

travelweek

/ TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL /

CRUISE
FALL 2022

Small ship
cruising in the
GREEK ISLES

**AVALON
VISTA
REVISITED**

GALÁPAGOS
Silver Origin

On the horizon:
MSC Seascape

Silversea's sizzling collection of cold weather expeditions

Prepare to be dazzled by the 25 immersive expedition voyages recently announced for **Silversea's** highly anticipated luxury expedition vessel, **Silver Endeavour**. Ranging in length from six to 18 days and departing from May 2023 through March 2024, these voyages allow guests to explore 116 of the planet's most beautiful and remote cold-weather destinations across Northern Europe, the Arctic, and Antarctica, including 24 maiden calls for Silversea.

While onboard, guests will enjoy spacious, elegant venues including the spectacular Otivm Spa & Beauty Salon and the Observation Lounge, which will offer 270-degree views of the incredible surroundings.

Says Conrad Combrink, SVP of Expedition, Destination and Itinerary Management: "With state-of-the-art expedition amenities, the industry's highest space-to-guest ratio, and a leading team of experts onboard, *Silver Endeavour* will deliver the most enriching experiences for guests in the world's most remarkable destinations as they journey in unparalleled comfort."

It's particularly appropriate that the Godmother of the *Silver Endeavour*, who will participate in an intimate naming ceremony held in Antarctica, is Felicity Aston, MBE. Aston is not only a celebrated polar explorer, author, television presenter and climate scientist, but is also the first woman to ski solo across Antarctica in 2012, and the first person to traverse the continent by muscle power alone. A recipient of the Polar Medal, Aston was appointed an MBE for her services to exploration.

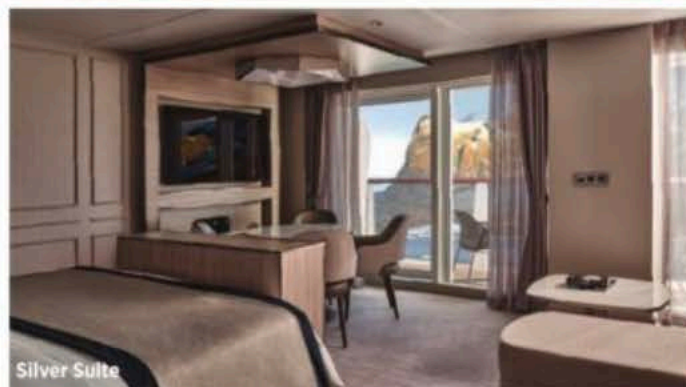
Silver Endeavour departs on Nov. 21 for its inaugural sailing in Antarctica, a voyage hosted by Combrink that includes an outstanding team of historians, marine biologists, anthropologists, naturalists, filmmakers and more.



