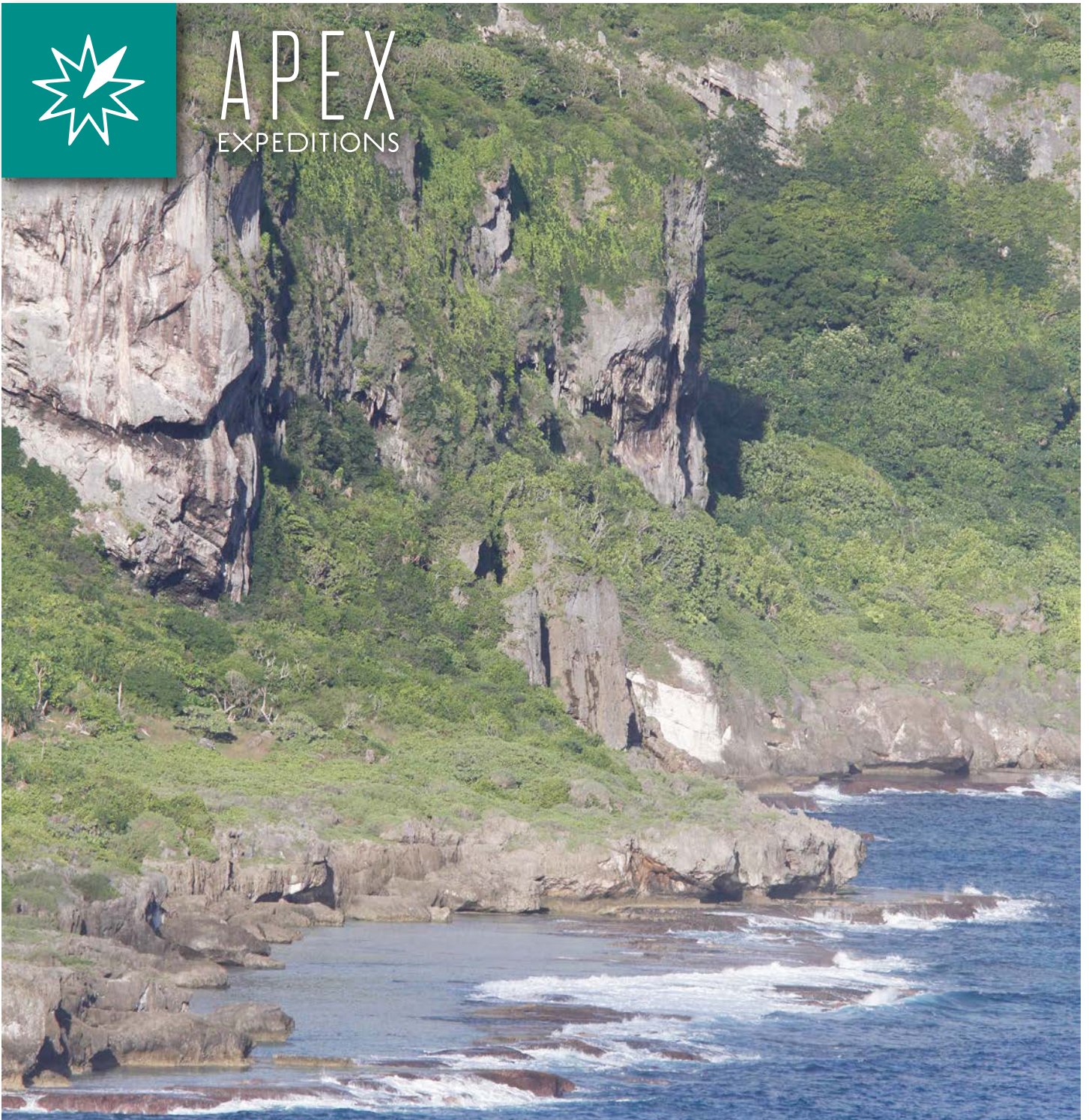




APEX
EXPEDITIONS



Palau, Yap, the Northern Marianas & Japan

June 9 - 25, 2016



Expedition Overview

The archipelagos of the western Pacific are some of the most remote and fascinating on Earth, with an astonishing diversity of cultural and natural landscapes. Covering 2,400 miles from south to north, this 17-day journey will take you from the pristine coral reefs of Palau, to the still-smoldering volcano of Miyake-jima in Japan's Izu Archipelago; from the traditional villages of Yap, to the sobering World War II sites of the Northern Mariana Islands. Trek to Pagan's most recent lava flow, explore Maug's submerged caldera, and circumnavigate Tori-shima to seek out the exceedingly rare Short-tailed Albatross. Sail on the superbly designed 338-foot *Silver Discoverer*, expertly engineered to allow access to rugged coasts well beyond the reach of ordinary vessels, and let our expert team of naturalists guide you on this journey to some of the most isolated and unspoiled islands in the Pacific.



© Peter Harrison, Cover © Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Palau, Short-tailed Albatross
Cover: Saipan Coastline





Itinerary

Thursday, June 9: Arrive Palau

Arrive late tonight at Koror Airport, and transfer to the *Palau Pacific Resort*, nestled among 64 acres of lush tropical gardens and pristine white sand beach on the island of Ngerkebesang.

Friday, June 10: Palau

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, then head out with your Apex expedition team for a tour of the nearby Rock Islands. These mushroom-shaped, jungle-draped limestone formations are home to crocodiles, fruit bats, and a rich array of bird life including kingfishers, Reef Herons, Black Noddies, and White-tailed Tropicbirds, but their underwater offerings might be their biggest draw—with over 1,500 species of fish and 700 corals, Palau is a heart of biodiversity, pumping life outwards from its