

Creating ADVENTURES

EXPLORE THE ARCTIC TUNDRA BY E-BIKE

Journey deep into the **Canadian Arctic** on this fully guided fat-bike adventure in search of Muskoxen. Enjoy the **Arctic** flora and summer landscapes of **Somerset Island**, and nights in an off-the-grid basecamp in en-suite cabins with locally sourced **Canadian** cuisine. On the frozen landscapes of the **Northwest Passage** floe edge your small group of maximum six guests will track polar bears hunting seals and revel in your far removed surroundings.

Dates: 1 - 11 July 2024, 3 - 13 July 2025
or ask about other adventures in the region

Price: From **£12,215** per person



Dear Adventurer

As I write, I am preparing for an extensive trip to **Georgia** in early October. See inside for details of my Seminar at Sea earlier this year on board a French luxury icebreaker, and our fantastic recce in the **Maldives** in July. As summer draws to a close, it's time to start to plan your winter escape so do get in touch. We've got great feedback from this summer's travellers, interesting ideas for winter warmers and some unique suggestions for polar adventures in 2024.



Fiona Brijnath, Director

BAWA'S SRI LANKA

Exciting news is the opening of **Lunuganga**, the former home of **Sri Lanka's** celebrated architect **Geoffrey Bawa** now a small luxury hotel set among 15 acres of extensive gardens that edge **Dedduwa Lake** in **Bentota** (10 mins from the southwest coast). To stay in such hallowed grounds is a treat for anyone with a passion for design. Rooms in the main 1930s plantation house open onto lawns peppered with frangipani flowers. The most recent addition is the former three-bedroom home of **Ena de Silva**, a renowned batik artist, dismantled, moved from **Colombo** and reassembled piece by piece in **Bawa's** garden. Local experiences include cookery demos, southern art tours and trips to **Brief**, the smaller yet equally captivating former home and estate of **Bevis Bawa**, **Geoffrey's** older brother.

>> **Email:** fiona@farfrontiers.com for details of incorporating this enchanting stay in your tour of **Sri Lanka**



KUZU ZANGPO LA BHUTAN

Post pandemic, **Bhutan** is working hard to preserve its pristine environs yet rekindle visitor numbers. It's well-known that visitors pay a daily Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of USD200 per person just to be in-country. **From 1 September 2023** Bhutan introduced a new incentive designed to encourage visits in the Kingdom.

How it works: 50% discount on the SDF for the next 4 years. Offer ends 31 August 2027.



Ask Fiona: For our suggested 17 day **Cross The Land Of The Thunder Dragon** itinerary

Ninestone, South Zeal,
Devon EX20 2PZ

telephone

01837 840640

email

fiona@farfrontiers.com

fiona@arcturusexpeditions.co.uk

My Maldives



"Mum, it's insane!" So exclaimed my 18 year old as our small boat chugs up to the jetty - turquoise waters, swaying palms and a beautiful curve of decking over white sandy beach. We've come to recce the other-worldly island of **Makunudu** in the **Maldives** and in truth we've already all fallen in love with this little slice of heaven.

This is the **Maldives** as it used to be. I first came here 30 years ago and whilst in that time a huge raft of swanky resorts have sprung up, all jostling for rankings, with pools, over-water bungalows, and more restaurants than you could shake a stick at, **Makunudu** has simply gone on with what it does best - barefoot, Robinson Crusoe, living - making your stay all about its natural beauty not about the facilities. Don't think, though, that you won't be comfortable. 36 pretty thatched cottages with AC, ceiling fans and open air bathrooms all face out over the azure waters. Each has a shady sit out and beach lounger. The central bar was one of our favourite haunts, be it in the heat of the day under the high ceilinged thatched roof or during long evenings on the deck over the water, spotting nurse and reef sharks gliding by while sipping a cold beer or tropical cocktail. The food - another highlight - was an imaginative blend of Maldivian, Indian, Sri Lankan and Western Cuisine - delicious buffets and a la carte dining with ever attentive staff who take the trouble to get to know you personally.

Daily we headed out to snorkel on the house reef - rainbow coloured Parrot and Picasso fish, royal blue giant clams, translucent needle fish, shoals of Moorish Idols, brilliantly named Humbugs and striped Oriental Sweetlips, tiny darters, a Moray Eel and the crowning glory, Hawksbill Turtles which we watched bottom feeding and rising to the surface on numerous occasions.