Silver Endeavour

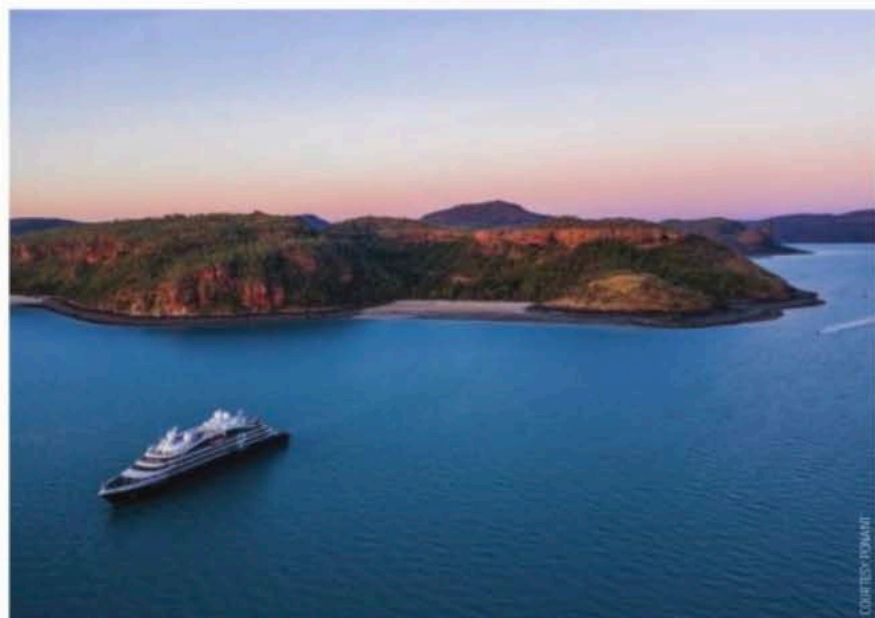


Observation Lounge



Silver Suite

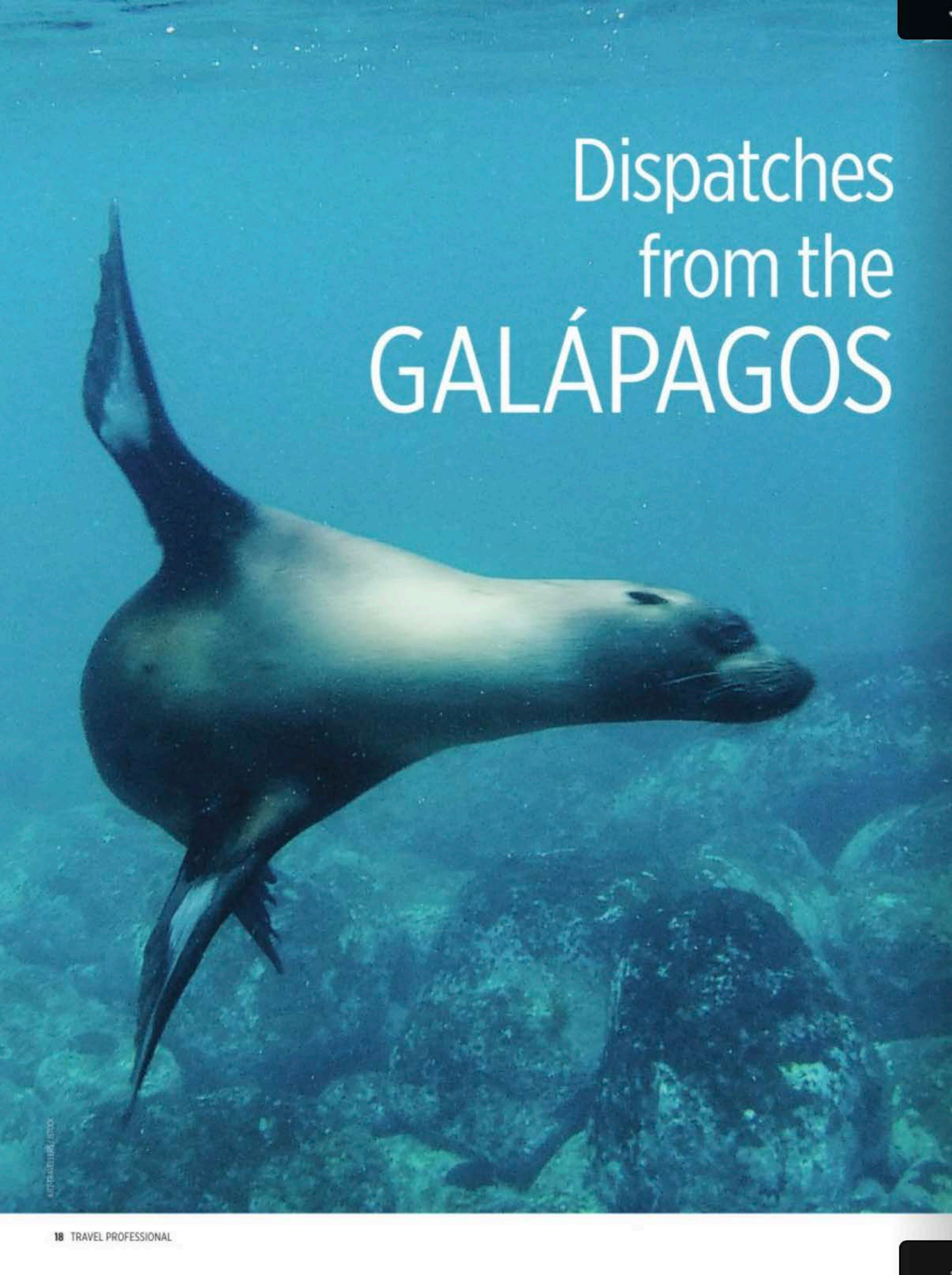
PHOTOS COURTESY SILVERSEA



COURTESY PONANT

Eclipsing all itineraries

Astronomy buff? Plan to sail with **PONANT**, April 9-24, 2023, on a 16-day voyage to eastern Indonesia, East Timor, and the Kimberley region of Australia, timed to showcase the total eclipse of the sun on April 20, 2023. Aboard will be Smithsonian Journey Experts, Associate Director of Science at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Alex Young and Australian-American historian Craig Benjamin, who will guide guests' viewing of this spectacular three-plus-hour cosmic event. This is just one of 21 co-branded itineraries being offered in 2023 by PONANT and the Smithsonian Journeys arm of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum, education and research complex. Smithsonian Journeys is a global leader in cultural travel for diverse audiences, offering unique, expert-led trips on all seven continents for eager world travellers.



Dispatches from the GALÁPAGOS

A voyage of close encounters, unique sites with fascinating landscapes, and wildlife at every turn – *Silver Origin* offers a taste of Ecuador and the Galápagos in every way

Vanessa Lee

I AM HELD CAPTIVE by the beauty of the Galápagos Islands and the wildlife that inhabits them. It reminds me that one of the reasons to travel far and wide is to see and experience remarkable events, life-changing moments, and, if one is truly lucky, the kind of stuff that gives you goosebumps. The memories we bring home can often be one of the most rewarding aspects of a trip. To finally sail in the Galápagos archipelago of 21 islands is a bucket-list experience that is now one of my most memorable travel experiences ever.

