

WORLD TRAVEL

Global adventurers seek out exotic cultural and natural locales

Queensland, Australia

From Coast to Rain Forest to Reef

By Chaney Kwak

Go on, mate,” Linc Walker urges me. “Taste it.”

Pinched between my fingers is an ant the color of a light-green apple. “Sorry,” this lapsed vegetarian apologizes to the insect. I pop it in my mouth.

“What did I tell ya?” Linc asks. “Tastes

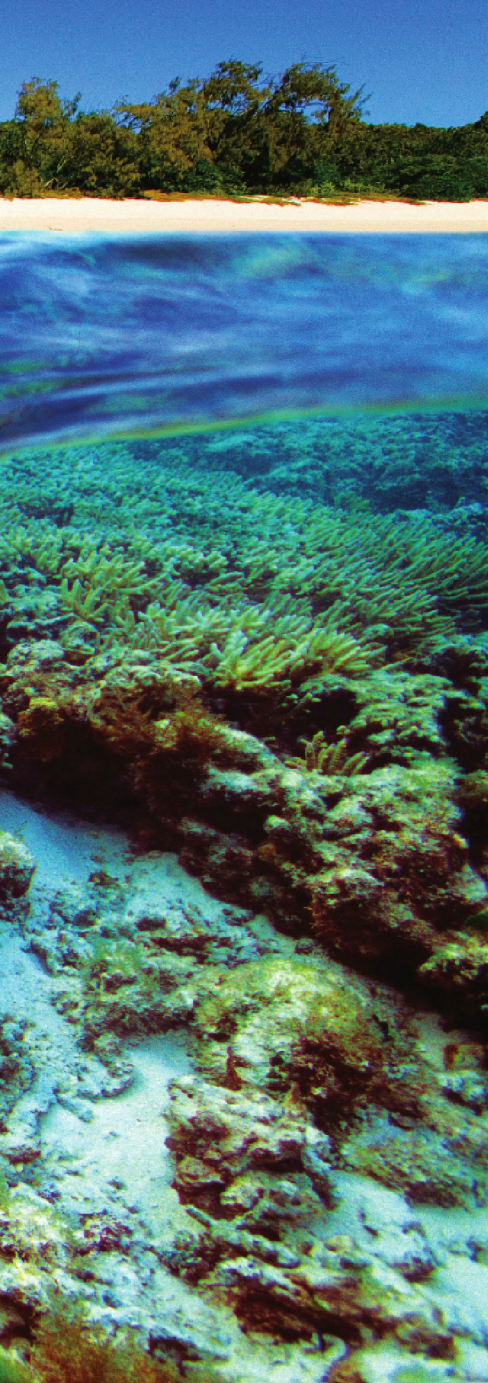
like lemon, eh?”

It does—very much.

Linc, a member of the Kuku Yalanji people of northern Queensland, Australia, is our guide from Kuku Yalanji Cultural Habitat Tours, which provides tour participants with a taste of traditional local life. Linc has been showing our group which

plant roots were historically used as anesthetics, which leaves made good bandages, and, now, how green ants were used for clearing the sinuses.

Walking with Linc from eucalyptus-shaded Cooya Beach, through dense mangroves and out to the mud flats, it becomes increasingly clear that I am a city slicker



life. As we venture farther out toward the low-tide line, he manages to spear a half dozen mangrove and mud crabs, which Linc collects in a bucket to steam later.

Then, in the corner of my eye, I see a black tail emerge from the water, evoking a miniature Loch Ness monster: “I got an eel over here!” Markus calls out, pointing.

“No, mate,” Linc says. “That’s a sea snake.”

As in, one of the teeny-mouthed reptiles that can paralyze and kill you.

This is Queensland, after all, a tropical frontier land where sensible, hardy people shrug off lurking dangers by sorting them into categories: “It won’t kill ya” (crabs, perhaps) and “It’ll kill ya” (box jellies and crocodiles).

Lucky for our German companion, the sea snake is happy to swim away, and we all live to feast on the crabs.

After the tour, I drive into the Daintree Rainforest, about two hours north of the international hub city of Cairns, and seemingly millennia in the past in perceived time. If I ignore the immaculate modern roads that run through this 460-square-mile forest, Daintree might as well be a computer-generated set for a dinosaur film.

So lush and primordial are its landscapes of giant ferns and swaying palms that it doesn’t surprise me to find out that this UNESCO World Heritage site is promoted as the oldest rain forest in the world.