We kayaked around the island and took a paddle board one afternoon to an outer reef to snorkel among black tipped reef sharks. Here I saw three pygmy rays swimming in perfect formation. After trying the resort dive, the boys were hooked and went on to do their PADI Diving Course. With a private instructor just for the two of them, and in the most sublime conditions, where better to take on a sport which unlocks the door to a whole new world of discovery.

"We had an awesome time. Maldives very chilled and friendly. Amazing. Great snorkelling and turtles. The dive centre is well run - Would definitely go back."

Mr and Mrs David Manning,
Makunudu, Maldives and Oman, April 2023



Whilst I grant that this island is not for those looking for top luxury, it WAS for us. And for our boys - a first holiday for them in such a tropical location - an absolute winner. It's quite something to impress an 18 and 20 year old, not to mention my husband who has, over the years, travelled all around the globe.



We met two couples who had honeymooned at **Makunudu** almost 30 years ago and were thrilled to return and find it barely changed. This place is a tonic for the soul and for sure I'm not leaving it another 30 years before I come back.



WHEN TO GO

We travelled off (rainy) season - in July - but in truth had 29-31^{°C} daily and precisely three minutes of rain the whole week. Global warming has made the **Maldives** a much more year round destination. Though November to April should mean better weather, travel in low season and you'll take advantage of lower rates and a more chilled vibe. Many times when snorkelling I'd be the only one on the reef.

PRICE GUIDE:

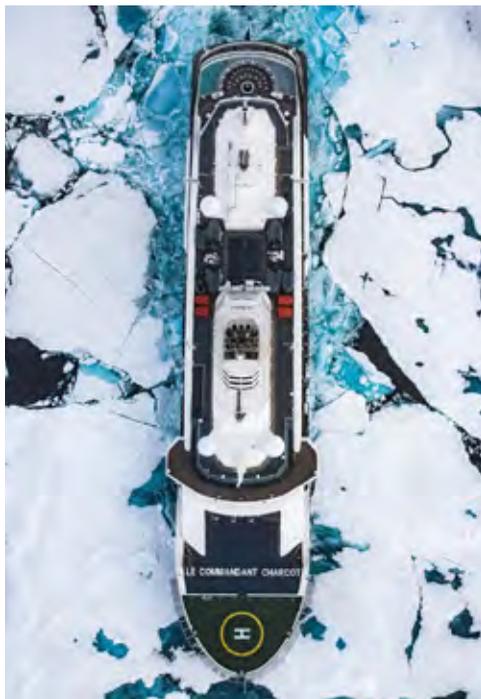
From **£2,560 per person** based on two sharing for 7 nights with flights and full board.



Icebreaker WHICH BREAKS THE MOULD



I'm still pinching myself. After an unforgettable three days spent crossing the channel aboard the luxurious French ice breaker **Le Commandant Charcot**, I don't know where to start with the superlatives. The company was created over 35 years ago by **French** sailors. Today they deliver a polished expedition performance without stinting on the comfort and elegance you might expect from a chic **European** operator.



Le Commandant Charcot is the world's first hybrid icebreaker. She carries 200 guests in polar regions and luxury is her byword. Think all-balcony cabins, a superb 180 degree glass observation lounge, science lab with resident scientists, restaurant with floor to ceiling windows, walk round deck, indoor pool, spa, sauna, ice room and outdoor hot tub.

Whilst the ship's elegant décor and numerous clever touches lend an air of luxury and comfort to the rugged destinations she visits, the emphasis on board is on reaching locations other ships cannot reach, and giving guests an experience like no other.

She offers some incredible voyages with a difference, but my signature trip has to be **Snow Hill Island** in the **Weddell Sea**.

No other ship has the capability of cutting through the thick fast ice and reaching within 2-3 kms of the most northerly Emperor Penguin colony in **Antarctica**. While others may well have to helicopter in, with Charcot you are able to park up against land and it's a short walk from there.

Hybrid power capabilities allow her to operate silently under battery power when approaching mammals and whales. The advanced ice sonar and hull structure allow her to seemingly float on the ice so you have none of the juddering and shaking of the old Russian ice breakers. For the trip of a lifetime seriously consider one of these:

Sailing 3 - 17 November 2023 the **Emperor Penguins of the Weddell Sea** is an expedition into the wildest corners of **Antarctica**, where emperor penguins, leopard seals, and humpback whales are among the wildlife you'll see. From the **Drake Passage**, venture south to the frostbitten waters of the **Weddell Sea**, a landscape dominated by ice floes, gigantic tabular icebergs, and colonies of Adelie penguins to kayak, hike and snowshoe in this majestic environment.