blood-warm waters. Kayak among the islands' pristine coral gardens, reef fish nurseries, hidden lagoons, marine caves, forgotten World War II sites, and ancient Palauan villages. Snorkelers will enjoy sightings of turtles, Bumphead Parrotfish, Napoleon Wrasse, Manta Rays, Lionfish, wildly colored Mandarin Fish, Clown Fish, Moray Eels, Eagle Rays, and much more. Return to the *Palau Pacific Resort* for a welcome dinner and overnight.

Saturday, June 11: Palau / Embark *Silver Discoverer*

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast and the morning to explore Ngerkebesang on your own. You may choose to stay at the resort and bask at its private, pristine white sand beach or walk its hiking trails. Visit the National Museum of Palau, or view more sea creatures at the impressive Palau Aquarium. At noon, head to the port to embark the *Silver Discoverer*, our expedition vessel for the next 15 days. Meet the rest of our outstanding expedition team and settle in for the adventure to come.



© Giovanna Fasanello



© Jonathan Rossour

Photos: Saipan, Napoleon Wrasse,
White-headed Kingfisher



Sunday, June 12: Palau

Make the best of your last morning in Palau by choosing from several activities: snorkel in the world-renowned Jellyfish Lake and behold the thousands of stingless Golden Jellyfish that thrive in its closed ecosystem. Hike an old WWII access road, used to supply cannons and ammunition to the Japanese, and see cockatoos and Eclectus Parrots as you walk toward a century-old lighthouse perched on the tallest peak in the Rock Islands. Scuba divers may choose to dive at one of Palau's stellar sites, from walls with brilliant coral formations to reef corners where the current attracts sharks and rays. At noon, the *Silver Discoverer* will lift her anchor and head north. Be on deck as we depart—the views towards Babeldaop Island's mangroves and terraced hills are a sight to behold as we make our way out of the cerulean lagoon.

