

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 5  
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# HILUXURY

HAWAII'S OWN LUXURY  
LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

## Mariska Hargitay

*The Law & Order:  
SVU* actress goes on  
a joyful crusade and  
chooses Hawai'i for her  
foundation's outpost.

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Spring Fever  
*Frocks with  
an exotic flair*

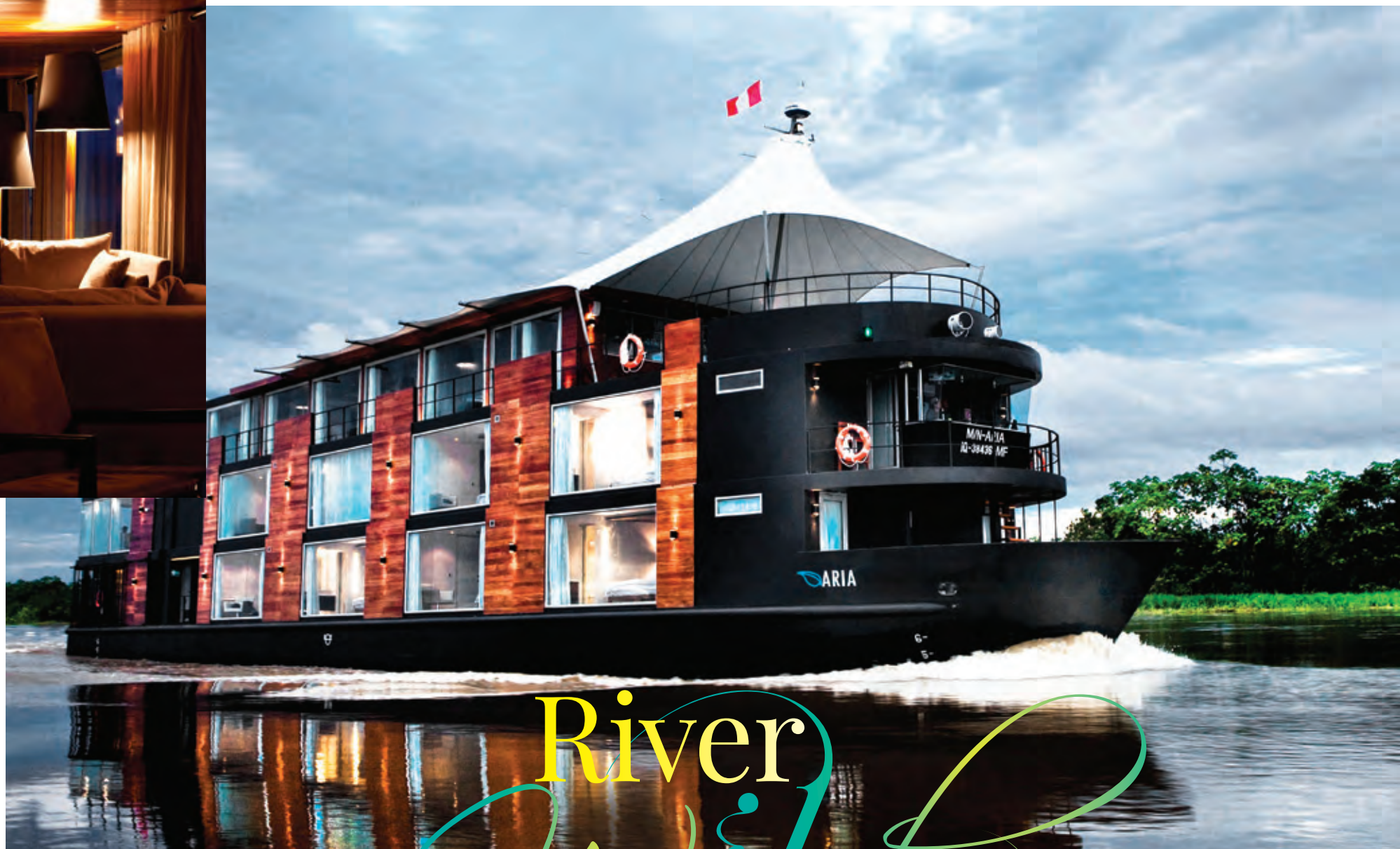
The Best Form  
of Philately  
*Thurston  
Twigg-Smith  
keeps us posted*

Jumping Juniper!  
*Gin is having  
a moment*



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# River Wild

Sail into Peruvian territory and absorb everything the Amazon has to offer.

by KRISTY ALPERT

AS THE SUN SETS BEHIND THE CANOPIES OF THE RAINFOREST LINING THE AMAZON RIVER IN PERU, THE ONLY SOUND THAT CAN BE HEARD BENEATH THE WILD CALLS OF EXOTIC CREATURES SCURRYING TO FIND

SHELTER BEFORE NIGHTFALL IS THE SOOTHING HUM OF THE AQUA EXPEDITIONS' LUXURIOUS CRUISE SHIP, THE AQUA, JOURNEYING AT A LEISURELY 10 KNOTS ALONG THE MYSTIC WATERS OF THE MIGHTY AMAZON RIVER.





