

THE BEST OF NEW ZEALAND on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

6 - 20 March 2023



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Day 1

Monday, March 6, 2023

Queenstown

Arriving in Queenstown on a spectacularly sunny afternoon, we check into our accommodation and met up for our first group dinner together as Shirley welcomed everyone, introduced some of our expedition team and outlined the plan for the following day. We retired to our rooms, excited by the adventure that lay ahead.

Day 2

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Queenstown to Bluff

With our departure from Bluff brought forward to accommodate the afternoon slack high tide, we had an early breakfast before checking out. Half of us elected to partake on a cruise along Lake Wakatipu, while the other half enjoyed a scenic gondola ride up the mountain and some last-minute shopping in Queenstown.

The lake cruise toured the central section of Lake Wakatipu, heading west along the northern shoreline past Bob's Cove and some of the exclusive accommodation often booked by the rich and famous.

Reaching the northern arm of the lake, we could see up to Glenorchy and the last of the glaciers that carved the lake. We returned along the south shore, past two of the historic farming stations, arriving back in Queenstown right on time at 1030.

After a short stroll back to the hotel, we had a quick lunch before boarding our bus to Bluff. The drive south was enlivened by the driver, Andrew's often irreverent Southland anecdotes. We were welcomed aboard *Heritage Adventurer* by Expedition Leader Nathan Russ, the rest of the expedition team, and the ship's crew. The ship sailed on the ebbing tide shortly before 1700, with Buller's Albatross and a few dolphins in attendance.

After rounding Bluff headland, we headed slowly west through Foveaux Strait into the gathering gloom, hugging the northern shoreline to minimise the westerly swell en route to Fiordland.



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Day 3

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Dusky Sound/Tamatea, Fiordland

We awoke to find *Heritage Adventurer* was anchored just offshore from an impressive cascade down a

bush clad Fiordland mountainside. We listened for announcements over breakfast to discover that our morning activity would be a Zodiac cruise with 2 landings.

We cruised along the shores of several islands and on the mainland, encountering New Zealand Fur Seals and watching for birds including Oystercatchers, Shags and ducks. We crossed open water to visit Indian Island and Astronomer's Point to learn how these two places featured in James Cook's stay at Dusky Bay (as he called it then) in the ship *Resolution* in March 1773 – almost 250 years ago. It was here that Cook and his crew rested after crossing the Antarctic Circle, brewed New Zealand's first beer, made measurements of celestial bodies to determine their position, and had long and friendly dealings with a Maori family.

Over lunch we went further into Dusky Sound through the narrow Cook Channel to reach our afternoon Zodiac cruise in Sportsman Cove, Cooper Island. This was a good chance to get up close to the bush in the stream inlets, and to have a shower at a nearby waterfall for some.

As the sunny weather continued, Nathan elected to navigate the ship along the high mountains of Acheron Passage. We went all the way to Breaksea Sound and returned with a quick visit from a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins along the way.

John then presented a lecture on the human history of this wild place as we arrived into Cook Channel. This was a great spot to rest and share our day's adventures during recap, receive a briefing for tomorrow, followed by another superb dinner as further exploration awaits.



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Day 4

Thursday, 9 March, 2023

Dusky Sound – Pigeon Island – Facile Harbour-Earshell Cove – Luncheon Cove and Anchor Island

It was a beautiful start to another calm Fiordland day. To maximise our last day in Fiordland, we left our anchorage at Cascade Cove and Zodiac cruised over to Pigeon Island to visit the site of Richard Henry's house. Henry was one of New Zealand's first conservationists who was instructed to take care of Resolution Island, one of New Zealand's first conservation reserves.

As we explored the site of his house and the pen where he kept Kiwi before relocating them, John and Glenda recounted his life and the efforts he made to protect the Kakapo and Kiwi in his care. We also went to a nice lookout over Dusky Sound taking in Anchor Island, the site of Kakapo recovery today. We were greeted by curious South Island Robins and the call of South Island Saddleback/Tieke.

