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**U.S. WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM COACH JILL ELLIS
CHRISTENS THE AVALON PASSION**

LINZ, Austria – April 13, 2016 – On a beautiful, warm and sunny evening in Linz, Austria, Avalon Waterways christened its 12th Suite Ship, the *Avalon Passion*. Acting as the ship's godmother, Jill Ellis – head coach of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team – led the christening ceremony.

"At first you were a vision, and with nurturing and enthusiasm you grew into a plan. Then, with dedication and teamwork, you were crafted, and today with pride and delight we celebrate you in your full glory," said Ms. Ellis. "May the lives of everyone touched by you be forever enriched, and may you feel the warmth of friendship and love on your decks. Travel safely on your journey and God Speed. I christen this ship, *Avalon Passion*."

After reciting her blessing, Ms. Ellis cut a rope tethered to Moët & Chandon Champagne, causing the bottle to break against the newly named ship's bow as Captain Peter Werner; Managing Director of Avalon Waterways Patrick Clark and her crew of 44 as well as 150 invited guests – including local dignitaries and tourism boards – cheered.

"As the head coach of the winning U.S. Women's National Soccer Team and former development director of the U.S. Women's Youth National Teams, Jill Ellis has a history of proving that with passion – and hard work – dreams come true," said Patrick Clark, managing director of Avalon Waterways. "As someone who has shown great passion for, verve and vibrancy in cultivating women's soccer, she is the perfect godmother to bless the *Avalon Passion*."

After the christening ceremony, the 443-foot, 166-passenger *Avalon Passion* will welcome travelers aboard to cruise the [Danube River](#) on such popular itineraries as *The Legendary Danube*, *The Blue Danube Discovery*, *European Splendor* and *Grand Danube Cruise*, among others.

The christening of the new *Avalon Passion* comes just one week after Avalon Waterways' christened another new Suite Ship – the *Avalon Imagery II* – in the scenic town of Engers, Germany. There, New Zealand broadcaster Judy Bailey gave a godmother blessing in Maori as dozens of travel industry professionals, international guests and dignitaries looked on.

About Avalon’s Suite Ships:

Unlike other cruise ships, Avalon Waterways has designed its Suite Ships with staterooms so beds face the windows – and the incredible sights river cruising is famous for. In fact, on two full decks of every Suite Ship in Europe and Southeast Asia, Avalon Waterways offers travelers a unique point-of-view: One where the [view](#) is the whole point.

“In the average cruise cabin, the view from the bed never changes. Travelers are looking at the same scene throughout their voyage: The wall,” said Patrick Clark, managing director of Avalon Waterways. “We had a better idea. We turned our beds so they face out giant windows. To do this, we angled the wall behind the bed – a design innovation that provided two additional benefits. It opened up each stateroom and bathroom, exclusively giving Avalon travelers more space and better views.”

In terms of space, at 200-square-feet, Avalon’s Panorama Suites are 30 percent larger than the average stateroom. In fact, the smallest stateroom in the Avalon fleet is 172-square-feet. Avalon also takes a different approach to the typical balcony. Instead of providing travelers with a traditional balcony, Avalon Waterways’ Suite Ships offer two full decks of suites with Open-Air Balconies: Floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall windows that open 7-feet wide.

“With a focus on bringing the beauty of Europe or Southeast Asia inside, Avalon’s Open-Air Balconies offer our travelers a fresh air, panoramic cruising experience complete with epic views, in every weather condition, without compromising room space,” said Clark.

About Jill Ellis:

Jill Ellis was named the eighth head coach in U.S. Women’s National Team history on May 16, 2014. In her first year at the helm, Ellis led the U.S. Women’s National Team to the Algarve Championship and the 2015 FIFA World Cup.

Prior to taking the reins of the U.S. Women’s National Team, Ellis served as the development director for the U.S. Women’s Youth National Teams.

Ellis joined U.S. Soccer after a highly successful 12-year run as the head women’s soccer coach for the UCLA Bruins. There, Ellis lead UCLA to eight NCAA Final Fours, including seven in a row from 2003 to 2009, and won six straight conference titles from 2003 to 2008. In addition, she was the NSCAA National Coach of the Year in 2000 after leading the Bruins to the NCAA Final.

Before UCLA, Ellis led the University of Illinois' women's soccer program and also served as the assistant coach at the University of Virginia, University of Maryland and North Carolina State. She also played soccer at the College of William & Mary from 1984 to 1987 and was a Third-Team All-American in 1987.

Jill Ellis grew up in Portsmouth, England before coming to the United States at age 15 in 1981. She also lived in Singapore for two years while her father helped to develop a national soccer program in that country. Ellis resides in Palmetto Bay, Florida with her family.

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ABOUT AVALON WATERWAYS

Since we launched our very first ship in 2004, Avalon Waterways has invited you – our traveler – to be our muse. Thanks to you, we let imagination and a relentless desire to create a smart use of space, be our guide. The result? An incomparable river cruise experience, including one-of-a-kind Panorama SuitesSM – with innovative Open-Air Balconies[®] and beds facing the views – on the industry's only Suite Ships[®]: Unequaled vessels that feature two full decks of 200- and 300-square-foot suites.

On the spectacular ships of Avalon, "included" is one of our favorite words. Spacious outside staterooms with plenty of room to relax – included. Special touches like regional wines and beer at every onboard dinner – included. Complimentary Wi-Fi – included. The most shore excursions, led by Certified Local Guides – included. VIP entrance into must-see sites – included. Unique Local FavoritesSM designed to bring your destination to life – included. In addition to everything that is included, we also give you the freedom of Avalon Choice[®] – a different approach to river cruising that invites travelers to personalize their trip.

Whether looking for a romantic mini-break, an in-depth 24-day exploration or something in between, with Avalon Waterways, you can choose the river cruise that reveals the very best of Europe, Asia, or South America– your way! For more information, visit www.avalonwaterways.com.