Price from £30,600 per person.
Voyage only.

In February 2023, **Le Commandant Charcot** completed her first **Antarctic Semi-Navigation**. The 28-day voyage covered 6,500 nautical miles, venturing as far as **Pine Island Bay**, at the southeastern end of the **Amundsen Sea**, where no cruise ship has ever gone. There, guests got a view of the earth's largest iceberg, the B22, which is about four times the size of **New York City**.

In 2024, join one of two half circumnavigations. The first, taking place from 7 January - 5 February will link the southern tip of **America** to **New Zealand**, **Ushuaia** to **Lyttelton**, sailing to some of the world's most remote islands (**Charcot Island**, **Peter I Island**, and the **Marie Byrd Land Islands**) and crossing three southern seas.

Price from £36,640 per person.
Just add flights.

The second, from 6 February - 3 March 2024 takes inspiration from the Heroic Age expeditions of **Jules Dumont d'Urville** and **Douglas Mawson**, crossing five southern seas and attempting to reach the Magnetic South Pole.

Price from £33,670 per person.



Snippets

MOROCCO: AUTHENTIC BERBER VILLAGE STAY

Amanay Home is situated in the heart of a typical Berber village at the foot of **Morocco's Atlas Mountains**. You are just 40 mins drive from the teeming souks of **Marrakech** yet here it feels as though time has almost stopped. Now a restored home of immense character and charm, it has five comfortable en-suite bedrooms, pretty courtyard and terraces for al fresco meals and intimate restaurant with open kitchen serving organic Berber cuisine. Join the cook to learn authentic Berber cooking before heading off on a Moroccan road trip.

>> Ask to see our **Atlas Mountains** itinerary



NEPAL - PERFECT POKHARA

Perched 1,000 feet above the **Pokhara Valley** with a spectacular Himalayan backdrop, **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** provides a perfect haven, the essence of tranquillity. Ideal for guests pre- and post-trek, or for those wishing to take day walks exploring local communities, bird-watching, gentle exercise, or just to relax in a typical Nepalese rural setting.

What next: Fiona will weave this into a Himalayan holiday to remember. Ask for details.

RAJASTHAN, LAND OF PRINCES

This is justifiably **India's** best known region. The sights here are unsurpassed and so are its **Heritage Hotels** – a unique collection of ancient forts and royal palaces now restored to their former glory whilst retaining much of their original charm and atmosphere. Beautiful and contrasting architecture combined with changing natural scenery make this tour of **Rajasthan's** highlights difficult to miss.

>> Email: fiona@farfrontiers.com
for our suggested itinerary



STRUCK BY WANDERLUST?

Not ready to go home after a week in the **Galapagos**? Why not detour via **Panama**! With direct flights to **Panama City** from **Quito** and **Guayaquil**, this beautiful country is the perfect answer for those looking to extend their trip after sailing the **Galapagos**. After a week-long cruise around the "Enchanted Isles" – dozens of islands that form the **Galapagos Archipelago**, stop off at the wonderful **Islas Secas**, a luxurious private-island resort with a passion for conservation. Enjoy marine safaris and customised excursions, before relaxing with a restorative treatment in the spa.

>> Email: fiona@farfrontiers.com for details

THE IRRAWADDY DOLPHINS OF CAMBODIA



After many years in decline, **Cambodia's** Irrawaddy River Dolphin population has now stabilised thanks to concerted local efforts. During the high water months of September and October, join a low-draft vessel which sails all the way up to **Kratie**, your chance to explore this unique location.

Limited last-minute cabins remain on the only overnight passenger vessels in the region. For those travelling later in the season, we have a new extension trip which can be added to your expedition on the **Lower Mekong** including two nights' accommodation and a full day trip to the dolphin grounds.



When: Numerous departures October - March 2023/24

Travel on: Shallow draft **Bassac Pandaw** - 60 guests

Price: From £2,700 per person voyage only

Offer: Under 18s go free in October half term. No single supplements on selected voyages.



