



# WORLD CLASS

AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE WORLD, RESIDENCES AT SEA, **JESSICA HOPPE** IS OVERSEEING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE LARGEST RESIDENTIAL YACHT AT SEA, SHAPING UNIQUE ITINERARIES AND ELEVATING THE LUXURY LIVING EXPERIENCE FOR ITS WORLD-TRAVELLED RESIDENTS. HERE, SHE EXPLAINS HOW SHE'S DRIVING INNOVATION AND MAINTAINING THE WORLD'S POSITION AS THE LEADER IN RESIDENTIAL YACHTING.

**You took on the role of CEO after quickly rising through the ranks. What excited you most about leading The World, Residences at Sea, and what has the journey been like so far?**

It's such a unique experience because there is nothing like The World. The name itself is fantastic, although I always clarify that I am not in charge of everything happening in the world – especially given how interesting the news has been lately! But The World itself is a beautiful product. When you go on board, it's truly like no other.

When you come on board The World, it's luxury, but it's also a home. It has a completely different feel, yet we offer all the amenities anyone would want in a luxury residence. To top it off, our crew and shoreside team are top professionals who generally stay with the company for many years. We have crew members who have been with us for 23 years – one of our captains has been here that long,

and a shoreside team member sailed out with the ship in Norway when it was first built. So we have a legacy of individuals who care deeply about our residents. We like to say we know them better than they know themselves, which is truly extraordinary.

**Coming from Crystal Cruises and the luxury travel space, how did those experiences shape your leadership at The World?**

Their cruise and river ships were gorgeous. You stepped on board, and it felt like luxury.

My background is in law, and I always sat in on operational meetings, but being there as inside counsel is vastly different from being in operations. I felt this pull to be part of the strategy of the companies I worked for and saw the ins and outs of the business from a really unique perspective. Working at Crystal Cruises previously certainly gave me the breadth of experience in what's involved in different operations.

When you're on a ship, there are unique challenges – logistics, food and beverage and hotel operations. You're building a city on a ship and then navigating it successfully, all while maintaining the level of luxury and personalisation we offer. These operations are very unique, and I was really lucky to have that experience at Crystal, as well as to see the launch of new vessels while I was there.

**Residential yachting is unlike traditional cruising – what was the biggest adjustment stepping into this world?**

At The World, the benefit is that we have our residents – this is their home. For some, it's their primary home; for others, it's one of many. That's the big difference. The level of personalisation we provide, and the fact that we have had our residents for years, offer something you just don't get in traditional cruise operations. Even in luxury cruising, you might have guests for two weeks, a few months, or maybe on a world

tour, but for residents, it's not a vacation – it's their home. The World was the first residential yacht, and we remain the only one currently sailing. It's very unique. We were the first, we're the only, so we always say that we're in competition with ourselves. Continuous improvement is part of our strategic plan, and we take it very seriously.

**What was your first big move as CEO?**

The first real thing I did was reinforce the relationship between our shoreside management and our ship. We travel all around the world – we don't have a home port – so it's really important to stay connected to the crew and forge those relationships. They are the heart of the ship. They and their families get to know the residents so well, and the residents get to know them just as well. They know when their children are starting school, graduating, getting married – it's a real bond.







It's also just as important to strengthen communication with our residents. Since this is their home, I want to ensure that management, and I as CEO, have direct connection with them. That way, we can respond in the right way and offer them everything they could ever desire in their home.

**With new residential yachts entering the market, how does The World continue to evolve and differentiate itself?**

Our teams and team leaders are constantly looking at innovation. In IT, for example, we were one of the first to implement Starlink. We can tell our residents or prospective residents, "If you're still working and haven't made your exit yet, don't worry. You can come on board." If they have children, they can do their tutoring from the ship. We have the best internet service imaginable, and we stay at the forefront. Because we're so nimble, we can make decisions quickly. We have a very supportive board and residents who are always open to innovation.

Take our food and beverage team – they literally scour the world, bringing new ideas to our residents. Our destination services team makes connections to new Michelin-starred restaurants. Recently, on a Mexico City overland journey, they arranged a visit to a Michelin-starred taqueria, which is basically just a street cart. Our teams are always thinking outside the box.

