A Pandaw river expedition in Burma and on the Mekong is not like an ocean going cruise.

There is no dressing up for dinner and no ‘captain’s table’. The atmosphere on board is very friendly and informal, more like a party on a private yacht than a cruise ship. Nearly everything is included in the price and there are no hidden extras for excursions. Even your drinks and the crew tips are included in the price of your ticket. There is an incredibly high level of personal service and care aboard, with a crew passenger ratio of 1:2. For these reasons passengers keep coming back and exploring more of a lost South-East Asia.

2015 is the 150th anniversary of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and the 20th since its revival by Burma historian Paul Strachan in 1995

We were the first since the Second World War to offer pioneering cruises on Burma’s spectacular Irrawaddy River, reaching Bhamo, one thousand miles from the sea, and the first to offer cruises on the Mekong since French colonial times.

1865
- The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company was established by Scots merchants in 1865. By the 1920s the company ran over 650 vessels on the rivers of Burma. It had become the largest privately owned fleet of ships in the world.

1995
- In 1998, Paul Strachan discovered an original Clyde-built steamer called the Pandaw and arranged for its lease and restoration.

2003
- In 2003 we took our Pandaw concept to the Mekong River in Indochina plying between Saigon in Vietnam and Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Here, the Pandaws broke the seemingly impenetrable river border between two very different countries.

1998
- Paul and Roser Strachan revive the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and are the first to offer river cruises on the Irrawaddy since colonial times.

2009
- We inaugurated new river cruises on the Rajang in Borneo and Ganges in India. Another two magnificent Asian rivers, rich in things to do and see, with varied topography of great beauty.

2003
- We now have twelve beautifully crafted ships that we built ourselves. Each ship, hand finished in brass and teak by traditional craftsmen, is in itself an object of great beauty.

TODAY
- Paul and Roser Strachan are the first to offer river cruises on the Irrawaddy since colonial times.
WHY PANDAW?

Pandaw River Cruises are very different from other cruise experiences. We’re lucky to have such a huge following with passengers returning again and again to experience all of what our river cruises have to offer.

What’s key to our success? Well, we say YES to lots of things…

YES TO TRANQUILITY

Curl up with a kindle and relax in our peaceful sitting areas dotted throughout the ships. Rest assured you won’t be interrupted with unnecessary PA announcements or annoying drones of TV’s in neighboring cabins. We promote a relaxed atmosphere on our ships so all our cabins give to a very social promenade deck.

YES TO CONVIVIALITY

We don’t believe in compulsory excursions, a Pandaw river cruise is whatever you want it to be! With so many river stops, we guarantee you’ll find it hard to resist exploring and creating your own adventures.

Gone are the days of the mini bar – if you’re feeling in need of refreshment whilst in your cabin, there is a bar service on the sun deck open from dawn to dusk waiting for you. We don’t do captains tables at dinner either; instead, everyone can dine together, alfresco style with our open-air environment.

YES TO FREEDOM

We offer daily briefings to whet your appetite for the cultural events and activities available onboard. Fancy kicking back with a cocktail? That’s fine too!

All our Pandaw ships have the highest public space to passenger ratio of any ship, seagoing or river, in the world. With at least one stop and excursion per day, you’re never cruising for long uninterrupted periods of time which make our cruises unique to other cruise liners.

Freedom on the river too; we can operate in all seasons and all areas due to the shallowest drafts on the river, so we’re not restricted by water levels.

YES TO CARE

Our onboard staff do a great job of making our passengers feel welcomed and fully entertained for the duration of their stay. We have a 1:2 staff passenger ratio which means we’re always on hand to satisfy whatever requests our passengers throw at us. Safety is number one priority for our crew – we have a full time ex Royal Navy officer responsible for emergency drills, safety appliance checks and ship security. You’re in safe hands!

SAILING ON A PANDAW

Sailing on a Pandaw is essentially an outdoor experience.

Whilst the staterooms are very comfortable and roomy, passengers prefer to spend their time sitting outside, on the promenade decks or on the vast observation deck above. Unlike other cruise ships, every window can open.

