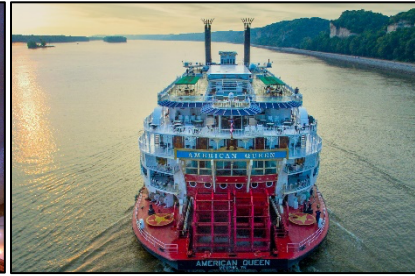
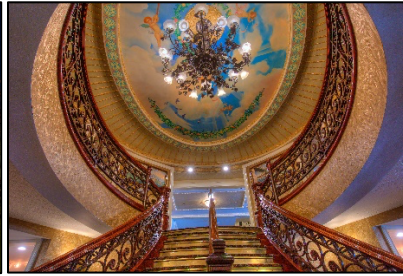


# AMERICAN QUEEN® STEAMBOAT COMPANY



## Flagship *American Queen*® Resumes: Full American Queen Steamboat Company® Fleet in Service

**NEW ALBANY, Ind., August 9, 2021** – [American Queen Steamboat Company](#)®, part of the Hornblower® Group, announced that the *American Queen*® welcomes her first revenue guests in 18 months today, becoming the fourth vessel to return to service for the U.S. flagged cruise line. As the world's largest and grandest paddlewheeler, the *American Queen* sets sail from New Orleans resuming the 2021 season on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. As the flagship vessel, the *American Queen*'s return to service is an important milestone as it marks American Queen Steamboat Company's 10th anniversary of the company closing on the purchase of the storied paddlewheeler (Aug. 8, 2011) almost a decade to the day.

"The purchase and restoration of the *American Queen* ushered in a new renaissance of U.S. River cruising ten years ago," said John Waggoner, founder and chairman of American Queen Steamboat Company. "Our close-to-home cruise experience resonates more than ever, and I feel such pride seeing how far our offerings have expanded. Today the *American Queen* embarks from New Orleans, the *American Empress*® welcomes guests in Clarkston, Wash.; our boutique paddlewheeler, the *American Duchess*™, is docked under the Gateway Arch in St. Louis and our newest riverboat, the *American Countess*™, is calling on Nottoway Resort in White Castle, La."

American Queen Steamboat Company bookings for 2021 and well ahead into 2022 and 2023 continue to reflect pent-up demand for cruising close-to-home. In addition, the cruise line reports 10+ record-breaking individual booking days in 2021, and the current sailing season is almost sold out with limited availability on remaining 2021 Thanksgiving- and holiday-themed voyages. American Queen Steamboat Company is also offering the FREEDOM sale, a bonus savings of up to \$2,000 on select 2022 bookings made by August 31, 2021.

Tourism represents the second-largest economy on the Mississippi River according to The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI), a coalition of 101 mayors. The return of the American Queen Steamboat Company fleet to the Mississippi and Ohio rivers is a welcome boost to the region's hospitality industry.

“*American Queen* guests will have an immediate economic impact on the port cities she calls on from pre-cruise hotel stays to visiting attractions and patronizing small businesses along the river,” shares Shawn Bierdz, president of American Queen Steamboat Company. “To meet the needs of having the entire fleet operational, our company is up to over 500 team members once again and continuing to grow with open shipboard and shoreside positions.”

American Queen Steamboat Company began a phased restart in March under SafeCruise™ protocols and became the only fully vaccinated U.S. river cruise line for both guests and crew effective July 1. The 100% vaccination policy allows guests the freedom to cruise with confidence in accordance with the most current CDC guidelines. All guests must show proof of COVID-19 vaccination with their vaccination card prior to pre-cruise hotel check-in. SafeCruise policies are subject to municipality and state rules based on current regional conditions and may be modified without advance notice to adhere to local health and safety guidelines.

For more information on American Queen Steamboat Company or to book a cruise on the *American Queen*, *American Duchess*, *American Empress* and *American Countess*, please visit [www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com](http://www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com), call 888-749-5280 or contact your travel agent.

For images, please visit <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/22aaycVwQZ> | Photo Credit: American Queen Steamboat Company

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### **American Queen Steamboat Company**

American Queen Steamboat Company® is the operator of the U.S.-flagged *American Queen*®, the largest, most opulent riverboat in the world. Longer than a football field, towering six decks in height and laced with fanciful gingerbread trim, she is a marvel of modern engineering. Her journeys through the heartland offer a unique perspective on America’s history, culture and landscape with convenient departures from some of America’s most iconic river port cities, including Memphis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Minneapolis. In April 2014, AQSC began serving the Pacific Northwest with the opulence and grandeur of the *American Empress*®, and added the *American Duchess*™ to the Mississippi River in August 2017. The newest and fourth boat to join the American Queen Steamboat Company fleet is the *American Countess*™, which made its debut in March 2021 and sails the Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee rivers.

### **Victory Cruise Lines**

New Albany-based Victory Cruise Lines operates *Victory I*® and *Victory II*™ identical 202-passenger ships, and the upcoming newly built 200-passenger vessels, the *Ocean Victory*™ and *Ocean Discoverer*™. Victory Cruise Lines operates all-inclusive cruises to Canada, the Great Lakes, New England and Eastern Seaboard, with upcoming itineraries to Alaska on the *Ocean Victory*™ in 2022 and the *Ocean Discoverer*™ in 2023. For more information about Victory Cruise Lines, contact a travel agent or visit [www.victorycruiselines.com](http://www.victorycruiselines.com).

### **About Hornblower Group**

Hornblower Group is the world's leading provider of water-based experiences with headquarters in San Francisco, Chicago, New York and London. The group's expansive portfolio reflects almost a century of sector expertise and innovation, which over time has continually redefined the marine hospitality industry, establishing a portfolio of distinctive award-winning brands across multiple categories including Hornblower Cruises & Events (Dining & Sightseeing), American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruises Lines (Overnight) and NYC Ferry, HMS Ferries and Seaward Marine Services (Transportation). Hornblower also operates the official ferry boat service to Alcatraz Island, the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Memorial Museum on behalf of the National Park Service as well as Hornblower Niagara Cruises on behalf of the Niagara Parks Commission. For more information visit [www.hornblower.com](http://www.hornblower.com).

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