In this area, visitors might even see a rare cassowary, the primordial, emulike, iridescent-blue-necked flightless bird that can weigh up to 128 pounds and yet can run quickly and jump nearly 7 feet in the air. It should be no surprise—again, this is Australia—that this bird can be dangerous, and is best given a wide berth.

I don’t see one myself, though, and instead enjoy a night in the plush, tree-houselike quarters of the Daintree

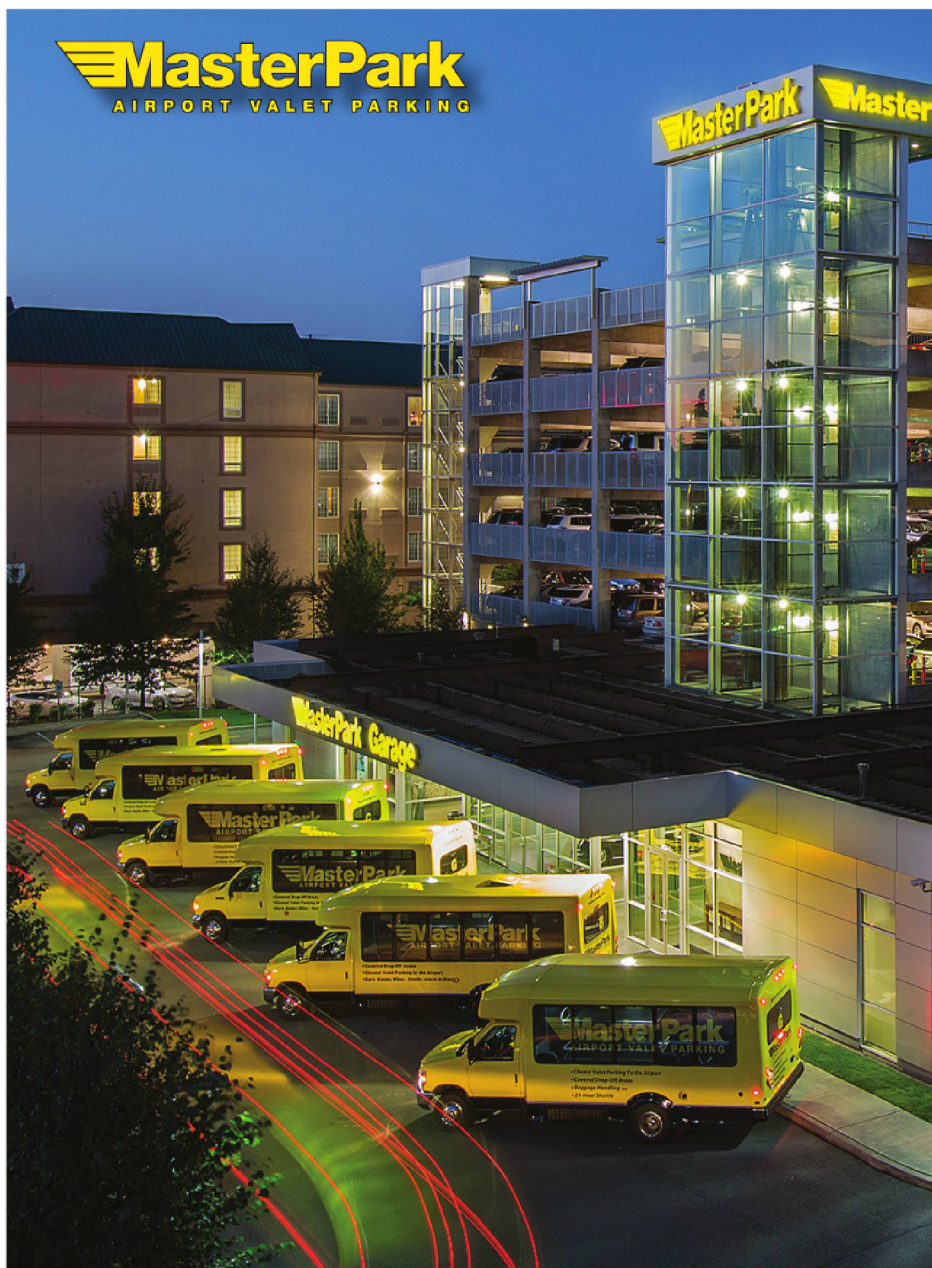
Queensland, Australia, offers access to rich and varied environments, including the Great Barrier Reef (above) and Daintree Rainforest (above right).

through and through. Using rudimentary bamboo-and-steel spears, our group begins hunting for buried mud crabs. But I am hopeless, mostly poking into empty mounds of sand and missing the few crabs that I manage to unearth.