Monday, June 13: Colonia, Yap

Some 275 miles northeast of Palau lies the island of Yap. Colonia, its capital, is surprisingly modern, but Yap's traditional indigenous cultures are strong compared to other states in Micronesia. Though most Yapese live in modern structures, some villages are still organized around the traditional meetinghouses, men's houses, and communal kitchens. Visit one such village, where you'll also see Yap's famous stone money, 'Rai'—large doughnut-shaped, carved disks, usually made of Aragonite. While exploring the island, look out for the endemic Yap Flying Fox. Birders may spot the White-headed Ground Dove, Yap Cicadabird, Yap Monarch, and Olive and Plain White-eyes. For those wanting to see what lies within Yap's waters, close to 100 miles of barrier reef provides world-class snorkeling and diving. You can see Blacktip, Whitetip and Grey Sharks and other big fish on one hand; and, on the other, tiny Ghost Pipe Fish and White Mantis Shrimp in the wire and soft corals. But perhaps most impressive are the concentrations of Manta Rays found around Yap.

Tuesday, June 14: Ulithi Atoll, Yap

Upon entering Ulithi's 200-square-mile lagoon, you can understand how it became the American Navy's largest Pacific harbor during WWII. A staggering 722 naval vessels were gathered here before the invasion of Okinawa in 1945. Today, step ashore and watch as some of the 800 Ulithians perform local dances, talk about Micronesian navigation, and show us their outrigger canoes. Snorkeling and diving are exceptional here, too. Ulithi's pristine reefs are teeming with rare corals and sponges, abundant Micronesian reef fish, and more sharks than most people see in a lifetime, including huge Silvertips.

Wednesday, June 15: At Sea

Today you'll cruise the Philippine Sea, heading northeast toward the Mariana Archipelago and on to the Pacific Rim of Fire. Attend lectures by our onboard experts and be sure to join our naturalists on deck to look for whales and dolphins.

Thursday, June 16: Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

About 120 miles north of Guam lie the Northern Mariana Islands. Saipan is the largest, and home to most of the Northern Marianas' 61,000 residents. Turquoise waters and white sands make up much of this tropical island, but it is perhaps its poignant military history for which it is best known. American forces entered the

Marianas in 1944, and WWII relics—Japanese pillboxes, fuel storage tanks, bunkers—are scattered all over Saipan. WWII sites include the Last Command Post where Japanese troops made their final stand against the invading US forces, and Banzai and Suicide Cliffs, with their beautiful views and grim history—it is here that



© Governor Faswell



© Governor Faswell



© Governor Faswell



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Jellyfish Lake, Yap Village, Yapese Child, Ulithi Atoll



hundreds of Japanese soldiers and civilians jumped to their deaths rather than surrender. Learn more about the island's WWII history at the American Memorial Park. Afterwards, you may choose to shed some of your melancholy with a walk through the park's beautiful 30-acre mangrove forest.

Friday, June 17: Pagan, Northern Mariana Islands

Two hundred miles north of Saipan, Pagan is an island consisting of two stratovolcanoes joined by a narrow strip of land. The island's black sand beaches are pristine, and the active volcano, Mount Pagan, stands majestically over the scenery. A 1981 eruption forced a total evacuation to Saipan, and residents are only now trickling back. There are several projects underway to aid in the islands' resettlement. Today, a hike through a forest and up to ridge reveals a scenic view of two large lakes, Inner and Laguna. Be on the lookout for the rare animal species found on Pagan, such as the Marianas Fruit Bat, the Micronesian Megapode, and the impressive Coconut Crab—this species can weigh up to nine pounds, with a leg span of more than three feet.



© Jonathan Rossouw

Saturday, June 18: Maug, Northern Mariana Islands

Maug Volcano is made up of three small islands that mark the northern, western, and eastern rims of its largely submerged mile-wide caldera. The highest point reaches only 745 feet above sea level. No eruptions have been recorded since the islands' discovery in 1522, and the presence of poorly developed coral reefs on the lava dome suggests a long period of general quiet. East Island has the most vegetation, and has been used to grow coconut palms. Here, such birds as the Micronesian Megapode, Micronesian Starling and Collared Kingfisher have been found. The islands are uninhabited, and aside from the remains of a Japanese weather station and fish processing plant used during WWII, largely untouched. Today, we will explore these islands by Zodiac.



