

INTO THE WILD *IN LUXURY*

BY STEPHANIE PRINCE ALEXANDER

On a crisp and cool morning in July, the stately *Silver Muse* sidled up to Hubbard Glacier—a sleeping giant measuring more than six miles wide where it meets the ocean. Because it was a clear and sunny day, the captain was able to position the ship closely to the glacier, allowing the Inspirato members on board to take in truly once-in-a-lifetime views.

As the glacier calved in the soft morning sun, the sound was otherworldly; a thunderous cracking could be heard from the observation deck as large blocks of ice would plunge into the glassy waters of Disenchantment Bay. To boot, there was an abundance of wildlife in the bay; hundreds of harbor seals popped their heads above water, a bald eagle perched on an iceberg nearby, and two moose were spotted swimming near the glacier, dodging icebergs along their way. Onboard naturalist Natalie Bruce narrated the experience over the intercom, remarking that seeing this much action at the glacier was quite rare and special—Alaska was indeed showing off.

As Inspirato member Cy Alizadeh witnessed all of this unfold at the ship's observation deck, he remembers thinking, "Wow, *this* is Alaska."



PHOTOS BY ANDREA DE LEON

THE BEST WAY TO WITNESS THE ALASKAN WILDERNESS

Boasting the title of the largest state in the U.S., measuring two and half times the size of Texas, there’s plenty of space to get far, far away and into the wild where the peace and quiet drowns out the noise of our busy lives back home.

Because of its sheer size, lack of infrastructure, and remote and unforgiving landscapes, planning an Alaskan adventure can prove intimidating for even the seasoned traveler. Perhaps that’s why Alaskan cruises have become the most popular and approachable way to visit the 49th state, with around one million people cruising the Inside Passage of Southeastern Alaska every summer.

But not all Alaskan cruises are created equal. Because so many people want to experience Alaska by sea, it’s important to choose a cruise line and ship that allows you to get away from the masses—whether on board or in port—so you can really witness the state’s raw beauty. If done right, there’s still plenty of opportunity to experience the untouched quiet of Alaska, to be someplace so still and pure that all you might hear is the breath

America’s Last Frontier graces the bucket lists of many travelers around the world, from young to old. Though it is part of the U.S., Alaska feels like it’s a world apart, which is exactly its draw.



of an orca surfacing beside the boat, or maybe just the sound of your own footsteps on a verdant rainforest trail.

Enter Silversea Cruises: an Inspirato Only experience partner that took 550 Inspirato members and their guests through the stunning seascapes of Alaska’s storied Inside Passage on their newest flagship, the *Silver Muse* in July 2019. Every year Inspirato Only releases five to seven

signature cruises and this was one the grandest voyages in the 2019 portfolio. For those longing to witness the wonders of Alaska while experiencing uncompromised comfort and service, this ultra-luxury cruise was just the ticket. Sailing through wildlife-filled fjords, past snowcapped mountains dropping straight into icy waters, and into the quaint port towns of Southeastern Alaska, members happily checked Alaska off their bucket list.

WELCOME ABOARD THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

The sun was sparkling on the calm waters of Vancouver Harbor as Inspirato members and their guests breezed through embarkation onto the stately *Silver Muse* vessel. The ship’s ever-present crew were waiting to greet each passenger with a friendly smile and glass of champagne as they stepped aboard and into the lap of luxury. With a crew to guest ratio of 1:1, this was just a hint at the superior service Inspirato members would experience over the next week. And with around 20 Inspirato staff present on the trip—from Care team personnel to the Vice President of Hospitality Services—members could always find a familiar face to ask questions or share a cocktail with.

Excitement was in the air as cruisers found their way to their suites—some stopping along the way to hug familiar faces and delight in spending the weeklong journey together. Fresh flowers and champagne awaited guests in their rooms which fueled the enthusiasm continuing into the “Suite Soiree” where passengers gathered in cabin hallways to meet their neighbors. Laughter and conversation filled the corridors as cheery butlers dutifully filled (and refilled) champagne glasses. There was a feeling of discovery in the air reminiscent of the first day at summer camp, though there would be no “roughing it” on this endeavor.

On the *Silver Muse*, all guests enjoy a completely sophisticated and beautiful voyage with all-suite, water-facing accommodations. One of the wonders of the journey is opening the curtains each morning and stepping into the crisp clean air of your private veranda to see what new scenery



awaits you. It’s arguably the most accessible way to take in so many of the sights offered by the vast and magnificent state—and you don’t even have to leave the privacy of your room to witness its rugged splendor. In fact, you can even enjoy a morning latte and extravagant breakfast made to order from your own balcony, brought to you by your dedicated butler. With each room receiving personalized butler service around the clock, the sky’s the limit to the kind of pampering experience you can have.

“Sometimes people are hesitant to ask their butler for things, but it’s more than okay to say, ‘Please bring me a cocktail at 5 p.m. while I’m putting on my makeup and dressing for the evening.’ And it’s okay to ask your butler to pack and unpack for you, or to shine your shoes,” said Cecilia Blevins, Silversea senior charter sales director, who joined Inspirato on their 2019 voyage.

(Left page, top to bottom)
The scenery never disappointed sailing through the Inside Passage of Alaska.
Excitement was in the air as passengers gathered on deck to celebrate setting sail.

(This page, left to right)
Drew and Mary Clements toasting to the adventure ahead as the ship departs from Vancouver.
Inspirato members taking in the views of striking Hubbard Glacier.



“Our butlers are great at anticipating the guests’ needs and putting personal touches in rooms based on what they’ve asked for before. They really get to know they guests,” she said.

