

# Celebrating the Sea



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hen the United Nations declared 1998 as the International Year of the Ocean, we thought it would be the ideal time to take our readers, at least vicariously, on the ultimate ocean cruise. Although the sea is too vast to cover comprehensively, the expert oceanographers, marine biologists, meteorologists and others gathered for this issue offer thoughtful excursions into many topics of the most pressing scientific and economic concern. Researchers around the globe also generously shared the experiences of their daily lives for our scientific “world tour” of work in, on, over and under the ocean. The detailed seafloor maps appearing on the next few pages are just a few products of such work. Amazingly, by measuring subtle undulations of the water’s surface, satellites can determine the shape and size of submerged mountains, ridges and trenches thousands of meters below the waves. Those maps are the best introduction to the ever expanding perspective that marine scientists are developing on our ocean planet.

—*The Editors*