After taking in the sights of Pigeon Island we Zodiac cruised over to Facile Harbour, the site of New Zealand's first European shipwreck the *Endeavour* (not Cook's *Endeavour*). Passing towering rock walls and surrounded by jellyfish, we circled the harbour before being escorted back to *Heritage Adventurer* by a local pod of Bottlenose Dolphins who followed and played around the Zodiacs.

Paying a fond farewell to our flippered friends we made our way around to Earshell Cove for another Zodiac excursion and short walk. Cruising through the small islands that guard the entrance of 'the Basin' we tucked into the small coves and bays, gazing at the pristine forest and the wildlife within it; including a couple of New Zealand Falcons and Kereru/New Zealand pigeons who soared over us.

As the Basin opened, we saw towering rocky hill tops down to the many buoys at the waterline where fishermen stored their crayfish pots. On the far corner of the Basin some intrepid souls braved the mud and the rain to climb an old waterfall out to the site of where a Department of Conservation hut had been. This provided extensive views back over the Basin and the opportunity to see if we could spot local lizards in the lizard hotels on the trees.

Returning to our trusty expedition ship we enjoyed yet another divine lunch before a group of adventurous ladies led by Glenda, Val and Heidi, landed on the northern side of Anchor Island to undertake a walk to Luncheon Cove. After an eventful ride from Earshell Cove to Anchor Island, spotting gannets and even a Fiordland Crested Penguin, we landed on the rocky shoreline of Anchor at Kuta Beach.

Walking through the lush forest of Anchor Island, trying our hardest to spot the elusive Kakapo, we spotted Saddlebacks/Tieke, Kakariki/Yellow-crowned parakeet, Mohua/Yellowhead and the friendly South Island Robin. Making our way along Lake Kirirua we traversed over logs and mud, stopping half way at a Pied Shag colony. We climbed over the slope to Luncheon Cove where John greeted us with his tales of New Zealand's first european boat and house built by sealers of the *Britannia* and Captain Cook visiting the area.

Those of us who stayed aboard enjoyed a leisurely cruise around the bottom of Anchor Island, into the shelter of the Many Islands. There we undertook a Zodiac cruise around the islands, listening to the birdsong and watching fur seals frolic among the islands and rocks. Some guests even encountered some friendly fishermen who shared some crayfish they had caught. Cruising into Luncheon Cove we met John who recounted the tale of the *Britannia* and Captain Cook visiting the area as we explored the historical site.

Returning to *Heritage Adventurer*, the vessel sheltered in Duck Cove before making its way down the Fiordland coast to Stewart Island.



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Day 5

Friday, March 10, 2023

Stewart Island/Rakiura

We awoke to find that we were anchored very near the predator free nature reserve of Ulva Island. Today's expedition options left us spoiled for choice between long, medium or short guided walks or a Zodiac cruise to tour the island.

Those on the guided walks were treated to lush old-growth bush as Ulva has been a reserve since 1899. Flitting through the bush was a wide variety of New Zealand native birds including Kaka, Yellowhead, Fantail, Rifleman, Brown Creeper, Kereru, and Bellbird. The guides answered all our questions and taught us even more. One highlight for most was a group of Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions on the beach with a glorious rainbow behind. Meanwhile the cruisers enjoyed an encounter with a White-capped Albatross.

Naturally you can't have a rainbow without rain, and today had periods of squally showers. Happily, our activities dodged the worst of them. If you don't like the weather, then wait a minute.

After lunch we headed for Oban, the only village on Stewart Island, where we had decisions to make: should we visit the excellent museum, shop for gifts and souvenirs, sample the hospitality of the South Sea Hotel, or should we do all three?

As the Captain weighed anchor and we headed for Dunedin. Steve gave a presentation on *How to get the Best from Your Photographs*, and we had ample opportunity for chats and drinks before recap and briefing. Another fine gourmet dinner to wrap up the day as we sailed further.



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Day 6

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Dunedin/Otepoti

The morning was a buzz throughout the ship as we came alongside in Dunedin. The bright sunshine and

warm air had us eager to explore. Shortly after mooring, we took the the bus and pulled away from the pier en route to Tūhura Otago Museum.

