



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

27<sup>th</sup> October, 2008

### **Orion's Ring of Fire expeditions**

Opportunity still exists to join one of two voyages *Orion* is undertaking in February and early March 2009. Select from the 10 night Auckland to Port Vila expedition or the 9 night Port Vila to Rabaul voyage – or join them together for a memorable 19 night Voyage of Discovery along the *Ring of Fire*.

Commence by exploring the picturesque New Zealand Bay of Islands before heading to the historic penal settlement of Norfolk Island and then on to the beautiful Isle of Pines in New Caledonia. Experience the true meaning of Melanesia's "*Ring of Fire*" with visits to the volcanic islands of Anatom and Tanna, highlighted by an exciting evening excursion to the rim of the crater of the spectacularly active volcano, Mt Yasur.

The first voyage concludes in Port Vila, Vanuatu, providing convenient air access and accommodation for those leaving or joining the ship.

Stay onboard for Espiritu Santo, where scuba divers will be able to experience an unforgettable dive on the world's largest accessible ship, the 22,000 ton President Coolidge, inadvertently sunk after hitting a US minefield during World War II.

Enjoy the gentle sea breezes of Marovo Lagoon, snorkel the extensive coral reefs or feed the sharks at Uepi. More spectacular than any film set, Ngella Island features the unforgettable hulking remains of the doomed expedition ship *World Discoverer*, beached in 2001 after hitting a coral reef.

Culturally fascinating, Orion's guests will enjoy a warm welcome at every destination, with plenty of music, uninhibited rhythmic dancing and singing and an invitation to join the locals in their beautiful villages. Intricate wooden and stone carvings, shell necklaces and woven baskets are all hard to resist - and buying locally means bargains abound.

The second voyage concludes in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, with a fittingly dramatic entrance to Simpson Harbour dominated by the massive Mt Tavurvur, a volcano still erupting today, long after it helped turn old Rabaul into a modern day Pompeii in 1994.

.....

**Bay of Islands and Norfolk Island Discovery**

**Departs Auckland 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2009. 10 nights** Auckland, Te Rawhiti Inlet, Russell (Bay of Islands), Norfolk Island (overnight), Isle of Pines, Anatom, Tanna, Port Vila (Vanuatu).

Fares begin from \$7,070 per person for an ocean view Category B Stateroom through to Owners' Suites with French Balcony at \$14,805 per person.

**Melanesian Island Discovery**

**Departs Port Vila 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2009. 9 nights** Port Vila, Malakula, Espiritu Santo, Santa Ana, Ngella, Marovo Lagoon, Rabaul (PNG).

Fares begin from \$6,365 per person for an ocean view Category B Stateroom through to Owners' Suites with French Balcony at \$13,325 per person

**An additional fuel charge of \$50 per person per night currently applies**

.....

**Orion background:**

Rabaul was known as the Pearl of the Pacific before being half buried in ash following cataclysmic eruptions by Mt Tavurvur and Vulcan in 1994 resulting in much of the town (and airport) subsequently being relocated to Kokopo.

The residents of Rabaul are a hardy lot. There was another significant eruption in 1937 and if that was not enough to unsettle one that was followed by the Japanese invasion and occupation in WWII. The most recent significant eruption was in October 2006. Tavurvur remains active today with consistently spectacular and dramatic displays of power.

When entering Simpson Harbour you will notice pinnacles rising from the waters – the remnants of the original volcanic plug of the flooded caldera that is now the magnificent harbour. Consider the enormity of the original volcanic activity that created this caldera compared to the (relatively) diminutive size of Mt Tavurvur.

.....

**Ranked #2 expedition cruise ship in the world in the just-released 2009 Berlitz Cruise Guide, Orion is the world's latest and Australia's only purpose-built luxury expedition cruise ship.**

**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.**

Further information on Orion Expedition Cruises can be obtained by visiting the website [www.orionexpeditions.com](http://www.orionexpeditions.com)

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](mailto:info@orioncruises.com.au)

**For further media information please contact:**

**Michael Corbett  
Public Relations Manager  
Orion Expedition Cruises  
Phone: (61-2) 4572 1885  
Mobile: 0417 469 228  
Email: [mcorbett@orioncruises.com.au](mailto:mcorbett@orioncruises.com.au)**