When sailing our passengers sit on deck and become absorbed by great panoramas as they unfold around them. Spellbound, one cannot help but to meditate upon the unceasing human and wildlife activity of these teeming water worlds.

LIFE ON BOARD

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VISIT WWW.PANDAW.COM

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The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are very spacious at just under 180 square feet. Much loved by all our passengers we have ensured that with each ship we build the stateroom remains the same. Our cabins do not have mini-bars, satellite TV’s, internet or phones. Pandaw passengers usually want to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

Many passengers describe life on board a Pandaw more like being a guest on a private motor yacht than a cruise ship. Where we go and what we see is intrepid in extreme. What you come back to is a floating base of discreet comfort, caring service and all the good things one looks for in life.

- Fruit and flowers on arrival
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water
- Free use of mini DVD player on request and selection of DVDs from our library

Excursions ashore a key part of any Pandaw river expedition.

These may be in the form of a good walk through countryside and villages; further explorations by speed boat going deeper into jungle or up river; horse cart rides in Burma or cyclos in Cambodia.

- All scheduled excursions accompanied by an expert member of crew
- Entrance fees for sights included in the itinerary
- Comprehensive fact sheets or ‘trip books’ provided
- Visit Pandaw Charity projects along the way and interact with the local communities who welcome us
- Opportunity to travel to local markets with the Pandaw Chef at least once during the cruise program
- Crew assists in areas where river banks are steep and slippery
- Individual excursions welcomed, but please rejoin the ship on time
Ply exactly 1,000 miles from Downtown Rangoon to the delightful city of Prome on the edge of the Delta to Katha and the great 2nd Defile on the Upper Irrawaddy. Daily stops include tours of the historic capitals of Pagan with its 3,000 monuments, and Mandalay with its royal palace and many sites around the city, particularly on the river. We will pass from the lush teak forests around Prome, through the near desert of Middle Burma, and then into the forests and mountains of Upper Burma. This expedition encompasses all Burma geographically and historically.

We began in Burma. The unique Pandaw river expedition concept evolved here from the vestiges of the colonial Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. Our first ships were built here and in Burma we learnt to master river navigation at its worst. These lessons were applied to the other rivers of Asia.
Sailing from Mandalay through the heart of ‘Middle Burma’, we pass through a varying landscape – from desert country south of Pagan to the lush teak plantations around Prome and then traversing the vast Delta to Colonial Rangoon. We visit a number of small villages and towns and see local agriculture and manufacturing at first hand. We will see the Pandaw schools and clinics at work. Remote from the modern world, these stops offer a glimpse of a timeless, lost Burma far from the usual tourist track. Cultural highlights include visits to rare wood carved monasteries.

The scenery on this river cruise is spectacular and we are welcomed with astonishment by the many remote communities through which we passed. Achieving our goal of Homalin, over 600 miles from the Chindwin’s confluence with the Irrawaddy, we return downstream all the way to the ancient city of Pagan just below the confluence.

Then we continued a further 700 miles up the Irrawaddy past Mandalay to the great 2nd Defile, and Bhamo. This is the most northerly navigable point on the Irrawaddy and gateway to China. No two days are the same with varied scenery and diverse cultural sites.

VISIT WWW.PANDAW.COM
In the past we only offered this during the monsoon, but with the ultra shallow draft Kalay Pandaw we can offer this year round. The river carves its way through mountains and forests and we stop at delightful unspoilt little towns. Our objective, Homalin is the capital of Nagaland and close to the India border. We will ply the Upper Chindwin weekly between Monywa and Homalin. Monywa is under three hours from Mandalay and the car transfer is included with the cruise. Homalin is now connected by scheduled flight with Rangoon and Mandalay. Combines easily with Beyond Bhamo.

