# Press release

## Epic expedition at the end of the world: HANSEATIC inspiration successfully completes its Antarctic semi-circumnavigation

**In 32 days, the HANSEATIC inspiration took her guests on one of the greatest adventures of our time: the semi-circumnavigation. The small and ultra-modern expedition ship of Hapag-Lloyd Cruises set off from Ushuaia in Argentina on 28 January 2025, crossing the Antarctic Circle and the International Date Line to Christchurch in New Zealand, where she recently arrived. The guests on this imperial route among Antarctic voyages experienced polar history up close in the wake of historic explorers.**

**Hamburg, 05.03.2025**. From 28 January to 2 March 2025, the guests of HANSEATIC inspiration followed in the footsteps of famous polar explorers. In exceptionally good weather, they experienced a variety of animal encounters that are very rare even for the Antarctic summer. Almost all the penguin species, sea lions, whales and elephant seals that live there could be observed in their natural habitat. You will visit historical sites and immerse yourself in the crackling ice landscape, the vastness and the silence. The half-circumnavigation of Antarctica is one of the longest and most challenging routes in the programme of the Hapag-Lloyd Cruises expedition fleet.

**Setting a Course for the Unknown**

After a calm crossing of the Drake Passage, the small expedition ship reached the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. The first landing took place in Whalers Bay, where guests were able to experience the fascinating wildlife, including humpback whales and orcas, up close.

Expeditions are always dependent on the weather and ice conditions: when an iceberg blocked the Lemaire Channel, the crew, under the leadership of Captain Ulf Wolter, adjusted the route. ‘Nature requires us to react flexibly,’ explained the captain. ‘It's in moments like this that a crew's true strength is revealed.’ The ship continued its journey to Petermann Island via a detour.

It continued to Marguerite Bay and then into the Ross Sea – a remote region accessible to only a few ships and encompassing the world's largest ice shelf. A detour led to Peter the First Island in the Bellingshausen Sea. This untouched island, surrounded by steep cliffs and glaciers, is rarely accessible. The Zodiac ride was a unique experience that thrilled guests and crew alike.

During the days at sea through the Bellingshausen, Amundsen and Ross Seas, a seven-member team of experts gave lectures on the special features of the region. They covered topics including history, biology, especially marine biology, glaciology and astrology. The guests experienced several highlights in the Ross Sea: the premiere of a landing at Cape

Hapag-Lloyd Cruises,
a TUI Cruises GmbH company
Heidenkampsweg 58 | 20097 Hamburg, Germany
Company Register: Hamburg
District Court Hamburg, HRB 105222
Management:
Wybcke Meier (CEO)
Frank Kuhlmann

Bird on Ross Island – a rare privilege for expedition travelers. They also crossed the waters off the ice wall of the Ross Ice Shelf. An evening visit offered a clear view of Mount Erebus, speckled with a little sea smoke in sunlight.

**Living history – in the footsteps of polar research**
Ross Island, Terra Nova Bay and Victoria Land took the explorers to historic sites of Antarctic research. Landings led to the huts of Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton. The visit to Shackleton's hut on 15 February, his birthday, was particularly poignant – a moment that brought the history of the early polar expeditions to life.

As the HANSEATIC inspiration approached McMurdo Station, the journey reached its southernmost point at 77°52.1' South - a milestone in the semi-circumnavigation. On the way back, the small expedition ship crossed the Ross Sea, where further surprises were in store. Guests were able to observe orcas, huge colonies of Adélie penguins and the legendary emperor penguins from on board before continuing to New Zealand.

**From the world of ice to New Zealand's green shores**
After a few weeks in the Antarctic, the HANSEATIC inspiration set course for Oban/Stewart Island, which was explored with sunshine and a light northerly breeze with a Zodiac ride. On 2 March, the ship finally reached Christchurch, where one of the most extraordinary expeditions of our time came to an end.

For those who also want to fulfil this lifelong dream, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises has already planned the next semi-circumnavigation in winter/spring 2027 with the sister ship, the HANSEATIC spirit. From Ushuaia to Christchurch from 01.02 to 05.03.2027 (31 days). Bookable in the GOLD tariff from €30,030 per person for double occupancy, incl. arrival and departure package and incl. early booking discount (valid until 31 January 2006). For more information, please visit: www.hl-cruises.de/reise-finden/SPI2702

**Press contact:**
Kirstin Mausehund
Press Officer
Tel: +49 40 307030-398
E-mail:presse@hl-cruises.com

Anna Stiller
Communications Trainee Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
Tel: +49 40 307030-397
E-mail: presse@hl-cruises.com

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Image material:

- The HANSEATIC inspiration has successfully completed the semi-circumnavigation of Antarctica after 32 days, © Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
- A rare sight: guests on the small expedition ship were able to observe emperor penguins in the Ross Sea, © Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
- Zodiac trips – like here off Possession Island – are part of the daily programme and guarantee up-close encounters with nature, © Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
- A variety of wildlife encounters in perfect weather: in Whalers Bay, orcas could be seen next to the HANSEATIC inspiration, © Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
- Hike through the wide snow-covered landscape of Prospect Point with a view of the HANSEATIC inspiration, © Hapag-Lloyd Cruises

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***About Hapag-Lloyd Cruises***

*Hapag-Lloyd Cruises is considered the leading cruise brand in the luxury and expedition sector in German-speaking countries. The fleet currently includes five ships. Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' ships are small, individual and outstanding in their class: The luxury ships EUROPA and EUROPA 2 are complemented by the ultra-modern new expedition class consisting of HANSEATIC nature, HANSEATIC inspiration and HANSEATIC spirit. All five ships in the fleet are the only ones to be awarded the top rating of five stars by Insight Guides 2025.*

*Since 2020, the Hapag-Lloyd Cruises brand has been part of TUI Cruises GmbH, one of the leading cruise operators in German-speaking countries. The joint venture between TUI AG and the US cruise company Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. also operates the Mein Schiff fleet with currently seven cruise ships. TUI Cruises employs around 750 people in Hamburg and Berlin.*

**Reservations:** International guests, as well as travel agencies, can make use of Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' free-of-charge phone numbers when requesting or booking a cruise. **United Kingdom:** 08000 513 829, **United States & Canada:** 877 445 7447, **Belgium:** 0800 79 421, **Netherlands:** 08000 220 459; all other countries, please call +49 40 30703070 (English-speaking hotline) – or send an email to service@hl-cruises.com or visit www.hl-cruises.com/contact/international-partners for local agents.

**For more information** on Hapag-Lloyd Cruises' exciting destinations and itineraries, visit www.hl-cruises.com. All press releases and a picture gallery can be found at www.hl-cruises.com/press.

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