

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Coastal cruises through the isolated Mergui Archipelago, a group of 800 islands in the Andaman Sea off Burma's southern coast, are a new venture for Pandaw. The week-long voyages depart from the port town of Kawthaung close to the Thai border, which was known in colonial times as Victoria Point.

WHAT'S THE USP?

If you're seeking the ultimate escape on the water, this is it. Mergui is the realm of fishermen and sea gypsies – nomadic Moken tribespeople who make their living from the sea by catching fish and trading pearls that they find beneath the waves.

FELLOW TRAVELLERS SAY:

"We've done the Irrawaddy River and been to Bagan and Mandalay.

JUST BACK FROM

THE MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO

We wanted to see a different side of Burma, away from the temples and tourists. These islands are beautiful and remote – an escape from modern-day life with no phone or Wi-Fi signal. A true digital detox."

TELL US ABOUT THE SHIP

The 20-passenger Andaman Explorer started life in 1963 as a Norwegian coastguard vessel, but after being retired in 1998 it was bought by a wealthy Italian family who own the Carrara

marble quarries and consequently layered the ship with 15 tons of the stuff. The next owners, a wealthy Dubai-based family, kept up the luxury theme that is now reflected in the ship's 10 spacious suites and opulent surroundings.

A PERFECT DAY?

Head ashore in one of two tenders for snorkelling and some time on an empty beach.

After lunch on board (grilled fish or a flavoursome curry), enjoy some scenic sailing before dropping anchor at another deserted isle – the setting for sundowners while watching fishing boats setting up their nets for the night. Toast the end of another idyllic day as the sky turns scarlet.

Sara Macefield

Seven-night cruises from **£2,658** (\$3,510) per person; pandaw.com