Meanwhile, a tall German tour member named Markus is having the time of his

Use Mileage Plan miles to travel to Brisbane or Cairns, in Queensland, on partner airlines Qantas or Korean Air. Or redeem miles (by phone only: 800-252-7522) on partner Cathay Pacific to fly to Brisbane or Cairns via Hong Kong. For information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • To learn more about visitor attractions in Queensland, visit Queensland Tourism at queensland.com.

ABOVE LEFT, REDBRICKSTOCK.COM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ABOVE RIGHT, JOHN WARRURTON-LEE PHOTOGRAPHY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Take the hassle out of airport parking.

We know that air travel can be a trying experience. MasterPark's 4 Valet Parking locations and MPark Self-Parking, provide SeaTac Airport's premier parking service. 24-hour shuttles, provide the shortest time from your vehicle to airline departure gates. Avoid the high cost of airport terminal parking, MasterPark is the fast, easy, safe and reliable choice. Please visit masterparking.com

SPECIAL OFFER!

Valid at all MasterPark Valet Parking Locations. Must present coupon to receive discounted rate. Offer not valid in conjunction with any other offer.

- LOT A 18220 International Blvd.
- LOT B 2907 South 170th St.
- LOT C 16025 International Blvd.
- Garage 16826 International Blvd.

* 20% Off With Saturday Night Stay, 10% Off Without Saturday Night Stay. Code #2141

20%*
OFF
Valid thru
Oct. 31,
2016

MasterPark

Try MasterPark's New **MPark** Self Park Location. \$10.95 per day for long term and discount parking. For more information visit mparkseatac.com



EcoLodge & Spa. I fall asleep to a forest symphony of birds and frogs—and absolutely no man-made noise.

I've traveled around the world, but few places have filled me with such wonder as the untouched corners of Queensland, from its tropical rain forests to its mangrove and white-sugar-sand beaches.

And one cannot overlook the Great Barrier Reef—accessed most speedily from Cairns. On one occasion, I took a trip with

I slept under the stars, feeling at one with this spectacular ocean environment. All around me, the brilliant coral reefs teemed with life just below the surface.

Sunlover Reef Cruises and overnighted on a moored pontoon floating over the corals—in a low tent, called a swag, with an open viewing panel overhead.

The last wave of daytime visitors had ebbed with the last tour boat back to the coast, and I slept under the stars, feeling at one with this spectacular ocean environment. All around me, the brilliant coral reefs teemed with life just below the surface. Though threatened by rising ocean temperatures, these reefs—which stretch along more than 1,400 miles of coastline—continue to harbor untold riches of marine life, from green sea turtles to more than a thousand fish species that you can swim among.

Even in our hyper-wired century, it is good to know that there are parts of the world where you can be at one with nature—even if you're a city slicker. ▲

Chaney Kwak writes regularly for the magazine about his global adventures.

Beijing, China

Accessing the Once-Forbidden

By Eric Lucas

Eric? Is that you? Where are you?" My sister, Kristin, sounds like she is next door, though she's almost half a world away, in Houston. I'm standing atop the Great Wall of China, just outside Beijing, marveling at the spectacular feat of construction stretching out before me. I'm also wondering at the fact that, from this ancient structure, I can make a few taps on my cellphone and call the States to share the moment. With my conversation, I mark a quick but memorable episode in my mind's world travel journal.

First and foremost: The Great Wall is everything you might imagine it would be. Here in the hills north of Beijing, the wall's

Badaling section rises 30 feet above the scrub hills from which northern tribes once threatened the Ming Dynasty. The fortifications that make up the Great Wall were built in segments, by multiple dynasties, between the third century B.C. and the 17th century A.D. It is simply astounding to stand atop this section and scan the wall's path into the distant horizon. The wall extends, like a stone cable laid by giants, for thousands of miles, into fabled lands where memories of Silk Road caravans abide.

The haze into which the hills and wall disappear provides an atmospheric allegory for my misty recollections of history. And Beijing provides a microcosm of the world



Tiananmen Square.

Use Mileage Plan miles to visit Beijing, China, on partners Hainan Airlines and American Airlines. For information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • For general information, visit the China National Tourist Office website, cnto.org.

we inhabit. China's capital is modern and ancient, bustling and sublime. In town on business, I've taken two extra days to see as much as I can, enlisting a driver and guide at my starting point in the city.



The Great Wall of China stretches for thousands of miles across the old northern border of ancient China.

