

ARCTIC ROLE

When Aqua Expeditions started up almost 20 years ago, it was the first travel company to offer boutique river cruising in the Amazon. Since then it has blazed a trail through the Mekong Delta, Eastern Indonesia and now, over the next few months, it launches East Africa and – in a total departure from its usual destinations – Svalbard and the Arctic Circle.

This has almost certainly got something to do with a new ship it's just added to its fleet, *Aqua Lares*, a 77-metre Soviet icebreaker-turned-luxurious expedition superyacht sleeping up to 30 guests in 15 cabins (12 of them suites), kitted out with a helipad and multiple tenders, which is designed to be great in somewhere like Zanzibar but to be equally brilliant in the polar extremes.

Aqua Lares will spend the summer months in the Arctic, offering a series of five-to-14-night expeditions (from \$10,150pp for a five-night cruise or \$435,000 for a full charter). Departing north from Glasgow at the beginning of June, the first voyage will take in some of the wilder, lesser-known Scottish Hebrides, such as Staffa and Callanish, before continuing north to Tromsø in Northern Norway, then there will be voyages taking in Svalbard, the Lofoten Islands and beyond. These itineraries provide the opportunity to head out on twice-daily small group excursions and immerse yourselves in the dramatic glacial landscape, where you stand every chance of spotting polar bears, migratory whales and Arctic foxes.

What Aqua Expeditions excels at is creating personalised experiences, so depending on your group, you could find yourself going for an icy sea plunge, then heading back to the on-deck Jacuzzi followed by an on-deck dance party to finish warming up.

aquaexpeditions.com



Aqua Expeditions' latest ship, the *Aqua Lares*, makes its way through the icy waters of the Arctic Circle

ELEVATING ART TO NEW HEIGHTS



It seems a lifetime ago that Ursula Hauser and Iwan Wirth opened their first international art gallery, Hauser & Wirth, in Zurich (it was 1992). Since then, they've launched outposts all over the world, published dozens of books, opened art centres and restaurants, and even ventured into hotels, acquiring, revamping and relaunching The Fife Arms in Braemar in Aberdeenshire in 2019 (officially opened by the Duke and Duchess of Rothesay – that's King Charles and Queen Camilla to you and me). Next month they will launch Chesa Marchetta in Sils Maria, long an artistic hotspot in Switzerland's Engadin

Valley that has attracted the likes of Friedrich Nietzsche, Marcel Proust, Alberto Giacometti and Marc Chagall.

Chesa Marchetta was first opened as a restaurant and pension by the Godly family in 1947. Hauser & Wirth's hospitality arm Artfarm has spent the past four years transforming it into an intimate, art-filled 13-bedroom hotel, restaurant and adjoining three-bedroom house. The new restaurant will take inspiration from original owner Christina Godly's renowned seasonal restaurant. Rooms from £380 including breakfast. chesamarchetta.ch