So, here are my dispatches from the Galápagos Islands and our cruise on the small, luxurious, and impeccable *Silver Origin*, the first destination-specific ship built by Silversea Cruises, carrying no more than 100 guests. We are sailing the Western itinerary on a seven-day cruise, but we wish we had thought to cruise for 14 days instead to explore even more of these stunning isles.

It's after dinner, and the only nightcap we need is to sail under an inky, warm, brilliantly starry night through the archipelago. We have come to the small stargazing deck in the company of one of our Expedition Leaders to do precisely that – to star gaze, and it's incredible. Up ahead is a rare sight – an active volcano on Isabela Island spewing hot red lava up and onto its flanks. As we draw closer to this magnificent sight, everything around us seems darker than dark. And then we look up and see something even rarer as we gently, almost imperceptibly cross the equator. I gaze at the firmament and see the Southern Cross in the southern hemisphere and, at the same time, I look northward and see a more familiar sky – the North Star and Orion. For me, this is undoubtedly a once-in-a-lifetime moment – a volcano and both hemispheres. I can hardly wait for the rest of our week to unfold if this is the way it begins.

And then, it's all about the land animals and sea creatures, of which there are plenty. Our joy is palpable as we engage with this wondrous array of wildlife and anticipate each new dawn and the surprises we will find. There are several activities on our daily schedule, depending on where we are sailing. We may choose to kayak, hike or enjoy a snorkel from the beach or one in deep water from a Zodiac. Many of these islands offer a unique experience of flora and fauna as well as geography.



