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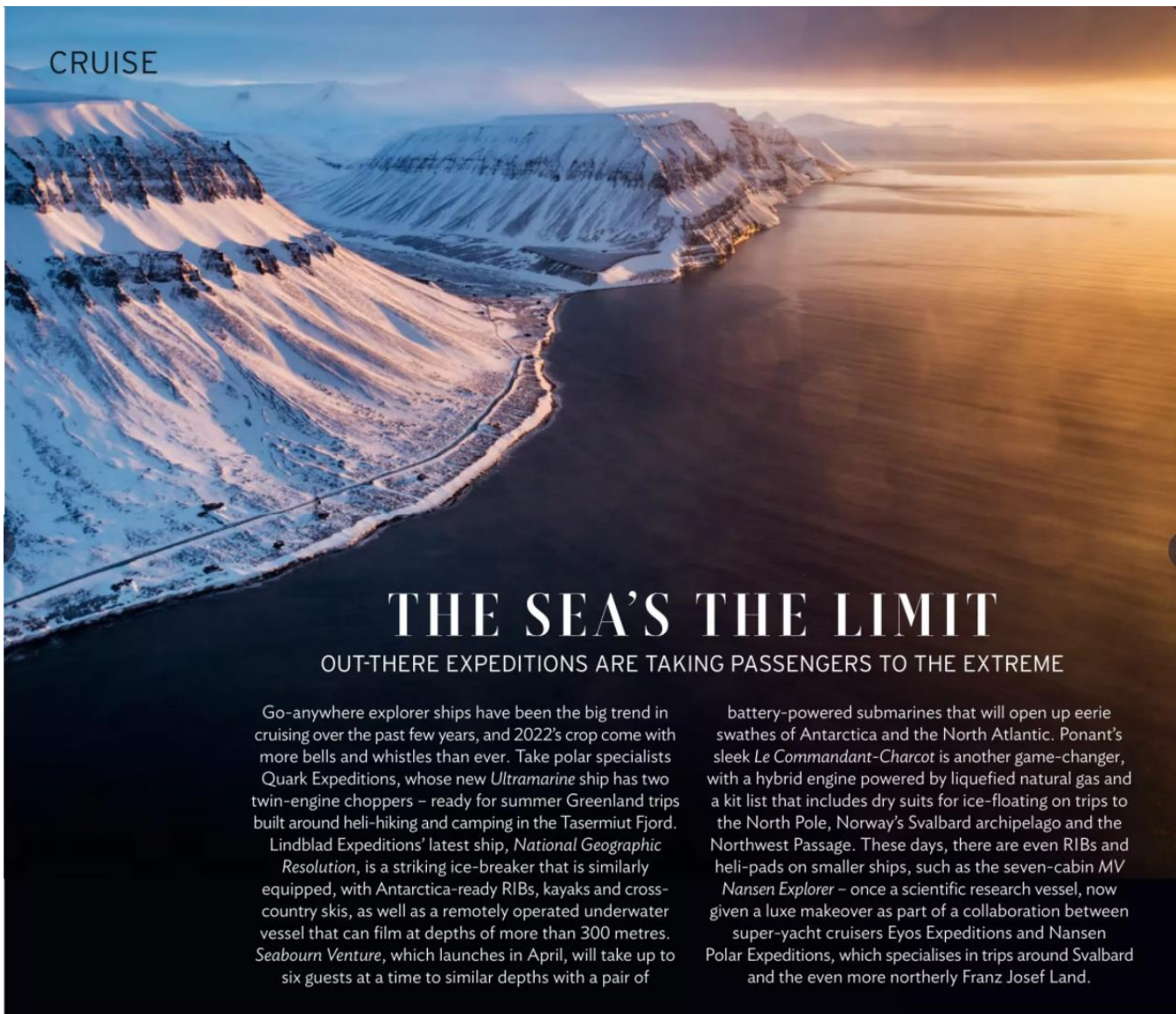
THE YEAR OF THE CRUISE

