



A White Adventure

EXPERIENCING ANTARCTICA CAN BE TICKED OFF YOUR BUCKET LIST, AS A TRAVEL CURATOR COMES UP WITH A UNIQUE HOLIDAY OPTION FOR INDIANS

ACTOR ORLANDO BLOOM admits sailing off to Antarctica on a science research boat, just to clear his head. That end of the world isn't out of reach anymore. As Mumbai-based travel planners The Q Experiences, managing director Vasim Shaikh says, 'curate itineraries where your limitation is your own imagination.'

The company that was founded in 2012, has designed the small ship cruising venture, The White Continent, a first-of-its-kind curated chartered experience to Antarctica. Now, Indians have the opportunity to travel to Antarctica with fellow Indians, and not the usual expedition as part of a larger western group. For this, they have selected the luxurious Le Soléal, a sleek yacht from Ponant, with interiors reminiscent of the

French Riviera, designed by the French virtuoso interior designer Jean Philippe Nuel. The guest to crew ratio is 1:1, which is the true essence of luxury onboard.

Michelin-starred chef, Atul Kochhar, will be present on board, curating the Indian food service. In addition to this they have also partnered with Ducasse Conseil, a catering centre of excellence run by 21 Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse, to enhance the onboard dining experience at the Restaurant L'Eclipseon.

The White Continent is a by-invitation offering for the select few, set to sail in December 2017. The 11-day excursion would begin from Ushuaia, the resort town at the Southern-most tip of South America also known as the 'end of the world', through the Drake passage.

The accommodation on the Le Soléal is a thing of magnificence. The Tern and Albatross staterooms offer the extravagance of a five-star hotel room with balconies with stunning views. Depending on how much space the guests desire, the staterooms can expand into a more indulgent Tern and Albatross suites. The Emperor Penguin suite, the only one on board, is 578-square-feet. It features two bathrooms, a spa, and a private dining area. A private butler service is available to all residing guests in the suite at no extra cost.

“Travelling with renowned anthropologists, marine biologists, historians, botanists, geologists, and ornithologists, enables the explorer to appreciate the destinations much more and create a rewarding experience,” says Vasim. “The Expedition team on board will provide lectures and valuable insights into the natural history and wildlife of the region. Accompanying travellers throughout the voyage, they are ideal companions for this journey of discovery,” he adds.

Entertainment on board is in ample post the nature sojourns during the day. A special Bollywood karaoke night, a classic instrumental evening, jazz night, a special cooking session with chef Kochhar, photography sessions, etc, give abundant choices to indulge in. The services on board also include a well being centre equipped with massage booths, hammam, a hair salon and fitness room with panoramic ocean views, and a large range of luxury treatments in association with the French beauty house Sothys Paris. Different lounges enable passengers to socialise during their cruise: The main lounge, the panoramic lounge, an intimate piano bar with a unique view of the horizon, and the outdoor bar, and an atmospheric spot that has access to the pool and solarium.

During the day, there will be talks by naturalists and experienced guides. In the evening, shows, musical performances or film screenings will be held in the theatre. There will also be a choice of books and board games, along with computers and Wi-Fi. You will find an image and photo corner, as well as a Kids Club offering games and a Wii console, with all cabins having direct access to On-Demand Videos.

On the voyage back, you will sail through the same route through the mesmerising Drake Passage to the wild Argentina. Expedition itineraries are characterised by flexibility at all times. The captain and expedition leaders can make unscheduled stops to let guests enjoy the natural beauty.

The Q Experiences’ research team identifies distinguished clients for this experience, and bookings are currently on going. —SAROSH MODY

GOOD TO KNOW The prices (inclusive of taxes) per person are: Tern Room: ₹8.90 lakh; Albatross Room: ₹9.60 lakh; Tern Suite: ₹12.95 lakh; Albatross Suite: ₹14.75 lakh; Emperor Penguin Suite: ₹24.95 lakh. The prices include the domestic flights in Argentina, i.e. Buenos Aires–Ushuaia–Buenos Aires.

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The cruising experience to Antarctica on the luxurious Le Soléal yacht offers Indian dining options curated by Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar.