BE AMAZED BY AUSTRALIA

Shining the spotlight on some of the amazing properties we can book in Australia - look no further than these beauties:

El Questro Homestead in the **Kimberley's** vast and ancient landscapes. Perched high on the red-earth cliffs towering above the **Chamberlain River** of **Western Australia** - fantastic views over the river and escarpment with impressive, Livinstona Palms, a natural oasis and thermal pools.

In the **Northern Territory**, seek out remote **Davidson's Arnhemland Safari Lodge**. Stay in rustic bush cabins with amazing food and multiple outback adventures from local passionate and insightful guides. See Indigenous rock art, swim with water goannas in crystal clear waterholes and boat meander through the rainforest on the floodplains, crocodile spotting en route to waterfalls. A truly unique Aussie experience.

Soaring high above the coral-fringed **Lord Howe Island** is award-winning **Capella Lodge**. Its casual barefoot luxury feel, coupled with exceptional service, sensational views of the turquoise waters with Mt Gower dominating the horizon and world-class gastronomical menu, make it a bucket-list **New South Wales** experience not to be missed! Visitors are limited to 400 at one time so its uncrowded beaches, scenic vistas, scenic hikes, crystal-clear reef snorkelling, kayaking and golf. Marvel at the resident turtles as you float alongside them. Jump aboard a fishing expedition or island cruise and survey the Admiralty Islands or uncover the lagoons' very own shipwreck. You will never be short of things to do in this little piece of paradise.

For the trip of a lifetime why not combine these with a **New Year's Eve Opera Gala Concert** at iconic **Sydney Opera House** - **31 December 2023**? Enjoy a pre-performance dinner and midnight party on a night you'll remember for years to come!

>> **Email:** fiona@farfrontiers.com for details

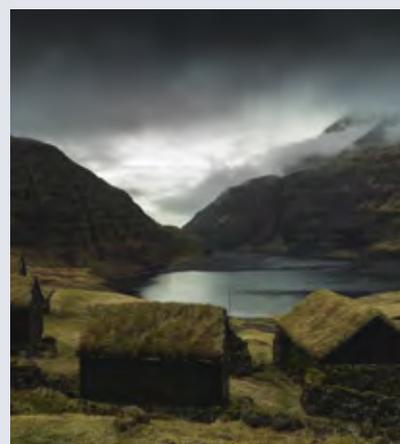


FABULOUS FAROES

Midway between **Norway** and **Iceland**, the **Faroe Islands** poke out of the **Atlantic Ocean** like hardy little flowers, offering thrilling experiences in a rugged environment. The landscape is one of steep cliffs rising from the open sea, narrow straits and natural harbours surrounded by small villages. This nation of 18 small islands, inhabited by more than three million sea birds, is a dream for ornithologists and nature lovers. We love our self-drive trip and so will you!

Price guide: From £2,590 per person
Travel: May - September 2024

Ask for: Our 8 day self-drive itinerary



SOLO TRAVELLERS

Travelling alone? Look no further than our firm favourites - the brass and teak **Pandaw** boats which ply the rivers of **South East Asia**. There are no single supplements on a wide range of itineraries and dates, including peak season. You are sure to meet like-minded friendly travellers and feel part of the **Pandaw** family the moment you step aboard.

Try **Christmas** away on a **Vietnam and Cambodia** river sailing from **Siem Reap** to **Saigon**. There is no single supplement and for families, under 18s go free.

Dates: 23 - 30 December 2023
Price: From £2,700 per person voyage only



THE STANS 'A LA MODE'

This year we've seen a huge amount of interest in travelling along **Central Asia's** ancient caravan routes. See the spectacular silkroad cities of **Khiva**, **Bukhara** and **Samarkand** in our suggested 11 day tour. From **Tashkent** fly to **Khiva**, the most completely preserved of all Silk Road Cities. See **Bukhara**, where the muted khaki walls and peaceful atmosphere of the **Lyab-I-Khauz** chai khanas are a far cry from the brooding **Ark**, fortress of the Emirs and centre stage to the 19th century '**Great Game**'. Our tour ends in **Samarkand** where the immense blue domes of the **Registan**, the most spectacular architectural ensemble in **Central Asia**, stopped many a traveller in their tracks.

