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**ACCLAIMED ACTRESS & COMEDIENNE, CHERI OTERI,
CHRISTENS THE *AVALON ALEGRIA* IN PORTUGAL**

PINHÃO, Portugal – April 1, 2024 – On Thursday, March 28, surrounded by beautiful green, hilly vineyards in Pinhão, Portugal, Avalon Waterways christened its 15th Suite Ship in Europe. Acting as the ship’s godmother, Cheri Oteri – widely known for the rise of female entertainers on *Saturday Night Live* – led the christening ceremony on the Douro River.

“Today, I name this goddess of Portugal’s Douro River, the *Avalon Alegria!* Not only is she the newest, happiest ship in Portugal, she is one of the most sustainable vessels in Europe,” said Cheri Oteri, during her blessing. “May her sunny disposition carry this ship, her captain, crew and guests, far as they set sail responsibly, together, through scenic landscapes, sloping vineyards and sleepy villages. Shine brightly on the ‘river of gold,’ *Avalon Alegria!*”

After reciting her blessing, Cheri Oteri cut a rope tethered to locally produced Cuvée – Marques de Marialva Cuvée Primitivo – causing the bottle to smash against the newly named ship’s bow. President of Avalon Waterways Pam Hoffee, Captain Alberto Moreira and the ship’s crew of 33 – as well as approximately 65 invited guests that included journalists, travel advisors, the ship’s builder and local dignitaries – cheered the ship’s christening. KC and the Sunshine Band’s 1975 hit, “Boogie Shoes,” played over event speakers to add even more “happy” to the occasion. The song was a special request from the *Alegria’s* godmother, Cheri Oteri.

“In our search for the best godmother for the *Avalon Alegria* – our first ship in Portugal with a name that means “happiness” – we knew Cheri Oteri would be the perfect choice,” said Pam Hoffee, president of Avalon Waterways. “As a difference-making entertainer – and one of the ground-breaking women who inspired modern comedy in America – Cheri has brought so much inspiration and joy into our lives. We are thrilled she chose to travel to Portugal to honor us the godmother of our newest, ‘happiest’ ship in Europe. It’s a joy to celebrate Cheri and her accomplishments as part of the *Alegria’s* christening.”

The new, 262-foot, 102-passenger *Avalon Alegria* – with 14 Deluxe Staterooms and 37 Panorama Suites, built exclusively to sail the Douro River – is the first Suite Ship from Avalon Waterways to set sail in Portugal.

The ship welcomes travelers aboard with a warm mix of light and dark woods, accented by rich copper and taupe hues, vibrant tones of green mixed with cool blues in public spaces and touches of muted yellow throughout the new, Suite Ship's Panorama Suites and Deluxe Staterooms. The color palate onboard was inspired by Douro Valley landscapes, brought to life by Dutch interior designer Liane van Leeuwen. Original works of art in *Alegria's* public areas were created by Dutch artist Sofia Fisher while four, specially lit artistic showcases celebrating the tradition of Portuguese Azulejos, were made in Porto by Gazete.

"Today, the *Avalon Alegria* joins an entire fleet of Suite Ships in Europe and Southeast Asia," said Hoffee. "Each features our boutique-hotel inspired Panorama Suites, the industry's only Open-Air Balconies with the widest-opening windows in cruising and decadent Comfort Collection beds that face the ever-changing scenery. Glass balcony panels on the *Avalon Alegria* provide an extra, exciting cruising outlook with completely unobstructed views, as does our first Sky Deck pool, inviting guests to enjoy panoramic views, soaking-in the vineyard-lined vistas of Portugal. Even seasoned travelers have never seen – or experienced – the world like this."

Offering guests the perfect blend of elegance and ease, there's a reason Avalon's Suite Ships are the critics' darlings. Creating the widest waterfront view of the world, Avalon Waterways' Open-Air Balconies were designed with views in mind. A Panorama Suite highlight on all of the Suite Ships of Avalon, these wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling windows open 11-feet wide in Europe and 14-feet wide in Southeast Asia ... Wider than any other balconies in the industry.

"We've waited a long time for the perfect opportunity to add Portugal to our robust vacation portfolio and that day has finally arrived," said Hoffee. "Inviting our guests to sail the Douro for the first time, we're bringing the Suite Ships of Avalon, the grandest views in cruising and whim-powered itineraries to Southwestern Europe. We're thrilled to officially set sail on the Douro!"

The *Avalon Alegria* will invite her first, official guests on board to cruise *Vida Portugal: Vineyards & Villages Along the Douro* on April 3, 2024.

“For those lucky enough to join our new ship and crew her inaugural year, hillside vineyards and historic villages await them on an eight-day cruise the begins and ends in Porto,” said Hoffee. “Like our cruises across Europe, this itinerary is filled with included “Classic,” “Active” and “Discovery” excursion choices that promise guests countless ways to enjoy the sheer splendor and cinematic scenery of the Douro Valley.”

For the full image gallery, click [HERE](#).

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ABOUT CHERI OTERI

Cheri Oteri was born in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia and later moved to LA where she worked in promotions for A&M Records. She joined the Groundlings, and in 1995 the producers of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE saw one of her monologues, which led to an audition and eventually being hired as a cast member where she starred for five seasons. Since then, Cheri has starred in multiple iconic comedies such as SCARY MOVIE, INSPECTOR GADGET, LIAR LIAR, DUMB AND DUMBERER, SHREK THE THIRD, and GROWN UPS 2 opposite Adam Sandler. More recently, she was last seen in the indie feature, LOVE VIRTUALLY opposite Paul F. Tompkins and Stephen Tobolowsky, as well as the film LAST CALL opposite Bruce Dern.

In TV, Cheri has made multiple special guest appearance on hits such as MAYANS MC on FX, The CW’s CRAZY EX-GIRLFRIEND, TruTV’s THOSE WHO CAN’T, NBC’s JUST SHOOT ME! (in which she was nominated for an Emmy), HOT IN CLEVELAND, and as an emotionally unstable nanny on the Golden Globe and Emmy award winning series CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM.

She also has a very exciting career in the VO space. Cheri has lent her voice to such hits as INSIDE JOB on Netflix, BIG CITY GREENS on Disney Channel, FAIRFAX on Amazon, and CLOSE ENOUGH on HBO Max.

ABOUT AVALON WATERWAYS

Cruising Elevated. Avalon Waterways has redefined cruising by going against the current and away from the ordinary. Delivering unparalleled experiences and boundless exploration, Avalon puts you in the captain’s seat to navigate your journey, fuel your passions and steer clear of the unexpected as you cruise down the world’s most memorable and mesmerizing waterways. One step aboard our modern, luxurious Suite Ships with the grandest views in cruising and you’ll see how the tides are changing. Welcome to a new wave in cruising. Welcome aboard Avalon Waterways.