We're also using AI and data to plan itineraries, explore new ports, and ensure we're offering fresh experiences. We map out journeys where residents can travel overnight or for multiple nights to explore inland destinations.



Even in our spa, longevity is at the forefront. Our food and beverage, spa and fitness teams work together, researching things like red light therapy and other wellness innovations. Then we integrate those ideas with destination services – if we're in Spain, for example, we identify exceptional spas residents can visit. It's a balance. On board, residents can enjoy a Michelin-starred meal if they want, but some will say, "This is my grandmother's recipe, can you make this for me?" and that's just as important.

At the end of the day, it's all about personalisation. The innovations are fantastic, but we always ask, "Is this what the community desires?" We have residents who are deeply into health and wellness – plunge pools, Oura Rings and yoga at dawn. And then we have others who say, "I'm having my cocktail in the evening, and I want my Snickers bar." And we say, "Great, we can offer that to everybody."

**Residents split their time between multiple homes, and their onboard residences reflect their personal tastes. How does The World support their ability to make their spaces feel like home – whether that means bringing in custom furnishings, rotating artwork or curating their living environment?**

I think for anyone who hasn't been on The World but perhaps has been on a cruise, this is one of the biggest differences for us. We introduce residents to designers and contractors because, of course, building on board a vessel is different than building on land, and there are different regulations. We have a team member in our Florida office who is dedicated solely to refurbishments and can bring an apartment all the way to the bulkheads and build it back up however the resident would like. And, of course, every sort of renovation in between. We have extensive dry docks, where the ship is lifted out of the water every three years.



**Personalisation is at the heart of it. Luxury is moving in that direction – the goal is to make the experience or product truly personal to the individual**

But we also have refurbishment time slots, twice a year so that residents can do refurbishments in their apartments. We don't want people to have to wait for the dry dock in order to make their apartment truly feel like their own. They can make those changes every year in two different time periods.

And you mentioned the art, which is really great. We have a really robust art programme. Residents, of course, can bring their own art into their apartment. They can also choose to put their art outside of their apartment. And if they desire, they can also showcase it around the ship, which many residents have done.

**How do you ensure discretion and security for residents while maintaining a sense of community on board?**

It really is an opt-in process, except for a few things, of course. We have security on board, and ports always have their own security. We also have a sailing





Opening spread: Jessica Hoppe, CEO of The World, Residences at Sea. Second spread: The World, Papua New Guinea; The World balcony  
This spread from left: The World Residences

manifest, which we do not publish anywhere. We make sure that our residents are always safely on board and that there are no individuals who should not be on board

Residents choose whether they want the rest of the community to know they are on board. They have their own communication groups that they can choose to be part of, and if a resident doesn't want to be included, they don't have to be.

We also have very strict rules for both our crew and residents: no pictures may be posted to social media that feature a resident on board or in their private homes, unless, of course, the resident is featured in a publication or is choosing to post their own home. These rules are followed very strictly. We want to ensure that no one is captured in a photo or video without their consent, as some people live very private lives. While the world seems to be more open with social media, we are very respectful of those who do not want to be featured.

**The World offers unparalleled amenities and experiences. What's a recent addition that stands out?**

Our spa and fitness programme continues to evolve and push boundaries. We have such an active community.

I was on board recently for an expedition, and I will tell you that I was bringing up the rear of a hike that I was on. We also have a physiotherapist on board, along with golf experts who are both PGA-level professionals. When we reach destinations like New Zealand, Scotland, or Singapore, they are always the first off the ship. In addition to our golf simulator, we offer a robust golf programme, and many of our golfers have played at more courses than you can imagine.

Our team on board is incredibly strong. We continue to innovate, and our team consistently comes up with new ideas. We're always impressed with what they bring to the table.

There was a recent Harvard study on happiness highlighting the importance of your social networks. Our residents will tell you that they initially came and purchased on board The World because they wanted to travel and they love travelling by a luxury yacht. But when they're asked why they stayed, they will tell you it's because of the community. The connections they have, with the residents, as well as the crew, are really meaningful and make it a very robust programme.