>> **Email:** fiona@farfrontiers.com for the detailed itinerary

INCREDIBLE SAVINGS: ANTARCTICA THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS

We have an amazing offer on this classic **Antarctica** cruise on small ship **Sea Spirit** which departs from **Ushuaia, Argentina**. We head south across the infamous **Drake Passage**, accompanied by albatross and our first sighting of the **White Continent** is the **South Shetland Islands**, historically significant and rich with iconic **Antarctic** wildlife. Our time in the **Antarctic Peninsula** region focuses on the **Gerlache Strait** area, where towering mountains, immense glaciers, and blue icebergs create a picture-perfect setting for incredible penguin and marine mammal encounters. This is an authentic expedition in a wilderness of epic proportions.

Voyage dates: 12 - 22 November 2023, 10 - 20 December 2023

Top choice for wildlife photographers: 21 November - 1 December 2023

Price from: £8,595 per person voyage only

Offer: Includes £1,900 per person discount



Client COMMENTS

“Safely back after a very enjoyable holiday. The arrangements all worked - the guest house in Gjógv is excellent and a real find, and the weather was mostly dry. The two full days I had in the Northern Isles, were spectacularly sunny which was marvellous. Alas no photos of me - travelling on my own!

I wrote something on Faroese for my blog website - in case of interest: <https://laburnum-consulting.co.uk/reviving-an-endangered-language-the-case-of-faroese/> Thank you for arranging a great holiday.”

John Nugee, Faroes Self Drive, July 2023



“Our trip to Uzbekistan was incredible and beyond expectation. The organisation was perfect. The guide and drivers were great. The country really is a must see. Everything went super smoothly and we had zero problems. We loved Uzbekistan, the culture and people and were surprised at the unrealized potential. Once again, thank you.”



Gregoire de Lestapis, Christian Bourely and family, Uzbekistan, May 2023



“Yet again thank you for making the travel arrangements to and from Sea Spirit so easy. Another educational and enjoyable trip. Including time spent in this part of the world in the early 1960s it must be about my 20+ time to have crossed 66°30'N. After about an hour from sailing we came across a feeding frenzy which included whales (Humpback), dolphins, gannets and other sea birds. Yet another amazing sight to add to the list.”

Peter Wright, Crossing the Arctic Circle on Sea Spirit, June 2023



“A wonderful trip to Assam. We could not fault the care and attention to detail on the boat. Thank you very much for your help and patience in arranging this trip.”

Phil and Helen Soward, MV Rudra Singha - private houseboat journey in Assam, March 2023

“Once we finally got past the ridiculous amount of changes, problems and hurdles that seemed to beset us before we went, we had an amazing holiday. In my previous two trips, I'd seen one polar bear per trip, distant. Two arctic foxes that almost ran past me and disappeared on the first trip, none on the second. Never seen a beluga. Well, this time, we had five bears, two really close. More arctic foxes than I can count, with gorgeous cubs coming incredibly close. Three to five belugas. The weather was mostly very kind to us. Most activities went to plan and, even on the day that a bear stopped us walking, he hung around to sleep and chill out, allowing us to get fabulous views from the zodiacs. The upgraded cabin was really nice, as was the lounge with the lovely large, low windows, perfect for wildlife watching in comfort.”

Sue Henning, Around Spitsbergen on Hondius, July 2023



“We recently completed an unforgettable trip to Svalbard, Arctic Norway where we embarked upon a truly spectacular adventure of over 300kms of snowmobiling, plus a full day of dog sledging. We are so thankful for Fiona, in her ability to take a few random comments of what we might like to do and turn those wishes into a spectacular experience that far surpassed anything we could have dreamt of. We will be forever grateful...thank you. And we've already booked our next adventure!”

Andrew McLauchlan & Julie Butler, Svalbard, March 2023



“Overall the trip was very good and everything worked pretty seamlessly. The location of the camp is breathtaking and travel by sledge great fun. We did get to see all that was hoped for and a bowhead whale surfacing 5m from me was incredible.”

Hugh Dampney, Narwhal and Polar Bear Safari, June 2023



BROCHURES PLEASE!

If you are looking for inspiration, don't forget our brochures - we'll happily send them out on request. Our **Arcturus** polar brochure covers voyages and expeditions up to summer 2024. Take a look at **Far Frontiers Travel** for tailor-made ideas the world over.

Travel with confidence: All the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this newsletter are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. **Please see the booking conditions on our websites for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate.**

Clients wishing to book their own international flights are financially protected by the **TOPP (Total Payment Protection)** scheme. Full details are given on both Arcturus and Far Frontiers Travel websites under 'Your financial protection'.

