



## Ocean Victory: How this new, small ship is a game changer for Alaska cruises

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When it comes to cruising in Alaska, there have long been just two distinct options: the big ocean liners that cruise-averse travelers love to hate and the small ships that cater to outdoor enthusiasts seeking adventure over amenities.

I've generally avoided both, being put off by the crowds and mass-market feel of traditional ocean liners and too spoiled by years of luxury travel to be tempted by the more basic adventure ships.

Enter Ocean Victory, which merges luxury and adventure for an experience that is as unique to Alaska's waterways as its pointy, submarine-looking X-bow nose. The new 186-passenger expedition ship is operated during the [summer Alaska cruise season](#) by American Queen Voyages, a company best known for its red paddle-wheelers that ply America's rivers.

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Ocean Victory marks the company's first foray into Alaska and expedition cruising. The itineraries are designed to appeal to a younger demographic than AQV's more senior-oriented river, Great Lakes and coastal cruising trips.

Judging from the reactions of passengers and travel advisors on its inaugural sailing, the ship is going to be a huge hit. On its face, the blue and white polar-class vessel radiates pure adventure. It features retractable, over-the-water observation decks that offer in-your-face wildlife viewing and special lower deck doors and a fold-out platform for launching kayak and Zodiac expeditions. The ship is so hardy it will spend winters [sailing Antarctica](#) for Albatros Expeditions.

Inside, the contemporary boutique-hotel vibe says pure comfort. Balcony cabins and spacious suites come equipped with large televisions, luxury bedding and heated bathroom floors. The ship is laden with amenities, including a small spa, fitness center, infinity pool, two outdoor hot tubs, two dining areas and three bars.