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The Spirit of Silversea



Every day on board *Silver Spirit's* around-the-world paradise is a privileged one, as **Toby Saltzman** discovers

WE WERE HOVERING OVER AN EERIE

LANDSCAPE, where clusters of mountains rose from deep valleys, when Jim, our helicopter pilot, deftly manoeuvred the whirring bubble to descend on a fingertip of land. "Hop out," he urged. "No worries. This high in the sky on a sunny day, we're blessed by Mother Nature." To our jaw-dropping delight, we found ourselves facing a mountainous otherworld. Centuries ago, this vision of **Aoraki Mount Cook** – the highest peak in all of **Australasia** at 12,316 feet, its tip perennially swathed in a cumulous billow – inspired the first arriving Maori tribes to call New Zealand **Aotearoa**, meaning 'Land of the Long White Cloud.' Visiting Mount Cook would be the pinnacle of our flight-seeing excursion from **Christchurch**. Our day began as we stood on deck, watching *Silver Spirit's* jaunty prow glide into **Lyttelton Harbour**, the calm water reflecting the rising sun like a sheet of pink glass. Our waiting driver, organized by **Silversea's** concierge, shouted the traditional local greeting – "*Kia ora!*" – as we piled into his 4x4 for an expedition through the rainforest. After seeing the indigenous flora, brilliant birds and ancient rock art left by early Maori moa hunters, we stopped at a clearing to lunch on delectable green-lipped mussels (a Kiwi specialty) and local Sauvignon Blanc just as Jim flew in. Aloft in the chopper, Jim summarized New Zealand's history as we soared over the tapestry of changing landscapes: dipping into emerald vineyards and valleys, where turquoise rivers meandered past remote villages, and ascending from foothills banked by purple lupines high above snowy alps to land on the **Tasman Glacier**, its icy surface sparkling in the sunshine. After a thrilling walk we returned, exhilarated, in time for the ship's sail-away party. Sipping Champagne as the sun slipped beneath the horizon, revealing innumerable stars in the indigo sky, we couldn't resist raving about our **Silversea World Cruise** itinerary for providing yet another privileged day in paradise.

Privileged aptly describes the sensation of a **Silversea World Cruise**. Mingling awesome sights and adventures as the itinerary proceeds through 60 destinations in 25 countries – from sailing **Vietnam's** exquisite **Halong Bay**, where karst mountains rise like obelisks from the sea, to transiting the engineering marvel of the **Suez Canal** en route to touring **Egypt's** antiquities and **Jordan's** ancient rose city of **Petra**, to circum-navigating the **Channel Islands** on the

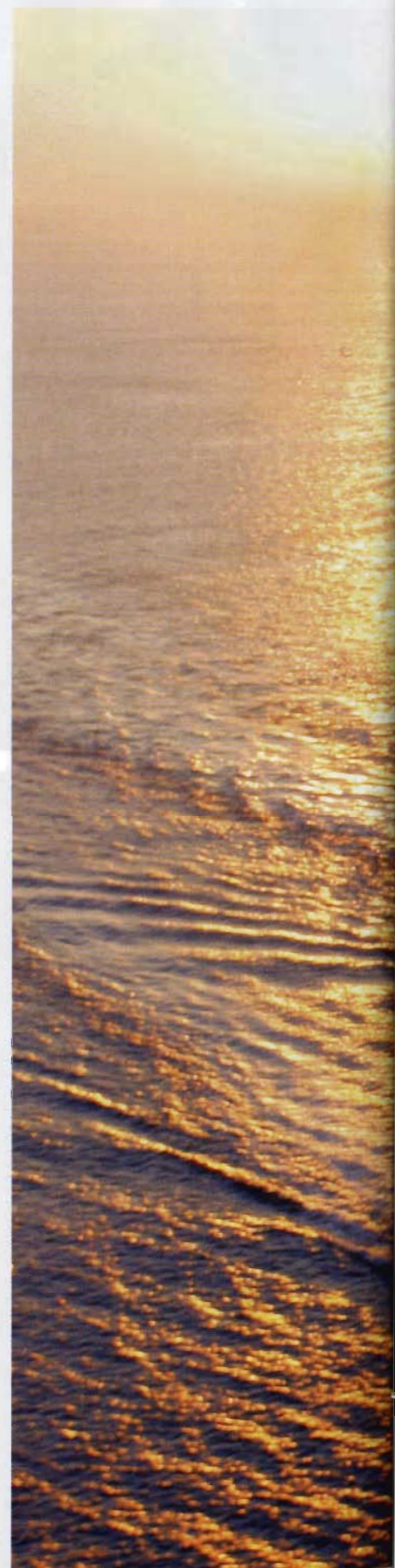
way to **Southampton** – **Silversea** introduces a world of geographic and cultural curiosities enriched by exclusive complimentary events, world-renowned speakers (like former newscaster **Dan Rather**) and awesome 'Silversea Experiences.'