TOP TO BOTTOM: KIRSTY MCLAREN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; YADID LEVY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Shipping to Alaska?



We've got you covered!

Lynden is proud to offer reliable weekly, twice-weekly and seasonal barge service to port communities in Southeast, Central and Western Alaska. You can rely on Lynden to create innovative solutions to your transportation challenges.

LYNDEN
Innovative Transportation Solutions

lynden.com | 1-888-596-3361

Enlisting help fosters efficiency and cultural exchange. My guide, Lisa, is happy to practice English and helps me with everything from reading Mandarin menus to bantering good-naturedly with vendors who sell “totally authentic” Rolex watches outside the Forbidden City. What is *certainly* authentic is the beauty and sheer scale of the palace complex at the heart of Beijing that housed imperial families through the Ming and Qing dynasties. This area that was closed to the public in the time of the emperors is now, thankfully, accessible to visitors.

The hushed atmosphere one expects in the Forbidden City lies in quiet gardens at the back of the imperial palace complex. Nearby, Tiananmen Square, which is among the world's largest plazas, is a veritable festival of kite-flying office workers.

A drive through Beijing reveals a metropolis brimming with construction. Almost every sign is in Mandarin and English. Few cars are more than 5 years old. For lunch we stop at Wangfujing “Snack Street,” an old-town area where vendors proffer street food.

The type of experience I have in Beijing—rich with interaction and discovery—is the point of journeys such as this. Any traveler would want to see the Great Wall, one of humanity's most famous feats. But I had no idea there was also a delightful, exotic, historic food court in Beijing, a quiet garden at the back of the Forbidden City and lunch-time kite fliers at Tiananmen Square.

After I finish talking to my sister from atop the Great Wall, a group of Chinese tourists, using that universal language of gesturing, asks me to pose for pictures with them. I imagine the occasion is inspired by the fact that I am a foreigner, and the idea that their country holds a sight so impressive that it draws visitors from across the world. Snapshots made, they thank me profusely: “*Xièxie, xièxie.*”

Thanks, indeed. It's a vast, wonderful world, and this place is one of the planet's most wonderfully memorable. ▲

Eric Lucas has traveled to 49 countries.

Tablet friendly

While at home or during your travels, use your iPad or other tablet device to read our digital editions, which offer engaging, insightful travel articles to help you plan your next getaway, plus additional information from our advertisers.

alaskabeyondmagazine.com

Beyond
Alaska Airlines Magazine
Horizon Edition Magazine



Machu Picchu, Peru

Exploring Peru's Ancient Treasures

By Candace Dempsey



We stand, cloud high, on one of the loftiest perches in Machu Picchu, the most famous ruin in Peru's Sacred Valley of the Incas, where each of the sites is more splendid than the last.

Inca emperors built this sanctuary in the Andes Mountains during the 15th century for unknown reasons and, just as mysteriously, abandoned it only a few generations later. Rulers may have feared invasion by Spanish Conquistadors, who, ironically, never found this spot, 7,970 feet above sea level.

For four centuries, Machu Picchu was lost to global history, covered by liana vines and bamboo thickets. In 1911, Yale University Professor Hiram Bingham led a team here and, with help from indigenous farmers, bushwhacked up the Urubamba River Valley to a green plateau wedged between two granite peaks. He took in "an unexpected sight." A classic Inca stone city with

Huayna Picchu towers over the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu.

numerous terraces stretched all the way to the cliffs, encompassing intricate watchtowers, private houses, gardens, pastures, a princess's palace, and temples dedicated to the moon and to the sun. "It fairly took my breath away," Bingham wrote.

I've dreamed of Machu Picchu, one of the New 7 Wonders of the World, since reading Paul Theroux's *The Old Patagonian Express*, about a train ride through Latin America. Friends have also boasted about backpacking the Inca Trail to the ruins, carrying tents and braving the elements. That part never sounded fun to me.

Enter the luxurious lodge-to-lodge Lares Trek, created by Mountain Lodges of Peru. A seven-day adventure, it offers me the freedom to move through authentic villages and remote wilderness.

Each morning, I can choose between

trekking or participating in cultural experiences, such as visiting local weavers.

Our eight-member group meets in Lima, Peru's capital. We stay in the Miraflores neighborhood, where locals surf in the Pacific Ocean, and trendy bars and restaurants line the wharf. After a daylong exploration—including a stop to view pre-Columbian art at the Larco Museum, a cooking lesson at Amoramor restaurant and dinner at Casa de Aliaga—we fly 80 minutes to Cuzco.

