

A luxury Caribbean cruise offers exclusive insight

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Silversea Cruises and its ultra-luxury fleet promise free-flowing Champagne, butler service, capacious accommodations and fresh itineraries.

MATTEO IMBRIANI/COURTESY OF SILVERSEA CRUISES

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After nearly two wild and woolly years, the idea of bucket-list travel is roaring back stronger than ever. Credit an ache for adventure (and perhaps a little extra coin) for tourism's apotheosis, wryly called "revenge travel": a vaxxed, joyous, no-expense-spared retaliation against the virus and all it has wreaked on us.

I could relate. Having spent lockdown in front of a computer screen, I longed not only for wider and warmer vistas, but also big-time indulgence.

Enter Silversea Cruises and its ultra-luxury fleet, promising free-flowing Champagne, butler service, capacious accommodations and fresh itineraries. Since they also charge top dollar, I naturally had one question as I embarked on a Central American cruise, which included ports-of-call in Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama: Could it possibly be worth it?

Silversea's new Silver Moon is tailor-made for safe travel. Hosting a mere 596 passengers (the average cruise ship carries around 3,000 guests with the largest topping out at more than 6,000), the ship embraces rigorous protocols and spacious public areas that deliver the "whispered luxury" Silversea lives by. That said, as I stepped into my veranda suite, a meticulous study in sandy hues, I wasn't sure I'd ever want to leave the room.



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There was, however, plenty to tempt me outside, most notably a novel offering that's unique on the high seas. Silver Moon was built around one big, simple bet – food. In addition to seven excellent restaurants, the ship boasts the launch of Silversea's boldly immersive culinary program called S.A.L.T ("Sea and Land Taste"), a whole-hog celebration of every destination's cuisine and culture. Lectures, cooking classes, excursions, a specialized cocktail bar and an eighth restaurant all seamlessly flow into each other to deliver a foodie's dream. After basking in the program's embrace, I'd say the new bet is a solid one.

Take our day in Belize. The day before had offered cooking classes in the glorious S.A.L.T Lab (think less "galley" and more "spaceship flight deck") to introduce the region's Garifuna cuisine. For today's excursion, many passengers chose a S.A.L.T tour that culminated in a visit to our guide's own village and a splendid beachfront meal showcasing his Garifuna heritage.



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Back on board I met with new friends in Dolce Vita, a low-slung lobby bar, its plush, cerulean tones evoking ocean liners' art deco glory days. We elected to dine together in the S.A.L.T Kitchen, a stylish restaurant adorned with colourful ceramics from around the world. There, chef Nadine Stangl's one-night-only, locally inspired Terrain Menu is the star attraction. Offerings included Ariran Guisou (a spicy-sweet Belizean chicken dish), Hudutu (a Garifuna fish stew) and a heavenly tart that locals call coconut crust (served with a sugar dusting that cleverly evoked Belize's marine wonder, the Great Blue Hole).

Taking in the ship's gorgeous spaces, I ventured that we might well be onboard the most beautiful ship sailing today, only to learn that I wasn't alone in that estimation: The editors of Cruise Critic had just named Silver Moon the world's best new ultra-luxury vessel.



