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## Viking Names Two Newest Nile River Ships in Luxor

*The Identical 82-Guest Viking Hathor and Viking Sobek Join the Company's Award-Winning Fleet in Egypt*

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Viking® ([www.viking.com](http://www.viking.com)) (NYSE: VIK) today named its newest river ships, the [Viking Hathor](#) and the [Viking Sobek](#), with a special celebration in Luxor, Egypt. The Hon. Edward Herbert, served as ceremonial godfather of the *Viking Hathor*; his great-great-grandfather, the 5th Earl of Carnarvon, was Howard Carter's benefactor and co-explorer, whose excavation uncovered the tomb of King Tutankhamen near Luxor almost exactly 102 years ago on November 4, 1922. Mohamed El Banna, founder of Cosmos Egypt and a member of the Egyptian Senate, served as the ceremonial godfather of the *Viking Sobek*. The *Viking Hathor* and the *Viking Sobek* are identical sister ships to the [Viking Aton](#) and the [Viking Osiris](#) and are state-of-the-art vessels designed specifically to navigate the Nile River on Viking's popular 12-day [Pharaohs & Pyramids](#) itinerary and built at Massara shipyard in Cairo.

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Viking today named its newest river ships, the Viking Hathor and Viking Sobek, with a celebration in Luxor, Egypt. Designed specifically to navigate the Nile River, the state-of-the-art ships were built at the Massara shipyard in Cairo and will sail Viking's popular Pharaohs & Pyramids itinerary. Pictured here, the Viking Hathor and the Viking Sobek at Viking's premier docking location at the Karnak Temple in Luxor, Egypt. For more information, visit [www.viking.com](http://www.viking.com). (Photo: Business Wire)

"Today, we are proud to welcome the *Viking Hathor* and the *Viking Sobek* to our growing fleet in Egypt. Along with their sister ships, we believe they are by far the most

elegant vessels on the Nile," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman and CEO of Viking. "We are very grateful for our continued close friendship with the Carnarvon family and that Eddie has honored us by serving as godfather of the *Viking Hathor*. For more than 15 years, Mohamed El Banna has been a part of the extended Viking family, helping to take good care of our guests in Egypt, and it is a great honor that he is serving as godfather of the *Viking Sobek*. As our award-winning fleet on the Nile continues to grow, we look forward to introducing even more curious travelers to this phenomenal destination."

The naming ceremony of the *Viking Hathor* and the *Viking Sobek* took place at Viking's exclusive docking location in Luxor and was followed by a celebratory dinner inside the nearby Karnak Temple. Viking's guests also enjoyed a performance by Sissel Kyrkjebø, one of the world's leading crossover sopranos and godmother of the [Viking Jupiter](#)®, who sang

the Egyptian, Norwegian and United Kingdom's national anthems in their native languages.

### **The Hon. Edward Herbert, Godfather of the *Viking Hathor***

The Hon. Edward Herbert is the son of George Herbert, the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon, and Fiona Carnarvon, the Countess of Carnarvon. In his new godfather role, Edward joins his father and mother, who are also Viking's first "godparents." In 2022, Lord Carnarvon became Viking's first godfather, fulfilling the role for the *Viking Osiris*. Lady Carnarvon is the godmother of a Viking Longship, the [Viking Skadi](#) and an ocean ship, the [Viking Mars](#)®. Edward's great-great-grandfather, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon, spent 16 years working in Luxor and later in 1922, with his colleague Howard Carter, discovered the tomb of King Tutankhamen. In Lady Carnarvon's newest book, *The Earl and the Pharaoh: From the Real Downton Abbey to the Discovery of Tutankhamun*, she explores the unparalleled life of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon and tells the behind-the-scenes story of the historic discovery.

### **Highclere Castle, Egypt & Viking**

For years Viking has offered a variety of ways for its guests to experience life at Highclere Castle, which is the home of the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and the historic estate best known as the filming location of *Downton Abbey*. Among the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl's many talents, he was an avid amateur photographer with an artistic eye for composition. His photographs are at Highclere Castle currently, stored in photo albums in The Library, and show the process of discovering and excavating the tomb of Tutankhamen, as well as scenes of daily life in Egypt of the period. With kind permission, the Carnarvons have allowed Viking to share this private collection for guests sailing on board the *Viking Hathor* and the *Viking Sobek*, as well as their sister ships, the *Viking Osiris* and the *Viking Aton*.

For guests who are interested in extending their exploration of Egypt, Viking offers Pre and Post Extensions that provide Privileged Access® to archives and exhibits. Guests on the five-day [British Collections of Ancient Egypt](#) extension will begin the journey in London, where they will meet their Viking Tour Director, an expert Egyptologist, and experience Privileged Access to two museums: first a private, early morning visit to the Egyptian Collection at the British Museum before it opens to the general public—and then a visit to the home and personal museum of world-renowned architect, Sir John Soane, where the tour will be illuminated by candlelight, a re-enactment of how Soane entertained guests and showcased his exquisite collection of Egyptian antiquities, including a 3,000-year-old Egyptian sarcophagus. Guests will also visit London's Petrie Museum, which houses more than 80,000 artifacts from ancient Egypt and Sudan. In Oxford, guests will visit the Ashmolean Museum, one of the oldest in the world, and home to a varied collection of Egyptian mummies and art—and go behind the scenes at Oxford University's Griffith Institute, where they will enjoy a Privileged Access visit to see Howard Carter's archives, which detail the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Lastly, guests will have further Privileged Access with an exclusive visit to Highclere Castle to view the Earl of Carnarvon's magnificent private collection of Egyptian artifacts, as well as archives and exhibits not normally accessible to the public.

