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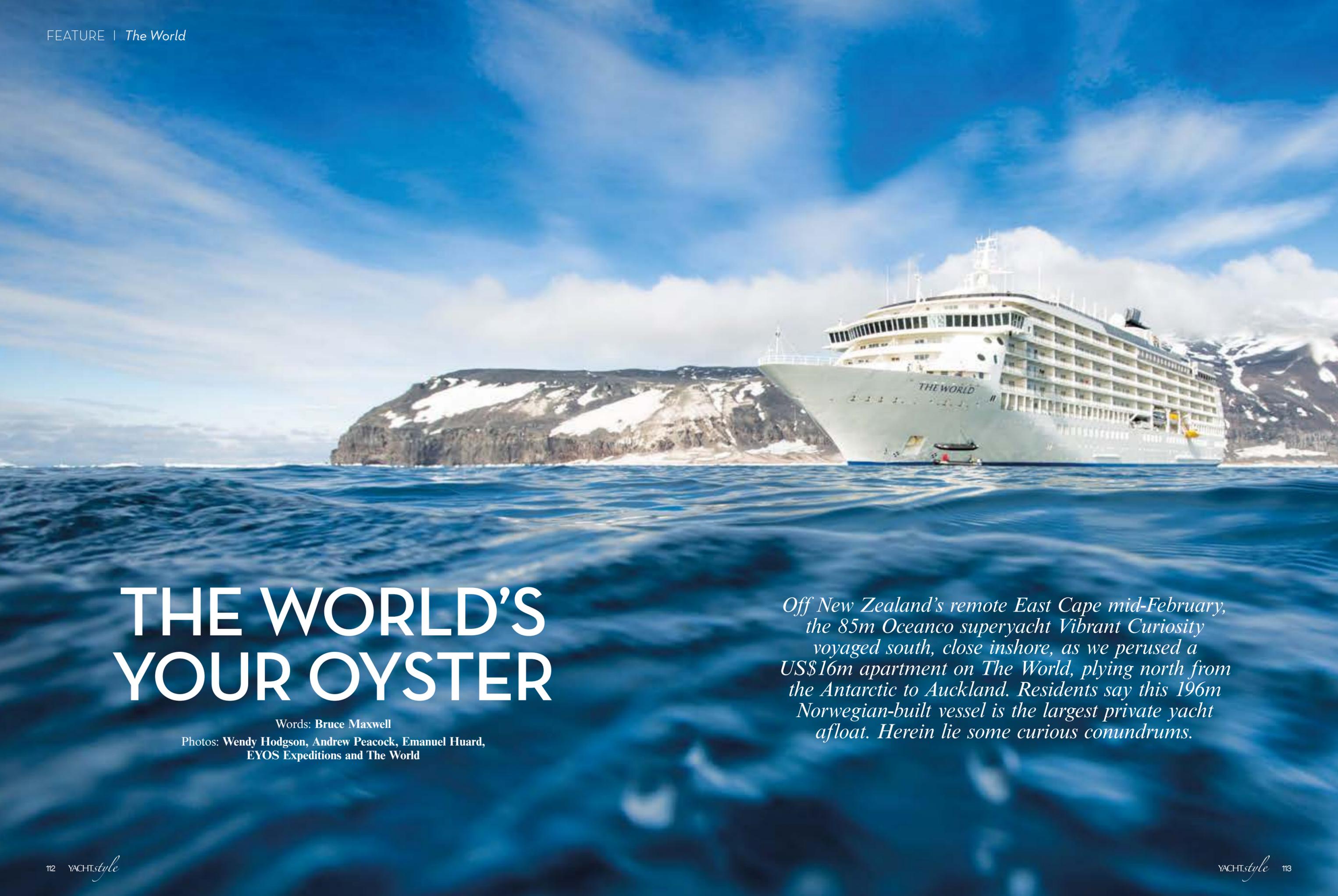
35<sup>TH</sup> AMERICA'S CUP PREVIEW  
THE WORLD'S YOUR OYSTER



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# THE WORLD'S YOUR OYSTER

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EYOS Expeditions and The World

