



'I'd like to think I could be the next Attenborough' The rise and rise of Julia Bradbury

Weekend

Travel
starts on
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You spend date night
talking about the kids ✓

You're both
hands-on
parents ✓

You're
exhausted ✓

Sex is a rarity ✓

You both
work ✓

**Are you in a HIP
marriage?**

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50 best holiday
homes in the UK



A log cabin on a
Scottish estate



A barn with sea
views in Norfolk



A romantic
riverside house

Cruising

The 20 best river cruises

New ships in Burma, private visits in Venice and rumba on the Rhine — **Sara Macefield** reports on the latest river voyages

Luxury in Burma

Burma is the cruising hotspot of the moment and a new name on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers this year is Sanctuary Retreats, whose luxury all-suite vessel, *Sanctuary Ananda*, is being built by two Burmese brothers, in traditional teak style. Soak up the atmospheric pagodas, palaces and temples of the Irrawaddy before sailing along the quieter Chindwin River through the jungle towards the Indian border. **Details** A ten-night voyage along the Chindwin River on *Sanctuary Ananda* is offered by Abercrombie & Kent (0845 4851845, abercrombiekent.co.uk) on August 5, 2015. It costs from £3,875pp and includes flights, excursions and drinks

Châteaux on the Loire

Storybook castles and romantic châteaux make the perfect backdrop on this new programme of sailings along France's longest river, the Loire, with CroisiEurope. The French family-run cruise line claims to be the first company to offer full voyages through the Loire Valley. From April 2015, it will run sailings on a novel paddle-wheel riverboat designed to cope with shallow waters as it cruises to the cultural heart of this region, with stops at Angers, Ancenis and Saumur. **Details** A seven-night round-trip sailing from Nantes on April 14, 2015, costs from £1,280pp, cruise only (020-8328 1281, croisieurope.travel)

Rumba on the Rhine

Slip on your dancing shoes and get ready to chassé on a new "Strictly River Cruising" ballroom sailing with The River Cruise Line. Joining guests on this twinkle-toed voyage along the Rhine and Moselle rivers will be two professional dance teachers who will lead organised sessions, including an afternoon tea dance and evening ballroom dance. When they aren't waltzing on water, guests can explore the beautiful Moselle valley, famous for its wines and atmospheric medieval towns. **Details** A one-week sailing from Andernach to Koblenz on October 10 costs from £799pp, including coach travel and ferry crossings (0844 5446437, rivercruiseline.co.uk)

Knitting on the Danube

Casting off takes on a whole new meaning on this knitting cruise with



AmaWaterways. It is being hosted by Barry Klein, described as one of the world's top knitters, who will lead classes on stitch patterns and knitting techniques. Enthusiasts can also swap knitting patterns as they cruise through the former Austro-Hungarian empire, stopping at Linz, Vienna and Bratislava. **Details** A one-week cruise from Vilshofen to Budapest on December 27 costs from £2,149pp. Flights, drinks with meals and excursions are included (0808 2235009, amawaterways.co.uk)

Amazing Amazon

Pink river dolphins, chattering monkeys, and the vivid hues of flocks of macaws give cruises along the Amazon a pioneering feel. Aqua Expeditions offers sailings along the Peruvian stretch of this legendary waterway on two luxury vessels, accommodating between 24 and 32 passengers. The *Aria Amazon* and newly refurbished *Aqua Amazon* combine haute cuisine and opulent surroundings with jungle treks and wilderness outings. **Details** A ten-night package that comprises a seven-night sailing on *Aqua Amazon* is offered by Bales Worldwide (0844 4881192, balesworldwide.co.uk) on September 12. It costs from £6,250pp and includes flights and two overnight hotel stays in Lima on the outbound and inbound journeys.

Private Prague

Soak up the sights and sounds of the Lobkowicz Palace in Prague on an Elbe sailing aboard one of Viking River Cruises' new "longships". Guests are promised unrivalled access to one of the Czech Republic's most significant cultural sites on tours guided by a Lobkowicz family member to view artistic and musical treasures that include Beethoven's handwritten manuscripts. A private concert in the palace's Baroque concert hall is followed by lunch in the family's original living quarters. Other stops on the sailing include Koblenz, Heidelberg and Würzburg. **Details** An 11-night voyage from Paris to Prague on November 13 costs from £3,295pp and includes flights, drinks with meals and free wi-fi (0800 3196660, vikingrivercruises.co.uk)

Venice to Verona

Relish the rich flavour of Italy on a voyage combining the Renaissance glories of Venice's palazzos and piazzas, the romance of Verona and the scholarly air of the medieval walled city of Padua. During this Univerworld cruise along the Po, passengers can join an exclusive after-hours evening tour of St Mark's Basilica

The Adige river at the Italian city of Verona, above, and the interior of the American Queen steamboat, below

in Venice, or they can roll up their sleeves for a pasta-making workshop in Bologna. **Details** A seven-night round-trip cruise from Venice on June 22 is offered by Titan Travel (0800 9885823, titantravel.co.uk). It costs from £2,439pp and includes flights, gratuities, drinks and shore excursions, plus its door-to-door airport pick-up service

Steamboat in the States

Cruise the historic heartlands of the Deep South in style aboard the gracious *American Queen* paddle-wheel steamboat. This grande dame is a main attraction, with its period furnishings reflecting the 19th-century glory days of the steamboat era. As for Old Man River himself, the famous Mississippi will take you past spectacular plantations crowned with beautiful antebellum homes to quaint towns such as St Francisville in Louisiana and historic centres including Vicksburg and the musical hub of Helena in Arkansas. **Details** An eight-night package comprising a one-week sailing from New Orleans to Memphis is offered on November 14 by Fred River Cruises (0808 1636247, fredrivercruises.co.uk). It costs from £2,496pp and includes flights and an overnight hotel stay