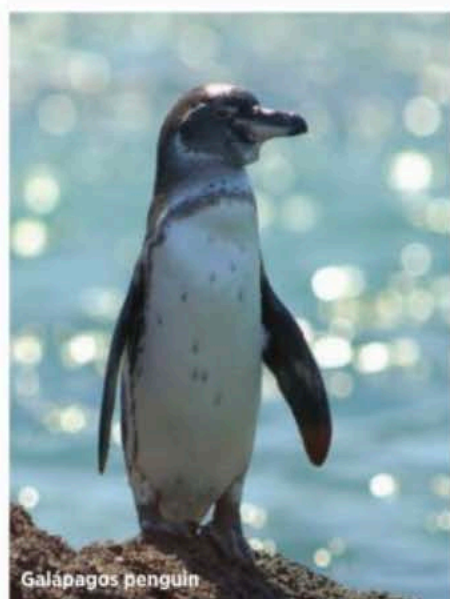
Blue-footed booby



Galápagos land Iguana

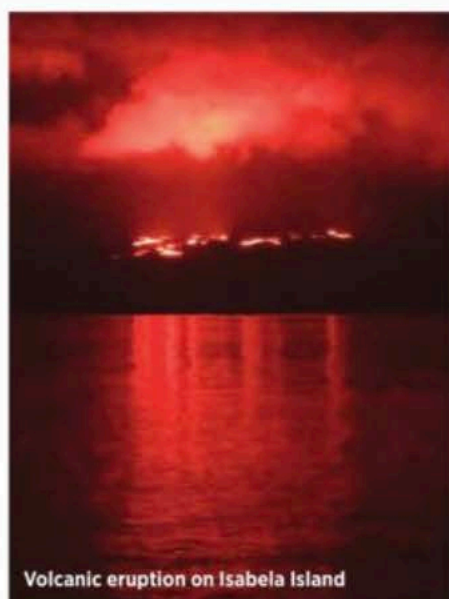


Galápagos giant tortoise



Galapagos penguin

PHILIPMAN / SHUTTERSTOCK



Volcanic eruption on Isabela Island

VAHESA/LEE



Geared up for snorkelling

As we immerse ourselves in our voyage, we begin to understand why this magical place became so important to Darwin – just as it should be to the world now.

Our aptly-named ship, the *Silver Origin*, is designed to perfection, with an outward sensibility, offering remarkable views, whether from the outside decks, the Explorer Lounge, Observation Lounge and Library, or our gorgeous suite and Horizon Balcony. We love getting to and from our Zodiac at the Marina, which leads into the cleverly-designed and informative Basecamp. We gather here to enjoy a hot drink after a swim or snorkel, check in with the accommodating staff, and watch the fantastic videos of below and above-water sights on the large screen. We also browse the tremendous collection of items and memorabilia on display from the Royal Geographical Society, which has a partnership with Silversea. These are from Darwin's voyage here 150 years ago and are fascinating.

Our highlights are snorkelling, swimming and frolicking with inquisitive and fearless sea lions – it's more than magical as they swim up to and around you, beneath you, and gaze at you with their big brown eyes. They happen to be just about everywhere you go, lazing and snoozing on any available surface. We even found one sleeping in the lobby of our hotel one morning – no extra charge!

We are always on the lookout for the tiny tropical Galápagos penguins, the rarest in the world, that inhabit this land. We spot some while ashore and zipping by in the water, and we even interrupt an amorous pair lying on a rock. We learn from our terrific Expedition guides that these penguins are the only ones living in the Northern Hemisphere and are endemic to this land.

We also learn so much from our Ecuadorian guides, and their company and knowledge enhance our experience. We anticipate our nightly pre-dinner cocktails in

the Explorer Lounge, where we see a film or enjoy a lecture about our upcoming port of call. It's a feast of information!

During the week, we enjoy five snorkelling excursions, replete in our gear supplied by Silversea. This includes a snorkel and mask, which guests may take home, flippers and a wetsuit for buoyancy, plus a small mandatory lifejacket. Remember to bring water shoes.