Ross, our exceptional local guide, was on hand to lead the group for a private tour through the exhibitions before opening to the general public. Moa, plate tectonics, extinct and endangered species were discussed while everyone marvelled at the amazing displays. Following the tour we were free to wander the exhibits or enjoy some quick retail and café therapy. A few guests then wandered into town for a self-directed adventure while the majority of the team boarded the bus for a scenic drive to the suburb of Portobello.

In Portobello half of us disembarked for a scrumptious lunch at Café 1908 while the other half proceeded to the Royal Albatross Centre at Taiaroa Heads. This year there are 33 young albatross who have hatched and are being raised by their parents. Guests were treated to a short video and interactive presentation by centre staff followed by exceptional viewing from the bird hide on the hill. Albatross soared overhead while a few adults landed ungracefully on the tussock and waddled over to their chicks.

As *Heritage Adventurer* departed Dunedin, refreshing daiquiris were served on the back deck as we enjoyed the sunshine and spectacular views.

Evening recap was enlightening as John brought to life the remarkable story of Larnach Castle, and Glenda imitated seal movements on stage...all without the use of PowerPoint! After a lovely dinner in the dining room everyone retired for some well-deserved rest in anticipation of another big day as we make our way to Lyttelton in Christchurch.



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Day 7

Sunday, 12 March, 2023

Lyttelton, Christchurch

Early morning saw *Heritage Adventurer* steaming west along the north shore of the Banks Peninsula en

route to Christchurch. We entered Lyttelton Harbour, lit by a glorious sunrise. After breakfast we were ferried ashore by Zodiac, landing in the marina where we were greeted by Shirley and other members of the Heritage team based in Christchurch. David and his trusty bus whisked us away and, after negotiating a tricky turn in town, we were soon gliding along enjoying views of Quail Island towards the head of the flooded caldera that is Lyttelton.

A short drive brought us to Ohinetahi Garden, near the head of Lyttelton Harbour. This spectacular garden, donated by renowned architect Miles Warren, features an array of striking sculptures and other interesting Objet d'Art set among a riot of formal gardens. We were privileged to be guided round the gardens by Ross, Mark and Archie the dog, who together ensure the garden remains one of the jewels in Canterbury's tourism crown.

From Ohinetahi we proceeded over the hill towards Akaroa to lunch at the Rossendale Winery, where we were hosted by Brent and Shirley at The Bicycle Thief restaurant. Here we enjoyed tasting six of their award-winning wines accompanied by a delicious array of snacks. The visit was made particularly memorable by Brent's fascinating insights on each wine and on the New Zealand wine industry in general.

All too soon we had to depart for central Christchurch where David dropped us off at the City Art Gallery. Here we dispersed with some electing to join John on a tour of the Antarctic Heritage Route, others visiting the gallery, and everyone else exploring the central city or catching up with family and friends based in Christchurch.

At 1500 we met at the gallery and travelled back to Lyttelton through the tunnel. A short Zodiac trip saw us back aboard *Heritage Adventurer* before setting sail out of Lyttelton Harbour headed for Marlborough Sounds. John gave a lecture on the history of whaling, while a pod of Hector's Dolphin slipped past outside. The evening meal was enlivened by Glen's birthday celebrations.



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Day 8

Monday, March 13, 2023

Marlborough Sounds

A wild, wet, and windy start to the day saw us entertained in the warmth of the lounge by Colleen with a lecture about Bioluminescence in the ocean followed by Glenda on the weird and wonderful Cryptic Creatures of the Marlborough Sounds. Partway through Glenda's talk we were greeted by some friendly Bottlenose Dolphins that accompanied us as we made our way into Queen Charlotte Sound.

After lunch we rode our Zodiacs over to Motuara Island, one of the many pest free islands in the Marlborough Sounds. Walking up the short track we were greeted by a family of Bellbirds bathing in the small pool which is the only water source on the island. Walking up to the top of the island we took in spectacular views over Queen Charlotte Sound, Hippah Island and across Cook Strait. As well as taking in the birdlife of friendly South Island Robins, chattering Kakariki and South Island Saddlebacks.

