

The World Residences at Sea: Inside the Luxury Ship Where Every Country Is a Room in the House

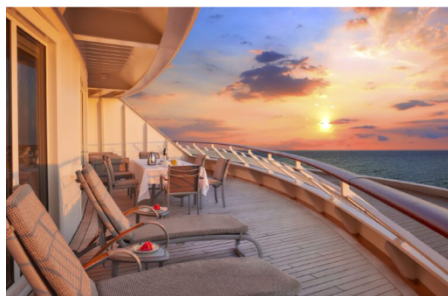
by Randy Dunbar



It's September, and in this month alone *The World* will visit Hakodate, Akita, and Niigata in Japan before sailing to South Korea, returning to Hiroshima, and then setting its course for China in October.

And that's just one month.

Over the course of a year, the ship will call at nearly 90 destinations in more than 20 countries across six continents. Even more remarkable than the itinerary itself is how those destinations are chosen.



The World is home to 165 privately owned residences and typically carries between 150 and 200 residents and their guests. Unlike a traditional cruise ship, its itinerary isn't determined by a cruise line—it is created by the people who live aboard.

Residents propose destinations, special events, and expedition voyages they would like to experience. The ship's Destination Team evaluates each suggestion, considering weather, seasonal conditions, port availability, and logistics before presenting a proposed itinerary to the community. Residents then vote on the major voyages, giving them a direct voice in deciding where their floating home will travel next.



The result is a highly personalized journey that often includes extended stays in port, remote expeditions, and visits timed to coincide with cultural festivals, wildlife migrations, and other once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Launched in 2002, *The World* introduced an entirely new concept in luxury travel: a privately owned residential community at sea.



Conceived by Norwegian shipping visionary Knut Kloster, whose family helped shape the modern cruise industry, the vessel was designed as a floating condominium rather than a cruise ship. Built in Sweden and completed in Norway, *The World* was purchased by its residents in 2003, making them not only homeowners but also stewards of the ship's future.

Today it remains the world's largest privately owned residential yacht, continuously circumnavigating the globe while offering its

owners the extraordinary opportunity to call the world's oceans—and its most remarkable destinations—home.

On a warm June afternoon, I was invited aboard *The World* while it was docked in Los Angeles. Boarding feels familiar at first. Like any cruise ship, guests pass through a series of security checkpoints before stepping into a world of elegant staircases, fine art, restaurants, lounges, and fitness facilities.

But the similarities end the moment you raise a camera.

This isn't a cruise ship.

It's a private neighborhood at sea.



During my visit, I toured several residences. Each reflected the personality and taste of its owner, with furnishings ranging from understated elegance to museum-quality collections. Yet every home shared one defining feature: floor-to-ceiling windows opening onto an ever-changing panorama of sea and sky. For the people who live here, the view is never the same twice.

Walking the ship feels less like touring a vessel and more like wandering through an elegant boutique hotel whose address changes every few days. Original Picasso prints hang in the corridors. Live music drifts from the lounges. Residents gather in intimate bars, browse the library, work out in the fitness center, relax in the spa, or stop to add a few pieces to a massive communal jigsaw puzzle spread across a large table. There is a tennis court, a golf simulator, and a beautifully stocked wine cellar featuring exceptional vintages from around the world.

Dining aboard rivals many of the finest luxury resorts. Six restaurants range from Michelin-level fine dining and a contemporary steakhouse to Mediterranean and Pan-Asian cuisine, a gourmet deli, and casual poolside fare. Residents may also arrange private chef service in their own residences.

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That evening our group was invited to dinner at Marina, one of the ship's signature restaurants. Located at the stern, Marina extends onto an over-the-water platform where outdoor tables sit just above the sea. It is one of those settings where dinner quietly becomes an event.

The service was impeccable. Our primary waiter had worked aboard *The World* for 25 years—a testament to the loyalty the ship inspires not only among its residents but also among its crew.

Seated with us was Dr. John Demartini. Within minutes we discovered that we had both seen Jimi Hendrix perform live, and from there the conversation flowed effortlessly.

