



EXPLORA JOURNEYS PARTNERS WITH CHEF EMMA BENGTSSON FROM AQUAVIT NYC AS THE SECOND GUEST CHEF AT ANTHOLOGY RESTAURANT ON BOARD EXPLORA I

Connecting cultures and bridging continents, Aquavit's two-Michelin-starred chef Emma Bengtsson will bring her signature cuisine to guests travelling on EXPLORA I's North American and Caribbean journeys



Geneva, Switzerland, 20 September 2023 – Explora Journeys, the luxury lifestyle brand of the MSC Group, is proud to announce its partnership with celebrated chef Emma Bengtsson and Aquavit NYC to curate an unparalleled culinary experience for guests on board EXPLORA I. Chef Bengtsson will be the first female and US-based chef to showcase her culinary talents at Anthology, one of 11 culinary experiences on board the ship. Guests can enjoy her curated menu from the beginning of October until the end of March, with Bengtsson personally attending the 9-night sailing on 3 October 2023 from Quebec to New York City.

Chef Emma Bengtsson is acclaimed for her creative interpretations of classic dishes and an innovative culinary approach that incorporates influences from Scandinavia as well as the vibrant flavours of New York City, while showcasing her focus on sustainability and a deep respect for local ingredients. A trailblazer for women in fine dining, Bengtsson is the first female Swedish chef and the second female chef based in the US to be awarded two Michelin stars. Her distinctive style of simplicity and sustainability seamlessly aligns with Explora Journeys' ethos of sustainable, locally sourced dining experiences that create a culinary 'Ocean State of Mind'.

Michael Ungerer, CEO Explora Journeys, expressing his excitement about the partnership, said: *"Chef Bengtsson is an inspiration in the culinary world, and we couldn't be more delighted to welcome her on board EXPLORA I. Anthology offers a one-of-a-kind culinary experience for our guests, and we have already received outstanding feedback from our guests on this exceptional venue. We look forward to working with Chef Bengtsson to continue providing our guests with an elevated dining experience that will showcase her distinctive culinary style through a variety of delicious dishes."*



Chef Emma Bengtsson conveyed her enthusiasm for the partnership, saying: *“I’m thrilled to partner with Explora Journeys to create a menu that reflects the values I share with the brand. I have always had a deep appreciation for local cuisines and sustainably sourced ingredients, so I look forward to bringing these aspects to Anthology and showcasing progressive techniques combined with traditional fare for an outstanding dining experience.”*

Bengtsson wanted to create for Anthology’s guests a menu that represents the culinary essence of her cuisine at restaurant, Aquavit. Using only the best ingredients and applying the unique Scandinavian flavour profiles produced by smoking, pickling, fermenting and curing – all of which are staples at Aquavit – she has created a distinctively different dining experience for this very special occasion.

EXPLORA I’s Anthology restaurant is a culinary stage on which guest chefs curate menus in collaboration with Franck Garanger, Explora Journeys’ Head of Culinary, showcasing global cuisines along with wine pairings by illustrious winemakers for a one-of-a-kind culinary experience. Set in sophisticated, refined elegance, with the opportunity to dine al fresco, lower light levels, and flawless service create an intimate yet elevated atmosphere.

Franck Garanger, Head of Culinary, Explora Journeys commented, *“It has been an absolute pleasure working with Chef Emma Bengtsson and her team at Aquavit to create this incredible menu for EXPLORA I’s guests. Showcasing the creative blend of Scandinavian influences and the vibrant flavours of New York City, this truly follows our ethos of connecting cultures and continents through culinary discoveries.”*

Guests on board EXPLORA I can expect a carefully crafted menu that showcases the best of Chef Bengtsson’s creations, using only the freshest and finest ingredients sourced primarily from local producers.

Explora Journeys continues to redefine luxury ocean travel, and the partnership with Aquavit NYC and Chef Bengtsson is just another step towards providing guests with exceptional immersive experiences. The company offers today’s discerning luxury traveller an opportunity to experience a truly transformative and purposeful ocean travel experience, reflecting both the essence of each destination visited, as well as the brand’s cosmopolitan and vibrant European luxury.

Dining at Anthology is a singularly special experience enabling discovery and enrichment, and is not part of the inclusive culinary offering. An experience fee applies – Tasting Menu: EUR 190 (\$210) per person, wine pairing: EUR 75 (\$82) per person.

The ship will spend the winter and spring in North America and the Caribbean Sea before returning to Mediterranean for summer 2024.

-ENDS-

For media enquiries please contact press@explorajourneys.com



About Explora Journeys

Explora Journeys is the privately-owned luxury lifestyle brand of the MSC Group, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, created at the heart of Swiss luxury hospitality. The brand stems from the long-held vision to redefine the ocean experience for a new generation of discerning luxury travellers, drawing on the Aponte family's 300 years of maritime heritage. The brand's aspiration is to create a unique 'Ocean State of Mind' by connecting guests with the sea, with themselves, and like-minded others, while remarkable itineraries will blend renowned destinations with lesser-travelled ports for a journey that inspires discovery in all its forms.

A fleet of 4 ships will be launched from 2023 to 2027, starting with EXPLORA I's delivery that took place on 24 July 2023. Equipped with the latest environmental and marine technologies, Explora Journeys introduces a new style of transformative ocean travel. EXPLORA I offers 461 oceanfront suites, penthouses and residences designed to be 'Homes at Sea' for our guests, all with sweeping ocean views, private terrace, a choice of 11 distinct culinary experiences across 6 vibrant restaurants plus in-suite dining, 12 bars and lounges (8 indoor and 4 outdoor), Chef's Kitchen, 4 swimming pools, extensive outdoor decks with 64 private cabanas, wellness facilities, and refined entertainment. Inspired by the company's European heritage, Explora Journeys will provide guests with an immersive ocean experience and respectful and intuitive hospitality.

EXPLORA II is currently under construction and will come into service in August 2024. EXPLORA III will come into service in 2026 and EXPLORA IV in 2027. Both ships will be LNG-powered.

To learn more about Explora Journeys, visit explorajourneys.com or follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Aquavit

After nearly 36 years as a New York City institution, Aquavit continues to evolve its menus and atmosphere with striking seasonal dishes across three tasting menus, and an à la carte experience and cocktail programme in the dynamic bar and lounge.

The acclaimed restaurant opened in Midtown in 1987 under the direction of owner Håkan Swahn, introducing Scandinavian flavours to New York City. Emma Bengtsson then joined the Aquavit team in 2010 as pastry chef before taking over the Executive Chef position four years later. Under her tutelage, the restaurant was awarded two Michelin stars within the same year of her promotion, making her the first Swedish woman to continuously hold two Michelin stars. Decades later, this NYC landmark continues to



excite visitors with stylish Scandinavian fare – a dining experience that reaches far beyond the Midtown neighbourhood of Manhattan.