

# National Geographic Endurance

Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic are partners in exploration, conservation and education. Jon Ingleton talks with Nikolaos Doulis about the latest addition to their fleet

**N**amed after polar explorer Ernest Shackleton's ship, National Geographic Endurance was designed to navigate polar passages year-round, providing guests with the chance to explore in exceptional comfort.

“This is a major milestone for National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions – until now we have put together a

carefully sourced used fleet,” says Nikolaos Doulis, senior vice president of newbuildings at Lindblad Expeditions. “Endurance is our first newbuild and was purposely designed and built to continuously operate in polar waters.”

The team took a collaborative approach to creating the vessel, which successfully completed sea trials in March 2020. “Endurance is a truly collaborative ship

– every team contributed to the planning and design process to make sure that she fulfilled every criteria and expectation,” says Doulis. “It was very important that we built a unique ship with a big personality and distinct voice. The design brief called for sophisticated and contemporary values with Scandinavian-inspired interiors and exceedingly high-quality finishes throughout.”



Nikolaos Doulis pictured with Sven-Olof Lindblad, CEO of Lindblad Expeditions, in front of National Geographic Endurance





Photo: Ocim

The Observation Lounge will provide the perfect space for guests to watch presentations from experts in comfortable surroundings

To achieve this, Lindblad Expeditions appointed Partner Ship Design, a design firm based in Hamburg, Germany.

“Choosing the right architectural and design partners was very important because we elected to use a yard that had not built a cruise ship before – it was therefore essential that we recruited a firm with good cruise ship experience,” explains Doulis. “Partner Ship Design fulfilled every criteria and was selected ahead of stiff competition. We made the right choice – the ship has all of the hallmarks of the National Geographic spirit and Lindblad Expedition’s DNA.”

Every design decision was analysed in detail to ensure it would engender a positive guest response. “We were committed to making this a really amazing ship for our guests and our crew,” remarks Doulis. “While we are conscious that the ship will not be the

destination for our guests, it must take them there safely and comfortably.”

According to Doulis, the team has achieved this goal. “Endurance has the highest comfort class notation from DNV GL and the very best equipment and technology available,” he says.

DNV’s Silent-E notation to minimise underwater noise as much as possible to avoid disturbing underwater life.”

Inside Endurance the “understated sophistication” brief is immediately apparent in every space, with high quality furnishings throughout.

## “We built a unique ship with a big personality and distinct voice”

“She is also equipped with the most environmentally friendly General Electric engines, which comply with Tier 4 Environmental Protection Agency standards. Along with many other sustainability features, they have contributed to us achieving the highest environmental standards. This includes

Functionality trumps form only in the practical Mud Room and zodiac platform where passengers will get ready and depart on their polar expeditions.

“We have tried to deliver a sense of the destinations that we’ll visit inside the ship – we’ll be visiting very remote places with wondrous sights and sounds



## INTERIOR VIEW



Photo: Ocalin

One of the luxury onboard spaces is the Scandinavian-style sauna which offers panoramic ocean views

for everyone to enjoy, so it's essential that the ship keeps this wonderment alive for guests throughout every voyage," comments Doulis.

Scandinavian minimalist design influences are visible throughout the ship, encouraging a greater sense of inside space and a heightened awareness of the extraordinary outside views. Educating the mind and engaging the senses is a carefully planned takeaway, says Doulis. "One of our core goals is to encourage guest participation and so many of our interiors spaces are primed for social interaction," he explains. "They include the restaurant's open galley, the B&H Table in the main lounge, spaces for sipping chilled cocktails in the Ice Lounge and the fire pits on the lounge deck, which are perfect to sit around and share stories."

However, Doulis is most excited about The Den, a multifunctional space that features a bar, chef's table, library and the Command Center. "Science teams will be invited to showcase their projects, as well as footage from underwater cameras or drones and much more – guests can even join scientists to analyse their

discoveries," he says. "It's a multipurpose space that we're all very proud of because it's a great example of our collaborative design approach."

In addition, the ship can accommodate up to 126 guests in 69 spacious cabins and suites spread across four decks. Thirteen suites are named after renowned explorers and all have balconies. They are thoughtfully arranged and highly specified. "The ship provides market-leading guest space ratios, which is yet another demonstration of our commitment to guest comfort," says Doulis.

"Every interior space tells a story – whether it's about the remarkable achievements of the explorers who have lent their names to the suites, the design inspiration for each public room, the first-ever permanent ship-based polar art installation curated by Zaria Forman, or the lectures that will be delivered in the Ice Lounge," concludes Doulis. "Guests will be able to enjoy so many unique experiences and there will likely be countless incredible stories told by the passengers who will cruise on Endurance in future." **CFI**

### Design note:

#### EXCITING ONBOARD SPACES

National Geographic Endurance boasts various public areas, including a lounge with bar, a gym, a yoga studio, infinity-style outdoor hot tubs, saunas with ocean views, a library, a photo workshop area, a restaurant, a Chef's Table and an area with various boating and sports equipment. The ship also has two transparent igloos on the outside deck, each with a two-person bed to enable guests to comfortably view the polar landscapes.