Some of us chose to spend the day at Ship Cove admiring Cook's Monument, the plethora of information about Captain Cook and the local Māori who lived in the area. A few of us also visited a local waterfall and followed the start of the Queen Charlotte walking track, winding up on the hillside through beech trees and Nikau Palms. Reaching the top we were greeted by a cheeky Weka as we took in spectacular views over Motuara Island, Ship Cove, and Resolution Bay.

Back on board, while passing Motuara Island, some of us were lucky enough to spot an Orca before a recap of the day's adventures and dinner.



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Day 9

Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Abel Tasman National Park

Overnight the Captain repositioned *Heritage Adventurer* to the holiday village of Kaiteriteri. Guests were

presented with several options for the day's excursions as the sun shone brightly.

Wilson's, an Abel Tasman local operator, arrived to take guests into the National Park. Everyone was transferred by Zodiac to their vessel and the adventure began with a sightseeing tour to Split Apple Rock. New Zealand Fur Seals warmed themselves on the rocks while various birds flew by. Further on, the long walkers headed to shore with their packed lunch in hand to begin the 4-hour trek toward Torrent Bay. Local guides waxed lyrically about the flora and fauna en route discussing such plants as the Rimu, Kahikatea and Beech.

While the long-walkers strolled, the rest of the guests enjoyed a boat ride through the park back to the golden sands of Anchorage. The medium and short hikers disembarked and walked along the beach to beautiful rock formations. A few brave souls squatted and crawled through a small cave system to observe cave Weta on the walls. Back on the beach an Eagle Ray perused guests as they made their way to the track start.

Wilson's staff guided everyone along the track to the junction where some guests wandered down to Te Pukatea Bay for a swim while other guests continued on the hour loop enjoying beautiful vistas and lovely forest smells. Arriving at Te Pukatea Beach a few brave souls ventured to the windswept sand for a brisk swim before fighting off resident Wekas while eating lunch. Everyone wandered back to Anchorage for some sun, fun and swims before the short Zodiac ride brought them back to *Heritage Adventurer*.

Once back aboard, showered and refreshed, Coleen entertained guests with her talk *The Blue Fleet: Life at the Surface*. There was great attendance at the now familiar and enjoyable recap, briefing, dinner and beverages. It was another great day and our voyage The Best of New Zealand was certainly living up to its name.



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Day 10

Wednesday March 15, 2023

Wellington

Awaking to a beautiful morning we cruised into Wellington Harbour as the sun rose. After our breakfast we made our way into the city for a day of exploration.

Some guests explored the extensive exhibits and displays of Te Papa while others made their way to Zealandia to check out the native wildlife in this predator proof area within the city. Other guests and staff enjoyed a ride in the Cable Car to soak in spectacular views of the city and the botanical gardens, while others strolled along the waterfront among the sculptures. City tours and retail therapy were hits as was sampling local coffee in some of the many cafes, bars and restaurants that the city has to offer. With Wellington putting on a scorching day many people enjoyed one of the city's famous craft beers or ice-cream before heading back to *Heritage Adventurer*, bidding farewell to the not so windy city.

With Wellington Harbour in our wake we enjoyed a lecture on New Zealand Geology from Glenda, however this was disrupted by several marine mammals including a Sperm Whale resting on the surface and several pods of Common Dolphins who joined us at dinner jumping and swimming alongside as the last of the light left us.



