

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

## [Behind Orion's expeditions to Borneo](#)

While some MD's can reel off seat pitch and others their wine list of preference for various airlines, the colourful layers of immigration stamps in Sarina Bratton's battered passport hint at adventures behind business trips of a different nature, to places where frequent flyer points are unheard of.

In preparation for inaugural visits in 2011 by the expedition cruise ship *Orion II*, Sarina Bratton, Founder and Managing Director of Orion Expedition Cruises, recently returned from a scouting expedition to Borneo. Accompanied by Expedition Leader Mick Fogg, Sarina spent days trekking, researching and exploring parts of Borneo to finalise bespoke shore activities that Orion's guests will experience in August and September next year.

One such exploration, in one of the oldest jungle eco-systems remaining on earth, involves venturing in local boats up the Kinabatangan River. This is the ideal way to view an impressive eco system at work - river system abutted by thick rainforest and extensive wildlife all interlinked. Home to orangutans, proboscis monkeys, macaques, hornbills, crocodiles and endangered Bornean pygmy elephants, this Rudyard Kipling-esque setting is one of just two places on the planet where you can see 10 species of primate.

*"This visit to Borneo exceeded all my expectations on every level" enthused Sarina. "The wildlife is quite simply amazing – orangutans, sun bears, proboscis monkeys are just the beginning. Unfortunately much of the natural habitat has been impacted by logging, plantations, even poaching, so part of the reason behind my visit was to open discussions with a number of wildlife rehabilitation organizations at Camp Leakey, Samboja Lestari and Sepilok to see how we can meaningfully assist with rehabilitating orangutans and other endangered wildlife. I am confident that our guests will want to embrace the programs we initiate, and that the awareness we create will assist these NGOs with improved outcomes for the animals in their care".*

*"Beyond the wildlife experiences and National Parks we will visit, our guests will also have the chance to stay overnight in a rainforest lodge retreat, snorkel with manta rays, scuba dive, see historically important World War II sites at Labuan and Sandakan and enjoy cultural interaction with the wonderful, gentle, locals with their longhouses and ancient traditions".*

*"We have released four separate expedition itineraries featuring Borneo in 2011 - each offering something out of the ordinary in this remarkable and*

*rarely visited destination. I am very excited to be able to take Orion's guests there in a responsible, controlled manner, to help contribute to the local tourism industry in a sustainable way".*

## **Background information**

Nestled in the heart of the Malay Archipelago, Borneo is the third largest Island in the world. The southern two-thirds of the island is divided into the four provinces of West, Central, South and East Kalimantan. The northern coast is divided into the states of Sarawak and Sabah. The tiny nation of Brunei is wedged between these two Malaysian states. Borneo is home to the world's oldest tropical rainforests which, until recently, covered the entire island. Since 1950 almost 50% of the Island has been cleared to satisfy the western world's appetite for cheap timber and palm oil.

Borneo is amongst the planet's most biologically diverse ecosystems with 15,000 plants (400 only recently discovered), 222 species of mammals, 420 resident birds, 100 amphibians and 394 species of fish. Borneo falls within the 'Coral Triangle', with 500 species of reef building corals, a global epicentre of marine biodiversity - the WWF has put this region on the top of its list for marine conservation.

---

## **Orion II 10 night voyages to Borneo in 2011**

### **Rajahs, Riches & Rainforests - Voyage of Discovery**

*2011 Departures - August 21 & 31- Kota Kinabalu / Singapore and v.v.*

Visit some of the key destinations in Malaysian Borneo, from the famous Bako National Park to the remote islands of Palau Tiga. The Semengoh Wildlife centre for orangutans, near Kuching, provides an opportunity to view, first hand, one of our closest relatives. The national parks of Tanjung Datu, Bako and Similajau provide a snapshot of the diverse ecosystems that once covered the entire island, and now provide refuge for the abundant wildlife. In addition, a visit to the Sarawak Cultural Village, near Kuching, will expand our understanding of the people of Borneo, and our visit to Bandar Seri Begawan in Brunei highlights the diversity of cultures embedded through the island.

### **Secrets of Sabah - Voyage of Discovery**

*2011 Departure - September 10 - Kota Kinabalu / Tawau*

Explore some seldom visited and very remote islands to take advantage of the marine diversity that exists in the heart of the coral triangle. Visit the key destinations of Sandakan and the Kinabatangan River. Described as Malaysia's gift to the earth, the Kinabatangan is a wildlife mecca and we immerse ourselves deep within its beauty with an inclusive overnight stay in the rainforest lodges of Sukau. We have the chance to view, wild orangutans, Proboscis monkeys, macaques, Bornean pygmy elephants and countless bird species as we journey along the river. We will explore the tragic history of the WWII Sandakan Death Marches, where only 6 survived from the initial 6,000 participants.

### Across the Wallace Line - Voyage of Discovery

2011 Departure - September 20- Tawau / Bali (Benoa)

From the clear tropical waters of the Derawan Islands to the remote Kutai National Park, our expedition will take us down the seldom visited eastern side of Borneo. Visit Samboja Lestari to view the reforestation projects and rehabilitation of the orangutans near Balikpapan. Cross the famous Wallace Line, named after the 19th century British naturalist, and take an overnight journey through Lore Lindu National Park, the Bada Valley and the ancient and mystical Toraja Land in Sulawesi. Finish the journey with an insight into the ancient Goan Kingdom and the more recent Dutch history of Makassar.

### Camp Leakey – Faces in the Forest - Voyage of Discovery

2011 Departures - September 30 & December 29

2012 Departure - January 8 - Singapore / Bali (Benoa) and v.v.

Exciting destinations await as we voyage along the southern and western coastlines of Borneo. From isolated tropical islands to diverse National Parks, our itinerary will showcase some of Borneo's undiscovered jewels. The landmark Camp Leakey in Tanjung Puting National Park will be a highlight, allowing us the opportunity to view the rehabilitation of the ex-captive orangutans. Tanjung Puting is one of the great wonders of Borneo and is a wildlife mecca. We also visit Tanjung Datu, Gunung Palung and Bako National Parks to examine the complexity of ecosystems that once covered the entire Island.

**PLEASE NOTE:** some aspects of these itineraries may change as arrangements are finalised. Check for latest updates on [www.orionexpeditions.com](http://www.orionexpeditions.com)

.....

Pricing onboard all *Orion* and *Orion II* voyages is in Australian dollars. Orion's voyages to Borneo all start and finish in places with easy international flight access.

### Fares Guide:

#### Early booking savings available

2011 Borneo Expedition 10 night fares begin from \$8,150 per person for an Ocean View Suite/Category B. Junior Suites from \$11,300 per person and Penthouse Suites with balcony are \$16,400 per person

***Expedition fares per person twin occupancy include accommodation, all meals, landings, port charges, gratuities and selected activities ashore.***

.....

**Note to Editors:** Ranked #2 expedition cruise ship in the world in the current Berlitz Cruise Guide, Orion is the world's latest purpose-built luxury 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.

Orion Expedition Cruises' itineraries for 2011 will include 49 voyages to 17 countries and more than 170 remote and exotic destinations stretching from Antarctica to the Russian Far East including Borneo, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and the Inland Sea of Japan (onboard *Orion II*) and Australia's Kimberley coast and Arnhem Land, New Zealand and the Sub Antarctic islands and Papua New Guinea (onboard *Orion*).

**[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)**