

AMERICAN QUEEN® STEAMBOAT COMPANY



American Queen Steamboat Company™ Christens the *American Countess* March 21, 2021

New Riverboat Received Bourbon Blessing in New Orleans Followed by Preview Cruise to Memphis

NEW ALBANY, Ind., March 22 , 2021 – [American Queen Steamboat Company](#),™ a Hornblower® Family company, is excited to announce the successful christening of the [American Countess](#) in New Orleans on March 21, 2021. American Queen Steamboat Company followed strict SafeCruise™ health and safety protocols, welcoming guests to experience the new riverboat as it officially joined the paddlewheel fleet. The christening follows the *American Duchess*' recent return to service with reduced guest capacity on March 15 on the Mississippi River. The *American Empress* and flagship *American Queen* will sail later this year.

American Queen Steamboat Company resumed its operations with newly enacted health and safety protocols which include, but are not limited to, mask mandates in all public areas where social distancing is not possible, 100% testing of all guests and crew and mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for all guests and crew that will go into effect for all sailings beginning July 1, 2021.

“As we celebrate the grand debut of the *American Countess*, I could not be more appreciative of the incredible team that made it possible,” shares John Waggoner, founder and CEO of American Queen Steamboat Company. “We listened to our returning guests’ feedback on what they would like to see in a new riverboat and created a contemporary American masterpiece that guests are eager to experience.”

In her debut following the christening, American Queen Steamboat Company is hosting an abbreviated VIP cruise aboard the *American Countess* on March 21 - 28, 2021 from New Orleans sailing northward along the Mississippi River, stopping in Nottoway and Natchez. The christening event on March 21 took place at the Mansion House at Mardi Gras World and dockside.

American Queen Steamboat Company, Angie Hack, daughter of American Queen Steamboat Company CEO and founder John Waggoner, was named the *American Countess*' godmother and christened her with a bottle of Maker's Mark Bourbon, a signature American Queen Steamboat Company tradition, that was presented by award-winning restaurateur and New Orleans native, Dickie Brennan. Additional christening event highlights included special guest Billy Nungesser,

Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana and Brandy Christian, President and CEO of Port of New Orleans and Hornblower Group CEO Kevin Rabbitt.

“Year after year, American Queen Steamboat Company has played an essential role in the U.S. river cruising renaissance benefitting the state of Louisiana from building boats in our shipyards, showcasing our iconic river cities and quaint towns to putting a spotlight on our state through its marketing efforts,” said Billy Nungesser, Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana. “It was an honor to see this Louisiana-built gem today, and I look forward to her bringing thousands of travelers through ‘The Pelican State.’”

Following the christening and preview cruise, the *American Countess* will begin her maiden voyage revenue cruise on March 28, 2021, sailing from Memphis to New Orleans. This journey showcases the diversity of the Lower Mississippi River on an eight-day sailing beginning with a stop at the Port of the Mississippi Delta and continuing down the river to Vicksburg, Natchez, St. Francisville, Baton Rouge and the American Queen Steamboat Company exclusive port stop at Nottoway Plantation before arriving in New Orleans. Guests will enjoy the same signature distinctions that make American Queen Steamboat Company the most celebrated river cruise line in America, from fine dining and world-class entertainment to thoughtfully planned shore excursions.

Built using the existing hull of former gaming vessel the *Kaneshville Queen*, the *American Countess* was lengthened by 60-feet and underwent a total renovation in the Gulf Island Shipyard in Houma, L.A. Her sleek, contemporary design offers plenty of open space for guest gatherings, especially the portside bar, which will delight guests with an 80-foot panoramic view. With four decks, including a Sun Deck, and 123 inviting staterooms in four categories, this paddlewheeler is a home away from home on six- to 15-day itineraries.

For additional information and reservations, please contact American Queen Steamboat Company at 888-749-5289, visit www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com or call a professional travel agent.

For American Queen Steamboat Company health & safety fact sheet, please click <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/GegewBthG6>.

For images of the christening ceremony: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vp2kvgxw0o9o90c/AADU7l3GrhbH5RLL8lJWWiRka?dl=0>

For images: <https://aqsc.smugmug.com/AQSC-Public>

SafeCruise Health and Safety Protocols

SafeCruise™ is a commitment to guests' safety and security throughout the entire cruise experience, and features pre-boarding, boarding and onboard processes to enhance health and safety. American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruise Lines recently announced a COVID-19 vaccination mandate for all guests that will go into effect for all sailings beginning July 1, 2021. Additionally, the vaccination requirement will apply to shipboard crew members and non-shipboard employees across all seven vessels. American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruise Lines are the first U.S.

based cruise lines to mandate guest vaccination and the only cruise lines globally to mandate vaccination for crew members.

Established by the operators, this latest protective measure expands upon the enhanced health and safety measures announced in 2020, which include, but are not limited to, pre-cruise COVID-19 testing of all guests and crew and a mask mandate in all public areas where social distancing is not possible. Additionally, American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruise Lines are continuing to work with leading health advisors, including a partnership with VIKAND Medical Solutions, and under the discretion of the CDC on evolving guidelines to protect guests, crew and the communities the vessels visit. For additional questions, please visit the American Queen Steamboat Company and Victory Cruise Lines website for ongoing [health and safety protocols](#).

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, American Queen Steamboat Company 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 fourth boat to join the American Queen Steamboat Company fleet is the *American Countess*™, which will cruise 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 2021 and the *Ocean Discoverer*™ in 2023. For more information about Victory Cruise Lines, contact a travel agent or visit 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

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