Sail between Mandalay and Bhamo, the most northerly navigable point on the Irrawaddy, 1000 miles from Rangoon and close to the China border. Highlights will be passage through the 3rd and 2nd defiles, not to mention visits to enchanting local towns, most favorite being Katha, once home to George Orwell and the setting for Burmese days. Bhamo is now a big trading town with a strong Chinese influence. We will then continue by local boat to enter the awesome 1st defile with its cataracts and towering gorges. Combine with the Chindwin. Flight connections Bhamo from Rangoon.
Pandaw is introducing the new Mandalay Pagan Packet. Why not use a luxury Pandaw ship as your floating hotel in Mandalay and Pagan with a river cruise between them?

The Kalaw and Kindat will each cruise weekly between the historic cities with two nights moored at Pagan and three at Mandalay and exploring small towns and villages of lost Burma in between. Connecting with international flights out of Mandalay airport we will meet you at the airport and take you back and you will see all the key sites at Pagan and around Mandalay from your floating base.

Arakan was an independent kingdom up till the 18th century where an extraordinary mix of Indian and South-East Asian cultures merged. Mrauk U, the capital, is a temple city that rivals Pagan, Angkor or Borobudur in significance as a center of Buddhist culture. There is much else to explore in the Arakan river system of the Kaladan and Le Myo rivers not to mention the old colonial port city of Akyab now called Sittwe. Currently there are no deluxe hotels or comfortable means of exploring this fascinating region with its own culture, language and cuisine so different from Burma proper.
The Salween is the longest river in Burma but is only navigable on larger boats between Moulmein and Hpaan. Moulmein was the first British capital of Burma and has a number of old colonial buildings, churches and church yards not to mention some spectacular Buddhist treasures. We will explore the town and cruise the coastal area and islands around the old port city before plying up the Salween to enter an area of stupendously magnificent scenery. We will visit Mount Zwekabin, with its Karen communities and the regional capital of Hpaan itself. If security permits we would then proceed further upstream on our ship or by local boat. Passengers will travel by car to or from Moulmein or Hpaan from Rangoon with stops in Pegu and Kyaiktyo Golden Rock.

For those without the time for a longer classic Pandaw expedition join one of our cult short cruises between the two ancient capitals of Burma. We started these in 1998 and they are a great component in a tailored land tour. You will see the best of river life with stops in the bustling monastery city of Pakokku and the delightful pottery village of Yandabo with its Pandaw School. Departs four times a week for two nights upstream and one night downstream. Warning! Most people who book the short cruise rebook for a classic longer cruise in a future year.

The RV Kalay Pandaw
There can be no tapestry of river life as fascinating and varied as the River Mekong. Indeed there can be no more striking a cultural contrast as that between the bustling Vietnam delta and the tranquility of Cambodia.

Pandaw continues to maintain its edge being the first on new rivers and routings. In 2015 we have two exciting new routes in Indochina: the Red River and tributaries encompassing much of North Vietnam and the Upper Mekong through Laos to Thailand. Only our ultra shallow draft Pandaws can tackle such challenging waters bringing our pioneering passengers further enriching experiences.

A limited number of 'no itinerary' reconnaissance cruises will be offered in early 2015

Weekly operation every Saturday from October 2015
In 2003, with the RV Mekong Pandaw, we were the first ship to attempt this extraordinary journey, surmounting complex bureaucratic and navigational obstacles. Upstream or downstream this weekly expedition connects French colonial Saigon with the monuments of Angkor at Siem Reap via Phnom Penh. We also stop at various villages in the Mekong Delta and in Cambodia on the Mekong and Tonle rivers with explorations of the Tonle Sap wetlands. The Mekong Pandaw was fully refitted last year with new look cabins, a gym, spa and library.

10 NIGHTS SAIGON-SIEM REAP

Only operable in the high water season of July - August, this expedition follows the Classic Mekong route to Phnom Penh, only commencing in Saigon city centre, and taking in the Delta and Central Cambodia. The ship then explores further up the Mekong to Kratie and its dolphin grounds. We then return to explore the Tonle river and making a circumnavigation of the great lake visiting bird sanctuaries, remote stilted villages and the bustling town of Battambang. Passengers then disembark at Siem Reap for the monuments at Angkor. Only the Angkor with her low airdraft can get under the bridges!
This expedition will connect the French colonial capital of Vientiane with the Chiangrai area of North Thailand with a two day stop over at Luang Prabang, the ancient capital and temple city. We will pass through dramatic scenery of mountains and gorges moving on a fast flowing river with many a rapid. The Laos Pandaw has been specially designed with super powered engines to cope with such river conditions. We will also pass through tribal areas and see local life at first hand. Both Vientiane and Chiangrai have excellent flight connections to all main Asian cities.