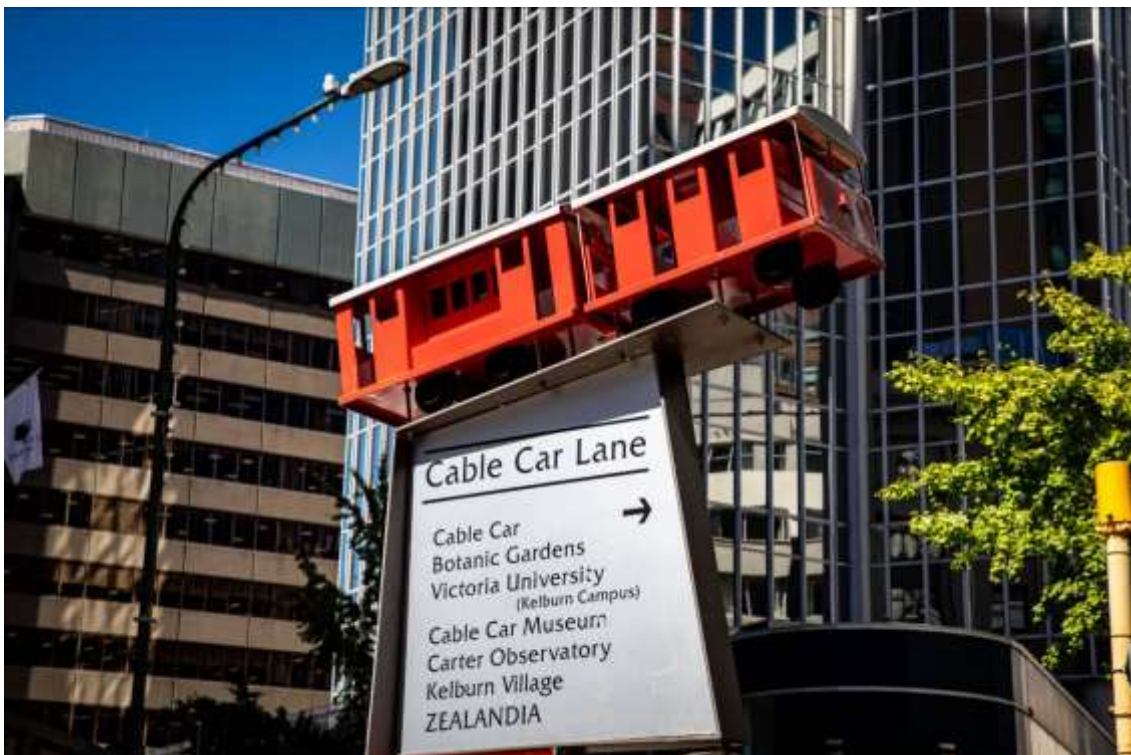
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Day 11

Thursday, March 16, 2023

At Sea along the North Island East Coast

As Nathan had explained from the beginning: our itinerary had been changed to bypass the ports of Napier and Gisborne due to the damage and distress caused by the recent cyclone Gabrielle. Instead, we had a day at sea to be followed by extended time in the Bay of Islands. The Expedition Team made sure everyone's time was put to good use by providing education, entertainment and more.

First up was Peter with an excellent background to the birds we could see around us in his presentation *A Life at Sea: The Wonderful World of New Zealand Seabirds*. Guest lecturer Cora-Allen gave us a fascinating and enlightening glimpse into the world of her art in *Encountering Aotearoa*. She showed us the techniques and traditions that she uses and carries forward, and we were allowed to see try her practices in a hands-on session. Wonderful!

At lunch the call came for dolphins off the port bow, a timely reminder that time out on the decks is not to be missed.

The afternoon kicked off with Nathan showing the vessels and voyages that have led to *Heritage Adventurer* in his presentation of *Heritage Expeditions – The Story so Far*. Sebastian then hosted *Sip with Seb: The Art of Wine* starting with an explanation of wine types, flavours and regions. We adjourned to the bistro for another hands-on, or maybe lips-on, session. This one was to test our senses and ability to identify the wine varieties - magnifique! The final session of the afternoon featured John helping us understand the start of European activity in New Zealand with his talk *Goblins from the Sea: First*

Encounters Between Maori and Captain Cook.

The recap, briefing and dinner led to *Heritage Adventurer Quiz* hosted by Val. Could we really remember all the way back to Fiordland? As it turned out we didn't do too badly. Good fun.



