THE NEW GLOBAL COMPLETION CENTRE

NETJETS’ GLOBAL 6000 SIGNATURE SERIES AIRCRAFT
KEITH URBAN’S SKY-HIGH GIG + SAIL THE WORLD + SKI YELLOWSTONE CLUB
“We have a polar bear on the port side,” says a voice over the intercom, sending passengers scrambling for their parkas and binoculars to head out on deck. On this Northwest Passage voyage, such announcements have become a daily ritual, drawing attention to deep blue icebergs, towering fjords and isolated Inuit villages. As the ship presses onward from Pacific to Atlantic through the Arctic Ocean (where so few have ventured and from where many never returned), this once-a-lifetime voyage is particularly poignant.

But the ship making the passage is not an icebreaker, freighter or research vessel. It’s The World, a one-of-a-kind residential community at sea and the largest passenger ship to have ever made the Arctic crossing.

The Northwest Passage makes one of several expeditions on the 2012 itinerary. The World’s 10th year also took its 200-odd international residents from the seldom-traveled islands of Melanesia on to Polynesia. Such encounters are firsts even for the experienced global travelers who spend their time aboard the ship, and the ability to create these moments is what makes this exclusive vessel so unique.

A month after the Arctic crossing, I’m soaking up the sun on the 11th-floor pool deck, listening to a resident’s stories about Melanesia and sipping a craft beer, picked up in Nova Scotia on the ship’s descent from the Arctic (along with crates of the local ice wine, lobsters and oysters). The resident tells of watching the land divers of Pentecost Island build an 80-foot-tall wooden scaffolding, tie vines to their ankles and plunge off the top.

“I mean, I’ve seen it in National Geographic, but in real life, ouf!” he says, swiping the back of his hand across his forehead. He is genuinely awed by the experience – a surprising reaction from a man whose professional life has him crossing the globe 200 days a year.

But then again, The World is not known for supplying everyday experiences. Its expeditions are the result of years of planning. En route to the ship’s destinations, residents and guests receive an education from a handpicked team of specialists. In the Northwest Passage, for example, naturalists, historians, anthropologists and Inuit translators accompanied the expedition, the logistics of which required three years of preparation.

The instructive component is just one reason why The World’s residents have chosen this lifestyle over yacht ownership. Being part of a community, however, doesn’t mean giving up their say. As owners of not just their private apartments, but of the ship itself, residents collaboratively determine the year’s itinerary.

The White Sea this year, Asia in 2014, and a plan for Antarctica the year after. Whatever this expeditious “condo board” collectively decides in conjunction with the captains provides the basis of the route map. A logistics team fine-tunes the details, including lengthy stays in each port of call (averaging three days but running as many as nine), which allows the community to truly get the feel for each destination.

In 2012, that meant stops in 31 countries. Residents are free to come and go as they please, selecting which part of the itinerary they wish to join. The average annual combined stay is four months, but a few residents remain on board all year.

Their autonomy continues to the 165 apartments, where owners have carte blanche over the design of their spaces, ranging in size from studios to a six-bedroom penthouse. They also have input into the look of common areas, such as the 2013 refurbishment of the pool deck, Regatta Bar and Tides restaurant, for which they voted on everything from the colors to the furniture.

Another powerful draw is the onboard dining. That evening as I settle into a table at East, the Pan-Asian restaurant under the direction of chef de cuisine John Poh, who trained under Nobu Matsuhisa, I give in to the sommelier’s suggestion to try the tasting menu. Frankly, after sampling at the dizzying array of sakes (many sourced by the sommelier herself from microbreweries while the ship docked in Japan), it’s a relief to leave the pairings in her hands. The meal does not disappoint as I tuck into a chef’s selection of maki, followed by Peking duck and prime beef.

More than a decade after its launch, a unique luxury residential community at sea continues to circumnavigate the globe, taking its residents to some of the most remote places on earth and bringing aboard the best that the world has to offer.

BY NATASHA MEKHAIL
Travel: The World Ship

The White Sea this year, Asia in 2014, Antarctica this year – whatever this superlative “condo board” decides provides the basis of the route map.

complemented by delightful wineries that include a rare sparkling sake. East is one of the ship’s four major restaurants, along with Tides, for Mediterranean fare, and the Marina steakhouse. For haute cuisine, to land on the upper deck. In Russia, passengers were treated to an im-

In Norway they surprised residents by parachuting in a crew of base jumpers

that means staging a seven-course caviar-themed tasting menu or bringing

Katsumi Yakamoto or Peruvian chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, whose dishes incorporate ingredients fomented from the Amazon jungle.

“Our benchmark is top international hotels, not cruise ships,” Arjan

experience, “and the château certainly doesn’t have
dinners that size. “Normal tourists would never have been invited to do that,”

It’s perfect. Glass in hand, I’m reminded of the legendary words of Dom

But before that, there is the small matter of rousing from the Bali bed. I take it slowly, using the bedside telephone to order a armonita. It arrives almost immediately; a tall glass of frothy mango, banana and ginger juices. I drink it down, thinking that sometimes the greatest luxury is just receiving what

I awaken early to the sight of land – Hamilton Harbour, Bermuda – and of the pink-, yellow- and apricot-hued houses that dot the lush slopes of Paget Parish. Now my Champagne is the crisp morning air. I drink it in, thinking deeper under this covers and enjoying the sagging feeling of having a cold nose, but warm body.

Land means a show stop, with groups of participants breaking off to pursue their preferred hobbies. The cycling groups will take to the twisting Bermudan coastal road, the hikers will climb craggy outcroppings to visit

On the approach to any destination, beverage

ambassador to Israel, Desmond Tutu’s daughter Reverend Mpho A. Tutu,

“Come quickly, I am drinking

I vividly remember the legendary words of Dom Perignon upon tasting his first Champagne: “Come quickly, I am drinking

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a wink. Later, when I head outside in my robe, locate my pristinely

and I mention that I’ve reserved a night in one of Deck 12’s open-air

of homemade squid-ink pasta and lobster Bolognese. Ivanova checks in

It happens to me that night, while dining in the elegant Tides on a meal

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