Brimming with colonial architecture, Cuzco is 3,000 feet higher than Machu Picchu, a good place to acclimate to the altitude and see the ruins of Sacsayhuamán, once a fortress overlooking Cuzco, which was the Inca capital.

The next morning, a van takes us to the small community of Amaru, where we begin our trek on foot via the uncrowded "weaver's route" into the Sacred Valley. In Amaru, the Quechua people make brightly colored textiles from the wool of the sheep, llamas and alpacas that they herd. Donkeys carry our supplies over a mountain pass. I love ascending the ancient trail, surrounded by the snowy peaks of the Andes.

Over the next few days, our treks take us to the ruins at P'isaq, Ancasmamarca and Ollantaytambo. Each night we stay in luxury lodges equipped with spas, and enjoy authentic Peruvian food and local wine.

Finally, we head to Machu Picchu in style. We ride the Inca Rail executive-class

Use Mileage Plan miles to visit Lima, Peru, on partner airlines American Airlines, LAN Airlines and Aeromexico. For information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • For more on Peru highlights such as Machu Picchu, the Peruvian Amazon, Lima and Cuzco, see visitperu.com. To learn more about the Lares Trek, visit the Mountain Lodges of Peru website: mountainlodgesofperu.com/lares.

Where Seattle Goes For Seafood



Pier 56 on Seattle's Waterfront,
1201 Alaskan Way, Seattle, WA 98101
www.ElliottsOysterHouse.com



Portland's Freshest Seafood



Fox Tower overlooking Director Park
838 SW Park Avenue, Portland, OR 97205
www.RingSideFishHouse.com

America's Top Ten Seafood Houses



Tom Horan's America's Top Ten Club is globally recognized as the authority of fine dining in America. No independent restaurant pays to be on our list of Top Ten establishments.

- 1 Elliott's Oyster House
Seattle, WA elliottsosterhouse.com
- 2 Bourbon House
New Orleans, LA bourbonhouse.com
- 3 Z's Oyster Bar & Steakhouse
Louisville, KY oysterbar.com
- 4 RingSide Fish House
Portland, OR ringsidefishhouse.com
- 5 The Sea Fire Grill
New York, NY theseafiregrill.com
- 6 Osetra
San Diego, CA osetrafishhouse.com
- 7 Tony Mandola's
Houston, TX tonymandolas.com
- 8 Eddie V's Prime Seafood
Scottsdale, AZ eddiev.com
- 9 Lynnhaven Fish House
Virginia Beach, VA lynnhavenfishhouse.net
- 10 Capt. Anderson's Restaurant
Panama City Beach, FL captanderson.com

America's Top Ten Club
12 Greenway Plaza, Suite 1100 Houston TX 77046

train car from Ollantaytambo to Aguas Calientes (about 90 minutes), where we overnight.

Rising before dawn the next morning, we take the 20-minute bus trip up the Urubamba River Valley to Machu Picchu. A few minutes' hike brings us to the famous viewpoint where everyone stops to look down at the ruins.

Our guide asks us to guess: Are we looking at a fortress, summer palace, university, religious shrine—or what? Every scholar has a Machu Picchu theory.

We marvel at the magnificent Inca structures, virtually intact, with Huayna Picchu ("New Peak") spiraling above them.

This is the photo caught in millions of Facebook selfies.

"Strength, simplicity, serenity—that is Inca construction," says our guide. He asks us to point out the two things every Inca settlement requires—water and building stones. We spot the Urubamba River and the granite slopes the Incas quarried.

After exploring the Palace of the Princess and admiring the Temple of the Sun, we make the strenuous 1,158-foot climb to the top of Huayna Picchu, for an even better view of all of Machu Picchu. Our guide asks us to guess: Are we looking at a fortress, summer palace, university, religious shrine—or what? Every scholar has a Machu Picchu theory.

I vote for summer palace. Who wouldn't want to laze away a few months so close to heaven? The emperors must have loved the sun and the moon and the Andes Mountains. So do I. ▲

Candace Dempsey is a Seattle-based writer.



At the heart of all Amouage creations is a signature accord that cultivates the ultimate luxury of being unique and distinctive. Amouage offers niche fragrances for both women and men namely: Gold, Silver, Ciel, Jubilation, Lyric, Reflection, Epic, Dia, Memoir, Honour, and The Library Collection.



