

# SBLS

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SPRING AWAKENING



# *sea the world*

*THE WORLD, THE LARGEST PRIVATE YACHT IN  
EXISTENCE, OFFERS UNPARALLELED LUXURY TRAVEL  
AND ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME*

BY *Maddy Sims*

Imagine traveling to the most remote parts of the world, and then returning to your own bed at night. Spending the day with a native tribe in Papua New Guinea and then coming back to an elegant restaurant with extraordinary service and dishes tailored to your exact preferences. Exploring the Sea of Cortez, Madagascar, Indonesian islands, Antarctica—and then relaxing in your own apartment filled with all of your things. Imagine seeing the world from your own home. That’s what life is like aboard The World.

The World is a first-of-its-kind, resident-owned ship that travels around the globe and offers the comfort of home every step of the way. During its recent anchorage off of Santa Barbara, I visited the ship to learn about residents’ day-to-day aboard the elusive vessel.

Equipped with 165 ultra-luxe studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments, this is no cruise ship. The finishes are sophisticated and high-end. The rooms have sweeping private balconies. The itinerary changes every year. Here, the residents decide where they’re going through an elected council (the size of your unit determines how many votes you get). Then, they share in a journey of over 100 ports of call each year, experiencing unforgettable adventures and enjoying a level of luxury that’s unmatched.

There’s an outdoor pool, indoor pool, tennis court (the only regulation-size court at sea), putting green, golf simulator (plus a full-time golf coach), in-house physical therapist, award-winning wine collection, poker room, library, and so much more. There are four restaurants, a poolside grill, plus a charming cafe with snacks, beverages, medications, and fresh produce. Guests can socialize in several different bars or head to the cigar club (the only place smoking is allowed on board). A non-denominational place of worship is open for those who want to organize services. Private spaces for small children and teenagers are available. The full-size theater not only houses live entertainment reminiscent of cruise ships, but also movie screenings and lectures with authors, professors, Nobel laureates, and other knowledgeable experts.

Yet another departure from typical cruise ship ethos is the impressive focus on health and wellness. The expansive spa is 7,000 square feet, with a beauty salon (offering manicures, pedicures, hair services), massage rooms, steam baths, a Jacuzzi, and a Vichy bed for full-body hammam treatments. Nearby, the immaculate fitness center is filled with modern machines and Peloton bikes. There's even a Pilates studio with reformers. It's nicer than many of the high-end gyms I've seen. Classes are offered daily, ranging from yoga to Zumba. Starlink internet is available on the ship, and conference rooms are open for those working remotely or for board meetings.

Residents must have a certain net-worth to even qualify for entry. That's because they fund everything: running the ship, crew salaries, regular maintenance, guest lecturers, entertainment, and more. They also need recommendations from existing residents aboard the ship. In exchange, they're granted access to an ultra-exclusive portal to the world. It's not just about traveling around the globe, it's about understanding as well. The ship brings experts from upcoming destinations onto the boat to educate the residents ahead of time. Scientists, anthropologists, musicians, and artists come to teach those aboard and lead onshore expeditions, offering full cultural immersion.

While it's possible to live on The World full-time, few residents do. Most stay on for a few weeks at a time. For the majority of residents, The World is more like a vacation home. They get on and off the ship whenever they like, traveling made easier thanks to the fact that their apartments are filled with clothes and other travel necessities. Every apartment is unique: Residents are free to renovate the space—moving walls, adding windows, or changing decorations.

As with the apartments, everything about The World experience is bespoke. One resident calls the level of service “six-stars.” Beds are made and towels are folded according to the residents' specifications. Onboard and shoreside activities are carefully curated based on personal preferences. Dietary restrictions and allergies are top of mind. Favorite foods and drinks are noted and remembered. I'm even told there's a list in the kitchen with notes for every resident. For example, one resident likes her water glass half-full, and I watch as servers honor this throughout lunch, after excitedly telling her they have fresh sea urchin available (her favorite).

I spend lunch with Steven\* and Donna\* who have been on the ship for 20 years, almost since it launched in 2002. Back then, Donna says, The World was an experiment. They received a notice about it in the mail. “I kept saying

it sounded fabulous,” Donna laughs. “He kept saying it sounded ridiculous.” But after visiting, they joined immediately. It was love at first sight, Steven tells me. The combination of traveling to remote places while having all your needs met and getting to sleep in your own bed is what sold them.

Love at first sight has grown into a lifelong relationship. Their dreams of traveling off-the-grid became a reality, as they've traveled to several small islands that don't typically have visitors. They've met the locals and formed relationships with them. If the communities are in need of school supplies or other items, the residents often bring them. These experiences in particular are the most memorable, Steven says. “It creates the sense that our community is the world,” he says. “We're so aware of the fact that it's one world we're in.”

The World affords residents a unique way to experience different destinations. The couple recounts numerous amazing experiences: bird-watching led by local experts, cooking classes with famous chefs, photography walks guided by professionals, scuba expeditions in remote diving locations.

However, Steven and Donna say the community aboard is what makes The World special. The staff is like extended family. Steven and Donna's grandson is 25 now, but some of the workers aboard today attended his sixth birthday when they hosted it on The World years ago. On this ship, everybody knows everybody. Despite the wealth required to join, the residents are refreshingly down-to-earth. “Nobody here shows off. It doesn't matter,” Steven says. “Age is less important. Religion is less important. Politics are less important. Wealth is less important.” What binds them all together is a true love of the world, which fosters an atmosphere of positivity, curiosity, and inclusion.

“The World offers activity, luxury, and community,” Steven says. “You can find those things at other places, but the combination here is what makes it so special.” And with that, we finish our delicious lunch (I can see why the ship is renowned for its cuisine) and head down to catch the ferry headed into Santa Barbara. We make a quick stop at their apartment—newly-renovated and filled with incredible artwork from all over the globe. I'm in utter awe as I walk through the space. “It's beautiful,” I say. Donna smiles proudly at the artifacts, while Steven replies: “It really is the only way to see the world without leaving home.”\*

*\*Names have been changed for privacy*

