

All aboard: How to travel the world in the luxury of your own home

This privately owned yacht offers its residents an exclusive luxurious life at sea. But the price tag is steep, the vetting is stringent and the journey never ends.



The World Residences at Sea is a luxury cruise ship where people can buy an apartment and travel the world all year round. **Eamon Gallagher**

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The world's largest privately owned yacht and home to some of the globe's richest people docks in Sydney this weekend, rounding out its Australian leg before it heads to New Zealand and then on to Antarctica.

And that's just the start of the 2026 voyage for The World, which completes a circumnavigation of the globe every two to three years, visiting about 100 ports annually.

This year's journey takes it through the Pacific, including stops at Easter Island and Bora Bora, and later to South America, the west coast of the US including California and then Canada, before returning to Asia including stops in Tokyo and Beijing, and through South-East Asia, where its 2026 voyage concludes in Singapore.

On board are 165 residences, from studios to three-bedroom apartments that are owned and occupied by about 150 wealthy families from 20 or so countries – predominantly from Australia and North America – who live on the vessel part-time or full-time as it ceaselessly travels the world.

Among them is Canadian Tim Hockey, a former senior banker for Toronto-Dominion Bank and president of TD Ameritrade in New York City.

Nowadays, he is chairman of The World's board and has owned a residence on the ship for the past six years, spending about half the year living at sea.

“I was drawn to the idea of combining global exploration with a true sense of home and community. I’ve travelled extensively throughout my life, often at a demanding pace,” he tells *AFR Weekend*.

“The World offers something fundamentally different: depth rather than speed, continuity rather than constant packing and unpacking.

“It allows you to experience places thoughtfully, while returning each time to your own space, your own routines, and a group of people you genuinely know deeply. I can’t imagine a better way to retire.”

Hockey’s neighbours include the likes of [AFR Rich Lister John Gandel](#), who is the joint holder of Australia’s biggest shopping centre, Melbourne’s Chadstone, and a major shareholder in ASX-listed Vicinity. Gandel owns a residence on The World, where he is also a member of the ship’s wine club. Other high-profile names thought to have owned apartments include mining magnate Gina Reinhart, Nutrimetics founders Bill and Imelda Roche, and Fitness First Australia co-founder Tony de Leede.

Life on board The World is as lavish or laissez-faire as its residents desire. They have four restaurants to choose from, ranging from fine dining to cafe style. Its chefs source local ingredients and curate their menus depending on

where the ship is docked. A delicatessen is fully stocked for those who desire to cook from their apartments.

With residents' average age at 61 years old, health and wellness get top billing: the vessel includes a medical centre, a fully-fledged fitness space, a golf simulator, two pools, a shuffleboard court and a pickleball court. Physiotherapists and personal trainers can also be booked.



One of two pools on board the world's largest privately owned yacht, The World.

Sydneysiders viewing The World at the White Bay terminal this weekend who are tempted by the romance of a life at sea will need to consider the price tag. The starting price is \$4.5 million and residences rarely change hands.

One 232-square-metre, three-bedroom, four-bathroom residence on the market is taking offers at \$US9.9 million (\$14.7 million) or more. Annual fees are levied at about 10 per cent of an apartment's value.

Aspiring residents face a stringent vetting process. They'll need two letters of recommendation from current residents before undergoing an interview, along with a financial assessment and a background check. But with keys in hand, they can thoroughly redesign and redecorate their apartment to maximise their cruising comforts.

The World, residences at sea: facts

Size in metres*	196.35m x 29.8m
Number of residences	165
Residence price range	\$US3m-\$US15m (\$4.5m-\$22.4m)
Number of residents	About 300 residents, comprising around 150 families from 20 countries
Average time spent on board	3 to 4 months combined
Typical occupancy at any given time	150-200 residents
Number of staff	About 300 from 42 countries

* Length x width at widest point

SOURCE: THE WORLD

Launched in 2002, the ship operates like a company. Residents are voted onto its board, which is made up of seven directors. There are a number of committees which fall under the board and govern everything from the ship's itinerary to its sales and marketing.

The World is headquartered in Florida where the company's chief executive, Jessica Hoppe, is based, overseeing the ship's operations. But residents are ultimately in charge, she says.

"Personalisation is the top thing," Hoppe says. "We pride ourselves on that the crew know the residents better than the residents almost know themselves.

"If you want to be the healthiest person that is sailing on The World, we can help you with that plan. If you want to drink Coca-Cola and have French fries, we can also help you with that."



An artist's render of the living area of the 232 square metre residence for sale on The World.

Next up on The World's tour is Antarctica – one of three expeditions hosted by EYOS Expeditions, which takes over the ship for each adventure. Residents will encounter penguins and whales in the ice-filled waters of the south for three weeks before sailing for Argentina.

“The ease of travel our ship offers is unmatched: there's no packing or unpacking because you're already home. It's almost unimaginable to circle the globe without ever checking a bag, but on The World, we make the unimaginable reality,” says Hoppe.