

STORE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

FEBRUARY 3, 2023 / BY TOBY SALTZMAN / (BLOGS)

ANTARCTICA **EXPEDITION LEADER** MARIEKE EGAN A suspenseful breeze blew south of the Antarctic Circle as Silver Endeavour passengers watched the advance expedition guides navigate their Zodiacs through rapidly moving ice. The

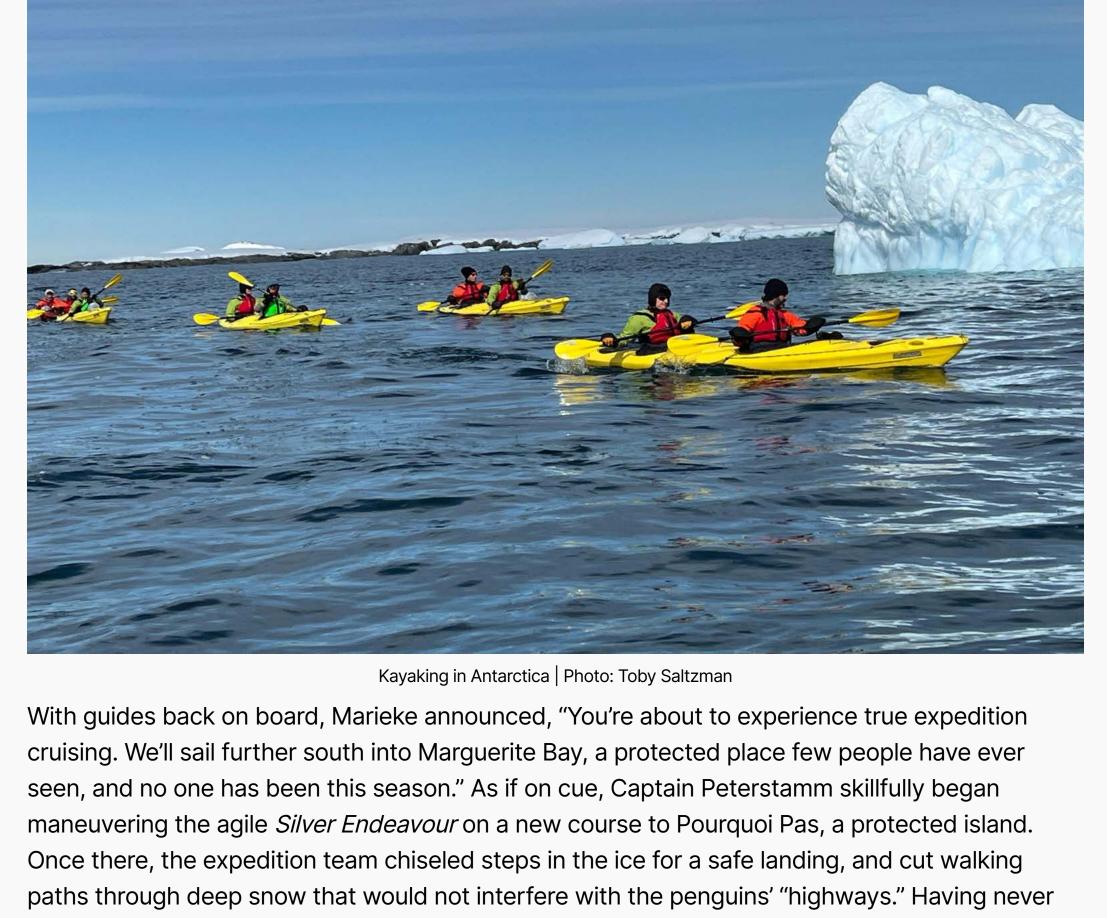
(FEATURED)

elephant seals lounging blissfully on the icy beach. Icebergs and growlers lodged against the shoreline, forcing guides to return to ship without stepping ashore, and I recalled Marieke Egan's polar mantra: "In Antarctica, Mother Nature dictates. Humans obey." As expedition leader of Silversea's new PC 6-rated ice-class 1A polar vessel, Marieke had briefed passengers well on the spontaneous nature of authentic expedition cruising. By now, halfway through this maiden voyage – and on the first ship of the season to venture so far south – we understood flexibility is key. Antarctica weather is unpredictable, with rapidly changing winds and

sea-ice conditions, and shifting ice at landing sites. We had already experienced guided kayaking