AMOUAGE
THE GIFT OF KINGS

Please call
Parfumerie Nasreen
in the lobby of the Alexis Hotel
at (206) 682-3459 or
1-888-286-1825
contact@parfumerienasreen.com
or visit
www.parfumerienasreen.com
1005 1st Ave. Seattle, WA
98104

Prague, Czech Republic

Time Czech

By Donna Stonecipher

I was standing near a ledge at Prague Castle, looking out at the city with its legendary “100 spires” spread below me, just like the emperors and queens of old did, when I paused to glance down at my wrist and saw that my watch had stopped. You could say that on my first visit to Prague, time stood still. Enchanted and slightly disoriented, I spent the next three days relying on the public clocks, wandering through the labyrinthine alleyways of the Old Town, marveling at the stunning Baroque and Jugendstil facades, peering in galleries of surrealist Czech photography, feeling as though I had woken up on the set of a fairy tale.

On my next visit to Prague, to spend the summer in the city, my watch stopped again. I knew I’d been given a sign: Prague, whose famous symbol is its 15th-century astronomical clock, had something to teach me about time.

I lived the summer, it seemed, on nectarines and nectarlike amber beer, crossing and re-crossing, at all hours, the Charles Bridge. Its rows of 30-some age-darkened statues of saints welcomed me to the city, as they have fellow travelers since the bridge’s 1402 completion.

It felt as though I’d wandered into a gold pocket watch, ticking half a beat slower than an efficient American Timex. There was time, in the country that had put a poet in the presidency, to let iconic red trams carry me up and down the winding hills; to sketch the Baroque fresco in the St. Nicho-

las Church, with its trompe l’oeil effect that seamlessly blends paint and architecture; to laugh with friends under the giant, slow-paced working Metronome that replaced a giant monument to Joseph Stalin; to learn the city’s fascinating history and legends while eating pizza whose tomato sauce is actually ketchup. And to write poems in a Communist-era-built high-rise apartment. In the U.S., I had worked a full-time job that left me little time to nurture my creativity. In Prague’s embrace, I wrote my first book of poetry.



Prague's Old Town.

Use Mileage Plan miles to visit Prague, Czech Republic, via London on partner airline British Airways. For information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • For more information to plan your Prague visit, see the official tourist website for Prague: prague.eu.

No matter how many hours I spend meandering through Prague’s streets, I am always impressed by its beauty. And today, Prague is blossoming with new shops and museums. Cuisine progresses far beyond ketchup pizza, with a multitude of excellent cafes and Michelin-star restaurants.

Still, whenever I arrive in Prague, I feel my pace slow down and my rib cage expand with deeper breaths. I receive once more the gift of time, given to me by this city like no other. ▲

Donna Stonecipher writes from Berlin.

Charles Bridge is a favorite for residents and visitors alike, with breathtaking views of Prague Castle and the Vltava River.



Small boats bring travelers close to the ice formations of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Antarctic Peninsula

The Land Beneath the World

By Tim Neville

A friend said it would be “profound.” Another said “life-changing.” I cringed at how hyperbolic that sounded. I know now I just didn’t understand. No one really can. Only a trip to the moon could prepare you for your first visit to Antarctica.

Mine came in February, when I boarded Antarctic Airways Flight 400 in wind-swept Patagonia. I flew about an hour and a half through the night over the Drake Passage to King George Island, a barren outpost with a gravel airstrip and various international bases. From there it’s 75 miles south by sea to reach the Antarctic Peninsula, that long landmass that seems to stretch toward Cape Horn. It’s the peninsula where you’ll find

the richest wildlife on the continent. To get there, you’d better have a boat.

Ours, the ice-strengthened yacht S/V *Australis*, used by Natural Habitat Adventures, was small: 75 feet long, with a reinforced hull and room for the crew and nine passengers. Whatever our boat lacked in mass, it gained in freedom. With the *Australis* being nimble and lower-impact than a larger vessel, we weren’t restricted on where we could sail, and we could linger when we wanted to linger. We had kayaks and a barbecue on board. The chef was French.

The 10 days I spent on that boat led to some of the most remarkable moments any wilderness-loving human such as myself could want. The boat ventured into bays

covered in brash ice (a layer of sea ice fragments), and we slept in inky-black coves surrounded by crackling glaciers. We hiked along volcanically warmed sand, dotted with fur seals, and we snoozed among lichen-covered rocks as penguins waddled clumsily toward us to investigate. Minke whales,

Use Mileage Plan miles to visit Antarctica via Chile or Argentina, on partner airlines American Airlines and LAN Airlines. • For more information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • Various companies run roundtrip excursions from Argentina and Chile.

