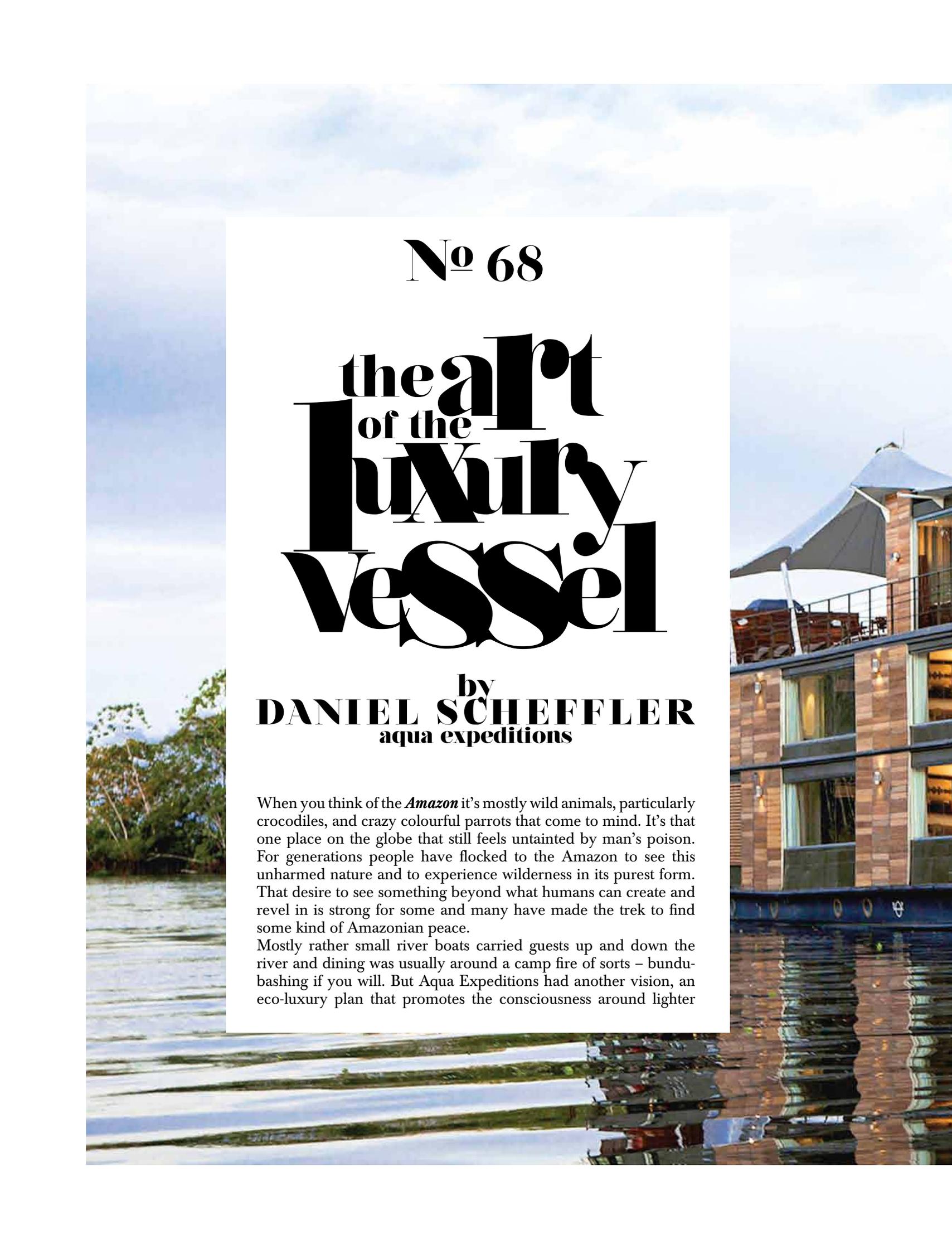


# Dossier

South Africa  
RSA R50



THE  
aRt  
issue



No 68

the art  
of the  
luxury  
vessel

by  
**DANIEL SCHEFFLER**  
aqua expeditions

When you think of the *Amazon* it's mostly wild animals, particularly crocodiles, and crazy colourful parrots that come to mind. It's that one place on the globe that still feels untainted by man's poison. For generations people have flocked to the Amazon to see this unharmed nature and to experience wilderness in its purest form. That desire to see something beyond what humans can create and revel in is strong for some and many have made the trek to find some kind of Amazonian peace.

Mostly rather small river boats carried guests up and down the river and dining was usually around a camp fire of sorts – bundubashing if you will. But Aqua Expeditions had another vision, an eco-luxury plan that promotes the consciousness around lighter



and more mindful travel but from the enjoyment of a luxurious boat.

And so *Aqua Expeditions*, a few years ago, called up Peruvian architect **Jordi Puig** again and designed the Aqua Aria, a 45 meter vessel that then set sail in 2011. This follows their success of their sister boat, the Aqua Amazon, a 40 meter vessel, that set sail in 2008.

Puig, known for his “spare, elegant yet comfortable” interior spaces included locals wood throughout the floors and Brazilian slate walls of Aqua Amazon. This was complimented with neutral soft furnishings and everything was intended to feel as much part of the outside surroundings as possible. The boat, designed for 24 guests, comes with a number of cabins and suites and the windows all around make for the best viewing of the Amazon and its mysteries. Even the bathrooms are worth noting, with eco-sensitive technology that gives the brand that worthwhile nod from conscious travellers.

The newer boat, Aqua Aria, is done in matte black and comes with 16 cabins. Floor to ceiling panoramic windows and an observation deck with a Jacuzzi is the best place to watch out for the famous pink river dolphins. And if you’re wanting some indoor time, it comes complete with

workout facilities.

Part of a luxury vessel is of course the dining and *Aqua Expedition* has **Executive Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino** who takes care of that department. The chef uses many ingredients that only grow in the Amazon jungle and has spent years learning the traditional cuisines from the area, although based in Lima his search for sustainable ingredients is what makes the fare on board so unique. From fresh ceviche, to plantain and yucca gnocchi food on the vessel might just distract you from the views around if you’re not careful.

There is a certain art in doing nothing on board a slow floating vessel heading down a historical and memorable river. It’s about connecting with the wild, it’s about finding yourself and facing yourself in context with nature. Above all it’s beyond just relaxing or seeing the world, it’s a way to see how man is as much part of the animal and natural world – perhaps more obviously so right this moment.

#### **HOW TO GET THERE**

***Johannesburg to Lima with the superb Lan or Tam via Brazil’s Sao Paulo. Then a quick hop with Lan Peru from Lima to Iquitos for an airport transfer to the Aqua Expeditions. lan.com and tam.com.br.***