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO HIT THE HIGH SEAS - OUR SPECIAL GUIDE SHOWS WHY.
EDITED BY EMMA LOVE

THE SMALL BOATS ROUND-UP
GAME-CHANGING NEW EXPEDITION SHIPS
CLASSIC VOYAGES TO FAR-FLUNG PLACES
EXPLORING ICELAND'S LESSER-KNOWN SHORES

SAILING OFF CALABRIA, ITALY

PHOTOGRAPH: JOAO CANZIANI



THE SEA'S THE LIMIT

OUT-THERE EXPEDITIONS ARE TAKING PASSENGERS TO THE EXTREME

Go-anywhere explorer ships have been the big trend in cruising over the past few years, and 2022's crop come with more bells and whistles than ever. Take polar specialists Quark Expeditions, whose new *Ultramarine* ship has two twin-engine choppers – ready for summer Greenland trips built around heli-hiking and camping in the Tasermiut Fjord.

Lindblad Expeditions' latest ship, *National Geographic Resolution*, is a striking ice-breaker that is similarly equipped, with Antarctica-ready RIBs, kayaks and cross-country skis, as well as a remotely operated underwater vessel that can film at depths of more than 300 metres. *Seabourn Venture*, which launches in April, will take up to six guests at a time to similar depths with a pair of

battery-powered submarines that will open up eerie swathes of Antarctica and the North Atlantic. Ponant's sleek *Le Commandant-Charcot* is another game-changer, with a hybrid engine powered by liquefied natural gas and a kit list that includes dry suits for ice-floating on trips to the North Pole, Norway's Svalbard archipelago and the Northwest Passage. These days, there are even RIBs and heli-pads on smaller ships, such as the seven-cabin *MV Nansen Explorer* – once a scientific research vessel, now given a luxe makeover as part of a collaboration between super-yacht cruisers Eynos Expeditions and Nansen Polar Expeditions, which specialises in trips around Svalbard and the even more northerly Franz Josef Land.

FOUR MORE LAUNCHES ON THE HORIZON

Aqua Expeditions has made a name for itself with small-scale, custom-designed ships that venture to some of the most unspoilt corners of the planet, from the Amazon River to Raja Ampat. So it makes sense that its next yacht – the seven-suite ***Aqua Mare***, which debuts in May – is based in the Galápagos Islands where twice-daily activities will be led by naturalist guides. Highlights include hikes on Santa Cruz Island to spot Darwin's finches, snorkelling in waters visited by bottlenose dolphins and kayaking off Floreana Island. aquaxpeditions.com

From its Squid Ink tattoo parlour to staff uniforms designed by Gareth Pugh, retro Eighties fitness classes to the world's only Korean barbecue at sea, **Virgin Voyages'** adults-only ***Scarlet Lady*** smashed any fusty cruise connotations when it launched last year. Now its identikit sister ship ***Valiant Lady*** follows with voyages from Portsmouth (starting in March, these include a long weekend in Zeebrugge, Belgium) before heading to the Mediterranean, where each seven-night sailing takes in an overnight stay in Ibiza. virginvoyages.com

One of the big draws of Oceania's next ship ***Vista***, which is slated to launch in spring 2023, is the food. The culinary-focused cruise line is adding four new dining spaces to its line-up, including Ember for American-influenced classics (crab cakes, cobb salad, braised short ribs) and wellness-first Aquamar Kitchen. Here, the menu will feature dishes such as yellowfin tacos with white-cabbage slaw and salmon with quinoa tabbouleh, both options can be washed down with a pressed raw juice or superfood smoothie. oceaniacruises.com

Last year **Silversea** introduced Salt, an immersive, destination-driven food concept for its ship the ***Silver Moon***. Now for ***Silver Dawn***, the latest addition to the fleet, there's Otium, an all-encompassing wellness programme that encourages balanced indulgence (it's named after the Roman word for leisure time). Experiences range from argan-oil massages in the spa to in-suite, butler-drawn candlelit baths and comfort food on the room-service menu (lobster rolls, truffle fries) followed by popcorn-and-movie nights. silversea.com EL