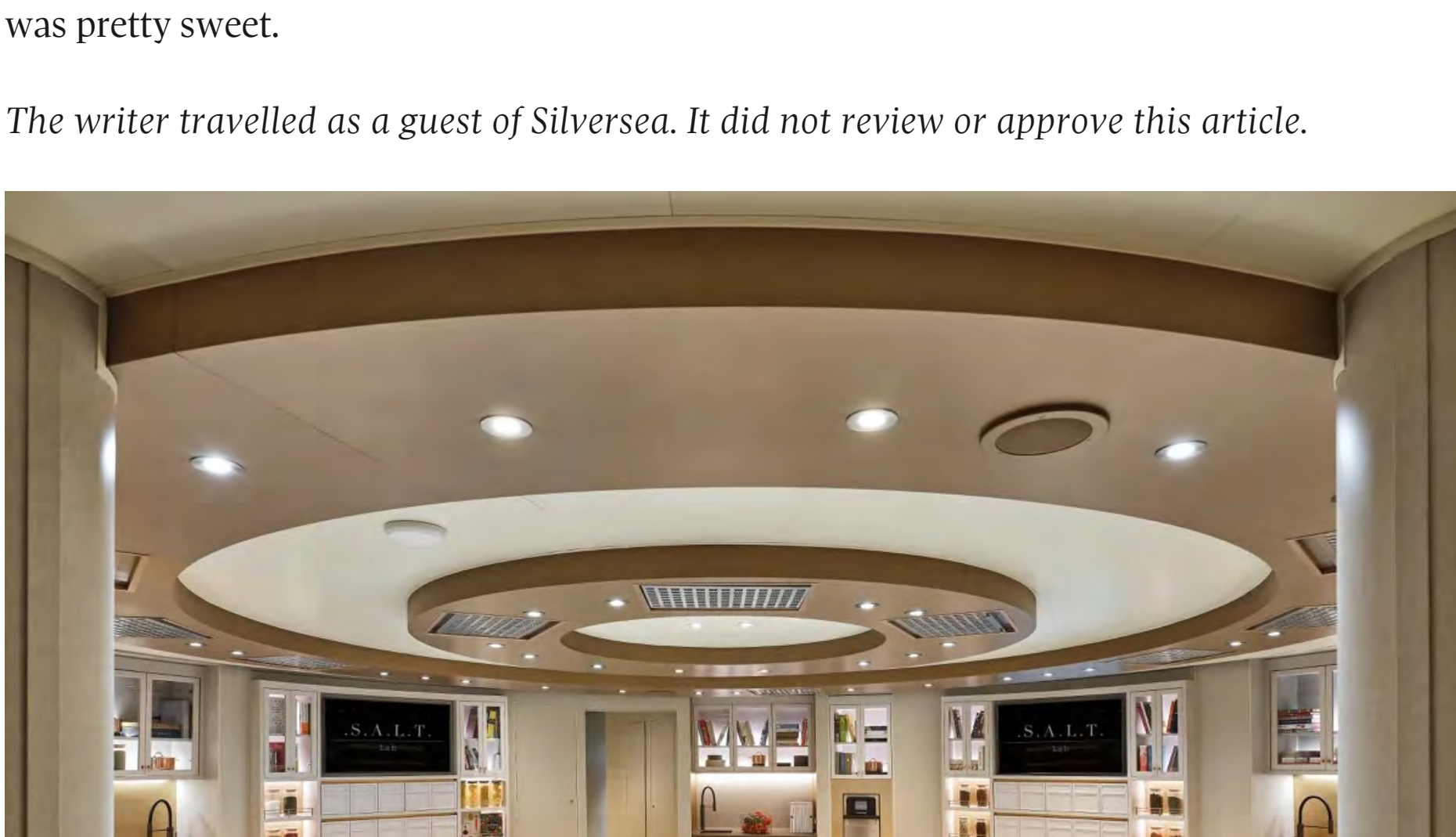
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Tomorrow we'd enjoy Honduras and a new array of culinary and cultural adventures, but tonight we weren't yet ready to gaze over our private railings at the roiling waters below. And so we tried the ship's Panorama Lounge, with DJ Anthony spinning old disco.

What happened next epitomizes the simple magic of bucket list extravagance. With senses awakened and wellbeing nurtured, shoulders dropped – as did inhibitions. We danced it up, belting out time-worn lyrics, and one by one each person from every table in the lounge rose to join us. In every set of bright eyes, I could see: After all we'd been through, revenge was pretty sweet.

The writer travelled as a guest of Silversea. It did not review or approve this article.