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Day 12

Friday, 17 March, 2023

Great Mercury Island

After a wonderful breakfast and a biosecurity check we joined another art workshop by Cora-Allen on environmentally low impact art by making cyanotypes, or using light and shade to leave designs in pigment. We also got the opportunity to paint using some of Cora's techniques and hand-made pigment. After practicing our artistic skills, we joined Peter for a lecture about plastics in our oceans before a quick lunch to prepare us for our excursion on Great Mercury Island.

Hopping on board our Zodiacs we set off to Great Mercury Island for the afternoon with some of us enjoying a long walk through the hills and along the coastline of the island. Meanwhile, others enjoyed a Zodiac cruise around the coastline, spotting crabs, Pied Shags, Reef Herons and being serenaded by the birdsong of Bellbird and Tui. Making our way along the cave-filled cliffs and the white sandy beaches we arrived at a small lagoon in Peachgrove Bay. Here we enjoyed the rest of the afternoon with a mix of short walks, swimming, and making cyanotypes with whatever nature provided around us. After a long day we made our way back to our trusty expedition ship and set sail for Great Barrier Island.



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Day 13

Saturday, 18 March Afternoon

Port Fitzroy, Great Barrier Island

The sun was shining brightly as *Heritage Adventurer* sailed in to Port Fitzroy on Great Barrier Island. Steve, the conservation officer from Glenfern Sanctuary came on board early and delivered an inspiring presentation about Glenfern so far. The history was fascinating and the conservation efforts admirable. Everyone disembarked into Zodiacs for a quick ride to shore and exploration of the Sanctuary. Vans were on hand to assist, though most folks enjoyed walking up, down and around the beautiful native forest. Some people even showed courage and ventured along the suspension bridge to climb the ancient Kauri Tree Reluctantly everyone returned to the vessel for lunch.

In the afternoon many chose to partake in a scenic Zodiac cruise along the coast and through Man of War Passage. Some chose to go for a walk to Akapoua Bay while many others walked through the small township of Port Fitzroy. Through Port Fitzroy guests could visit a small shop before heading into the forest, through a mix of regenerating native bush and pine trees, before descending down into Nikau Palm-filled gullies and a small waterfall at Warren's Track. At the waterfall, many went for a swim in the pools then came to wind down on the valley floor at Akapoua Bay campsite. There was time for a short cruise where a variety of wildlife was spotted including Pied Shags, Little Blue Penguins, Australasian Gannets and White-fronted Terns. Heading to Kaikoura Island, our Zodiacs were reunited with the rest of the team from *Heritage Adventurer* for a laugh and photo shoot before heading back to the ship. Recap and dinner followed by a lovely sunset to finish off a spectacular day.



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Day 14

Sunday, 19 March, 2023

Bay of Islands

We awoke to the spectacular surrounds of the Bay of Islands, anchoring just off the township of Russell. This morning we made our way over to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds where we learnt about the history of the treaty and participated in several aspects of Māori culture, including poi, haka, rakau and waiata (songs). After a morning of history and culture we had a brief stop at the ship for lunch before passing *Heritage Explorer*, the sister vessel of our ever-familiar *Heritage Adventurer*, on our way over to the township of Russell. Here we enjoyed strolling around the township soaking up its history and once named the “hell hole of the pacific” and our first capital.

At Russell we enjoyed many walks along the area including to Flagstaff Hill, the historical site where Maori leader Hone Heke cut down Russell’s flagstaff several times in protest about unfulfilled promises from British colonisation.

Returning to *Heritage Adventurer*, the pool and bar were open and happily frequented as the sun warmed the vessel. The shout of “dolphins” moved many from their recliners and cameras were poised to capture the frolicking cetaceans. We had a divine 5-course dinner and Captain’s farewell drinks before watching our Slide Show and reminiscing on our journey through New Zealand.



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Day 15

Monday, 20 March, 2023

Auckland

We awoke on board *Heritage Adventurer* for the last time on our voyage to enjoy a final breakfast together before it was time to gather our belongings and disembark at Auckland, the City of Sails. Cheers to a great adventure! Though we are saying *au revoir* to the lifelong friends we have made along the way... this is not goodbye - until next time!



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