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World Class

Palm Beachers explore the planet from the comfort of their own apartment at sea

BY JUDY MARTEL

When author Paul Theroux wrote, "Travel is at its most rewarding when it ceases to be about your reaching a destination and becomes indistinguishable from living your life," he could have been referring to the owners who occupy the 165 condominiums aboard *The World*, a private residential yacht that continuously circumnavigates the globe. Whether gliding through the remote Hebrides islands or docked along Italy's Amalfi Coast, *The World* caters to sophisticated trekkers who believe travel is best when it comes with all the comforts of home.

Aside from the logistical ease of visiting a variety of destinations without the bother of packing and unpacking, owners praise the country club-style amenities, onboard community of adventurers, and the control (as owner-residents) over the ship's itinerary. Anne Schreiber, who maintains homes in Palm Beach and Manhattan, easily embraced the idea of at-sea living. She and her late husband first read about *The World* in *The Wall Street Journal* before it was launched in 2002. They purchased a condo after they retired and moved aboard for nearly eight months a year. "My husband never wanted to get off; he loved it so much," Schreiber says.

These days, Schreiber lives aboard for a couple months annually and schedules her



RESIDENTS AVERAGE THREE TO FOUR MONTHS ABOARD ANNUALLY, VISITING SPOTS LIKE SYMI, GREECE (BOTTOM LEFT) WITHOUT HAVING TO SACRIFICE THE COMFORTS OF HOME.



time based on *The World's* ports. In April, she spent a week in Paris and Bordeaux with her son and then traveled to Marseilles to rejoin the ship. "I love the Mediterranean in the summer," she says. "And then at the end of the summer we go to Great Britain and Dublin, and I don't want to miss that."

Schreiber doesn't treat her time aboard so much as a vacation but rather as a way of life. She sometimes attends the shore excursions planned by *The World* but just as often follows her own schedule, soaking up the local culture at her own pace or planning side trips with friends. "In May, we were docked in Genoa [Italy] for two nights," she explains. "I put together a group of four women and we went to Milan. Then in July, I have a wedding

in Bologna when the ship is in Valencia [Spain]. I'll leave the ship, fly to Bologna, and meet it again in Lisbon."

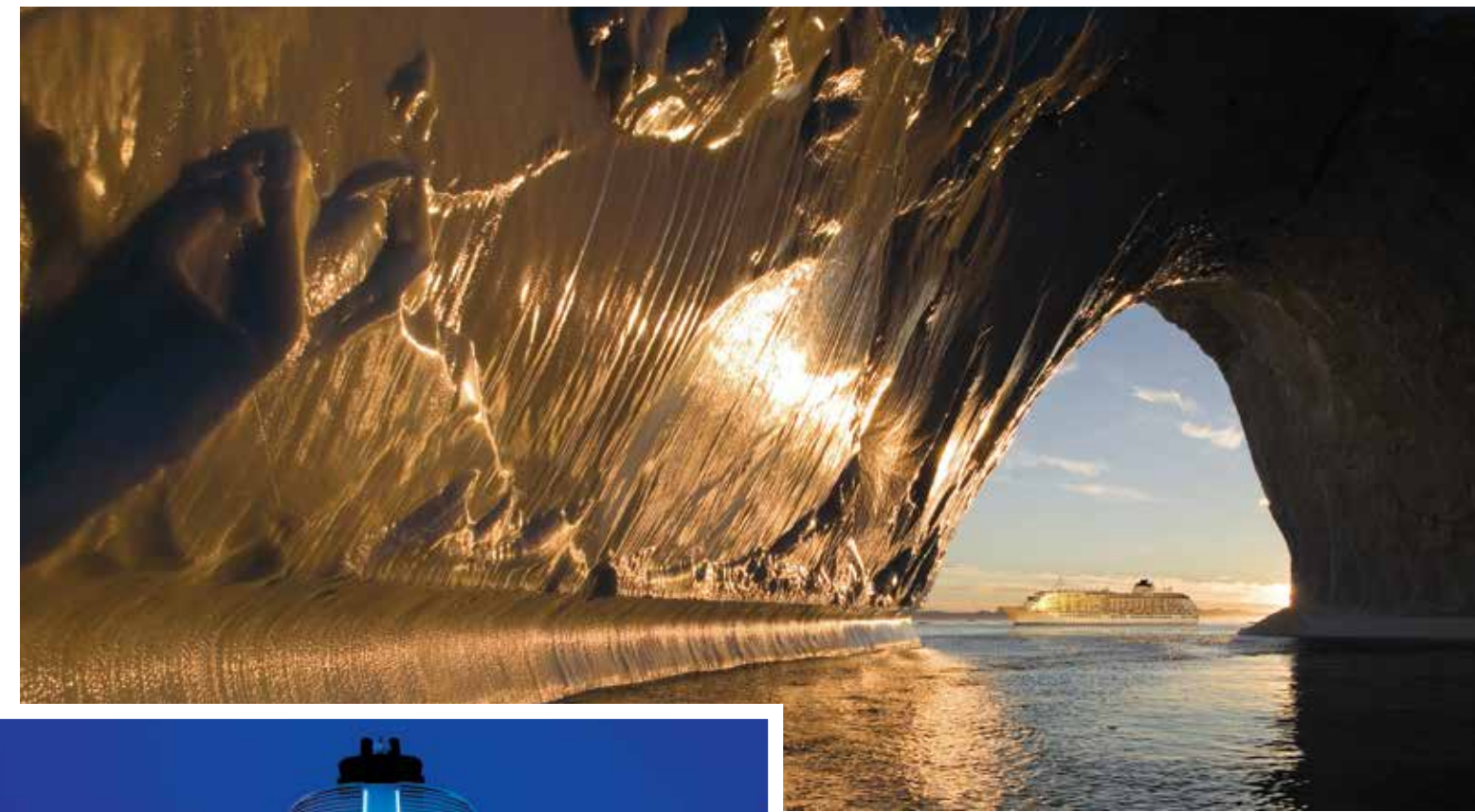
For retired attorney Peter Antonucci, taking in the ever-changing landscape while living in the lap of luxury is the only way to go. "You can't get on a plane at Miami or JFK airport and say 'take me there,' and have the same travel experience," he says. "It's like you took the best luxury hotel [stay] you've ever had and the best restaurants you've been to and doubled the experience—that's *The World*." Aside from his residence in Palm Beach and a home in Connecticut, Antonucci has owned four condos aboard *The*