Demartini is an internationally recognized human behavior specialist, educator, bestselling author, and speaker whose work has influenced audiences in more than 100 countries. Over a career spanning five decades, he has authored more than 40 books and developed the Demartini Method, a framework for personal and professional development. Since shortly after 9/11, he has made *The World, Residences at Sea* his primary home, combining his passion for global travel with a life dedicated to teaching, writing, and research.

It quickly became apparent why he had been invited to join us that evening. As one of the ship's longest-tenured residents, he speaks about life aboard not simply with enthusiasm but with genuine affection.

In a conversation conducted later, I asked what first attracted him to *The World*.

"When I first read an article in Robb Report in 1999 about The World, it just resonated with me," he said. "I saw myself and my wife living here in my mind's eye. We were already jet-set gypsies, and I sensed it would become one of our homes. Just after 9/11 it finally became reality. The World is my home, and every country is a room in the house."

Asked which destinations had left the deepest impression, Demartini hesitated.

"That's hard to answer," he admitted. "Antarctica certainly stands out for its awe-inspiring beauty and wildlife, but there have been so many extraordinary places. Sailing into ports like New York, Sydney, Shanghai, London, Dubai, Hong Kong... exploring remote islands, sharing private beach picnics, experiencing cultures most travelers never see. It's the continual variety that keeps me inspired."

Perhaps most surprising, however, was his answer to what he misses about living on land.

"Meeting remarkable people while traveling the world in comfort has been the greatest unexpected gift," he said. "About the only things I occasionally miss from life on land are the dental drill and traffic jams."

He smiled.

"Tongue firmly in cheek."

Dinner eventually came to an end, and we reluctantly said our goodbyes. Stepping back onto the dock, it was hard not to appreciate how different this way of living truly is.

Residences aboard *The World* range from approximately \$2 million to more than \$15 million, with annual ownership costs based on the size of each home. It is undoubtedly a lifestyle reserved for a fortunate few.

But it is easy to understand its appeal.

Residents don't simply own a luxury apartment—they own a home that continuously circles the globe. With world-class dining, personalized service, a full-service marina, wellness facilities, cultural programming, and itineraries shaped by the residents themselves, *The World* offers the rare opportunity to wake up in a new destination without ever packing a suitcase.

As I left the ship, I found myself thinking about something Dr. Demartini had said only hours before.

"The World is my home, and every country is a room in the house."

After spending a day aboard, it no longer sounded like a metaphor. It simply sounded like home.

For more information: https://aboardtheworld.com/?utm_source=pr&utm_medium=article&utm_campaign=The+World+Residences+PR

The World by the Numbers

- **Launched:** 2002
- **Length:** 644 feet (196 meters)
- **Decks:** 12
- **Luxury residences:** 165 privately owned homes
- **Residents and guests aboard:** Typically 150–200 at any given time
- **Crew members:** Approximately 280
- **Countries represented by owners:** About 20
- **Continents visited:** All seven over the course of its itineraries, with regular voyages to six each year and periodic Antarctic expeditions.
- **Destinations visited annually:** Nearly 90 ports in more than 20 countries.
- **Time to circumnavigate the globe:** Approximately every 2–3 years.
- **Restaurants:** Six restaurants plus private in-residence dining.
- **Ownership price:** Approximately \$3.5 million to more than \$15 million for a residence, plus annual ownership costs.

Did You Know?

- Residents **vote on where the ship will travel**, making *The World* one of the only vessels whose itinerary is determined by its owners rather than a cruise line.
- Every residence is individually designed and furnished by its owner, so no two homes are alike.
- The ship is **collectively owned by its residents**, who purchased it in 2003 and continue to help shape its operations through elected committees and a board.
- *The World* became the **largest passenger vessel to transit the Northwest Passage** in 2012 and later completed the passage in both directions.
- The ship has reached some of the planet's most remote regions, including **Antarctica**, where it once set a record for the southernmost voyage by a passenger vessel.