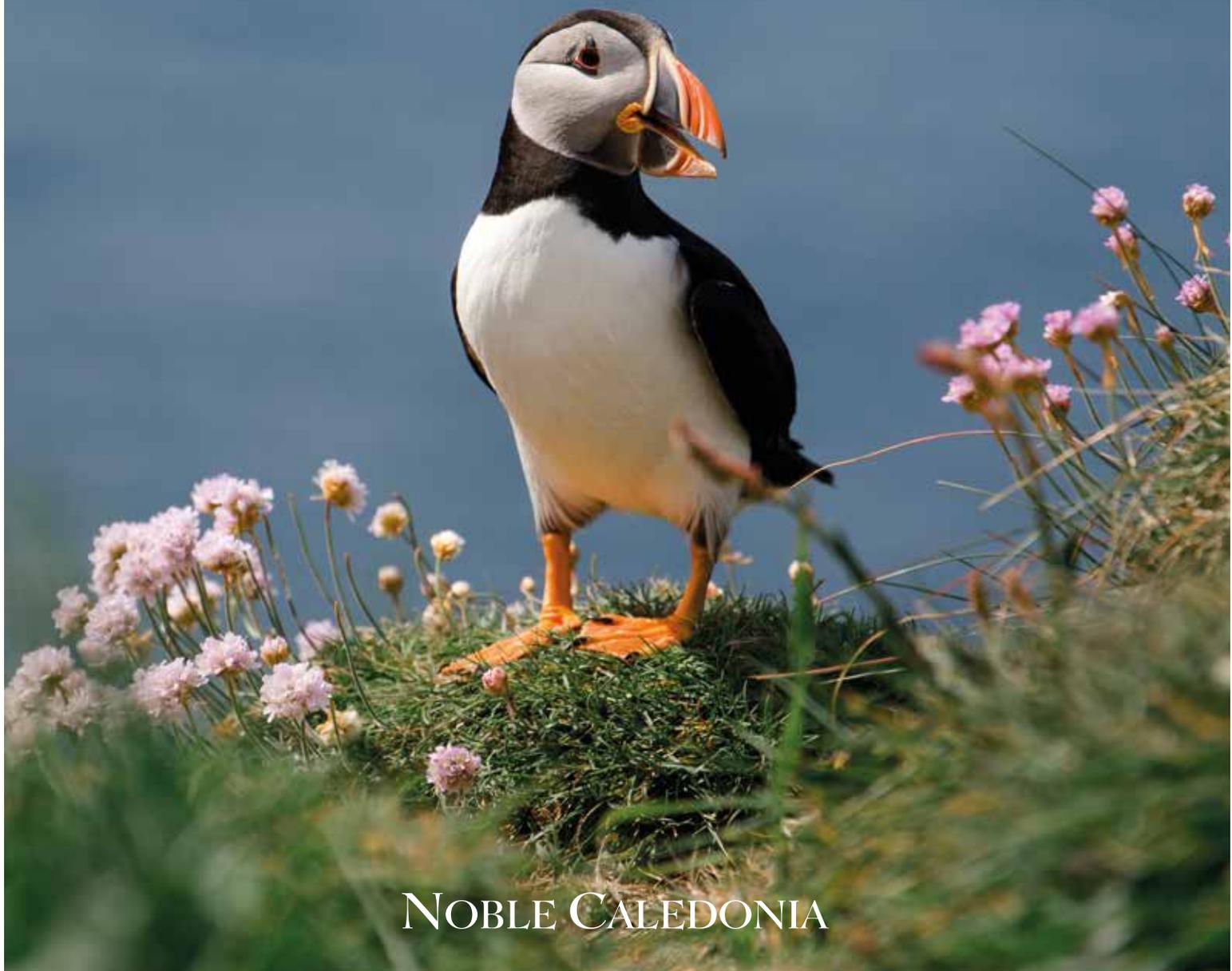


ATLANTIC ISLAND ODYSSEY

AN ISLAND HOPPING EXPEDITION THROUGH THE
HEBRIDEAN, SHETLAND & FAROE ISLANDS
ABOARD THE MS SERENISSIMA

31ST MAY TO 12TH JUNE & 15TH TO 27TH JULY* 2023



NOBLE CALEDONIA



This expedition cruise is one of our most popular and will appeal to those who prefer their islands deserted, but with abundant bird and wildlife. True, Noble Caledonia can bring you all over the world, visiting all manner of exotic and wonderful places yet it is also true that some of the finest scenery, fascinating history and most endearing people are found close to home and nowhere is this truer than the islands off Scotland's indented coastline which form stepping stones into the Atlantic. During this unique voyage, we will journey along rugged coastlines and visit once inhabited islands venturing far north to the Hebrides, Faroes and the Shetland and Orkney Islands.