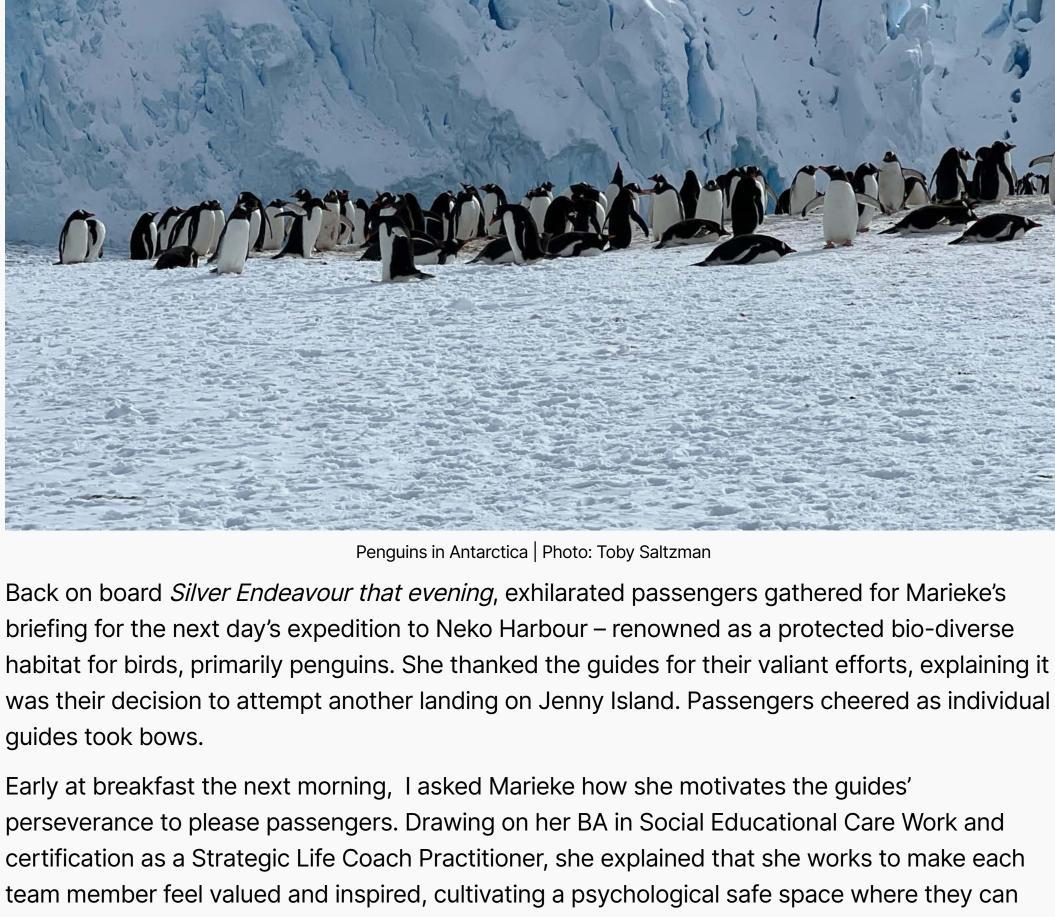
boats were seeking a safe landing on Jenny Island that would take us up close to the colony of

safaris and scenic Zodiac tours that weaved through ice floes up to snowy mountains thriving with gentoo or chinstrap penguins, so we grasped Marieke's confidence in the highly experienced, 20-member expedition team - including scientists, historians, and post-graduate ecologists and environmentalists. By now, we were accustomed to the loosely described itinerary that followed Marieke's instinctive intuition for the best place to be, any day, any time. And we felt totally inspired by her positive attitude to nature's surprises: "The Antarctic never ceases to amaze. You never know what you are going to get, but whatever you get is fantastic."



extending flippers as if in fond embrace. It was hard to tell who felt greater joy, the humans watching the Adelies' comical antics, or the Adelies indulging in the unabashed pleasures of spring courtship. Later that afternoon, when waters calmed, we returned to Jenny Island. The expedition team set forth with indomitable spirits, determined to give passengers the sensational experience we had earlier anticipated. Some stepped into frigid water at the rocky shore, and some physically pushed floating ice aside to create a safe approach to a ridge overlooking the elephant seals.

seen humans yet this season, the animated Adelie penguins scurried forward curiously,



said. Now they want to do that again."

thrive. "As we saw at Jenny Island, the team worked so well together to overcome challenges to

create a great day for the guests, they applauded themselves and their morale grew," she

Gill Photo of Marieke Egan | Photo: Toby Saltzman And so they did, every day of the Antarctica expedition. By journey's end, we all knew; when

Nature's chill forces a spontaneous change of course, the journey can turn more spectacular than ever anticipated, and deliver experiences beyond our dreams.

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2 comments

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