

FOR ALL THE WORLD

Main picture: *The World*, a private residential yacht, at Villefranche-sur-Mer. Inset: *The World* Residents live in sophisticated apartments customised to their own taste



HOME AT SEA

An ever-changing view, itineraries to inveigle, a bevy of unimpeachable amenities: cruising's next wave is all about a place you can call your own. By **Gary Buchanan**

The idea of cruising around the world dates back to the 1920s, but the idea of living at sea is a relatively new one. In fact, it dates back just 20 years. That's when the notion of sailing aboard *The World* (aboardtheworld.com) was first envisaged: the ultimate address aboard the largest residential ship ever created. The vision was to conceive a lodestar of privacy and grace, one from which resident explorers could savour a cavalcade of ineffable seascapes without the obligations associated with traditional yacht ownership.

Undoubtedly, *The World* is a super-ship for the super-rich, but even the über-wealthy like to keep a keen eye on their investment. Eighteen months after the launch, the



Residents acquired the ship from the holding company, and this discreet floating resort community assumed responsibility for its own destiny. By June 2006, the original inventory was sold out and since then only a handful of the 165 Residences has become available for sale. Stealth wealth and ocean roaming became cosy shipmates.

With a refined vibe, the spacious Residences, all with verandas, range from not-so-bijou studios to commodious 3,242sq ft (301sq m) three-bedroom apartments, each customised to Residents' individual tastes – needless to say, they feature everything from contemporary to traditional décor and exude an aura of relaxed sophistication befitting their \$2-million to \$15-million price range, annual ownership costs notwithstanding. ➤➔





Contrary to popular misconceptions, *The World* Residents are not Hollywood moguls, industry plutocrats or glamorous celebrities. The owners of this floating Xanadu are first-generation entrepreneurs, some semi-retired but still active in their businesses. Another myth is the notion that enrolment in this maritime community confers non-dom status; in truth, tax status depends on the country at which Residents are permanently domiciled. Equally false is the claim that *The World* is the largest ship sailing the seven seas; at a modest 43,188-tonnes, she is in stark contrast to those floating leviathans that hurry from one port to another, dropping anchor at breakfast and sailing well before cocktail hour.

Residents enjoy a coup de cuisine in the four principal restaurants, plus grill and café. There's an exceptional golf facility with onboard putting greens, state-of-the-art golf simulator and resident pro. In addition, there's the only full-size, regulation tennis court at sea, swimming pools, a therapeutic spa and wellness centre with personal trainers, gourmet marketplace, library, cinema, boutique, cigar club and games rooms.

Itineraries are determined some three years in advance by an egalitarian vote among the Residents. The roster of ports ranges from remote parts of Antarctica to the Northwest Passage, Madagascar to Melanesia. Navigating six continents and sailing every ocean, the 2023 Journey will be an exceptional voyage. Pan-global odysseys – with a focus on extended stays in port – ensure that for Residents, *The World* is their oyster.

Itineraries for *The World* are determined three years in advance by an egalitarian vote

A DEKADENT LIFE

With a hoped-for delivery date in 2025, *Njord* – known as 'the next generation of private superyacht' – is to be built in Germany

THE NEXT WAVE

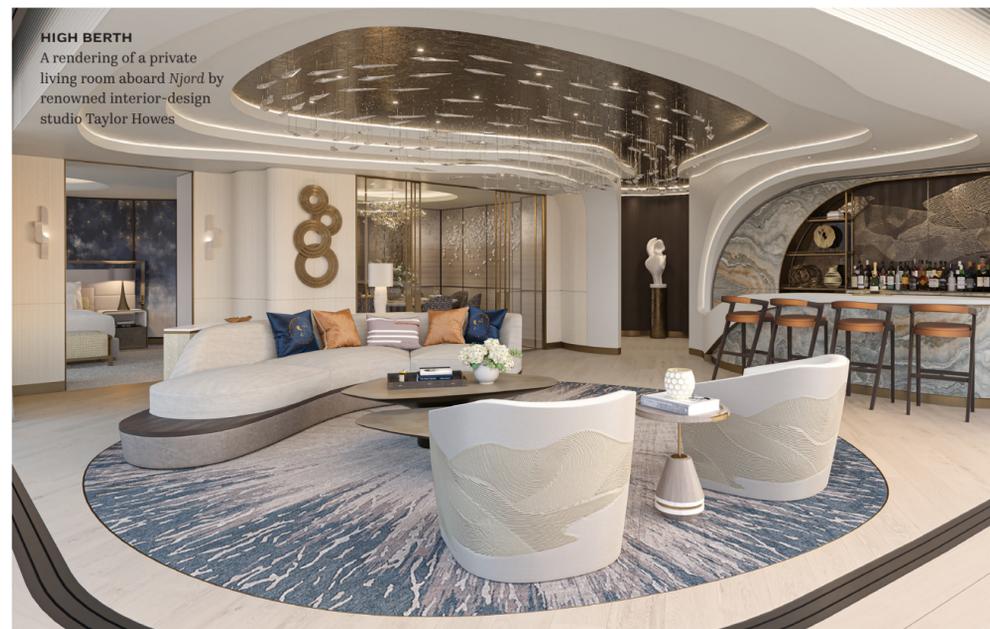
Concepts for a variety of residential ships in recent years have either failed to get beyond the drawing board or were unable to garner the necessary funding for construction. Now the future looks bright for nautical nomads with deep pockets, thanks to perspicacity from the most elite superyacht designers.

