet at your convenience.*

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