Sunday, June 19: At Sea

Binoculars in hand, join our naturalists on deck to watch for such seabird species as Black-footed and Laysan Albatrosses, as well as Bonin and Matsudaira's Petrels. Marine mammal sightings could include Sperm Whale and several dolphin species. Attend informative lectures by your expedition team as we head towards the remote Ogasawara Islands (previously called the Bonin Islands by the British), which have earned the nickname "Galapagos of the Orient" for their unique plant and animal species, and were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2011. They are technically a part of the Tokyo prefecture, separated from the rest of Tokyo by over 600 miles and a 25-hour boat ride.

Monday, June 20: Chichi-jima, Japan

Chichi-jima, or Father Island, is the largest in Japan's Ogasawara Archipelago. The mountainous island is covered in subtropical forest, white sand beaches and steep cliffs. For birding enthusiasts, Chichi-jima harbors such specials as the Brown Booby and Brown Noddy. Minami-jima is a small, uninhabited island just off Chichi-jima's southern shore. Snorkeling within the "Marine Park Zone" around Minami-jima offers a chance to see big fish such as Dogtooth Tuna and Spotted Knifejaw, large numbers of brilliant Moontail Bullseyes, the exceedingly rare Wroughtiron Butterflyfish, Yellow-edged Lyretail, and Lavender Jobfish. The Ogasawara Islands are also the largest breeding grounds of the Green Turtle in Japan.



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Coconut Crab, Saipan, Micronesian Megapode



Tuesday, June 21: Tori-shima, Japan

This uninhabited volcanic island, located in the Izu Archipelago, is still active—its submerged caldera last erupted in 2002. Despite the fact that most of it consists of desolate volcanic ash and rock, Japan has named it a Natural Monument and National Wildlife Protection Area. Tori-shima means “Bird Island,” and its name is apt as tens of thousands of pairs of Tristram’s Storm Petrel breed here, as well as the Japanese Murrelet and Black-footed Albatross. But Tori-shima’s Short-tailed Albatross population is its real draw. This rare species is known to breed on only four islands in the North Pacific, with close to 80% nesting here. As only scientists are granted permission to land on Tori-shima, we will circumnavigate the island while our ornithologists scan the coastline for this beautiful, and highly endangered, bird. This time of year, we may see fledging chicks. The 2002 eruption was disastrous for the Short-tailed Albatross, with recovery hampered by the presence of large numbers of Black Rats, the only remaining mammal on the island. But conservation efforts are in full effect, and about 4,000 individuals now live on Tori-shima’s ashen slopes.

Wednesday, June 22: Hachijo-jima, Japan

Hachijo-jima is the second largest in the subtropical Izu Shoto Island Chain. Its proximity to the mainland (180 miles from Tokyo) makes it a popular resort destination among the Japanese. It is a volcanic island with two mountains: Mihara and Hachijo-Fuji, which has the tallest peak in the entire Izu Archipelago, at 2,800 feet. For the adventurous, a hike up Hachijo-Fuji with members of the expedition team will bring you to the volcano’s rim, from which you can look down into its inner crater. The island’s Botanical Garden, located in the natural forests of a lava field, teems with birdlife, including Black Wood Pigeon, Owston’s Varied Tit, and Pleske’s Warbler.

Thursday, June 23: Miyake-jima, Japan

The inhabitants of this volcanic island, another in the Izu Group, face a strange danger—their volcano, Mount Oyama, has erupted six times in the last century (the latest was in 2000, forcing a mass evacuation) and is still active. Despite this, parts of the island are extremely lush, and endemic birds, such as the Izu Thrush, Ijima’s Leaf Warbler, Japanese Wood Pigeon, and Japanese Robin, abound. Join your expert ornithologist and geologist this morning on a hike to the mountain’s observation deck to take in the panoramic view, distinguished by a long stretch of black lava stretching to the horizon. See the historic Shiitori Shrine, which was partially swallowed by mudflow in the latest eruption.

