

Vietnam's Luxury Cruise Industry Rises In Asia

For decades, Asia's luxury cruise landscape has been dominated by foreign operators on iconic waterways. Vietnam is increasingly joining that conversation.

HANOI, HANOI, VIETNAM, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Vietnam's Luxury Cruise Industry Rises in Asia: Two Vietnamese Brands Named Among the Top 6 in Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026

Heritage Cruises and Emperor Cruises Strengthen Vietnam's Position as an Emerging Luxury Cruise Destination in Asia



Heritage Cruises

Vietnam's luxury cruise industry has reached a significant milestone as two homegrown cruise brands, Heritage Cruises Vietnam and Emperor Cruises Ha Long, have been ranked among the Top 6 Best River Cruises in the prestigious Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026.

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LuxGroup's Lux Cruises Group, A Vietnamese Luxury Boutique Cruise Line with 3 brands Emperor Cruises, Heritage Cruises and Amiral Cruises”

Luxury is Culture

The recognition places Vietnam alongside some of the most respected names in Asia's luxury travel sector and reflects the country's growing reputation as a destination capable of delivering world-class hospitality, authentic cultural experiences, and innovative luxury tourism

products.

According to the official Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026 rankings, Heritage Cruises Vietnam secured the No. 5 position while Emperor Cruises Ha Long ranked No. 6 among the region's best river cruise experiences.

The achievement represents a remarkable advancement from 2025, when Heritage Cruises and Emperor Cruises were ranked No. 8 and No. 10 respectively. Their rise into the Top 6

demonstrates increasing international recognition of Vietnam's premium tourism offerings and the growing appeal of Vietnamese luxury hospitality on the global stage.

Industry experts view the awards as more than a recognition of individual brands. They signal the emergence of Vietnam as a serious contender in Asia's fast-growing luxury cruise market.

"Being recognized by discerning travelers and readers of Travel + Leisure is a tremendous honor," said Dr. Pham Ha, Founder and CEO of Lux Cruises Group. "This achievement is not only for our brands but also for Vietnam. It demonstrates that Vietnamese culture, heritage, creativity, and hospitality can compete successfully with the best luxury travel experiences in Asia."

A New Model of Luxury Travel Rooted in Authenticity

The success of Heritage Cruises and Emperor Cruises reflects a broader transformation occurring within global luxury tourism.

Modern luxury travelers increasingly prioritize meaningful experiences over material extravagance. Rather than seeking opulence alone, affluent travelers are searching for authenticity, cultural immersion, sustainability, personalization, and emotional connection.

Both Vietnamese cruise brands have built their identities around these evolving travel preferences.

Heritage Cruises was inspired by Bạch Thái Bưởi, often referred to as the "King of Vietnamese Shipping," a pioneering entrepreneur who helped shape Vietnam's maritime industry in the early twentieth century. Designed as a floating boutique hotel and living museum, the cruise celebrates Vietnamese entrepreneurship, art, culture, and maritime heritage.

Operating in the pristine waters of Lan Ha Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago, Heritage Cruises



Emperor Cruises Legacy Halong



Dr. Pham Ha Founder and CEO LuxGroup

offers travelers a journey that combines breathtaking natural landscapes with curated cultural experiences, local storytelling, fine dining, and Vietnamese artistic expression.

Emperor Cruises takes inspiration from Emperor Bảo Đại, Vietnam's last monarch, and recreates the elegance of royal Indochina through highly personalized hospitality. The cruise experience features private butler service, gourmet cuisine, fine wines, curated art collections, and individualized guest experiences designed around the principles of exclusivity and refinement.

Set against the dramatic scenery of Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Emperor Cruises blends natural beauty with heritage-inspired luxury to create one of Vietnam's most distinctive tourism experiences.

Together, the two brands represent a uniquely Vietnamese approach to luxury travel—one based on storytelling, cultural authenticity, and emotional connection rather than replication of international models.

Vietnam's Waterways Offer Global Potential

The recognition comes at a time when Vietnam is increasingly attracting attention as one of Asia's most promising cruise destinations.

With more than 3,260 kilometers of coastline, thousands of islands, extensive river systems, and some of the world's most spectacular bays, Vietnam possesses exceptional natural assets for both river and coastal cruising.

Destinations such as Ha Long Bay, Lan Ha Bay, Bai Tu Long Bay, the Red River Delta, the Perfume River, the Saigon River, and the Mekong Delta offer a diverse range of experiences rarely found within a single country.

Beyond its geography, Vietnam also benefits from a rich cultural heritage deeply connected to water. Historic ports, river communities, traditional villages, floating markets, artisanal crafts, local gastronomy, and centuries-old trading routes provide powerful foundations for experiential tourism.

As global travelers increasingly embrace slow travel, sustainable tourism, wellness, and cultural immersion, Vietnam's waterways are emerging as compelling alternatives to more established cruise destinations throughout Asia.

Tourism analysts believe river and coastal cruising could become one of Vietnam's most important tourism growth segments over the next decade, contributing significantly to visitor spending, regional development, and destination diversification.

Looking Toward Vietnam Waterways 2045

The recognition of Heritage Cruises and Emperor Cruises aligns with a broader long-term vision being pursued by Lux Cruises Group.

The company has announced plans to invest approximately US\$38 million in a new generation of boutique cruise vessels designed to connect Vietnam's cultural, historical, and natural destinations through immersive water-based journeys.

Among the company's newest initiatives is Amiral Cruises for Presidents, a luxury boutique river and coastal cruise brand focused on the Saigon River and Southern Vietnam's waterways. The project aims to introduce international travelers to Vietnam's southern heritage through curated experiences centered on culture, gastronomy, art, and storytelling.

The vision extends beyond shipbuilding and tourism infrastructure.

"Our ambition is to transform Vietnam's waterways into living cultural corridors," said Dr. Pham Ha. "We believe rivers and seas are not simply transportation routes. They are pathways of memory, heritage, commerce, and identity. Through thoughtful tourism experiences, we can help travelers discover the soul of Vietnam while contributing to sustainable development."

This long-term strategy has become known internally as "Vietnam Waterways 2045," a vision to position Vietnam among Asia's leading cruise and maritime tourism destinations by the centenary of the country's modern development journey.

A Milestone for Vietnamese Tourism

The Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2026 recognition sends a powerful message to the international travel industry.

It demonstrates the increasing competitiveness of Vietnamese tourism enterprises. It confirms the global appeal of Vietnamese culture when delivered through world-class hospitality. And it highlights the country's growing ability to create distinctive luxury

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