Myriad memories and priceless images come with the complimentary treats on *Silver Spirit's* 119-day **Spirit of Discovery** voyage, including excursions to vineyards and wine-tastings in **Australia's** prized wine country; overnighting in **Bangkok's Shangri-La Hotel** before a private tour of the dazzling **Grand City**; rumbling on safari through **Dubai's** desert dunes to an Arabian Nights bash enlivened by belly dancers and belching camels; sipping fragrant tea at a private viewing at **Barcelona's Picasso Museum**, not to mention adventures like snorkelling in **Australia's Great Barrier Reef**. Along the way, your cultural IQ will surely improve as you sail alongside families living in junks in the **Mekong Delta**, witness Hindu rituals and elephant dances on **India's Gundu Island** and watch Polynesian artisans ply their crafts in the **Marquesas Islands**.

Meanwhile, for those craving deeper experiences, **Silversea** provides precious opportunities to disembark for several days, from **Ho Chi Minh City** to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at **Angkor Wat**; or from **India's Port Cochin** to **Agra** and the **Taj Mahal**; or from **Spain's Málaga** to explore **Madrid**.

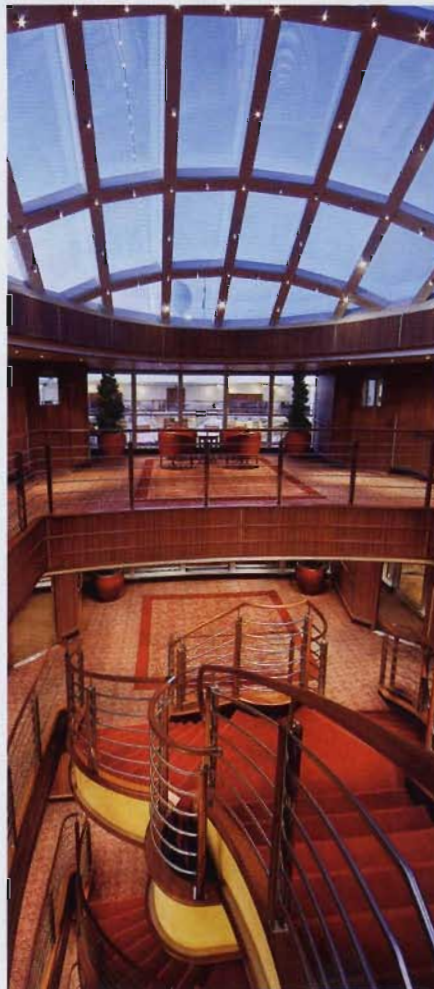
Wherever the port, *Silver Spirit's* guests feel privileged indeed, considering everyone enjoys a private verandah and butler.

Designed like an elegant yacht, the 540-passenger vessel exudes sophisticated style at every turn – its gleaming wood interiors accented by hues of burgundy sunsets and warm beaches, its lounges rich with plush sofas and chairs. Full of places to luxuriate in on days at sea, *Silver Spirit* has a well-equipped gym and posh 8,300-square-foot spa (offering massages, therapies and beautifying cosmetic procedures like Botox and dermal fillers), but its *pièce de résistance* is out of doors: on the two decks surrounding the pool, glass walls allow passengers vistas of the sea as they bask in the sunshine; and on the aft deck, designer chaises and canopied beds provide solace from the sun. Enhancing all of this, state-of-the-art stabilizers provide surprisingly smooth sailing for the 36,000-tonne *Silver Spirit* in even the roughest of waters.





With *Silver Spirit's* six eateries, and a gregarious sommelier eager to offer a wide choice of complimentary wines, there's no chance of culinary boredom. Besides traditional dining at **The Restaurant** – where specials include filet mignon, duckling, seafood and assorted fresh fish – guests can sample fine dining at an Italian trattoria, a Japanese restaurant or the exclusive **Le Champagne**, featuring gourmet Relais & Châteaux cuisine with vintage wines to match. For casual dining, guests at the al fresco grill can cook their own meals on sizzling hot rocks, or savour multi-course meals of delectable bites of lobster, fish or steak while enjoying a live jazz performance at **The Stars** nightclub.



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*Silversea introduces
a world of geographic
and cultural curiosities
enriched by exclusive
complimentary events*

❧

After a day of adventure or a day at sea, we loved slipping into private luxury. Life was comfortable in our mid-ship, 376-square-foot suite – with its separate living-bedroom areas, two flat-screen TVs (featuring free interactive video plus 505 movies on demand), a walk-in closet and marble-clad bathroom with separate tub and shower stall. Admittedly, though, we saw the value of upgrading to twice the space in a **Silver Suite** for a World Cruise, if only to linger on its wide terrace for romantic dining under the stars. Never mind: best of all was rising each morning after a sensuous sleep at sea to witness the sun cast its rosy glow on a new destination. A privilege, indeed. **V**