

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Orion Expedition Cruises

28th August, 2007

Antarctic 2007/8/9 itineraries

The ultimate "path less travelled..."

Orion's 2007/2008/2009 Antarctic and Southern Ocean expeditions:

Perfectly designed and constructed for modern day expeditions, voyages to the Antarctic epitomise *Orion's* capabilities as a purpose-built 5 star expedition ship. Her ice-strengthened hull and over-size retractable stabilisers offer travellers the ultimate in safety and comfort, while shallow draft plus bow and stern thrusters provide the convenience of being able to manoeuvre close to shore. 10 Zodiacs offer the ideal transport for shore landings or for guests to cruise through ice flows.

In December 2007, Orion Expedition Cruises has two 18 night voyages to spectacular parts of the Southern Ocean and Antarctica. In December 2008 there is one 16 night expedition to Commonwealth Bay and sub Antarctic islands and in January 2009, *Orion's* sixth Antarctic season, a 20 night expedition that includes the Ross Sea.

Orion's Antarctic expeditions offer modern day adventurers a rare chance to experience the world of the Antarctic explorers Mawson (Cape Denison), Scott (Cape Evans) and Shackleton (Cape Royds), including shore excursions to their historic expedition bases, weather permitting.

Depending on the chosen voyage and itinerary *Orion* will depart from Hobart or Bluff (NZ) to explore sub-Antarctic Macquarie, Enderby, Campbell, Snares and Auckland islands, with their unique topography, flora and fauna, before crossing the Antarctic circle into the world of pack ice and spectacular auroras with up to 20 hours of daylight.

16 night expeditions start from \$15,790 per person twin share/Ocean View Stateroom. Accommodation is strictly limited to just 50 couples per voyage and sell out well in advance. There is limited accommodation left for the 2007 season, however bookings have just opened for December 2008 and January 2009 expeditions.

Expedition details, pricing and itineraries available from
http://www.orioncruises.com.au/expeditions/antarctica/voyage_summary

Further information on Orion Expedition Cruises can be obtained by visiting the website www.orioncruises.com.au

For reservations or to obtain a 2008 brochure call Orion Expedition Cruises: 61-2 9033 8777 (Sydney callers) 1300 361 012 (regional and interstate) or your travel agent. Email: info@orioncruises.com.au

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Orion's Antarctica: 2007

18 night expeditions: Hobart/ Antarctica/ Bluff (and vice versa)

Expeditions depart 12th December 2007 (ex Hobart) and 30th December 2007 (ex Bluff, NZ). Limited accommodation available on 12th and 30th December sailings.

Fares from \$16,920 per person for an Ocean View category B Stateroom

Suites from \$23,330 per person for a Junior Suite

Orion's spacious Owners' Suites are \$35,410 per person

Orion's Antarctic Continent – Commonwealth Bay 2008

16 night expedition: Bluff / Antarctica / Hobart

Expedition departs 11th December 2008 (ex Bluff, Invercargill, NZ). Bluff/ Snares Islands/ Auckland Islands/ Macquarie Island/ Commonwealth Bay region/ Hobart

Fares from \$15,790 per person for an Ocean View category B Stateroom

Suites from \$21,775 per person for a Junior Suite

Orion's spacious Owners' Suites are \$33,055 per person

Orion's Antarctic Continent – Ross Sea 2009

20 night expedition: Bluff / Antarctica / Bluff

Expedition departs 12th January 2009 (ex Bluff, Invercargill, NZ). Bluff/ Enderby and Auckland Islands/ Macquarie Island/ Cape Adare/ Ross Sea Region/ Campbell Island/ Bluff

Fares from \$19,740 per person for an Ocean View category B Stateroom

Suites from \$27,220 per person for a Junior Suite

Orion's spacious Owners' Suites are \$41,320 per person

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It should be noted that these are not cruises; rather they are expeditions to what can be the most inhospitable region on earth and, as such, prevailing weather and ice conditions may ultimately dictate Orion's course and opportunistic destinations.
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Launched in November 2003, *Orion* is already a veteran of Antarctica, having undertaken multiple voyages from both South America and Australia to the Antarctic.

Orion was custom designed and purpose built for strength and stability. The ship designers focused on expedition cruising with particular consideration to the unique conditions of the Antarctic and the comfort of our passengers. While ships with icebreaking capability have rounded hulls, *Orion's* streamlined ice-strengthened hull together with state-of-the-art stabilizers, provides a smoother cruise experience through the sometimes challenging waters of the Southern Ocean.

2007/8 is the International Polar Year – an internationally co-ordinated campaign of research designed to initiate a new era in polar science.

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Orion offers 6 categories of accommodation: 22 staterooms and 31 suites. All feature ocean views, the option of queen size or twin beds, fully-equipped marble bathrooms and modern amenities like flat screen TV, DVD/CD player, internet connectivity and mini-refrigerator.

Cruise fares include accommodation, all meals in an unhurried single sitting in either the dining room or outdoor café, guest speakers and/or expedition leaders and selected landings & activities ashore. The service of 75 experienced crew members provides the highest ratio of staff to passengers on any ship permanently based in Australian waters.

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Additional Information

Orion Antarctic 2007/8 /9 Expedition Leaders

Don & Margie McIntyre

Adventurers Don and Margie McIntyre are known as Australia's "Antarctic Couple". In 1995 they spent a year living together alone in a 2.4 x 3.6 metre box

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chained to rocks at Cape Denison in Commonwealth Bay, the windiest spot on the face of the earth. Living only 400 metres from the historic 1911 Aurora

Expedition huts of Sir Douglas Mawson, they struggled to survive a frontier experience battling blizzards which at times kept them trapped in their box for up to 20 days. The effects of this self imposed isolation are the subject of an award winning documentary and best selling book 'Two Below Zero'.

As a couple their awards and accolades are many and varied. In 1996 Margie was recognised as one of Australia's 12 most outstanding women and together they were presented with the Australian Geographical Societies highest honour - a gold medal as Adventurers of the Year, the youngest ever to receive it. They both ran with the Olympic torch on the day of the Opening Ceremony and have been Australia Day Ambassadors since 1998. Don & Margie are both AAP Mawson Huts Foundation Ambassadors along with Sir Edmund Hillary, Tim Bowden and Sir Peter Durham

From 1993 to 2000, the McIntyre's organised and participated in nine sailing expeditions in their own expedition yachts and worked on Russian Antarctic tourist ships as Lecturers, Field Guides, Boat Drivers and joint Expedition Leaders. In 2000 they purchased their own 36 metre 500 tonne helicopter equipped ice ship 'Sir Hubert Wilkins' in Finland. During the next three years they sailed half way around the world and then set out on four Antarctic expeditions in support of education, research and adventure. To thaw out, the McIntyre's headed north to the Philippines on a six month treasure hunting expedition.

For further media information please contact:

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