We have been operating cruises around the tip of Scotland for many years and this really is an itinerary that conveys the multiple benefits of small ship cruising. With our fleet of Zodiacs we are able to make calls into some of the remote and uninhabited islands that surround the Scottish coast and cruise close to shorelines and cliffs crowded with birdlife. Few ships make the journey to these outer islands and we are grateful to therefore be able to explore these wonderful places aboard the ideally suited MS Serenissima with just 95 fellow passengers. To combine the small communities of Unst, Fetlar and Westray with uninhabited St Kilda into one itinerary is rare and when combined with the towns of Torshavn and Lerwick, such an itinerary allows us to understand the history, witness the wildlife and experience the culture of these remote and beautiful islands.



Gannets and Great Skua, Hermaness Nature Reserve, Unst

The Itinerary

Day 1 Oban, Scotland. Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Glasgow International Airport and Glasgow Central Station at a fixed time. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Staffa, Iona & Lunga. Awake this morning at Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face features an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which has been cut by the sea into cathedralesque caverns,

most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. We continue to Iona which has been occupied for thousands of years and has been a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. It was to this flat, Hebridean island that St Columba fled from Ireland in 563 and established a monastery. Here his followers were responsible for the conversion of much of pagan Scotland and Northern England. No less than 62 Scottish Kings are buried in the Abbey. Visit the Abbey



St Kilda

Iona

Canna

Exploring by Zodiac

or perhaps walk along the white sandy beaches or go in search of the corncrake amongst the irises. We end the day in the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. The island of Lunga is the largest of the Treshnish Isles in Argyll and Bute. Of volcanic origin, Lunga has been described as 'a green jewel in a peacock sea' and is a summer nesting place for hundreds of seabirds.

Day 3 Loch Scavaig & Canna, Inner Hebrides. Arrive this morning in lovely Loch Scavaig on the island of Skye. Just beyond is the freshwater Loch Corruisk with its breathtakingly beautiful view over the Cuillins. This is great walking country, but for those who prefer a less energetic morning, our Zodiacs will explore the coast looking out for seals. Over lunch we will sail to Canna. Strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday are bound together like some rare text that reveals over 60 million years of Hebridean geology and history. They have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled occupation in Scotland. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by the National Trust for Scotland and enjoys the best harbour in the Small Isles, a horn shaped haven. The fertile soil and its diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life with 248 native flowering plants recorded. We will see Canna House,

and wander across grassy basalt plateaus to the 600-foot cliffs on the north shore.

Day 4 Isle of Lewis & Shiant Islands. Arrive today on the Isle of Lewis. On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, we will head across the island to the beautiful west coast. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 BC. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design. The stones stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. We also visit the Dun Carloway Pictish Broch, probably built sometime in the last century BC, it would have served as an occasionally defensible residence for an extended family complete with accommodation for animals at ground floor level. Our final stop is the Gearranan Blackhouse Village – a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses which were made using dry stone masonry and have thatched roofs, distinctively weighted down with rocks. Visit the small museum, enjoy a display of a typical crofting activity such as weaving and take in the views of this dramatic site on the wild Atlantic coast. This afternoon we will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis. This is an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully white-tailed eagles.

Day 5 St Kilda, Outer Hebrides. Cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Stac an Armin. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet. Later this morning we continue onto St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only a few UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island.

Day 6 Suduroy, Faroe Islands. After a morning at sea we arrive in the Faroe Islands at Suduroy, the southernmost island of the group. From the port of Tvoroyri we have a choice of activities this afternoon. Choose to join an island drive passing the beautiful scenery as we drive between the villages seeing the stunning geology, fjords, tunnels and architecture of the island and end at the southernmost point and

the Akraberg lighthouse. In Porkeri we will take the ridge-top road which winds up the mountainside for wonderful views towards the steep cliffs on the west coast, the Beinisvoro promontory to the north and the luscious grass slopes to the east. To locals, this delivers the essence of the Faroe Islands with mountains and fjords, villages and valleys, birds, sheep and nature. Alternatively, those feeling active may wish to join a hike to Hvaanhagi, a beautiful, uninhabited place north of Tvoroyri on the east coast of Suduroy. The view is fantastic towards the three islands Litla Dimun, Stora Dimun and Skuvoy. There are sheep and birds, a valley with a lake and beautiful high mountains.