Friday, June 24: At Sea

Recap the expedition and complete onboard lecture presentations on the voyage toward Japan’s first port opened for foreign trade in 1859, Hakodate. This evening, as the summer sun sets over the Pacific, toast the end of our thrilling journey.

Saturday, June 25: Hakodate, Japan

After breakfast, disembark Silver Discoverer and transfer to the airport for your international flights home.



© Giovanni Fasanello



© Peter Hansson



Photos: Green Turtle, Short-tailed Albatross, Hachijo-jima, Japanese Robin



Your Expedition Leaders

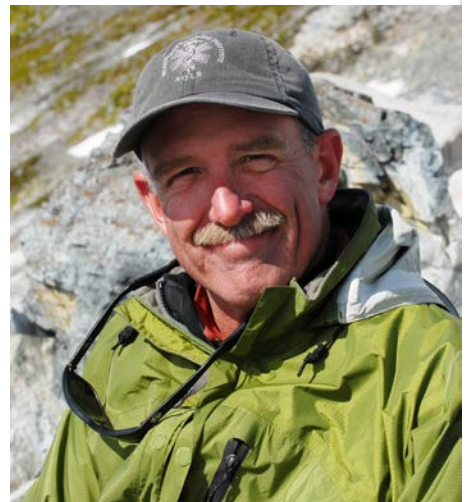
Mike Messick

Mike Messick is considered one of the most experienced Expedition Leaders in the business. His enthusiasm and determination for exploring the world is as infectious today as it was back in 1983 when he started his career on the M/S *Lindblad Explorer*, the frontrunner of expedition cruising. He has since led expeditions to over 170 countries on all seven continents aboard more than 20 different vessels, ranging from live-aboard dive boats to Russian nuclear ice breakers. His travels started at a very young age, but it was a trip to the Galapagos at 14 that cemented Mike's career path. He received a degree in Biology and Psychology from Skidmore College in New York, became an accomplished small boat operator while living in the Cayman Islands and qualified as a scuba instructor. One month prior to his college graduation, Mike was offered a job as Divemaster and Assistant Expedition Leader in Indonesia and embarked on what is now a 30-year career in expedition travel.



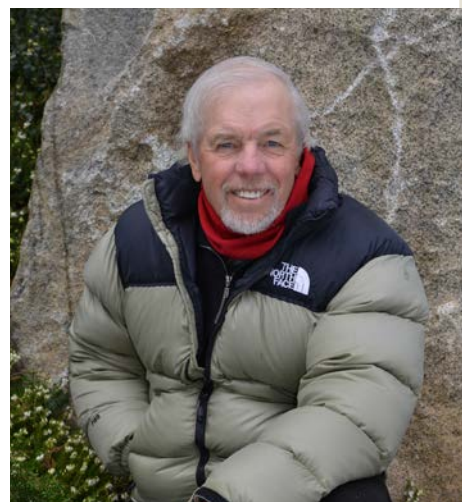
Kevin Clement

Not many people can say they have lived inside Alaska's Denali National Park, but Kevin Clement is one. Nowadays, however, he spends most of his time guiding ecotourism and adventure travel trips on all seven continents. Kevin has served as the Denali Foundation instructor for natural history and as a trainer for the Park's staff of naturalists. As a Certification Instructor for the Wilderness Education Association he led month-long outdoor leadership courses under the auspices of the University of Alaska. He has lived in several other national parks and has guided groups in whitewater rafts, on cross-country skis, by sled dog, and on foot, earning certifications in scuba diving, swiftwater rescue, and wilderness medicine, as well as a Coast Guard Master's license. Most recently, Kevin has been coordinating and leading kayaking excursions in South Georgia and Antarctica. Kevin is also a veteran of the South Atlantic expedition having visited the Tristan Archipelago five times. Kevin also continues to draw and paint. His first career was as an illustrator and he never travels without his sketchbook. Or his sense of humor.