World, where units range in price from \$1.5 to \$15 million.

Antonucci learned about *The World* through his wife, who, like Schreiber, read an article in *The Wall Street Journal* and felt it would be a dream come true to live aboard. "To humor her, we visited the ship and the next day I was in the residence advisor's office," Antonucci says. Depending on the destinations, he'll spend up to nine months aboard annually.

The ship's board approves itineraries three years in advance, with input from residents, explains Antonucci, who is a board member. Every occupant has a vote in the final schedule, which differs each year. In 2018, there are 114 ports of call.

Residents say the main characteristic that separates *The World* from other luxury cruise liners is that they own the vessel and have a say in how it's run. Because of this proprietorship, the ship's schedule is basically at their command, meaning they can plan extended stops in Rio de Janeiro during the annual Carnival celebration or England for the



WHEN NOT EXPLORING ARCTIC GLACIERS (ABOVE), RESIDENTS OF *THE WORLD* CAN RELAX AT ONE OF TWO POOLS OR SAVOR A SELECTION FROM THE WINE VAULT.



Wimbledon tennis championship. "We look at what's going on—the World Cup or the Olympics or art and music festivals—and if we can get there, great," says Antonucci.

Destination experts and speakers frequently join the ship, allowing ample opportunity to whip up excitement ahead of a visit. For example, when *The World* traverses the arctic landscape of Norway's Svalbard Archipelago, "we'll hear from experts on polar bears because it's one of the few places in the world where you can still see them in the wild," says Antonucci. "There will also be an Audubon expert and someone who will talk about ancient Norwegian mariners, as well as experts on marine life, photography, polar meteorology, and all sorts of related fields."

In 2017, *The World* introduced a lecture

series that brings four Nobel Laureates aboard each year to share their expertise and interact with residents. In addition to talks on local culture and history, *The World* also hosts regional wine tastings and cooking classes, while its restaurants showcase native cuisines.

The education continues in port through one-of-a-kind experiences and access to local luminaries. In St. Petersburg, Russia, residents were offered a private tour of the Hermitage Museum on a day it's normally closed to the public. "It's the first time it was open on a Monday in 30 years," Antonucci says. On a recent stop in New York City, several Broadway stars, including opera singer Renée Fleming,

came aboard to mingle and perform. While docked in Cape Town, South Africa, the mayor visited the ship for a breakfast discussion.

And then there are the fellow travelers, who hail from 19 countries. Although *The World* measures 644 feet long, the feeling aboard is intimate, says Schreiber. "If you asked me the single most important part of this lifestyle, it's the community and staff. That's the reason I stay. It would be hard for me to give it up because it's become a very important part of my life. As long as I'm healthy and have the means [to] travel, I'll keep doing it." ◀◀