

ARGYLL

A LAND OF MOUNTAINS, GARDENS & COAST

A five night stay at the Loch Melfort Hotel
with David Mitchell & Chantal Cookson

22nd to 27th June 2025

NOBLE CALEDONIA



Loch Awe

An Introduction by Andrew Cochrane, Noble Caledonia Founder & Director



“ “ Argyll’s central location makes it the ideal base from which to travel out north and south to explore the region which has many treasures including Kilmartin Glen’s standing stones and circles, cairns and a large henge, plus the renowned linear cemetery with several burial cairns dating from between 3500 BC - 1500 BC.

The area is home to some of the best and most significant woodland and wild gardens to be found in Scotland, many with fine collections of trees and shrubs which thrive in the mild climate provided by the Gulf Stream. Within them you will discover an abundance of rare and exotic plants from around the globe but especially the Himalayas and the Southern Hemisphere, New Zealand and South America.

From Loch Melfort we will travel out each day on a programme of short excursions, each designed to help you discover and enjoy the landscapes and gardens of Argyll. The first of these will be to Crarae Garden, the centerpiece of which is a Scottish Glen complete with burn and tumbling waterfalls. Later in the week we will explore the exotic plant collections at Ardmaddy Castle as well as Arduaine Garden and Ardchattan Priory, each filled with colourful rhododendrons, magnolias and a myriad of unusual botanical curiosities. Throughout the tour our aim is to introduce you to the best of the region’s architecture, cuisine, culture, gardens and natural history, all celebrated through a special blend of art, science and nature. We hope your visit to Argyll will leave you with a strong sense of place and wonderment as well as special memories of a unique part of the British Isles. ” ”



Loch Melfort



Craræ Gardens and the Craræ Burn



Nether Largie Standing Stones, Kilmartin Glen



Ardmaddy Castle

YOUR HOSTS

David Mitchell – Guest Speaker



David Mitchell was previously a Curator at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; he is currently Deputy Chair of the National Trust for Scotland. He is also Director Curator at Muddy Feet Consultancy, his own environmental education company specialising in landscape assessment, project development, horticulture, and interpretation. His knowledge as curator is augmented with over thirty years'

experience working as a consultant in the private and public sector, supporting organisations that include The National Archives of Scotland, The National Galleries of Scotland, The National Trust for Scotland and the Royal Zoological Society for Scotland. He has extensive broadcasting experience in television and radio with the BBC, STV and Channel Four; augmented by global involvement as an Expedition Lecturer for Noble Caledonia, the National Trust for Scotland and the American Ivy League Universities of Harvard, Dartmouth, and Brown. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture and the Royal Geographical Society he has a passion for nature and the land.

Chantal Cookson – Tour Leader



Chantal was born in Suffolk very near the sea and now lives in Northumberland where her husband farms. Chantal has been associated with Noble Caledonia since the company was founded in 1991 and has led tours, be it cruising or land, all over the world. Chantal's initial experience of cruising in British waters was in 1991 when Noble Caledonia undertook its first cruise around the British Isles, which was a

groundbreaking voyage and led to a very successful and popular concept. Though her main job over the last 25 years has been working for Sotheby's, she is now a Travel and Fine Art Consultant intertwining in her busy life still working periodically as part of the Noble Caledonia field staff team. Chantal is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.



Arduaine Gardens

The Itinerary

Day 1 Glasgow to Loch Melfort, Scotland.

A transfer to Loch Melfort from Glasgow Central Station will be provided to those arriving by train. Those driving may park at the hotel's car park. Meet in the evening for welcome drinks and dinner in the hotel. **(D)**

Day 2 Craræ Garden & Kilmartin Glen. Following breakfast at the hotel, drive through Kilmartin Glen to visit Craræ Garden, famed for its wonderful collection of Himalayan plants and natural woodland setting, complete with a highland burn crisscrossed by numerous bridges. It was initially transformed into a splendid Himalayan garden by Lady Grace Campbell; the aunt of explorer and plant hunter Reginald Farrer. Discover glades of rhododendrons, magnolias, azaleas, camellias and other exotic rare plants as well as eucalyptus forest. Lunch will be provided in the George Hotel in Inveraray after which a tour of Kilmartin Glen will include the Temple Wood Stone Circle, Nether Largie South Chambered Cairn and Standing Stones,



The Clachan Bridge (Atlantic Bridge), Isle of Seil



McCraigs Tower, Oban



Loch Etive

Kilmartin Glen Orientation Centre and a visit to the Early Grave Slabs at Kilmartin Church. On return to the hotel we will then enjoy a presentation about the Kilmartin area and its treasures from Director of the Kilmartin Museum, Dr Shona Webb MBE. This will be followed by dinner and a Scottish harp or 'Clarsach' recital by local musicians. (B, L, D)

Day 3 Isle of Seil & Ardmaddy Castle.

