

BILLIONAIRE



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World First

A continuously globe-circumnavigating residential mega-yacht with a solid philanthropic purpose.

by Daniel Nash

At the end of a long holiday, no matter how wonderful, there is always the comforting thought of getting back to your own bed. But what if you could travel the world and sleep in your own bed every night? This is the concept of Njord (pronounced Nyord, named after the Viking god of the ocean) a residential luxury mega-yacht set to launch out of Norway in 2025, on a continuous round-the-world journey.



Artist's impression of details
aboard Njord © FM Architettura

Underwater drones and submersibles will map out the ocean floor using multi-beam echo sounders that will identify the contours of the sea floor and any shipwrecks resting there.

With a build cost north of €1 billion, with construction taking place at German shipyard Meyer Werft, Njord's architecture and design credentials are impeccable. She was designed by Espen Øino, the Norwegian designer and naval architect behind some of the most iconic superyachts in the world, including Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's Octopus. Interiors are jointly the vision of Jean-Michel Gathy of Denniston and Francesca Muzio of superyacht design studio FM Architettura. Along with razor sharp aesthetics Njord's architecture is eco-friendly to boot. Solar and wind turbines support her propulsion and power-generation systems, and she will only use electric power when gliding through the most sensitive waters.

Njord will offer 117 residences priced between €6.8- to upwards of €45 million. Of those, 14 will be duplex residences, and two will be spectacular triplexes with private elevators. An additional annual levy of around 5 percent of the residence price will be charged for a year's F&B, gym, regular spa treatments and activities, not including shore visits and retail. That means, if you buy a residence for €45 million, there will be an additional €2.25m fee to pay, annually.

The price tag might sound steep, especially with COVID creating wariness around cruise ships. But a

third of the residences have been already reserved with a deposit and the sales process has barely begun, says Alain Gruber, chief operating officer of Ocean Residences Development.

"Initially last year there was nervousness about COVID," Gruber admits over a Zoom call from his home in Florida. "But now, with lockdowns, there is pent-up demand; people want to go out and about. We will have all the health protocols on board to make sure everyone, including staff, can be tested continuously."

There will be plenty to keep residents entertained with six fine-dining restaurants, a gourmet market and culinary studio. The yacht accommodates two eight-seater twin-engine helicopters and four purpose-built luxury tenders, as well as a custom-built dive boat and a seven-passenger submersible. There is a high-speed satellite communication system, a range of sporting facilities, including a fully equipped golf centre, pools, a gym, arts and craft centre, a library and theatre.

Njord is set to journey to some of the world's most beautiful and remote destinations, making stops for a few days to view and explore the wonders of the world's remote coastlines, such as the glaciers of east Greenland or the exotic landscapes of Madagascar and Mozambique.



Clockwise from top: Njord
designers Jean-Michel Gathy,
Espen Øino and Francesca Muzio.



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— Alain Gruber

One of the major selling points, says Gruber, will be the sense of purpose informing the yacht. While cruising, Njord will be equipped to carry out scientific and oceanographic research, with a gyroscopic telescope and drones monitoring the atmosphere.

Other equipment will collect data on the coastal and marine environment as the yacht travels around the world to some of the remotest destinations. Underwater drones and submersibles will map out the ocean floor using multi-beam echo sounders that will identify the contours of the sea floor and any shipwrecks resting there. To travel to and from Njord there will be two Airbus ACH 160 helicopters available, both fitted with eight seats and capable of 400 nautical miles.

Njord will be available to international research laboratories and support charitable causes and philanthropic missions that are still in planning stages. “When you join Njord, you commit to being part of a philanthropic purpose,” says Gruber. “With the locations we will visit, our residents will see the world in the most authentic way possible. That means they will see great beauty but also shocking poverty. Njord will facilitate residents’ involvement in these land-based projects.”

Gruber says the sense of purpose influencing Njord starts from the way it treats its staff. “We’ve paid as much attention to our crew accommodation as we have to amenities,” says Gruber, who started out his career as a crew member on a cruise ship. He says it is the first time a boat of this scale has built-in personal single accommodation for all 300 crew members. “We want to attract and retain an exceptionally talented crew, whom residents will be able to recognise year after year. It’s the secret to the whole project.” ◇



Above and below: Cardiorespiratory fitness assessment and neuro-acoustic meditation at the Chenot Spa.