Day 7 Vestmanna. Vestmanna is our base for today as we explore the northwest corner of Streymoy and the nearby cliffs. Here we will board local boats to explore these vertical cliffs that climb almost 1500 feet, sailing into grottos carved by the surf over the years and watching the thousands of seabirds including puffins, guillemots, fulmars and kittiwakes that nest here each summer. After lunch on board, we will drive to the beautiful village of Saksun, an isolated settlement situated beneath steep majestic mountains. We visit Duvugaroar, an old farmhouse that is now a museum, and a traditional Faroese wooden church in Kollafjord. Sail over dinner to Torshavn, where we moor overnight.



Torshavn



Fingal's Cave



Loch Scaivg

Day 8 Torshavn. From our berth we will join a guided tour through Torshavn over the hills to Kirkjubour, the island's oldest cultural centre where we see the ruins of the 13th century St Magnus Cathedral and the 11th century church, still in use. We also visit the 900-year old "Roykstovan", the old bishopric, considered to be the oldest wooden house in Europe. For those feeling active we will arrange a hike in the hills surrounding the town to discover the local flora and fauna. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at sea as we return to Scotland.

Day 9 Unst & Fetlar, Shetland Islands. We start our exploration of the Shetlands in the northern islands of Unst and Fetlar. Arriving in Unst, Britain's most northerly inhabited island, visit the Heritage Centre where we will learn about the islanders' struggles over the centuries and the industries that have prospered whilst the Unst Boat Haven is dedicated to the history of the island's distinctive wooden boats which descend from Viking craft. We also visit Saxa Vord with views over Hermaness National Nature Reserve and Muckle Flugga stacks, home to thousands of gannets and puffins as well as rare Arctic-alpine plants. Fetlar has been inhabited for over 5000 years and the island lays claim to being the first Norse landing site in the Shetlands. Known as the most fertile of the Shetland Islands, the wildflowers bring colour to the landscape whilst the

birdlife on the island is prolific. Our expedition team will lead walks ashore including a visit to the Fetlar Interpretative Centre and Museum where we will learn about the wildlife and archaeological history of the island.

Day 10 Lerwick. From the Shetland capital, we will visit the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof. The site was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896/7, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures – late Neolithic houses, a Bronze-Age village, an Iron-Age broch and wheelhouses, several Norse longhouse, a Medieval farmstead, and the 16th century laird's house. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore this historic port. Perhaps wander through its narrow stone lanes or maybe visit the excellent Shetland Museum, containing artefacts from shipwrecks and the whaling era. Tonight we will be entertained by local musicians as we moor overnight.

Day 11 Fair Isle. This morning we hope to sail around Noss Head. Here the cliffs will be full of nesting gannets, guillemots and fulmars whilst we may also see skuas in the skies above. In the early afternoon we anchor off the remote island of Fair Isle. Located midway between the Shetland and Orkney islands, the tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extend us a warm

welcome. Enjoy a walk across the island searching out the puffin slopes, visit the community hall for a cup of tea or maybe purchase some of the famous knitwear.

Day 12 Westray, Orkney Islands. Spend the morning in the Orkney Islands as we explore one of the islands to the north of the mainland. On Westray we will visit Noup Head, an RSPB reserve on the sea cliffs and home to up to 100,000 nesting seabirds. We also see Notland Castle, an incomplete fortress built in the 16th century by Gilbert Balfour, Mary Queen of Scots Sheriff of Orkney whilst in the main village of Pierowall we find the Westray Heritage Centre housing Neolithic carvings. Spend our final afternoon at sea as we return to the mainland.

Day 13 Aberdeen. Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Aberdeen Airport and Railway Station at a fixed time.

*Please note that the 15th July itinerary operates in the reverse direction to that shown from Aberdeen to Oban. Full itinerary can be viewed online.



Dolphins

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Cat	Cabin Description	Price
2	Standard Stateroom	£5395
3	Classic Stateroom	£5695
4	Superior Stateroom	£6095
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£6495
6	Junior Suite	£6795
7	Owner's Suite	£7095
8	Serenissima Suite	£7295
10	Standard Single	£6895

PRICE INCLUDES: 12 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Shore excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

MS SERENISSIMA



Harald Jarl Lounge



Venice Restaurant



Andrea Lounge

The charming MS Serenissima began her career as the Harald Jarl, cruising the Norwegian coastline and fjords. Since 2003, when she was extensively renovated, she has been operating as a classic cruise ship. Previously known as the MS Andrea, she was upgraded again in 2013 and started her new life as the MS Serenissima. With her small size she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships and appears an impressive sight when moored. With her fleet of Zodiacs, she is capable of both destination and expedition cruising.