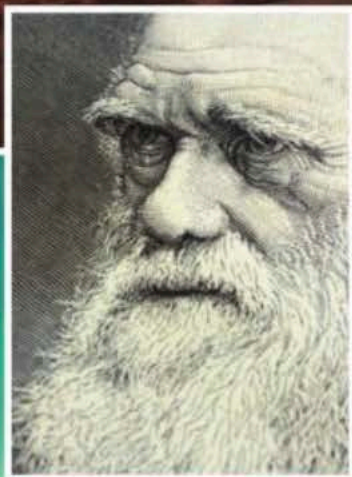
We set out in a Zodiac from Base Camp and the Marina with a driver and an Expedition Leader who ensures our safety and takes us to the best snorkelling spots to see more fascinating creatures. We float above sea turtles and snorkel into massive schools of multi-coloured fish while watching lazy, white-tipped sharks meander below us. And then up pops another sea lion – they are everywhere, as are the blue-footed boobies.

Each day brings new opportunities to be amazed. If we're not snorkelling, we might enjoy a hike, a Zodiac excursion or a kayak. And each day, the ship usually visits two islands and sails at lunchtime as we gather at The Grill on Deck 7 for a tasty al fresco lunch, which often includes seafood. It's a convivial, happy crowd, and we engage with each other and the lovely staff who serve us. We are casual, relaxed and mesmerized by our experiences, sharing stories of all we have seen.

We snap pics of the iconic and massive Galápagos tortoises on Santa Cruz, some of whom have been alive longer than many of us. Then, on Fernandina at Punta Espinoza, we take a guided hike, treading carefully so we don't interrupt (or step upon) marine iguanas digging nests in the sand to lay their eggs. We see flightless cormorants, Darwin's finches and the wonderfully named Sally Lightfoot Crabs.



PHOTO COURTESY SILVERLINE



Silver Origin Observation Lounge.

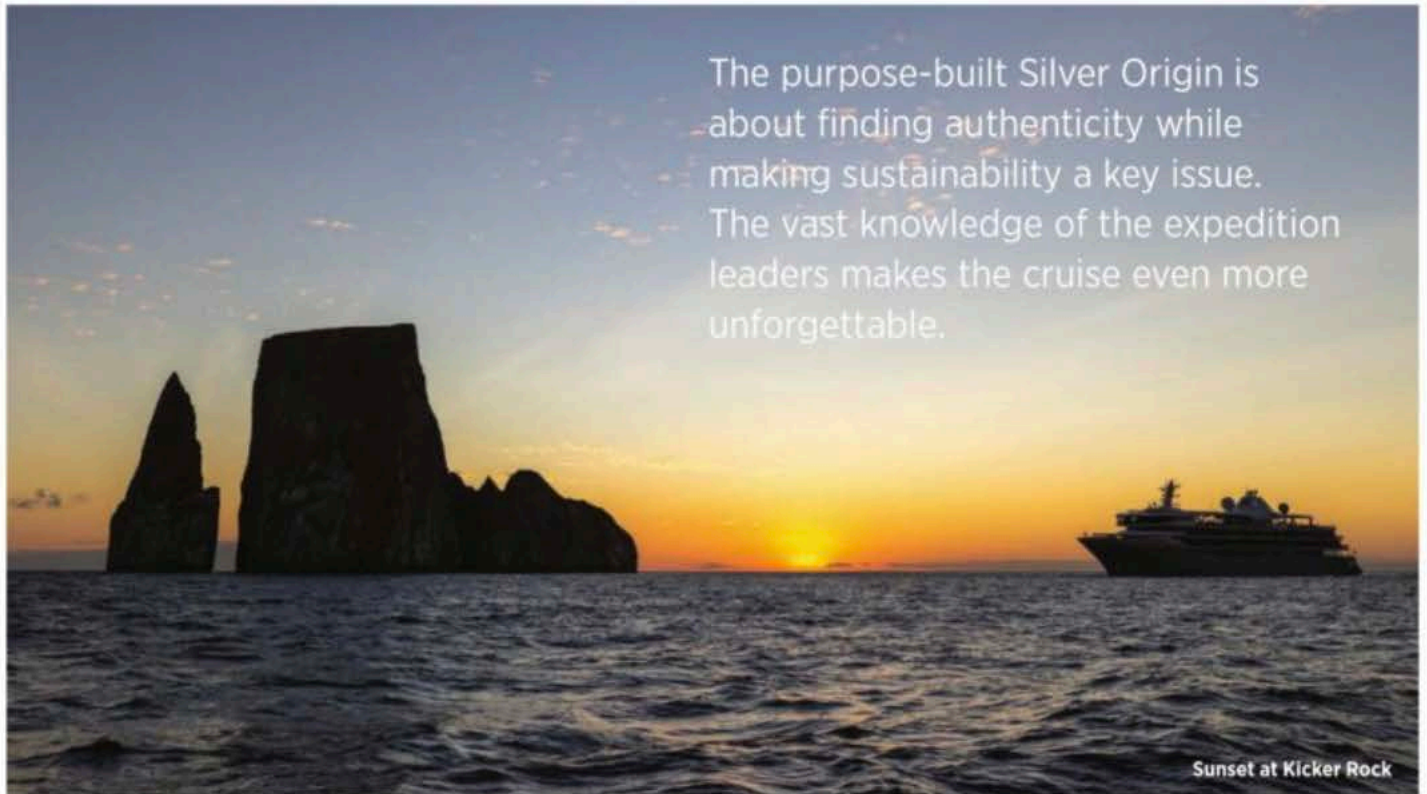
“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.”