**The World's residents are highly engaged in shaping itineraries. Can you share an example of how their input has led to a particularly memorable voyage?**

There are so many great examples. Since our residents come from all over the world and many are extremely well-travelled, they often bring exceptional ideas and connections, both from their professional and personal lives. For instance, we've had residents invite the entire community to

their homes in Turkey, and more recently, a resident in Australia invited not only the residents but the crew to their home as well. It was an incredible experience that really strengthened the sense of community. We've also had residents inspire overland journeys, using their personal connections with exclusive lodges in Africa. These experiences offer our residents access to unique guides, giving them perspectives that would never be available to the general public.

**Can you tell us a bit about the residents, where they're from, and how that balance creates such a unique community on board The World?**

We have residents literally from around the world. While most of them, even if English isn't their first language, will generally converse in English, it's such a unique experience when you have Quebecois residents speaking with other French-speaking individuals. These connections often extend to shared passions like food and wine. We also have residents where one partner is from one country, and the other is from the United States, with homes in different parts of the world. They'll tell us that when the ship is next in the south of France, we must book specific restaurants, enriching the entire experience.

Our residents bring so many different viewpoints. When we have lecturers on board, perhaps discussing global politics, these diverse perspectives create a dynamic conversation and make things more interesting for everyone. And of course, our crew is from around the world, too. It's a very international group, and that creates even more connections.



For example, if we have a resident from South Africa, they can bond over that shared background with South African crew members. Recently, we celebrated Australia Day, and our crew and residents from Australia came together to celebrate. It's a beautiful thing.

**What major trends are you seeing at the moment in luxury travel, or things you're keeping an eye on in your space?**

We all stay on top of everything, and it's a very collaborative environment. But certainly, one of the major trends is the growing focus on unique experiences. Personalisation is at the heart of it. Luxury is moving in that direction – the goal is to make the experience or product truly personal to the individual. For us, we know our residents better than they know themselves. We keep detailed preferences for each resident. We also keep track of allergies, preferred experiences, and much more. Of course, we never limit their access to anything, but when

they sit down for dinner, our team already knows exactly what they want. This attention to detail makes the experience seamless and truly special. I remember a resident recently telling me, "It's just so nice to come on board and have the crew welcome me back". It's those personal touches that really make all the difference.

**Sustainability is an increasing priority in luxury travel. How does The World balance its global itineraries with responsible travel initiatives?**

Sustainability is definitely at the top of our minds. We follow the regulations set by the International Maritime Organization and adhere to Bahamian flag regulations. We stay on top of these matters closely, as well as the developments in the European Union, such as the carbon credit initiatives. When we bring our ship into dry dock this year, we'll be installing shore power, which is becoming increasingly important for many lines and ports. There are even ports

in California now where you can't dock unless you have shore power. This initiative has been part of our plans for a while, and we're excited to implement it.

We also look at different ways to reduce our carbon output. The fact that we go into dry dock for extended periods gives us the resources – both time and funds – to make these technological advancements, ensuring we stay top of class. The World has always led in sustainability, whether it's reducing plastic bottles on board or implementing major projects like shore power. We're also aware of pushback in certain ports, like Amsterdam and Venice, where there's concern about mega ships. As a residential yacht with 165 residences, we are very different. We stay in ports for two to four days, allowing our residents to truly experience the culture, people, and places they're visiting.

When you're on a traditional cruise, you might only be in a port for six to eight hours, rushing to get back to the ship, and you miss out on the full experience.

That's not our model. Our residents want to feel like they have a home in every port, and they want to experience each place in-depth.

Differentiating ourselves from other ships is always a challenge because we may look similar, but we're very different. With our best efforts and relationships with port agents and government officials, we're working hard to showcase those differences in meaningful ways.

**What's your vision for the future of The World over the next few years?**

The next few years will be really interesting in terms of where our itineraries will take us. We've already been to some exciting places in the past, and my goal – along with the itinerary committee, which includes resident feedback and input from our team and captains – is to create even more exciting itineraries. With the technological changes we're implementing, we'll continue to visit ports and areas that may be closed to others. Our value proposition as a luxury worldwide travel experience will remain strong, all from the comfort of your home.

I have children, and when I travel, I tend to end up with a lot of luggage. Now, when I see our residents travelling with just a small overnight bag, I think that's true luxury. All of their gear – snorkelling, hiking, whatever they need – is already in their homes, and they just bring a small backpack for the flight. I think, wow, that's luxury. That's the dream! ●

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