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# Let's Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE AND LEISURE TRAVELLERS



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## Gold Stars for Aqua Expeditions

By Gayle Dickson

As a frequent world traveller, I love ticking new and exciting ventures off my bucket list. What is unexpected though is when that tick massively outweighs all your expectations...and then some!



It has been a lifelong dream of mine to visit Vietnam and Cambodia and to cruise sedately along the Mekong River. Thus, it was with much anticipation that I accepted an offer of just such a trip from Aqua Expeditions on their ship, Aqua Mekong.

Flights were rapidly booked, hotels and land operators contacted, and it wasn't long before my exciting dream took shape as an actual itinerary that would see me exploring the Mekong region for nearly three weeks.

I have returned with many memories...some exceptional, some sad; the latter after my visits to Cu Chi and the Killing Fields. However, like the rest of Asia, the people are incredibly warm...they're knowledgeable, proud, sometimes shy, but always welcoming.

The happiest memories I have of this trip all emanate from the cruise itself. From the moment we were met at the hotel in Saigon and transported in air-conditioned luxury to the vessel, I knew I was in for a rather special experience. It's actually rather difficult to know where to start this account - there was so much that stood out. I feel a book coming on, but I simply don't have the space for that here!

Aqua Mekong stands out from all the other cruises on offer...she is sleek, modern, beautiful, and an exceptional blend of wood and glass. With only 20 stunning and large cabins, you can always find a quiet spot to reflect or simply watch the passing shoreline.



That said, the communal areas are numerous and we often gathered in the massive saloon for cocktails and chats, out on the aft deck on the loungers or cabanas, or on the foredeck where the bar staff catered to your every whim whilst you cooled off in the pool.

If fitness is your thing, you couldn't ask for more than the fully equipped gym with wall to ceiling windows, which ensured you remained in touch with where you were. There's also an onboard spa and I can tell you that I went back for seconds, so deft were the therapists! From a private movie room to a well-stocked library, Aqua Mekong manages to pack in so much.

On most cruises, shore excursions are an added cost... not so here. Two shore excursions were offered to guests every day, and the skiffs to shore were full every day! From temples and city tours to unique village tours, the knowledgeable guides knew exactly where to find the best treasures amongst so many. Because of their relationships with the locals, we were able to experience things that many travellers would never be afforded!



We were welcomed into private homes, ate with the locals, were offered unique entry points to tourist spots and generally treated like royalty.

Talking of royalty, I have no doubt that even the bluest bloods would be impressed with the cuisine onboard Aqua Mekong! Three meals a day all consisting of at least three courses. While you were presented with a menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner, that didn't mean you couldn't ask for something else. I don't eat much fish, and the staff were aware of this and catered to my needs without a hitch. The restaurant and kitchen staff were only too happy to discuss the menu in-depth, and even shared their recipes! The service and presentation of the meals were worthy of any five star restaurant I've ever dined in!

Since we're doling out stars yet again, I'm giving the cabins at least six! The 20 cabins are almost identical, the difference being that a few have balconies. The balcony rooms are thus a little shorter on space than those without...but those without have massive sliding walls of glass that open up completely, so you have the same effect just more space.





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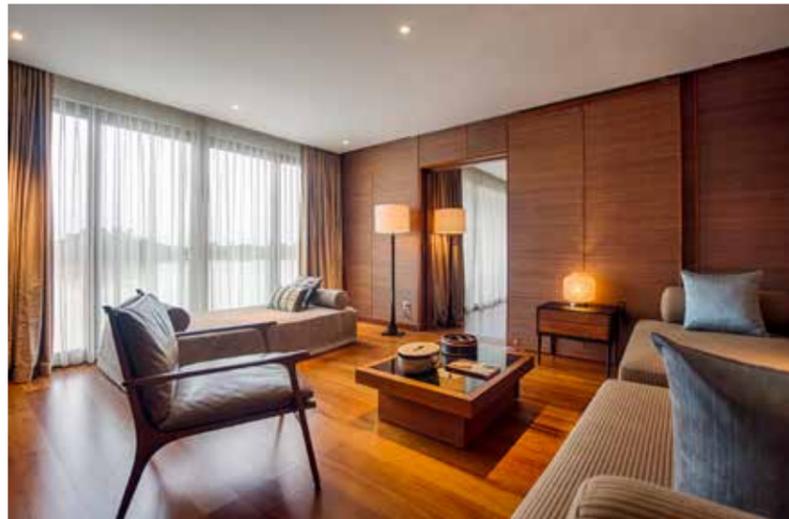
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In this additional space, I had two day beds to lounge on. There was also room for a reading chair and table, a massive and exceptionally comfortable bed, large cupboards and an enormous en-suite offering a view from the walk-in shower that you'll have nowhere else on earth! All the mod-cons were there - telephone, individual air-conditioning, hair dryer, luxury amenities, fluffy robes, his and hers size sandals...the list goes on. Yes, there was even a laundry basket!

Toss your clothes in there and they'd be returned at day's end beautifully laundered...at no charge! Oh, and after returning to the vessel from a shore excursion, they cleaned your shoes for you too!

All I can say is that the tick on my bucket list of a Mekong cruise ended up being more than a handful of huge gold stars. Would I do it again? Hell, yes! In fact, I now have Aqua Expeditions' South American cruise, along the Amazon, added to my bucket list! ■



AQUA EXPEDITIONS

# Luxury Mekong River Cruises

*Journey through Cambodia and Vietnam and experience the vibrant culture, history and cuisines of Southeast Asia.*



## AQUA MEKONG FEATURES:

- Exclusive 1:1 guest to staff ratio
- 20 air-conditioned design suites featuring panoramic, floor to ceiling windows, daybed and en-suite bathroom
- World-class dining with consulting chef David Thompson
- Forward-facing infinity pool, private indoor & outdoor cinema
- Sleek, contemporary award-winning interior design
- Private fleet of elegant aluminium launch boats

## INCLUDED IN THE CRUISE FARE:

- All meals whilst onboard
- Beverages onboard (non-alcoholic, premium wines & beer)
- All shore excursions - 10 guests per guide
- Complimentary laundry service
- Ten bicycles for guests to explore independently on shore
- Wireless internet (intermittent satellite connection)
- Group Transfers



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4 Night Explorer Cruises from US\$3,780pp

7 Night Expedition Cruises from US\$6,615pp

Fares based on cruises departing 27 April 2018 to 14 August 2018.  
 Rates are in USD, twin share in First Deck Suite and includes taxes. Conditions apply.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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