— CHARLES DARWIN



Golden rays

PHOTO COURTESY SILVERLINE




The purpose-built Silver Origin is about finding authenticity while making sustainability a key issue. The vast knowledge of the expedition leaders makes the cruise even more unforgettable.

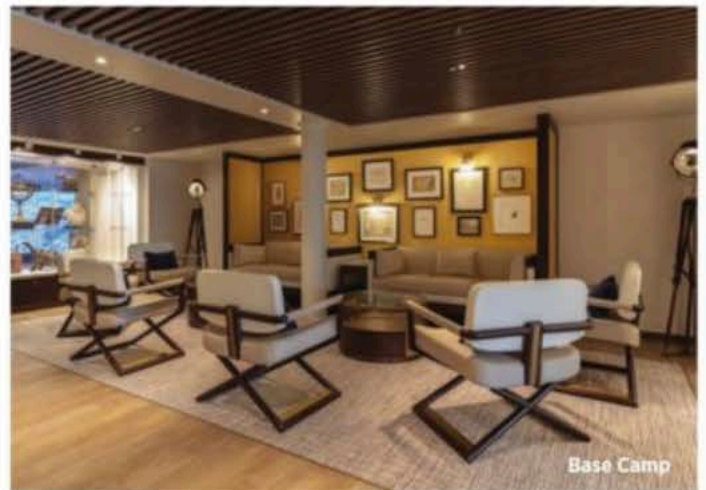
Sunset at Kicker Rock

Another day we take a Zodiac into the mangroves and spot a squadron of golden-coloured stingrays as we cruise gently in the calm water. And then our guide takes us for a close-up encounter with two sea lions basking on a branch in a mangrove tree, well above the water line.

The purpose-built *Silver Origin* seeks authenticity while making sustainability a key forefront issue. The crew onboard includes charming and kind Ecuadorians who provide outstanding service. Plus, the group of 8-10 Expedition Leaders, with their vast knowledge of the region, makes the cruise even more unforgettable. They know the National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary that is the Galápagos Archipelago so well, and their focus is to ensure that all guests have the most incredible time.

The *Silver Origin* is beautiful and suits the region in which it sails. Everything is easy and charming, and the staff is fabulous. We wear casual clothes and are relaxed yet receive terrific service. We enjoy fine dining at The Restaurant on Deck 4 for dinner with an extensive menu. And the onboard cuisine makes the most of local produce and the freshest seafood, with 55% of the food sourced in Ecuador. The Restaurant and the popular Grill can accommodate all guests at lunch or dinner.

Inspired by nature with soothing views of the islands at every turn, the ship offers 51 very comfortable suites for 100 guests and an enriching all-inclusive lifestyle at sea with all gratuities, Wi-Fi, fine wines, and premium liquor included in the cruise fare. The attentive ministrations of a suite butler make guests feel very special, as is typical on any Silversea cruise. 



Base Camp



Deluxe Veranda Suite