Peter Harrison

Peter Harrison has led expeditions throughout the world, from the Arctic to the Antarctic and everywhere in between. Peter has written and illustrated over a dozen books, of which *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*, is considered the bible of seabird identification. In addition to being a professional birder, entrepreneur, artist, author and screenwriter, Peter has devoted much of his time to conservation efforts. In recognition of his outstanding work in natural history, Peter was honored with the title, Member of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. More recently Peter received the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' prestigious Conservation Gold Medal Award. This honor is bestowed upon one individual each year in recognition of their support and dedication to wild bird protection and global habitat conservation. Exploration and discovery remain a driving force for Peter and it is safe to say that with Peter leading the charge, adventure always abounds.



Shirley Metz

Shirley Metz's careers and accomplishments have spanned the globe. Shirley became a certified diver at age 16 and while at the University of Hawaii did shark research earning her degrees in Marine Biology and Communications. She met her first husband in Hawaii with whom she founded Hobie Sports. She also developed several active clothing lines and consulted to companies such as The North Face. In 1988 Shirley visited Antarctica and became inspired to work in Antarctic conservation. To raise awareness, she became a member of an international expedition that would attempt to ski 800 miles from the edge of Antarctica to the South Pole. On January 17, 1989, the nine-member expedition arrived at world's end; Shirley made history and her way into the *Guinness Book of Records* as the first woman to ski overland to the South Pole. A member of the Explorers Club and The Society of Woman Geographers, Shirley continues to raise awareness and support for environmental and cultural projects.



Giovanna Fasanelli

A life-long love affair with the sea propelled Giovanna into the world of marine biology, conservation, underwater photography and natural history documentaries. From an early childhood exploring the rock pools of South Africa's shorelines she immigrated to Australia and wasted no time in getting her PADI Dive Master certification. She has since logged over 1,000 dives throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Whilst completing her marine biology degree at Australia's James Cook University, Giovanna worked at an underwater film company, gaining experience tagging Tiger Sharks and Green Turtles in the Coral Sea and assisting with film production. This opportunity spawned a decade-long career in television, presenting the latest developments in aquaculture and fisheries science. In 2013 Giovanna worked with National Geographic Channel in co-presenting a documentary series, *Australia: Life on the Edge*, as the marine biologist and submarine pilot showcasing stories from around the continent's shores.



Giovanna's passion for wilderness and animals has driven her to explore habitats around the world from Snow Leopards in the Himalayas to Komodo Dragons in Indonesia and Mountain Gorillas in Uganda. Fast approaching 100 countries visited, Giovanna has extensive experience as a guide and naturalist all over the world. A talented photographer and skilled writer, Giovanna's work is regularly featured in several Australian magazines. Her deep love and concern for the environment has led her to be an advocate for conservation.



Shirley © Jonathan Rossouw





Palau, Yap, the Northern Marianas & Japan 2016 onboard the *Silver Discoverer*

Adventure travellers can explore the remote archipelagos of the vast Pacific aboard the sleek, 120-guest *Silver Discoverer*. She's the perfect platform for viewing these untamed landscapes, with all ocean-view suites and plenty of deck space, so that a breaching whale or pod of dolphins can readily be viewed. *Silver Discoverer's* shallow draft allows her to navigate closer to shore, and with a fleet of 12 Zodiacs guests can land on isolated shores and explore varied ecosystems, up-close and in-depth.

