

People

# Out to 'Sea' the World: Jason Chan's Voyage of a Lifetime

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Harsh gales. Driving rain. Rogue waves. Bumps and bruises. Limited sleep. Cramped quarters.

It's **Jason Chan's** dream voyage.

"There'll be a lot of storms and it'll be very hairy; cold and grueling. Some family, friends, and colleagues think it's crazy," says the San Francisco People & Change Advisory manager.

On March 20, Chan and his 19 crewmates embarked on the sixth leg of the [Clipper Round the World Race](#), sailing from China to the U.S. West Coast. The Pacific crossing is the longest trip in an eight-leg, 40,000-mile global circumnavigation race.

Twelve identical 70-foot yachts are vying to be the first to reach the final U.K. finish line after hopscotching around the globe for almost a year. At this point, the fleet has already traversed Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and much of Asia.

Chan was on board ClipperTelemed+ (the boat's sponsor and official race medical provider) last October, for the second leg of the race, traveling the Atlantic from Brazil to South Africa. He rejoined his crew in Qingdao, China, last week to tackle the month-long crossing of the world's largest ocean.

### Ocean Obstacles

"The Pacific trip will cover 5,200 miles of open water; nothing but ocean for weeks. It can get lonely, since you don't see any other boats," says Chan.

Still, it promises to be magical, with dolphins, sharks, whales, flying squid, and phosphorescent fish illuminating the inky nights. And it's likely to be a tough go, based on Chan's previous outing across almost 4,000 miles of the Atlantic.

"We often faced heavy weather, which at one point rendered our mainsail useless for 24 hours. Our engine room also flooded and we spent the first 24 to 28 hours bailing it out. And in addition, one crew member was nearly knocked unconscious at the top of the mast when we were overpowered by a sudden strong gust that could have turned the boat on its side," Chan recounts.

But wait, there's more.

"Waves as big as small buildings – resembling enormous hills and valleys – chased us and threatened to crash on the deck at any time," he adds.

The Pacific trek is expected to be even more daunting.

"When we leave China, it'll be really cold, close to zero degrees Celsius with ice possible on deck, and more hurricanes than usual are forming in the Pacific this year," says Chan.



Recommended 8 times



*Advisory manager Jason Chan, off and on the ship.*



Chan will be crossing the Pacific with the ClipperTelmed+ team. Read more [about the team](#) on the [Clipper Round the World site](#).

### Siren Song

The epic man-versus-nature struggle first attracted Chan to sailing a decade ago, when a friend asked him to substitute for a crew member on a regatta. “Right there, I was hooked,” recalls Chan, “but I never dreamed I could cross an ocean.”

Then came Clipper.

Created by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first man to sail solo non-stop around the world in 1968, the Clipper pits 12 teams of ordinary but highly trained sailors against each other as they circumnavigate the globe.

The preparation for such a demanding race is rigorous and lengthy.

“We have to learn everything about the boat – from helming to route planning, navigation, equipment repair and maintenance, emergency procedures, and the proper response for a wide variety of conditions. We take turns performing engineering, navigation, cooking, cleaning, engine and rig check, and bilge duties,” says Chan.

With no showers and tight quarters – everyone lives, eats, and sleeps within inches of each other for weeks at a time – the experience forges strong bonds.



**Follow the race:** You can keep track Chan and his team at the [Clipper Round the World site](#). We also plan to post updates from Chan, who will be sending us messages throughout his race. [Follow KPMG Today on the Hub](#) to make sure you don't miss the latest.

### A Family Affair

Tracking Clipper's progress across the seas will be countless colleagues, family, and friends, categories that overlap for Chan. His brother, **Leslie Chan**, is an Advisory manager in the New York office, his wife is a KPMG alumna, and Chan himself is a 'boomerang hire' who rejoined the firm after leaving to work in Hong Kong for five years.

In the three years since returning to KPMG, Chan has made waves in the San Francisco APIN (Asia-Pacific Islander Network).

“This race kes a ton of drive, courage and skill, and that also explains why Jason is such an inspirational leader for APIN. He really defines high performance culture,” says San Francisco Audit Partner **Joe Yuen**.

Adds his PML, Advisory Director **Brock Solano**, "Jason always gets excited about the things happening in our lives. That's who he is. Now, we have the chance to celebrate what he's doing,"

As they speed toward their mid-April Seattle arrival, friends and family can share Chan's progress by checking [the Telemed's progress online](#). And they can experience the thrill of his adventure by checking in with his regular updates, which promise to be exhausting and inspiring.

"When you're out there with 60-knot winds howling and the boat is at a 45-degree angle, it's an adrenaline rush. You're working to challenge the ocean, move fast with the wind in your face, and feel that sense of freedom. It's like nothing else," says Chan.



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