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Guests are treated to five-star quality dining by chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino; seating areas, like this lounge, provide panoramic views of the Amazon (photo by Hans Stoll); meals are prepared using only the freshest local ingredients. (photos courtesy Aqua Expeditions)



Designed in 2007 by one of Peru's top design architects Jordi Puigín—who also designed the *Aqua's* sister ship the *Aria* that launched in 2011—this 130-foot long vessel is comparable to a five-star hotel and is the first luxury cruiser in the Peruvian Amazon. Accommodating an intimate group of up to 24 passengers (not including the crew), individual service and attention to detail are mainstays onboard the M/V *Aqua* as it transports guests in the highest level of comfort through a very exclusive level of extravagance and adventure along the pristine landscapes of the planet's largest river.

#### VOYAGING ONBOARD

This luxury cruise ship has everything guests could desire while cruising the Amazon, from a comfortable indoor bar and a rooftop observation deck with oversized lounge chairs for taking in the rare landscape of more than 1000 species of exotic flora and more than 400 species

of birds and hundreds of other mammals, to live local music onboard where the sounds of cajon drums and guitars will serenade the end to a perfect day afloat.

Even with so many modern luxuries and privileged pampering options on board, the star of the ship lies in eyes of diners as they feast on the some of the most exquisite food in Peru by the company's executive chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino.

Schiaffino is best known as the owner and chef of the upscale Peruvian restaurant in Lima Malabar, which was recently ranked the 62nd best restaurant in the world by *S. Pellegrino's Restaurant* magazine. But to those aboard the M/V *Aqua*, he is the mastermind behind each carefully crafted dish served in the intimate dining room. Preferring to take his cues from Amazonian produce instead of modish gastronomy trends, Chef Schiaffino was a natural choice from the beginning to head up the cuisine for Aqua Expeditions. This celebrity chef pre-

pares only the freshest local ingredients with his signature five-star quality presentation and taste, and loves to keep guests in suspense at what will be served that day, often including recipes like heart of palm salad or grilled paiche and armored catfish delicately paired with delicious South American wines.

Although most cruises along the Amazon tend to fall more into the primitive category, this petite cruise liner is far from anything even remotely provincial. Handsomely decorated with modern elegance and constructed of harmonic finishes and effortless opulence, the M/V *Aqua* features 12 oversized ship suites with spacious sitting areas and outward-facing panoramic views of the river. The ship even boasts a repertoire of four master suites that can interconnect for groups traveling together. Each air-conditioned suite boasts lush 100-percent Peruvian cotton bedding and first-rate bathroom facilities with great showers and excellent housekeeping.



#### A DEPARTURE FROM THE ORDINARY

With an amazing staff that goes way above and beyond in just about every way possible to make each guest's experience exceedingly euphoric, the M/V *Aqua* operates every week of the year and offers guests an option of three ways to cruise: a three-night discovery cruise, a four-night explorer cruise, or their most popular seven-night expedition cruise.

Each trip caters to the most discriminating and adventurous travelers and provides an experience nothing short of spectacular. But to get the full experience, the staff recommends opting for the Amazon expedition that explores the more remote and unspoiled areas of the Pacaya Samiria Reserve in the upper Amazon River and its tributaries.

Departing from the port of Iquitos, Peru—just a short hour and 20 minute flight from Lima—starting off, this expedition may seem more like a luxurious safari

rather than a cruise as guests experience one of the wildest places on the planet while indulging in the sophistication expected from an upscale restaurant and hotel. The ship even has three naturalist guides on board who know the region and jungle intimately, and are more than willing to share their vast knowledge with eager explorers.

Once the ship departs from Iquitos on Saturday night, guests will cruise along the Amazon's three commanding tributaries: the Marañón, the Ucayali, and the Putumayo with several options to explore hidden black water lakes as well. The next day guests will awaken to the sights of the most diverse flora in the Amazon basin and will have the chance to see the endangered and exotic pink dolphin, who calls this river its home, while exploring the river's headwaters and taking advantage of the ships fishing excursions.

The next few days are filled with opportunity after opportunity to absorb nature at its most abundant with full-day excursions including touring around the Pacaya Samiria Reserve, taking monkey and dolphin watching expeditions, walking on safari through the jungle, enjoying night trips to see the caimans, sipping coffee and eating breakfast on an early morning exploration on an *Aqua* skiff, and even visiting small native communities to experience their cultural mystique and unique customs and lifestyle in person.

As all things must come to an end, the friendly staff aboard the *Aqua* doesn't rush the goodbyes of their new found friends, and eases the transition offshore with a city tour of Iquitos before guests make their final departures. It's then that guests can finally leave full: full of decadent meals; full of adventure and exotic experiences; and full from a deep immersion into such a rich and lively region of the world. ■

For more information visit [www.aquaexpeditions.com](http://www.aquaexpeditions.com)