



Gems of the Danube Scenic Opal

By Hank Schrader

Accredited Cruise Counselor & Europe Destination Specialist

Our 7 Day Cruise Itinerary

- We sailed from December 1-7 2015, on the Danube starting from Nuremberg and ending in Budapest.
- We were sailing during the famous Christmas Market Season.
- Our ports were Nuremberg, Regensburg, Passau/Linz, Melk/Durnstein, Vienna and Budapest.
- Scenic cruises feature 3 signature tours. These unique tour features are called **Freechoice**, **Sundowners** and **Enrich**.

Scenic Opal Ship Overview

- The ship is very sleek and modern. The ship was built in 2015 and is well designed. The Scenic Opal is a 135m long ship. It has room for 169 guests & 53 crew members.
- There are 4 decks: the **Jewel Deck** (at the river line), the **Sapphire Deck**, the **Diamond Deck** and the **Sun Deck**.
- Facilities on board include Portobellos Restaurant, the River Café, the lounge & bar, a gift shop, the Crystal Dining Room, Table La Rive (only for Diamond deck guests, limited to 10 guests and serves a 6-course meal paired with fine wines), a massage parlor, a hairdresser salon, and a fitness center.
- On the Sun Deck (top level), there is a pool and walking track. The lounge & bar area is very large and open for a river cruise ship.

Standard Scenic Cruise Features

- Your own butler (services vary by stateroom category);
- complimentary beverages all day, every day;
- six dining options;
- the Tailormade GPS device;
- balcony suites on the 2 upper decks;
- electronically assisted bikes;
- complimentary Wi-Fi; laundry and airport transfers.
- There are no extra charges for tours or gratuities, but massages and the hairdresser are extra charges.

The Scenic Opal

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Electronic Assisted Bikes



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Dining Options on our Cruise

- The Crystal Dining room serves most of the meals. Breakfast and lunch are buffet style (although there are some items you can order off the menu) and most dinners are served at your table at night.
- **The best dining experience in the Crystal Dining room was the seafood buffet**—it is the best seafood buffet we have tasted on any cruise ship period!
- Other dining venues include the **River Café** (a casual all-day dining place), **Portobellos** and the **Table La Rive**.
- **Portobellos Restaurant** is for 32 guests at one nightly seating, and reservations are necessary, but each guest is given at least one chance to dine there during a 7 day cruise. We thought the five course Italian meal that was paired with Tuscan wines was excellent and a special feature of the cruise.
- You can also get **room service from your butler**, certainly not a standard feature on most river cruise lines.
- During good weather, there sometimes are special meals served on the Sun Deck area.

Crystal Restaurant.



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Crystal Restaurant Seafood Buffet



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Portobellos Restaurant

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Portobellos Restaurant



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Our Cabin

- Our balcony cabin was 205 square feet, a good size for a river cruise ship.
- It had a comfortable bed, 32 inch flat screen TV, a well-designed bathroom (shower only), and a good size closet with a stocked bar (no extra charge!)
- The **highlight was the Scenic Sun Lounge**—at a push of a button, the glass enclosed lounge converts to an open air balcony—it was awesome!
- **We had a butler**, who escorted us to our cabin and explained his duties and made sure we knew how everything in the cabin was and how it worked

Our Balcony Suite

Photo Anne Schrader
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Our Scenic Sun Lounge—It converts to an open air at a push of a button!



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Our Balcony Suite



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Our Balcony Suite Bathroom



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Our Balcony Suite



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Tours

- All tours are included—they call them **Freechoice**. At each port, there are at least 2 choices of escorted tours.
- Freechoice tours are divided into Active, Moderate and Relaxed, to allow you to choose the pace which best suits the tempo you desire for your vacation.

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Nuremberg

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One of Regensburg's Christmas Market



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

My Cruise Highlight

- I got to visit **Cesky Krumlov, the medieval Czech town**, a place I had wanted to see for quite some time.
- This place is great—a cool castle and a great charming village—and, for me, the highlight of the entire cruise.

Cesky Krumlov



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Cesky Krumlov



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Melk

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Durnstein

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Sundowners

- Our Sundowners experience was in a great little wine stubbe in Durnstein.
- Although we have visited the small village of Durnstein multiple times, we had never been inside this wine stubbe and **the wine/beer/food party with a band was really awesome.**
- It truly was a great end to the day!

Sundowners



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Sundowners



Enrich

- Our **Enrich** visit was an **evening concert featuring the music of Strauss and Mozart in Palais Liechtenstein** during our visit to Vienna.
- We started off the evening with a couple of glasses of excellent Austrian Sekt (sparkling wine).
- The concert hall had great acoustics, was lavish beyond belief and was really a memorable experience.

Palais Liechtenstein



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Palais Liechtenstein



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Budapest Parliament at Night—this was the view from our balcony!

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The, Hotel manager, Cruise Director & Captain Say Goodbye & thanks for sailing on Scenic!



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