

Home Afloat

There's cruising and then there's The World. We take a look at a very exclusive seaborne community.

Taking the world of cruising to another level

The World is not a cruise ship. It looks like one, acts like one, even has all the features we've come to expect from a luxury liner. But a better way to describe The World is a semi-permanent private community at sea. There are no cabins on this ship, just apartments – privately-owned apartments that, when the owners are away, can be rented out to guests for a minimum six-night stay.

The World has 165 apartments, either owner-occupied or rented out to short-term guests who can board and disembark the ship anywhere in the world. The ship's itinerary is astonishing: over the course of its year-long voyage it calls at almost every port you can imagine.

Moreover, because it's a 12-month journey, The World can take the time to stay in a port more than one day. Sailing on The World is not a matter of scrambling off and on for rushed half-day tours. The pace is far more relaxing. Take the schedule for October 2008, for example: three days in Italy at San Remo, six days in Monte Carlo, four days in Corsica at Ajaccio, and two in France in the port of Toulon.

The World was the brainchild of Knut U. Kloster Jr., whose family has been a pioneering force in the modern cruise industry for many years. His father, Knut Kloster

Sr., founded the Norwegian Caribbean Line. Knut Jr., after serving as chairman and chief executive of the Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Viking Line, was well prepared to take the world of cruising to the next level. He launched The World in 2002.

The ship has two- and three-bedroom self-contained apartments and studios with kitchen, spacious bathroom, living and dining areas, and the latest appliances and audio-video technology. Many of these apartments have an outside veranda large enough and private enough for a Jacuzzi – one of the options.

All the apartments were sold by June 2006, at prices that then ranged from US\$825,000 to US\$7.3 million. But, as we said, you don't have to own an apartment to enjoy this amazing vessel. Apartment owners are frequently absent, so guests are welcomed aboard to experience life at sea as they've never before known it.

The look and style of each apartment was the work of a leading interior designer. Nina Campbell of London created a collection of apartments in the smart and comfortable style of an elegant English country home. Other apartments designed by Chilean Juan Pablo Molyneux, now resident in New York, may remind you of neo-classical Park Avenue homes, while Petter Yran and





Bjorn Strobraaten of Oslo have bought their maritime sensibility to others.

Altogether, The World interiors create the feeling of life aboard a luxury yacht rather than an ocean liner. Then again, even if the finest luxury yacht doesn't have four restaurants, a poolside grill, a delicatessen, in-room dining, 24-hour room service, and a Banyan Tree Spa specialising in high-touch, low-tech techniques for massage, facials and body scrubs.

Nor do yachts come with three bars, a nightclub, a cigar club, and a golf centre complete with computerised instruction training and a course simulator that allows guests to "play" the likes of St. Andrews, Augusta National and Pebble Beach. On the other hand, you might like to play tennis on the ship's full-size tennis court or simply relax by one of the two swimming pools.

Art is an important theme on board. There are two fine art galleries holding original art, on loan and for sale. The ship's collection rotates to suit the itinerary, as a way of emphasising the artistic traditions of different regions and cultures along the way. Every public space is graced with fine art that is part of the ship's permanent collection of 650 pieces.

Sailing the globe all year round means taking care to minimize the environmental impact. The World is the first ship of its size to burn marine diesel rather than the more common heavy bunker fuel. The ship has also set a world-first with its leading-edge wastewater cleaning system – a high-tech water recycling process.

This year The World anchored or docked in 36 countries, plus Antarctica and along the way guests were lucky enough to attend events as diverse and entertaining as Carnival in Rio, the Cannes Film Festival and the America's Cup.

In 2008, one of the ship's most exotic ports-of-call begins on April 11 when it arrives in Mumbai. Because it's in port for the next two days, onshore excursions (included in the original cost) include two nights at the Oberoi Mumbai Hotel, one of the most elegant and exclusive hotels in the city once known as Bombay. That stay is accompanied by organised tours of this extraordinary city and surrounding region.

From Mumbai, guests fly south to Cochin for a three-night luxury cruise through the Kerala Lakes and up the Pamba River. The cruise stops at Karumadi, a city sometimes called the Venice of the East, before guests are returned to Cochin, where they re-board The World, sailing on to Colombo and Galle, in Sri Lanka and the Maldives port of Male.

In the northern summer The World returns to the Mediterranean. There it will visit ports in Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Italy and Croatia, among others. But that is only a quick glance at the options. Guests are free to tailor their itinerary to suits their time, budget and interests. The World is travel-by-design in more ways than one.

For the ship's complete itinerary and other information, go online to www.aboardtheworld.com or phone Voyage Affaires in Auckland on (09) 302 0800. 🌐