*Off New Zealand's remote East Cape mid-February, the 85m Oceanco superyacht Vibrant Curiosity voyaged south, close inshore, as we perused a US\$16m apartment on The World, plying north from the Antarctic to Auckland. Residents say this 196m Norwegian-built vessel is the largest private yacht afloat. Herein lie some curious conundrums.*



Captain Dag Saevik watches closely as *The World* edges further south into the Antarctic icepack than any vessel before her

## Is the very concept of *The World* a threat to superyachts?

convivial host, who has a residence on Deck 8, where we began with cocktails, also owns a substantial superyacht that we often see anchored off the Eden Roc at Cap D'Antibes, when visiting the South of France in September for the Cannes Festival de la Plaisance and Monaco Yacht Show.

Another non-discussed but well-known family member and multi big boat owner is presently building the largest superyacht in Benetti's history, for delivery in 2019. That project is as yet under wraps.

So why keep a residence aboard *The World*? Because it is relatively hassle free. And because one can be as social with fellow residents or as privately self-contained as one likes. Simply fly in and fly out for whatever parts of the very interesting annual itinerary fit one's schedule.

*The World* has a vision: *You are about to embark on a journey with a diverse group that embodies a spirit of wanderlust. Once aboard, we hope that you'll feel as much at home as other residents who share with one another a thirst for living, learning and exploration that cannot be satisfied by conventional travel experiences.*

The last experience before New Zealand was a 22-day trip to the Ross Sea in Antarctica, where *The World* reached 78°43.996' S, the furthest south that any ship has ever been. The Guinness Book of Records has been notified. For a fairly large vessel of 43,000 tons, it should stand for some years to come. Our host that night had set a prior record in an ice-classed yacht.

Norwegian captain Dag Saevik, a former cruise ship master who has been with *The World* since this vessel was launched 15 years ago, was particularly proud to have followed in the footsteps of his illustrious countryman Roald Amundsen, the first man to reach the South Pole on 14 December 1911.

Is the very concept of *The World* a threat to superyachts? When I first saw her, not long after her much-fêted 2002 launch in Oslo, while covering the 31<sup>st</sup> America's Cup coincidentally also in Auckland, it seemed she was.

The idea is that, instead of a single owner, a posse of wealthy people combine to buy a much larger vessel, aboard which they can custom-create their own apartments.

Initial investment and ongoing running costs are reduced, and as *The World* circumnavigates the globe every 2-3 years, visiting intriguing places, the travel experience for residents can be that much richer.

Superyacht purists, on the other hand, say a vessel that looks like a cruise ship is a cruise ship, and ask how it can be private when its 165 apartments are owned by 142 families.

Reality lies somewhere in between. *The World* loomed large again while we stayed at one of Bangkok-based Bill Heinecke's Anantara resorts in the Maldives a few years back, but it was not until the present trip, actually aboard, that a much better understanding of this adventurous vessel evolved.

Superyacht yards can relax. At entry level, *The World* provides passage-making for people worth upwards of US\$10m. After that, many residents own or have owned large yachts as well as these apartments. Some are *still* in the ultra superyacht league. And let's face it, this unique and eventually successful concept may never be repeated. In short, these different approaches to life on the ocean waves are complementary, not opposed.

Dining in *East* restaurant the first night aboard, for example, our



Evidence of the 78°43.996' S latitude was sent to the Guinness Book of Records



Residents were able to closely study latest ecological aspects of melting ice in the Ross Sea

"We edged forward into the ice", he told me. "There is a sonar in the bulbous bow. We came as close as we safely could".

Amundsen reached the North Pole as well, and he negotiated the Northwest Passage through Canada's frozen wastes. *The World* was the first large private vessel to make the same transit unsupported. En route to Australia this trip, residents explored exotic Borneo and the Makassar Strait. Next up after Auckland came a custom Melanesian voyage involving New Caledonia, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

"We have a 10-11 strong itinerary group", explained another couple, who owned a Sunseeker and a similarly sleek 32m Australian-built Warren motor yacht before buying a residence on *The World* six years ago.

"They work with the Captain, obviously, and people like Rob McCallum, who runs an outfit originally called Expedition Yacht Operations Specialists, now shortened to EYOS Expeditions".