A leopard seal in Antarctica.



right whales, humpbacks and hourglass dolphins—they all made appearances right off the side rails of the boat. And then there were the icebergs, Antarctica's magnum opuses, each more intricate, more brilliant, more Gothic and fantastic than even the famed architect Gaudi might imagine.

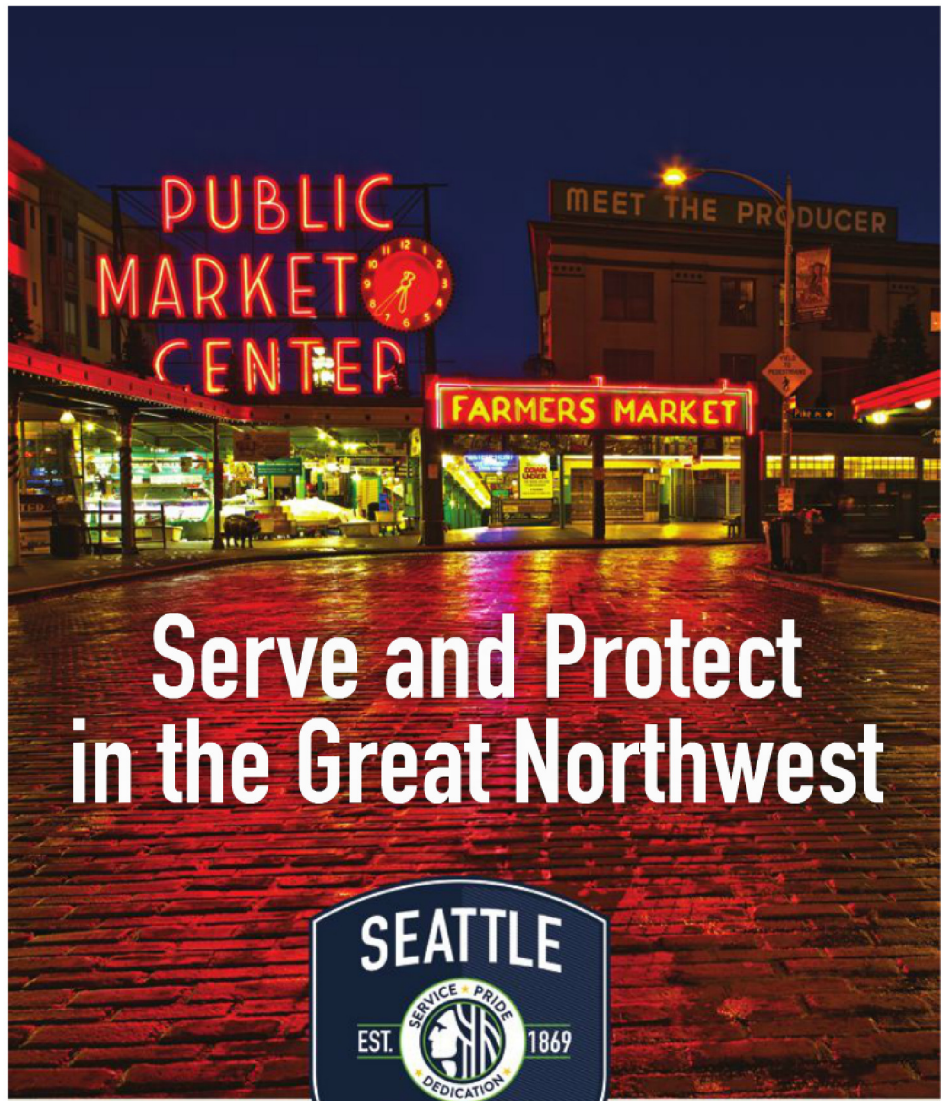
Some bergs were so large, I mistook them for mountains.

One evening stands out as the moment when I understood what my friends back home had been trying to say. After a shipboard dinner of quiche and fresh salad, we took a dinghy to a narrow beach under the Kershaw Peaks near the peninsula's Forbidden Plateau. Icebergs stood like statues in a bay as smooth as slate. The sky at sundown ignited into a flare of heavenly gold. I stood apart from my group, staring north at the rest of the planet, in awe of this vast, primordial beauty that so few humans ever see. To visit Antarctica, I realized, is to step into the earth's most private quarters, to see a planet in its essential, pared-down form, and to understand with hyperclarity how small, yet significant, a single heartbeat can be in a land with so few.

Is Antarctica life-changing? Profound?

Yes. So much so, it'll stay with me forever. ▲

Tim Neville, based in Bend, Oregon, has seen and written about all seven continents.