Your Cabin/Suite

Accommodating no more than 95 passengers, there are eight different grades of cabins arranged over five decks, and all feature either windows or portholes. The cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an en-suite bathroom with shower (please note cabins 601 - 605 and 507 have a bath with shower attachment) and a selection of toiletries in addition to a hairdryer, robes and slippers. All cabins come equipped with telephone, flat screen television, safety deposit box and other thoughtful appointments. Refillable water bottles are available in all cabins for use on board. Due to the very nature of the ship, the cabins vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm.



Your Dining

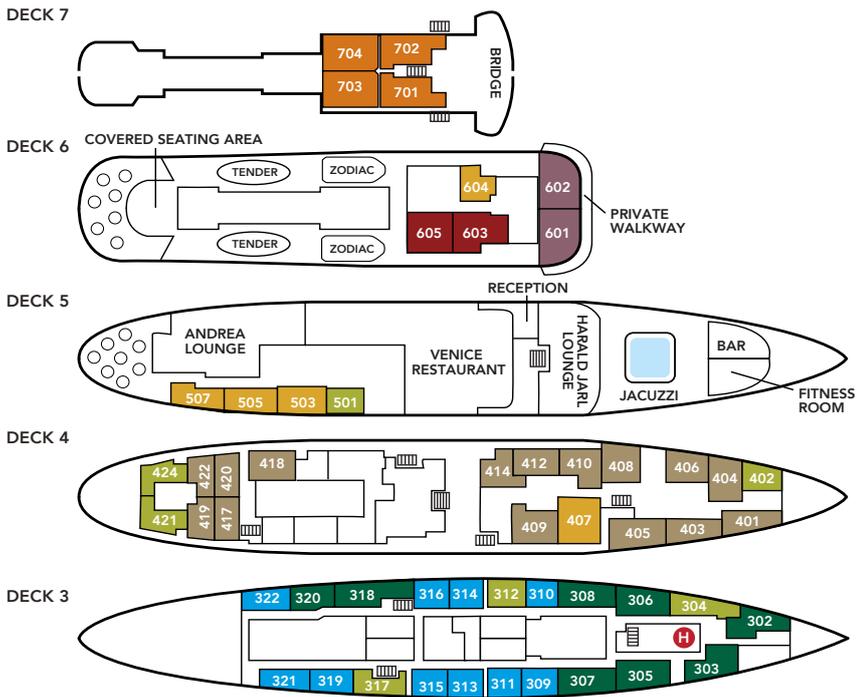
The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting and, with its Deck 5 location, all of the tables benefit from great views. The picture windows also make the restaurant wonderfully light and airy. Breakfast is served buffet-style with cooked dishes available and eggs to order by the ship's accomplished chef. Lunch is also served buffet-style

with hot and cold dishes available. Dinner is served à la carte and is four courses, except at the Captain's Dinner, which is a six course affair. Where possible, local produce is sourced for an authentic dining experience. A choice of red or white wine, beer and soft drinks is included at lunch and dinner. In good weather there are al fresco dining facilities available and tea and coffee are available around the clock in the Andrea Lounge.

Your Space

The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Jarl Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library and Wi-Fi is available at an extra cost throughout the vessel. The outside areas really are something special. A spacious observation deck allows 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with Jacuzzi and outside bar. The covered seating area at the back of Deck 6 is ideal for relaxing with a drink in hand. Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique style. During the major refit in Sweden the then owners commissioned Swedish interior designers to create a country house style which has recently been updated with some Art Deco styling which works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and a classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

MS SERENISSIMA DECK PLAN & CABINS



- STANDARD STATEROOM
- DELUXE STATEROOM
- SERENISSIMA SUITE
- CLASSIC STATEROOM
- JUNIOR SUITE
- STANDARD SINGLE
- SUPERIOR STATEROOM
- OWNER'S SUITE

NB. Please note cabin sizes vary in each category and measurements shown are approximate.



SERENISSIMA SUITE
(25 square metres)



OWNER'S SUITE
(22 square metres)



JUNIOR SUITE
(21 square metres)



DELUXE STATEROOM
(15 to 25 square metres)



SUPERIOR STATEROOM
(11.5 to 18 square metres)



CLASSIC STATEROOM
(14 to 19 square metres)



STANDARD STATEROOM
(10 to 11.5 square metres)



STANDARD SINGLE
(7 to 12.5 square metres)

During this voyage you will be visiting out of the way destinations and will be accompanied by an expedition team. Landings and excursions will be made by Zodiac landing craft. This cruise will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.



NOBLE CALEDONIA

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: Puffin, Lunga.