It's surely no coincidence that a previous master of *The World* is the co-founder of **Somnio** (somniausyachts.com). Described as a 'yacht liner', this floating community of like-minded individuals will have just 39 luxury apartments. Owners can work with the creative experts at Tillberg Design of Sweden, Winch Design or Luttenberger Design to create their individual halcyons. Interiors throughout the superlative vessel will seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor living. Endorsing the exclusivity, *Somnio's* condominiums are only available by invitation or referral, and the identity of each owner will remain secret. Due to be constructed at the Norwegian shipyard VARD, this 33,500 GRT vessel is set to debut in 2024.

Named after the god of the seas and winds in Norse mythology, **Njord** (my-njord.com) has been dubbed the 'next generation of private superyacht'. This 84,800 GRT vessel has been designed by the world-famous creator of custom motor yachts Espen Øino, along with Jean-Louis Stutzmann, chief designer architect at Ocean Residences Development. Spanning the lexicon of decadent design, the 118 Residences



ON THE LIST?
The 39 luxury apartments on the 'yacht liner' *Somnio* are only available by invitation or referral



HIGH BERTH
A rendering of a private living room aboard *Njord* by renowned interior-design studio Taylor Howes

will range from two- to six-bedroom apartments. There are plenty of options for Residents to customise their apartments with premium features, such as wine cellars, cheese rooms, humidors, safe rooms, gyms, saunas and steam rooms. *Njord* will be equipped to undertake scientific and oceanographic research everywhere she travels. Underwater drones, together with two submersibles, will map the ocean floor using multi-beam echo sounders. This mega-yacht will dial up the trappings of exclusivity with two eight-seat, Airbus helicopters with a range of 400 nautical miles. Construction will be undertaken at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany with a target delivery date of 2025.

Co-founded by the former CEO of *The World*, Fredy Dellis, **Blue World Voyages** (blueworldvoyages.com) claims to be the first cruise line specifically for adults who are active, athletic and health-conscious, as well as those who aspire to be. The founders planned to downsize an existing ship to accommodate 350 passengers in owner-occupied apartments that included 40 luxury one- and two-bedroom residences, along with 225 hotel suites. The launch of *Blue World* was delayed, and the company is currently seeking a bigger ship. An entire deck will be dedicated to sports and fitness, with a spacious gym, golf, football and hockey simulators, plus a saltwater lap pool with cabanas. There will be another deck devoted to a state-of-the-art luxury spa, yoga studio and sports-medicine clinic. ■

Five Minutes with...

Tom Wolber



CEO of *The World*

Q: What makes *The World* different?

I've worked for several cruise ships but, apart from its outward appearance, *The World* is nothing like them. It is a private home for only 150 families from 20 countries and is a lifestyle of luxury travel versus a vacation. It's the gold standard of residential ships and remains one of a kind and the only privately owned residential mega-yacht in operation today. She's truly in a class by herself.

Q: What does the post-pandemic world look like for its Residents?

Our Residents were delighted to return to their home at sea in July 2021. We are fortunate in that *The World's* residential concept is naturally designed to be more relevant post-pandemic. We have the same people living on the ship, including our crew, versus other ships' more transient passengers who come and go from week to week. *The World* remains a very compelling option for those interested in travelling the globe in total privacy from the comfort of their home at sea.

Q: It sounds dreamy – what are the USPs for owners?

The World has set the benchmark for luxury residential travel at sea. Residents travel to more than 100 ports of call each year for extended stays to experience new cultures, natural wonders, incredible food and wine, enriching lecturers, and more. Our Residents enjoy being part of a community and travelling together.

Q: What initiatives and exciting developments are on the horizon?

This spring the ship will go into dry-dock in Cádiz, Spain, for a few weeks for a multimillion-dollar refurbishment of several public areas as part of the Residents' ongoing investment and commitment to preserving the immaculate condition of this yacht. During this time, some Residents will use the opportunity to refurbish their homes as well. We have a very exciting journey planned later this year including the furthest reaches of the Northern Hemisphere for an Iceland Expedition.

Q: And what about the competition?

We know there are others eyeing this niche market and it's a challenge that we are well prepared for. The high level of service that our crew delivers is unmatched. We describe luxury as the anticipatory service our crew provides and knowing each Resident's preferences. Whether it's recommending certain wines we know they will enjoy with their dinner selections to how they like their family photos arranged in their apartment to their preferred type of ground transportation, Residents need not ask; we already know and work hard to surpass their expectations when it comes to service.

PHOTO: THE WORLD, WINCH DESIGN, OCEAN RESIDENCES