

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

Orion Expedition Cruises

2008 – 2009 Calendar of Sailings

21st May, 2007

Orion previews 2008 – 2009 Calendar of Sailings with new voyages that include the Coral Sea, Lord Howe and New Zealand

Orion Expedition Cruises has released its range of itineraries for 2008-2009. It includes existing Orion destinations such as the Kimberley, Antarctica and Papua New Guinea as well as introducing signature 'Voyages of Discovery' to new destinations that include the Louisiade and Trobriand Island, Lord Howe Island and both North and South Islands of New Zealand.

Announcing the Calendar of Sailings, Sarina Bratton, Managing Director of Orion Expedition Cruises said "We have had a highly successful year with very strong forward bookings resulting in many voyages being completely sold out. And so with only limited space left for the remainder of 2007 it is timely to release our portfolio of expeditions for 2008 and early 2009 to provide potential guests sufficient time to consider which voyages best suit their needs and time frame. We have retained a number of our most popular destinations such as the Kimberley where we have enhanced the expeditions with new ports and experiences.

Many of our past guests have been asking us to visit New Zealand and so in response we have developed two itineraries that cover both north and south islands. Additionally we have an exciting new 11 night Coral Sea, Louisiades and Trobriand Islands voyage that should appeal to anyone interested in visiting these still relatively untouched Melanesian island groups".

Portfolio of destinations: Highlights for 2008

28th February 2008: 16 night Melanesia and Solomon Islands expedition. Departs Auckland and makes its way through unspoilt Melanesian island destinations including Pentecost Island, Utupua and Santa Anna Islands and Marovo Lagoon en route to Rabaul.

Following **March/April voyages to Papua New Guinea** Orion unlocks the **Mysteries of Arnhem Land** with a 9 night voyage from Cairns to Stanley Island, Thursday Island, Groote Eylandt, Yirrkala and Elcho Island before arriving in Darwin.

The **Kimberley Expedition** season starts in May, the end of the big wet when the waterfalls are at their most spectacular. In 2008 Orion will modify its voyages with most 10 night sailings commencing or concluding in either Darwin or Broome. Orion's Kimberley icon destinations include King George River and Falls, Vansittart Bay- for Bradshaw Art and Truscott Air Base (new), Bigge Island, the Hunter River (for Mitchell Falls), Montgomery Reef, Raft Point, the Horizontal Waterfalls, Cape Leveque (new) and the Lacepedes Islands (new).

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An 11 night alternate itinerary (**Kimberley East and West**) includes visits to the international ports of Kupang and Roti in Timor as well as Wyndham for access to the Bungle Bungles and El Questro.

September will see Orion once again back in Papua New Guinea with two 11 night **Papua New Guinea Highland Cultures** voyages that include Milne Bay, Samarai and Kwato Islands, the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, Tufi, Madang and the Sepik River.

[New for 2008 is the one of a kind 11 night **Coral Sea, Louisiade and Trobriand Islands \(Voyage of Discovery\)**](#). Departing from Cairns on 14 October 2008 this itinerary captures the romance of south sea tropical paradises. Orion will visit Milne Bay, Dei Dei on Ferguson Island, Kitava in the Trobriands (otherwise known as the Islands of Love), Egum Atoll, Deboyne Lagoon, Doini Island, Samarai and Kwato. A must for James A Michener fans.

[Introducing the all new 14 night Brisbane to Wellington **Adventures of Lord Howe & Aotearoa Voyage of Discovery**](#). Departing 30th October 2008 this is an exciting sailing that includes Lord Howe Island and Balls Pyramid, the beautiful Bay of Islands, Auckland, Tauranga, actively volcanic White Island, Napier and the visually stunning Marlborough Sounds.

[A further new 11 night itinerary entitled **New Zealand South Island Exploration**](#) has been introduced. Departing Milford Sound on 19th November this expedition reaches deep into remote fiord lands and reveals coastal secrets of the South Island. Orion's guests will visit Doubtful and Dusky Sounds, the sub-Antarctic Snares Island, Stewart Island for Port Pegasus and Half Moon Bay, Dunedin, Akaroa, Kaikoura and Marlborough Sounds as well as other destinations before arriving in Wellington.

The return route, also 11 nights, is the same voyage reversed, concluding in Bluff before Orion departs for Antarctica.

Orion will undertake one **Commonwealth Bay 16 night Antarctic voyage** in December 2008 (including Snares and Auckland sub-Antarctic Islands, Commonwealth Bay and Macquarie Island) and a **Ross Sea 20 night expedition** (departing from and returning to Bluff) in January 2009. This will include Enderby Island, the World Heritage listed Macquarie Island, Cape Adare, the Ross Sea region with its historic explorer sites and Campbell Island.

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Orion is Australia's only 5 star purpose-built expedition cruise ship, featuring an unmatched range of onboard facilities. With 75 crew and a maximum of just 106 passengers Orion offers the highest staff to guest ratio and guest to public space ratio of any ship based in Australian waters.

It is, however, *Orion's* luxurious accommodation and facilities that distinguish it most from other expedition ships in Australian waters. All 53 staterooms and suites are exterior with ocean views and include a sitting area or living room, direct Internet access, flat screen TV, DVD and CD player, private marble bathroom and choice of twin beds or queen-size bed.

The five-star amenities include a spa, sauna, masseuse, hairdresser, boutique, several lounges and a library equipped with Internet access.

The dinner menu was created by Sydney's renowned chef Serge Dansereau (of The Bathers' Pavilion fame). The extensive wine list includes well known and boutique Australian and New Zealand wines.

Purpose built for the adventurous. As elegant and comfortable as *Orion* is, it never loses sight of its purpose as an expedition ship. There are ten, heavy-duty, Zodiac inflatable motorized boats for shore landings and expeditions and a well equipped fishing boat. The stern platform area is purpose-designed to provide access to the Zodiacs and a further ten 2-seater kayak.

The permanent onboard Expedition Team is supplemented by specialist guest lecturers and presenters selected for their areas of expertise according to the various itineraries and destinations.

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

For reservations or to obtain a 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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