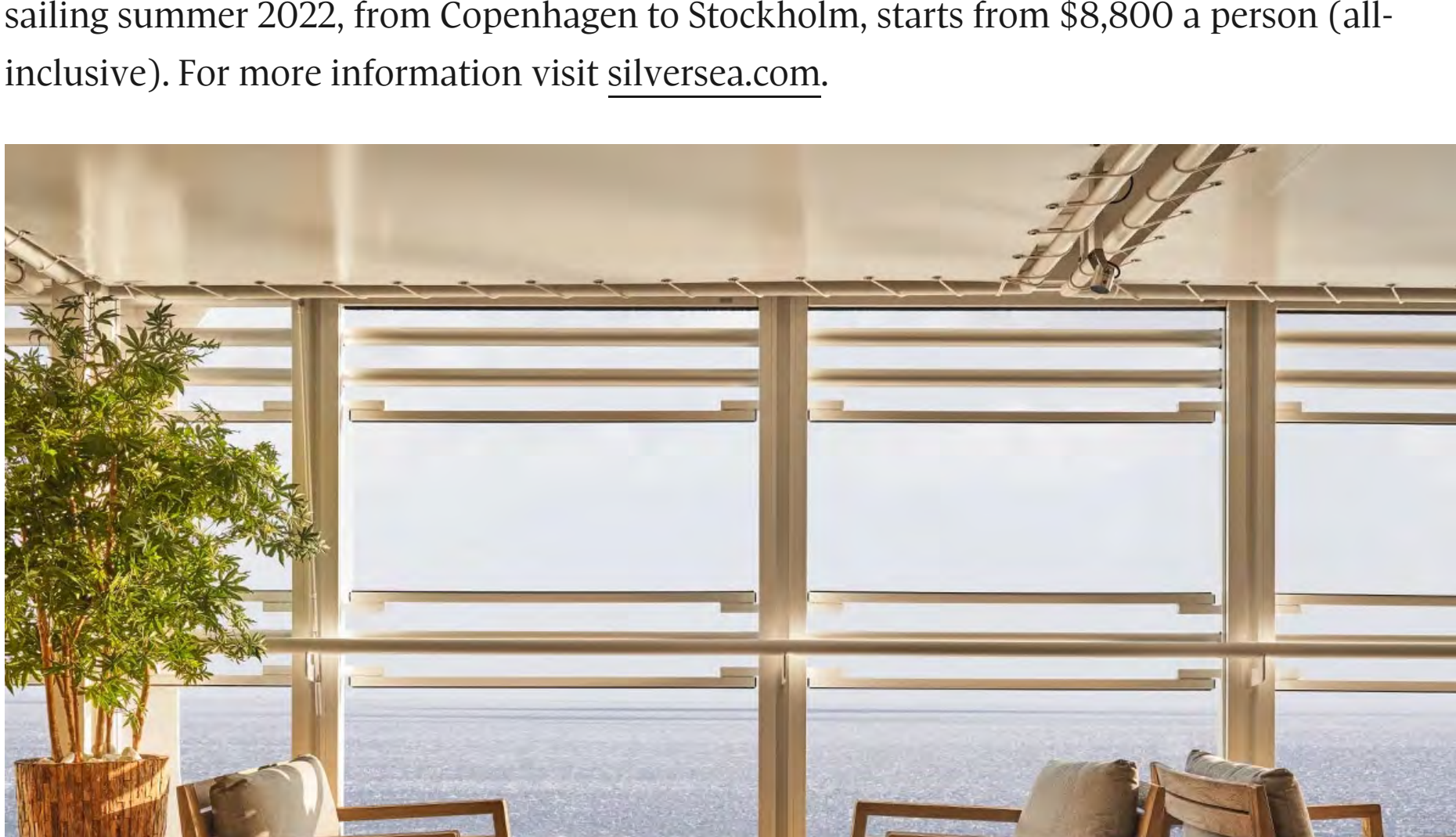


Silver Moon sails Central and South America, Northern Europe and British Isles, and the Mediterranean annually.

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If You Go

Silver Moon sails Central and South America, Northern Europe and British Isles, and the Mediterranean annually. A seven-day Silver Moon Northern Europe and British Isles voyage sailing summer 2022, from Copenhagen to Stockholm, starts from \$8,800 a person (all-inclusive). For more information visit [silversea.com](https://www.silversea.com).



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