Suite Categories

Suite Categories	Per Person Rates
Explorer Suite	\$10,790
View Suite	\$11,990
Vista Suite	\$15,890
Veranda Suite	\$19,790
Medallion Suite	\$23,690
Solo - Explorer	\$13,728
Solo - View	\$15,228
Solo - Vista	\$20,103
Solo - Veranda	\$24,978

Vessel Specifications

Length.....	338 feet
Width.....	51 feet
Speed.....	14 knots
Tonnage.....	5,218
Guests.....	120
Crew.....	96
Refurbished.....	2014
Passenger Decks.....	5
Registry.....	Bahamas

All Suites Include:

Twin beds or queen-sized bed with premium mattresses; fine Pratesi bed linens and down duvets; refrigerator stocked with your preferences; Radio/Alarm with iPod docking station; writing desk; wardrobe with personal safe; hair dryer; flat screen television with on-demand movies and music, and satellite news programming; plush robes and slippers.



Expedition Details

Palau, Yap, the Northern Marianas & Japan

June 9 – 25, 2016

17 Days Trip Length

Koror, Palau Start

Hakodate, Japan End

Included

Included in the price of your Apex expedition are all accommodations as noted in the itinerary; meals, activities and excursions; all gratuities; complimentary room service onboard the vessel; select wines and premium spirits onboard the vessel; services of four Apex Expeditions leaders, as well as the full onboard lecture team and expedition staff; local guides; airport transfers; permits; entrance fees; and taxes.

Not Included

Not included in the price of your Apex expedition is airfare to Koror or from Hakodate; select premium wines and liquors; travel insurance (Trip Cancellation and Interruption, as well as Emergency Medical and Evacuation insurance, are highly recommended); airport departure taxes; passport and/or visa fees; excess luggage charges; items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, souvenirs, etc.); onboard spa and salon services; and independent travel arrangements pre- or post-trip.

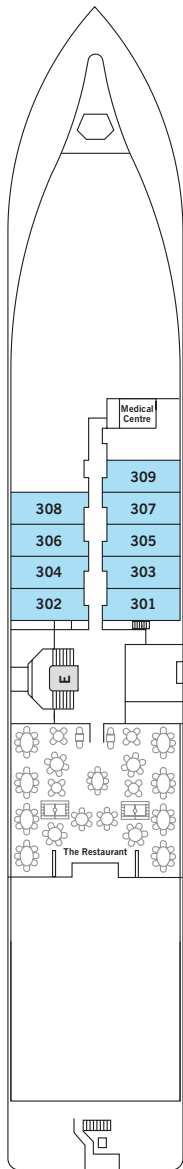
Payments & Terms

25% of the trip cost will confirm your place on the expedition. The final balance is due 150 days prior to departure. All prices are quoted in U.S. dollars and must be paid in U.S. dollars. Per person pricing is based on double occupancy. The Solo Rate is paid by participants who specifically request single accommodations and is subject to availability. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we will try to match you with a roommate of the same gender. However, if a roommate is not available, the published Solo Rate will be charged. Upon confirming your reservation you will be required to pay the published Solo Rate, if we are able to pair you with a roommate, the applicable difference will be refunded at the time that final trip payment is due for all participants. Please note that solo accommodations are limited and cannot always be guaranteed throughout. For our full set of Terms & Conditions, please visit our web site at www.apex-expeditions.com.

One-of-a-kind adventures to the world's most fascinating places. Join us.