THE RV ANGKOR PANDAW

This expedition really covers all that one could see and do in North Vietnam. Commencing in Halong Bay the Angkor Pandaw will explore the picturesque islands and then proceed up the Red River to Hanoi to moor in the city centre for city visits. We then continue up the Red River and in high water (July - Oct) continue up to the China border port of Lao Cai. From here you would continue by car to the Tonkinese Alps and the delightful French resort of Sapa. You would then return to Hanoi by the very comfy overnight sleeper train. In low water (Nov, Dec, May, June, July) we will operate on the even more lovely Lo River that passes through equally magnificent mountain scenery to the wild life park of An Giang. On both rivers the interest is the scenery, local Vietnamese life, in the larger towns, and ethnic minority life in the hill villages we will travel to from our expedition ship. North Vietnam has a European type of climate and best time to visit is in the summer months June - September.

THE RV LAOS PANDAW
On a typical day there will be at least one shore excursion. This could be a visit to a major city like Mandalay or Phnom Penh or heritage site like Pagan and most of the day spent ashore.

On other days we may be cruising and covering considerable distances. On these days passengers like to relax and enjoy the on board amenities and facilities.

Our larger ships have dedicated gyms, spas and libraries whilst our smaller more intimate ships lack these features but make up for them in atmosphere.

On every day there is at least one shore excursion, even if just tying up for a couple of hours so that passengers can stretch their legs and offer entertainment to bemused locals.

On the Irrawaddy after twenty years we are still tying up in new places and discovering new things of interest.

When cruising there is never a dull moment as our rivers are teeming with life, human or wild. There is just so much going on that it is hard to concentrate on a book.

Other ships, fishermen, kids playing along the banks and villagers going about their daily routines the panoply of life as we puff along is totally absorbing.

Then there are great moments of tranquility, the stupendous sun rises and sun sets and the vast landscapes that unfold about us.

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**BRIEFINGS**

Expert Pandaw guides accompany all expeditions and each evening at the cocktail hour will debrief passengers on the day’s events and explorations and brief them for the day ahead followed by questions and answers and a short talk on aspects of history, art and culture for the areas visited.

**EVENTS**

On cruising only days our pursers organise a variety of on board events including cookery classes for local dishes, tours of the engine room and the working ship, fruit carving and other demonstrations that passengers find highly amusing.

**ENTertainments**

On every expedition there is at least one on board show - puppets, ballet or orchestral. On longer expeditions there will be two shows.
The Pandaw Charity was established following Cyclone Nargis in 2008 when the Pandaw ships, converted to floating hospitals, and their crews saved so many lives. Since then over 12 schools have been built and the UK-registered charity operate seven Pandaw Clinics in middle Burma which provide an average of 5,000 free treatments a month with a full time team of 20 medics, paramedics and pharmacists. This is entirely sponsored by donations from Pandaw passengers and a profit share from Pandaw River Expeditions.

When you buy a Pandaw ticket you are also supporting education and healthcare in Burma.

THE PANDAW CREW

Each crew member is committed to incredible levels of care and service not to mention health and safety.

All our crews are recruited from the communities in which we operate and supervised by an expatriate team committed to quality and excellence.

Safety is of paramount importance and in both the Mekong and in Burma we have a full time expatriate Marine Superintendent mainly concerned with training and emergency equipment checks.

Our hotel directors ensure that food, beverage and housekeeping standards are of a level to be found in any five star hotel.

We are particularly proud of the high levels of maintenance and care of our beautiful teak and brass ships that require daily love and care.

However it is thanks to the high level of care that our dedicated crews offer that we get so many thank you letters and such a high number of repeat cruisers.

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