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THOSE WERE THE DAYS, MY FRIENDS

Frances Yip honours
Cantopop songwriting
legends James Wong
and Joseph Koo

THERE'S A PRIVATE MEMBERS' CLUB
OUT THERE JUST FOR YOU

THE NEW RESTAURANTS SHAKING UP
THE CITY'S INDIAN CUISINE SCENE



*Post Magazine stepped on board floating luxury condominium
The World to discover how residents sail the seas in personalised style.*

Ship shape

BY DAVEN WU

For some lucky invited Hong Kong residents, the arrival into port last month of The World – Residences at Sea was a rare opportunity to peek into the world of a small elite that lives and travels the globe on what is essentially a floating luxury condominium with the amenities of a swanky country club. Think fancy wine programmes, boutique health and wellness services including physiotherapist and personal trainer, and reciprocal access to a suite of equestrian, yachting and golf clubs far and wide.

Owned by about 150 families and backed by a management team that runs all operations, the 644-foot, 12-deck mega yacht was in town on one of its

100-plus port peregrinations around the planet. On board are just 165 apartments – a mixture of bright and spacious studios, two- and three-bedroom units, and one- and two-bedroom studio apartments ranging from 330 sq ft to almost 10 times the size. Apartments don't come on the market often, but when they do, they fetch from US\$2 million to US\$15 million.

The analogy of The World as a luxury condominium is not casually made. Not only are residents at liberty to furnish their apartments to their personal tastes – with the help of a designer of their own choosing or one recommended by the yacht – they also have a say in how the rest of the vessel, including its sprawling public spaces, is decorated and used.

And like any condominium, practical, quotidian issues loom large, not least maintenance headaches,



renovation schedules and the coordination of incoming and outgoing residents. But when it comes to The World, all this has to take place often while literally being on the move.

Usually, every three years The World is lifted out of the water so that submerged portions of the hull and underside can be inspected, cleaned and painted, alongside the repair or upgrading of all major mechanical systems.

Dry dock is also when residents can refurbish their apartments or do more extensive construction work.

"We have staff on board and in our Florida corporate office who assist residents and their contractors and designers with arranging for their materials and furniture to arrive," says Jan Helge Pile, vice-president of Marine and Technical Operations

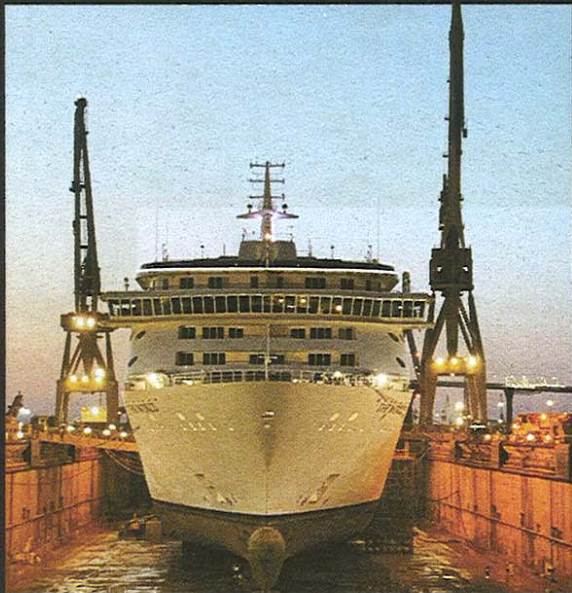
One resident told Post Magazine they had recently upgraded their one-bedroom apartment by installing custom shelving, art lighting, a built-in wine cooler, new carpets and shipping in a new sofa from Italy. "Managing the process was surprisingly easy and absolutely seamless, despite the ship's continuous journey around the world," they said.

The apartments - at least the ones Post Magazine peeked into when The World visited Singapore recently



Main picture: The World in Kobe, Japan. **Above:** one of The World's 165 apartments, showing off Hamptons chic, with a touch of country retreat, the go-to aesthetic. Pictures: The World





Far left: the yacht's apartments are refurbished during dry dock.

Left: residents of The World are on board for an average of three to four months a year. Pictures: The World

– are all primped and styled each day by a squad of cabin stewards, ever ready for their glossy close-ups. For the most part, the decorative theme is Hamptons chic – light colour palettes of whites and blues, plush deep-piled rugs and glass-topped dining tables for 10 – with a touch of the country retreat vibe by way of warm timber accents, Venetian curtain pullbacks, Louis XVI armchairs and elaborate ceiling mouldings.

Of course, certain work can be done any time during the year – such as replacing or installing new carpet and wall coverings, painting and decorating, moving loose furniture and carpentry – as long as the noise levels are tolerable and do not interfere with the ship's normal operations. More extensive work, such as electrical and plumbing installation, is done during a refurbishment time slot while structural works, like moving walls, can be done only during a dry dock.

“Our most recent refurbishment time slot began in mid-May in Singapore and ended in Hong Kong in mid-June,” says Helge Pile. “We designate certain

hours for noisy work and ask contractors to keep noise to a minimum.”

Dry dock is also an opportunity to carry out general maintenance in the public spaces. These may range from simple tasks such as updating furniture to physical layout changes.

“It is always exciting to see the transformation of The World during a dry dock from idea and sketches to tangible structures and spaces,” says Helge Pile.

The 2022 dry dock at the Navantia shipyard in Cádiz, Spain, lasted 30 days, during which private pods were installed in the front office and reception, new furniture and a state-of-the-art sound and light system were set up in one venue, a nook for sports viewing was carved out, and 12 art pieces purchased from Saatchi, Grimandi Art Gallery and online art marketplace Artsy were installed.

According to Helge Pile, “[Residents] are keen to invest to keep the ship looking fresh and modern. In fact, the public spaces are customised based on their preferences, helping to choose colour schemes,

fabrics, chair styles, materials and so on. After all, it is their home.”

By all accounts, The World is looking better today than it did when it set sail on its maiden voyage from Lisbon, Portugal, in May 2002. Meanwhile, the next dry dock is due in the spring of 2025, with the renovation of the poolside bar and grill on the to-do list.

Until then, the residents – most of whom are on-board for an average of three to four months a year – continue to enjoy a rarefied existence as they sail from one exotic location to the next, cosseted by a full-sized Rebound Ace tennis court, helicopter landing pad, gourmet deli and mini-supermarket, cigar bar and a wine cellar that stocks 15,000 bottles.

After Hong Kong, The World headed towards mainland China, South Korea and Japan before turning towards the spectacular Kimberley region in northwest Australia. It then heads east past Papua New Guinea and the Hawaiian islands before drifting finally into Mexico's Cabo San Lucas for the New Year. As aspirational goals go, The World sets a high bar. ■