For the rest of 2017 *The World* will visit some relatively obscure parts of Japan, then Shanghai and Hong Kong before heading across the Pacific via fascinating Micronesia and Hawaii to the US and Canadian West Coasts and later Mexico and the Caribbean.

Her 2018 schedule is set too, on either side of the North and South Atlantic, so the itinerary group is presently focused on 2019-2020, knowing that they will be starting from the final port of 2018, which is Cape Town, South Africa.

Perhaps Madagascar next, and the Seychelles, or maybe divert to Reunion and Mauritius? Several options are put to the residents, who then vote until the majority are in favour of a particular course.

Who exactly are the residents? That aspect is kept strictly private too, although not a few are quite recognisable from their public profiles when ashore. Suffice to say that the largest but not majority group are Americans and Canadians, followed by Australians and New Zealanders, Britons, South Africans, assorted Europeans and a spattering of Japanese and South Americans. Ages range from early 40s to 90s.

The residences were not fully sold until 2006. Since then, a number are always coming up for resale, because the average length of ownership is 6-7 years, by which time one could have thrice circumnavigated the world.

Some residents trade up or downsize, keeping leading interior designers such as Christian Liaigre busy, while non-residents expressing



This residence had some eclectic features, a map of *The World's* voyages and calls, and an entrance hallway featuring a boutique artwork display



*Bali beds used for daytime dalliances can be configured for sleeping under the stars*



**A price of US\$25m has been whispered for the Penthouse**

an interest in buying into the venture are first carefully vetted, and then may be invited to cruise as a paying guest, which for many is an essential exercise before deciding whether to go ahead. Even at this stage, one needs to be proposed and seconded by existing residents who are not owners of the residence for sale.

Residential Director Eddie Wong, who hails from Bondi Beach, advises there are 40 small Ocean Studios of 290-846 square feet, 19 Ocean Studio Residences of 560-1011 sq ft, and 106 Two Bedroom Residences of 1106-1391 sq ft and Three Bedroom Residences of 1758-3242 sq ft (163-301 sq m).

These range from US\$2.5 to circa US\$16m for the three-bedroom one we were viewing when *Vibrant Curiosity*, which has a very distinctive profile, passed by off East Cape. This residence had an entrance hall displaying an art collection, and was rather eclectically furnished by a Canadian.

Some principals buy a residence and additional ones for family members or guests, which explains why only 142 families occupy 165 residences. There is also a six-bedroom, six and one half bathroom penthouse suite of 4184 sq ft topping out this Decks 6-11 residential set-up. We are told a price of US\$25m has been whispered.

Annual costs are a bit higher here than if one were keeping an apartment ashore. The residents basically own the ship, so like

*Fredy's Deli sells reasonably priced selected wines and essential smallgoods, and one of two pools with al fresco eateries either side*

*Aft deck Marina Restaurant, above, and one of many interior decor styles for a master bedroom*





*Clockwise from top left, nail salon adjunct to the Spa and Wellness Centre, walk into any empty bar and a barman magically materialises, the substantial Colosseo theatre, and a Christian Liaigre-designed residence*

superyachts there are substantial outlays for the 280 crew, fuel and insurance. Unlike cruise ships, *The World* averages 2-3 days in each city it visits – more in larger cosmopolitan hubs like New York, London and Hong Kong - so port fees increase too.

One pays according to the exact square footage of one's residence, which may be the reason that rather odd-looking decimals appear on such lists. The same rationale is used in deciding itineraries.

The resident community takes a fee on each residence sale, which goes toward amortising the annual budget, but *The World* President and

CEO Pamela Conover, who happened to be aboard, tells us some owners have historically made a profit on resale, albeit while also paying annual running costs.

Modern cruise ships, which despite multi-branding are mostly owned by Carnival and Royal Caribbean, now have a lifespan of circa 20 years before they are resold and replaced. Better kept ones like *QE2* and *Marco Polo* lasted 40-50 years.