Serve and Protect in the Great Northwest



Hiring Entry-Level and Lateral Officers

One of the highest paid departments in the state:
\$69K entry - \$90K in 5 years

Great City of Seattle Benefits

Over 40 different Specialty and Detective Units

seattlepolicejobs.com



Table Mountain overlooks Cape Town and Table Bay.

Cape Town, South Africa

Majestic Table Mountain

By David Armstrong

A group of dignified penguins stand stock-still, looking at me as I look at them. Small, sharp-billed and “tuxedoed,” the black-and-white flightless birds evoke the planet’s South Pole.

But I’m not in Antarctica, and that continent’s shore is over 2,500 miles away. I am in South Africa’s spectacular Table

Mountain National Park, at a scenic spot called Boulders Beach, admiring wild African penguins. Boulders Beach is home to a protected penguin breeding colony of 2,000 of these endangered birds. This is one of many engaging features of the park, created in 1998 on South Africa’s Atlantic coast to showcase and protect the region’s biodiversity.

Table Mountain National Park stretches 28 miles from the Cape of Good Hope north to Cape Town’s iconic, flat-topped Table Mountain—the park’s namesake, which was recently named one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature. Table Mountain is an ideal spot to take a cable car up and experience panoramic views of Cape Town, Table Bay and the surrounding area.



Wild African penguins.

Use Mileage Plan miles to visit Table Mountain National Park, South Africa, via Cape Town on partner airlines Emirates and British Airways. For information or to enroll in Mileage Plan, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-ALASKAAIR. • To learn more about Table Mountain National Park’s wide variety of activities, including walking, hiking, rock-climbing, and spotting native flora and fauna, go to the park’s website: tmnp.co.za. Information about all things Cape Town—Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, the Castle of Good Hope, Robben Island and more—is available at capetown.travel. For travel tips about South Africa, contact South Africa Tourism; 800-593-1318 or southafrica.net.

The park is noncontiguous, with three sections that run between and around urban developments. But as I stand on Boulders Beach, behind enormous brown granite rocks that shelter this small enclave from the sea, the area feels anything but





MANOR BY THE SEA
\$3,450,000 | WHIDBEY ISLAND



SANDY JUSTEN, JULIE BINIASZ & SAM CUNNINGHAM



FIFTEEN TWENTY-ONE #2702
\$1,975,000 | SEATTLE



BELLA VISTA
\$1,455,000 | WEST SEATTLE

RANKED IN THE TOP 1% OF BROKERS IN THE U.S.
CITRONE-PARTNERS.COM | 206.849.2681
CALL OR TEXT

Realogics | **Sotheby's**
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

urban. Even neighboring Cape Town, itself rich in sites, seems far away.

Lanky ostriches strut about in native fynbos shrubland, near the M4 roadway that takes our compact chartered bus through the landscape. From the bus, I see in the middle distance white-faced bontebok antelopes with their twin spiraling horns. Big, long-faced chacma baboons abound, sitting along the roadside next to signs advising visitors not to approach the wildlife. All around me, cottony clouds wreath craggy hilltops.

I clamber out of the bus at a bluff that overlooks another highlight: Long Beach. Just inland, I see a sprinkling of houses; on the other side, aquamarine seawater sparkles in the sun. On curving, 5-mile Long Beach, a man and woman ride on horseback down the white-sand shore and into the foaming surf. The scene is utterly cinematic. All I hear is the wind off the water and the soft thunder of surf.

Arriving at a southwestern tip of Africa, I alight at the famed Cape of Good Hope. As a child, I was entranced by Europe's globe-girdling Age of Exploration, and especially by Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama's epic 1497 journey eastward 'round the Cape of Good Hope on his way to the legendary riches of India.

I snap photos at the windy Cape, then ride the bus 1.4 miles west to Cape Point, where I walk uphill on chiseled stone steps to a lighthouse. The climb feels good and the salt air bracing, some 900 feet above the churning waters below.

A savory lunch of prawns and calamari, and mineral-rich South African Chardonnay, at the Two Oceans restaurant—named for the Atlantic and Indian oceans—is an ideal end to the day. Gazing through floor-to-ceiling windows, I see an unforgettable sight: Shoreline, sea and sky meet as one at the spectacular tip of South Africa. ▲

David Armstrong is a journalist and author in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.

REAL MISFORTUNE IS TO HAVE NEVER DINED HERE.



Churchill's
STEAKHOUSE



165 S POST ST, SPOKANE, WA
CHURCHILLSSTEAKHOUSE.COM