Close by the hotel is the Isle of Seil which is accessed by the 'Bridge Over the Atlantic'. Here we find An Cala, which dates from the 1930s and is a very gentle and delicate garden cradled by the surrounding cliffs. Wander at leisure and discover its streams, waterfalls and many exotic and native spring flowers, as well as taking in the fine views towards the Island of Easdale, famed for slate quarries and stunning coastal views. Return to Loch Melfort Hotel for lunch before going on to spend the afternoon at Ardmaddy Castle to walk through this charming walled garden with its rare and unusual shrubs, a clock cutting garden, a crevice garden and well cultivated fruit and vegetables. The adjacent rhododendron woodland, which is adorned with Himalayan primulas and other perennials and bulbs ensures that Ardmaddy has something for the plantsman in all seasons of the year. David will complete the day with a presentation entitled 'A Majestic Land - The Gardens, Natural History, Art & Artists of Argyll'. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Ardochattan Priory & Oban. Travel north from the hotel this morning and cross the impressive Connel Bridge, originally built for the railway to Ballachulish and opened in 1903. Arrive at Ardochattan Priory, a monastic site dating back to 1230 AD where a garden with views to Loch Etive has existed on site for almost 700 years. Today the ancient walls shelter a variety of ornamental shrubs, bulbs and other unusual plants. After lunch at the Falls of Lora Hotel in Connel we make a short stop at the nearby Dunstaffnage Castle before arriving in Oban. Enjoy a tour of Oban Distillery with some free time for you to explore the town with its blend of seafront, galleries, craft and gift shops. Return to the hotel via the hilltop McCaig's Tower overlooking the harbour. After dinner we will enjoy a relaxing Scottish traditional music night. (B, L, D)

Day 5 Inverary Castle & Arduaine Garden. After breakfast at the hotel drive along the banks of Loch Fyne to Inverary Castle, the ancestral seat of the Dukes of Argyll, Chiefs of the Clan Campbell. Explore the famous Armoury Hall and the State Dining Room before a walk through the estate's beautifully maintained garden. Enjoy some free time to explore the town before meeting for lunch at a local restaurant. Return by coach in time for

an afternoon walk around the highlights of Arduaine Garden with David. Our day ends with a farewell dinner at Loch Melfort with hopefully a magical sunset. (B, L, D)

Day 6 Loch Melfort to Glasgow. After a hearty Scottish breakfast transfers will be provided to Glasgow Central Station. (B)



Meconopsis, Ardochattan Priory

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Category	Twin	Sole Occupancy
Garden View Room	£2895	£3195
The Garden Room	£3095	N/A
Seaview Room	£3095	N/A
Seaview Lodge Room	£3195	£3695
The Junior Suite	£3795	N/A
The Master Suite	£3995	N/A

PRICE INCLUDES: Five nights accommodation at Loch Melfort Hotel on a half board basis • Meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) • Tour Leader • Guest Speaker • Excursions as described with entrance fees • Transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



Exterior of Loch Melfort Hotel

LOCH MELFORT HOTEL

For our stay we have chosen the Loch Melfort Hotel, a unique retreat set in 17 acres of gardens and beach on the romantic coast of Argyll in the Scottish Highlands. We have chosen the hotel due to its truly stunning location and idyllic surrounds. As you step into the warmth, comfort and tranquility of this comfortable country family home, you cannot fail to notice the uniquely informal and relaxed atmosphere. The family-owned hotel which is surrounded by the enchanting Arduaine Gardens has beautiful views to the Sound of Jura and the Inner Hebrides and beyond and offers a variety of room options. Choose from 10 rooms in the main house including two luxury suites which are convenient for the restaurant and bar, or perhaps opt for one of the 20 lodge rooms with their uninterrupted sea views.

Dinners will be taken at the hotel's acclaimed restaurant, where the greatest care is taken when choosing the produce, ensuring it is as local and fresh as possible, such as West Coast trout, scallops, venison and Game when in season.



Terrace



Loch Melfort Hotel



Junior Suite



Sea View Lodge Twin Room

Your Room

Main House Garden View Rooms

Beautifully decorated, with the added bonus of the character of the main house, these three rooms face the gardens and are a comfortable backdrop for your relaxing stay at Loch Melfort.

Main House Garden Room

Designed to make the most of the high ceilings and generous proportions of the original building and featuring dual aspect windows, the largest of the garden view rooms offers a separate seating area, king sized bed and beautiful vistas of the gardens and the Argyll countryside beyond.

Main House Sea View Rooms

These two characterful rooms both feature king size beds and offer amazing views over the loch.

Sea View Lodge Rooms

All individually designed, the sea view rooms offer guests the most stunning views of the sea and the beautiful grounds. Comfortable, well-equipped and all en-suite, sea view rooms are spacious and full of light. Each has a private balcony or partitioned decking so you can take in the vista at your own leisure.

Main House Suites:

These two characterful rooms both feature king size beds and offer amazing views over the loch.

The Junior Suite draws on the origins of the house, with antique furniture and traditional decor. A dedicated seating and dining area combine to make this a comfortable and large space. The room's crowning glory is the view from the huge bay window.

The Master Suite is more contemporary in nature, more luxurious, spacious and just as comfortable. It also boasts its own balcony with a table and chairs to admire the sea views.



Sea View Lodge Double Room



Restaurant



Main House - Garden View Room



Main House - Sea View Room



Exterior of Loch Melfort Hotel

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Argyll landscape.