*The World* as mentioned is 15 years old. But because she has not been treated like cruise ships, which require revenue streams and are in



*Recent Borneo expedition down the Makassar Strait required extra security*



*Spectacular underwater volcano erupts in the Solomon Sea east of Papua New Guinea*



*Up close and personal with a pair of penguins. Some residents assemble extensive photo files*



*Meeting the natives in the Tyuleniy Archipelago in Russia's Caspian Sea, which is reached from the Black Sea via the Don-Volga Canal*





***It is projected that  
The World will roam  
the planet for 50+ years***

and out of dockyards as quickly as possible, it is projected that she will operate for 50+ years. Her most recent drydock and significant upgrade period was scheduled over a lengthy four weeks in Cadiz, Spain, and she looks first class, in better shape today perhaps than at her launch.

When stepping aboard, it is fair to say that any resemblance to routine cruise ship life rapidly begins to fade, and it does indeed become akin to a private yacht experience. *The World* may look like a cruise ship, but she does not *behave* like one.

Owners check into their private residences, a home afloat, with all the familiar bits and pieces of life already installed and up for another outing. Everything works. No need to call anyone, except perhaps on the 16-touch intercom for a chilled bottle of Fleury, this year's selected champagne, and caviar and cheese from Fredy's, the well-stocked delicatessen and casual cafe.

Venturing out, it is possible to roam the decks without actually meeting anyone for some time. This is not a 5,000-passenger behemoth, nor is it an extremely upmarket small cruise liner, a concept which probably comes closest, but remains well astern.

The 142 families that own *The World* are not aboard year-around. Well, a few are, but average occupancy is 3-4 months. The most one may encounter are 150-200 people, spread over eight decks of a 644 ft ship.

They often entertain and dine in their own residences, but do sometimes surface to use the Deck 11 pool and jacuzzi, which has an adjacent al fresco Med-style eatery, or the aft Marina pool. *East, Tides, The Marina* and *Portraits*, which is often black tie, are the signature restaurants.

Stroll into the empty Regatta Bar, base of the clearly exclusive *The World Yacht Club*, and before one has a chance to properly study 30-odd burgees from diverse nautical establishments, a barman materialises, and a pianist, who embarks on a medley.

In the Marina bar and restaurant, another resident is running a belated Robbie Burns Night private party, complete with kilts, haggis and wee drams of single malt scotch, because this was not possible in the Antarctic on the exact date.

This vessel has a premier three-star rating from *The World of Fine Wine* in 2015 and 2016, which only applies to the world's top 300 restaurants, and we have no reason to think they may lose this accolade in 2017. Also "Best Ship" 2015 and 2016.

In prior port Napier, which seriously rivals Miami's South Beach for Art Deco architectural styles, due to rebuilding after a 1931 earthquake, residents flocked to Mission Estate and Elephant Hill Wineries to sample lauded Gimlett Gravels reds. Beverage Manager Marinela Ivanova, and lovely Head Sommelier Mia Martensson, advise that we have an overall total 17,697 temperature-controlled bottles aboard.

Wine does not travel well, so they buy for drinking now.

One can play great golf courses on the simulator, although the real thing, Cape Kidnappers, rated 16<sup>th</sup> in the world, and Gulf Harbour north of Auckland, were on our schedule.

A British-Australian resident of *The World*, who has another residence overlooking Beatle George Harrison's old place on Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, off the Great Barrier Reef, opined that Hamilton Island's course, on nearby Dent Island, is superior to Cape Kidnappers.

*The World Spa* has a full range of wellness, fitness and beauty treatments and products as well as jacuzzis, steam baths and so on, and due to space constraints we should also quickly list the Bali Beds under the stars, billiards and cigar rooms, Colosseo theatre, dive club, sailing and kayaking, art gallery, palette arts and crafts, non-denominational place of worship, medical centre, gymnasium and an absolutely superb Study, which boasts an extensive library, maps, DVDs and magazines among which, we were pleased to see, was our own. ✂

*Another visit to Hong Kong is scheduled late April to early May*



**The World is Bahamian-flagged, and The World Resident Holdings, The World of ResidenSea II and operator ROW Management are also organised in the Bahamas. Headquarters for sales and marketing are in Ft Lauderdale. For more information, see [www.aboardtheworld.com](http://www.aboardtheworld.com) or call +1 954 538 8449.**