### **Mohamed El Banna, Godfather of the *Viking Sobek***

With his exceptional communication and interpersonal skills and deep interest in world

cultures, Mohamed El Banna was destined for a career in the travel industry. He completed a bachelor's degree in commerce and began working in tourism in 1970. Seven years later, he founded Cosmos Tourism Company—now Cosmos Egypt—a Cairo-based tour operator and the country's oldest destination management company. He continues to run the business with his son, Sherif El Banna, who serves as CEO. Viking has proudly partnered with Cosmos Egypt and Mr. El Banna for more than 15 years to promote exploration along the Nile River. As Viking's exclusive tour operator in Egypt, the company continues to handle all ground operations and transportation for shore excursions and helps source English-speaking tour guides and Egyptologists. Mr. El Banna also helped Viking create its operational division in Egypt, which now includes more than 500 company employees that work in the country. Through these extensive partnerships, Viking consistently provides its guests with an award-winning and seamless travel experience in Egypt. As one of Egypt's most devoted ambassadors for travel, Mr. El Banna has held several influential government positions throughout his distinguished career. Previously, he was a member of the Chamber of Tourism from 1986 to 1994 and served two terms as the Deputy of the Tourism and Antiquities Committee in the House of Representatives from 2005 to 2015. Currently, he is a senator in the Egyptian Senate, a role he will fulfill through the end of his five-year term in 2025.

### **The Viking Hathor, the Viking Sobek & Viking's Growing Egypt Fleet**

Hosting 82 guests in 41 staterooms, the new *Viking Hathor* and *Viking Sobek* are inspired by Viking's award-winning river and ocean ships with the elegant Scandinavian design for which Viking is known. An identical sister ship to the *Viking Osiris* and the *Viking Aton*, the *Viking Hathor* and *Viking Sobek* feature several aspects familiar to Viking guests, such as a distinctive square bow and an indoor/outdoor Aquavit Terrace. Other ships in the Egypt fleet include the [Viking Ra](#) and the [MS Antares](#). Viking plans to welcome four additional ships in the next two years—the [Viking Amun](#) and the [Viking Thoth](#) in 2025 and the [Viking Sekhmet](#) and the [Viking Ptah](#) in 2026—which would bring Viking's fleet to 10 vessels on the Nile River.

Viking was rated #1 for Rivers, as well as #1 for Oceans and #1 for Expeditions, by *Condé Nast Traveler* in the 2024 Readers' Choice Awards for the second consecutive year. This achievement marked the first time a travel company won these three categories in back-to-back years. Viking's Egypt ships have also been included in *Condé Nast Traveler's* "Hot List" the last two years. Viking was also named a "Best Luxury River Cruise of 2024" in *Forbes'* "Best Luxury Cruises" list. Additionally, *TIME* magazine featured both Giza and Saqqara on its "World's Greatest Places" 2023 list, mentioning sailing the Nile River with Viking. *TIME* notes that Viking is among the very few who stop in both Giza and the village of Sakkara, where excavation sites, like the megatombs of animal and human mummies, are active.

### **Viking's Pharaohs & Pyramids Itinerary**

During the 12-day [Pharaohs & Pyramids](#) itinerary, guests begin with a three-night stay at a first-class hotel in Cairo, where they can visit iconic sites such as the Great Pyramids of Giza, the necropolis of Sakkara, the Mosque of Muhammad Ali, or the Grand Egyptian Museum. Guests then fly to Luxor, where they visit the Temples of Luxor and Karnak before boarding a Viking river ship for an eight-day roundtrip cruise on the Nile River, featuring visits to the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley of the Queens and the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Valley of the Kings, and excursions to the Temple of Khnum in Esna, the Dendera

Temple complex in Qena, the temples at Abu Simbel and the High Dam in Aswan, and a visit to a colorful Nubian village, where guests can experience a traditional elementary school. Finally, the journey concludes with a flight back to Cairo for a final night in the ancient city.

## **Media Assets**

For more information about Viking, or for images and b-roll, please contact [vikingpr@edelman.com](mailto:vikingpr@edelman.com)

## **About Viking**

Viking (NYSE: VIK) was founded in 1997 and provides destination-focused journeys on rivers, oceans, and lakes around the world. Designed for curious travelers with interests in science, history, culture and cuisine, Chairman and CEO Torstein Hagen often says Viking offers experiences For The Thinking Person™. Viking has more than 450 awards to its name, including being rated #1 for Rivers, #1 for Oceans and #1 for Expeditions by *Condé Nast Traveler* in the 2023 and 2024 Readers' Choice Awards. Viking is also rated a "World's Best" for rivers, oceans and expeditions by *Travel + Leisure*. No other travel company has simultaneously received the same honors by both publications. For additional information, contact Viking at 1-800-2-VIKING (1-800-284-5464) or visit [www.viking.com](http://www.viking.com). For Viking's award-winning enrichment channel, visit [www.viking.tv](http://www.viking.tv).

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