Another reason Inspirato chose Silversea to charter an Alaskan voyage for its members is the spaciousness that the *Silver Muse* provides, making it easy and enjoyable to get around the ship—something everyone can appreciate, especially those with limited mobility, or those traveling with children.

“Some of our guests who are older—who are just very discerning travelers—really enjoy Silversea and ships like the *Silver Muse* because they can maneuver around the ship very easily and not feel overcrowded.”

And with eight dining venues, a spa, casino, observation library, fitness center, and many specialized gathered areas, there’s a lot to explore.

THE JOURNEY ALONG THE ALASKAN COAST LINE



SEASCAPES
+ SOCIAL
SCENES

the adventurous shore excursions, for others it was being with loved ones and making new friends, or maybe it was simply enjoying the amenities of the immaculate *Silver Muse*.

For Inspirato members Kristen and Nick Ruscetta, it was a little bit of everything.

“I can’t imagine a better way to see Alaska than this cruise. A highlight for us was going to Davidson Glacier. We took a small boat from the port in Skagway, then canoed right to the base of it. It’s hard to explain the beauty and otherworldliness of the glacier itself. Our guide said we were the first ones to be able to get close enough to touch the glacier in months, so that felt really special. We also loved making connections with other Inspirato members on the cruise and how cruising allows you to be social and interact with others as much or as little as you want to,” the Ruscettas said.

For many people on board, like Inspirato member David Loven, the highlight was witnessing the unique beauty the state has to offer and having quiet moments where the scenery seemed to stop time.

“One day I was off the back of the boat smoking a cigar and having a scotch and there was a double rainbow on full display, then as if someone cued it up, a whale started jumping in the water nearby. It was so quiet and almost eerie—the sound of the water, the rainbow, the captivating landscape on all sides of me. You kind of have to pinch yourself, because the landscape is so surreal—it’s hard to describe the vastness and beauty,” recounted Loven.



When asked what had impressed him the most on the cruise, Inspirato member Cy Alizadeh noted, “The food is better than expected and we have just been really well taken care of. Everything is top notch and the cruise has delivered on the price. After this experience, we would consider doing another cruise with Inspirato.”

One of Alizadeh’s favorite onshore excursions with his significant other Terrie Barnoski, was a whale-watching adventure where they took a helicopter ride to Taku Glacier outside of Juneau and then experienced the glacier up-close from an airboat tour.

Husband and wife Drew and Mary Clements agreed, stating that landing on the glacier was like landing on the moon.

“We also loved the Inspirato exclusive outing to the Dove Island Lodge in Sitka where we had an excellent five-course meal with wine pairing,” said Mary Clements. “Another simple highlight Drew and I loved was having our breakfast each morning in our room on the deck. It was so peaceful as the ship glided through the passage. Plus, having our own butler was the best. It was hard for us to come back to the reality of daily living at home.”



(Top to bottom)
Inspirato members enjoying a crab feast in Ketchikan.

Adventures by kayak gave members a front row seat to Alaska’s epic beauty.



Several shore excursions allowed members to witness bears in their natural habitats.

(Right page)

Several multi-generational families enjoyed the journey from Vancouver to Anchorage together.

CONNECTIONS
AT SEA

Muse with our members for an entire week gave us so many great opportunities to interact in really meaningful ways. From enjoying long dinners together at La Terraza to visiting a historic Alaskan fishing lodge in Ketchikan followed by a beautiful boat tour and epic crab feast—there were so many great adventures,” noted Inspirato’s Vice President of Hospitality Services Joey Colby-Begovich. “It’s really valuable for us at Inspirato to connect with our members and get their feedback on things that impact their membership.”

There were plenty of chances for members and Inspirato staff to interact on the cruise, from time spent together on shore excursions to chatting at the Inspirato Hospitality Desk conveniently situated within the glamorous Dolce Vita Lounge, a perfect location to hear pianist Aleksandra play, jump in a game of afternoon trivia, or grab a top-shelf drink.

“The Inspirato cruise team were very helpful throughout our trip—we loved them! Overall, it was an amazing experience for us and we will

For Inspirato members and staff alike, the cruise offered the chance to put faces to names and get to know one another.

“Being on the *Silver*

always remember all the other Inspirato members we met and enjoyed spending time with on the excursions,” said the Clements.

It was heartwarming to see so many couples, multi-generational families, and individuals making friends along the way. Kids and teenagers could be seen laughing and splashing in the pool or playing table tennis during the days at sea. There was always a lively bunch that turned out for bingo and trivia. And members could be seen mingling in the evenings throughout the ship, enjoying many of the different entertainment options.

“Our Care team and the Inspirato leadership on board bent over backwards to make this a successful trip—both on and off the ship. My wife Brooke and I enjoyed all the experiences and made some new friends along the way,” said Loven.

The Alaska Cruise 2019 was a grand adventure that allowed Inspirato members to connect with the things and people that matter most and take a break from the hustle and bustle of their daily lives. Whether guests were looking for rest and relaxation or adventure and excitement, the journey from Vancouver to Anchorage was one to remember—perhaps this isn’t the last we’ll be seeing of the Last Frontier. ♦

JOIN US
NEXT TIME

If this piqued your interest, Inspirato is always adding new experiences and cruises to the Inspirato Only portfolio. In 2020, Inspirato will be sailing from Barcelona to Lisbon, Athens to Athens, Rome to Athens, as well as cruising the Rhine River.

Go to inspirato.com/travel/experiences to see all of our cruise offerings.