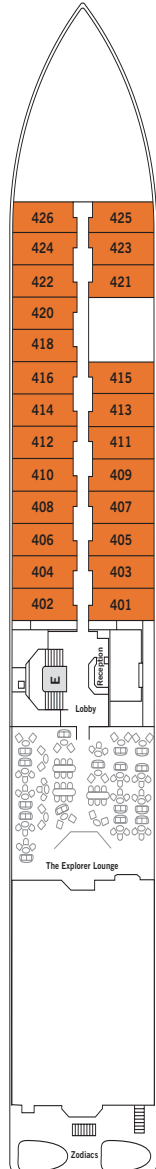


Deck Plan - Silver Discoverer



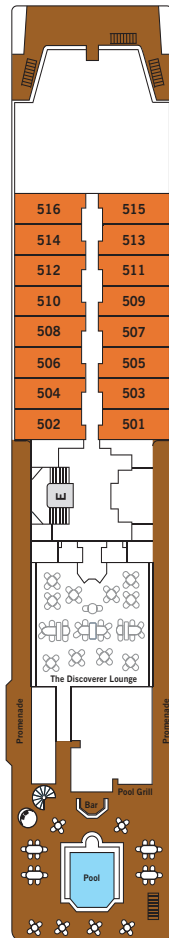
DECK 3
Restaurant
Medical Center

● Explorer Suite



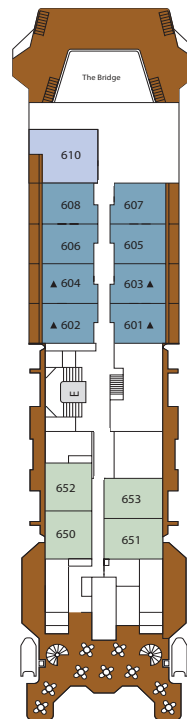
DECK 4
Explorer Lounge
Lobby/Reception

● View Suite



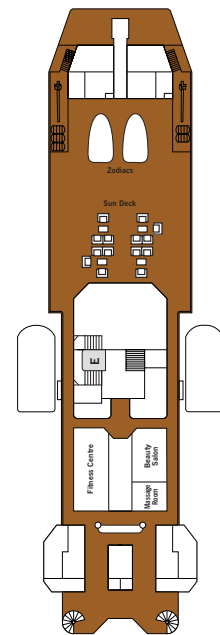
DECK 5
Pool
The Grill
Discoverer Lounge

● View Suite



DECK 6
The Bridge

● Vista Suite
● Veranda Suite
● Medallion Suite



DECK 7
Beauty Salon
Massage Room
Fitness Center
Sun Deck



Suite Details - *Silver Discoverer*

Medallion Suite



- 408 sq. ft, including Private Balcony (27 sq. ft.)
- Teak style balcony, with floor-to-ceiling glass doors
 - Living room with sitting area
 - Laundry service
 - Wifi available (fees apply)

Suite Layout



Veranda Suite



- 280 sq. ft, including Private Balcony (35.5 sq. ft.)
- Teak style balcony, with floor-to-ceiling glass doors
 - Sitting room
 - Wifi available (fees apply)



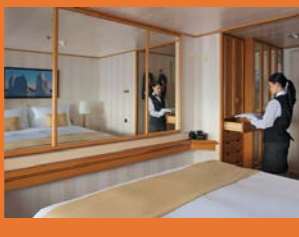
Vista Suite



- 269 sq. ft • Two view windows (35 in. x 24 in.)
- Sitting area
 - Wifi available (fees apply)



View Suite



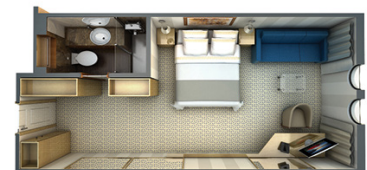
- 181 sq. ft • One view windows (35 in. x 24 in.)
- Sitting area
 - Wifi available (fees apply)



Explorer Suite



- 186 sq. ft • Two portholes (15.75 in. diameter)
- Sitting area
 - Wifi available (fees apply)



Suite diagrams and deck plans are for illustration purposes only.



Reservation Form

Palau, Yap, the Northern Marianas & Japan

June 9 – 25, 2016

Person 1: (Primary Contact)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Details:

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Double

Solo

Cabin Category Preference _____

Person 2: (If applicable and at same address, otherwise please submit a second Reservation Form.)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Deposit Information:

My deposit check is enclosed

Charge my deposit to my: VISA

MasterCard

American Express

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

CCV Code: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this completed form to Apex Expeditions.

E-mail: info@apex-expeditions.com or Mail: 3275 36th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98126

