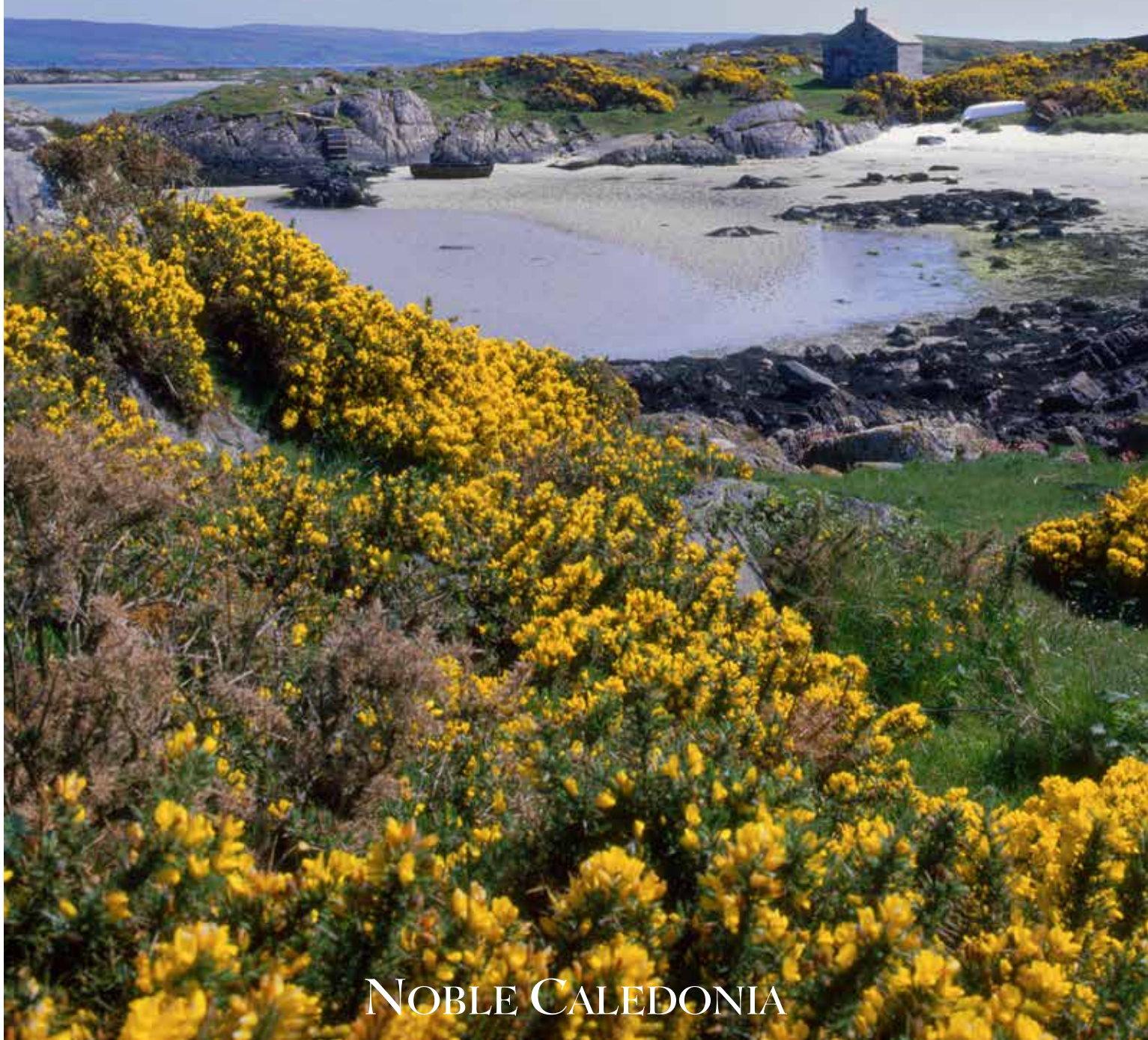


LAUNCH  
OFFER - SAVE  
**£200**  
PER PERSON

# Britain and Ireland in Bloom

A voyage to the castles and gardens of England, Scotland,  
Ireland and Wales aboard the MS Serenissima

11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017



NOBLE CALEDONIA



**D**uring the month of May our western shores and Ireland become alive with colour. This is a spectacularly beautiful time when many of the gardens, estates and national parks are at their most appealing and the countryside will be lush and inviting. This, combined with the sheer diversity of the coastline, makes for a most appealing sea journey, whether you be an avid gardener, birdwatcher or simply enjoy sailing past and visiting some of the most enchanting places in the world.

The gardens of Britain and Ireland have a unique quality, the temperate weather and green mountain backdrops make for lovely views whether you are in a grand and dramatic highland setting or in a simpler island setting. From the formal and manicured, to the wilder and more natural, our itinerary includes our most beautiful and diverse gardens which, in spring are a sight to gladden any heart.

Of course our main emphasis will be on gardens and without doubt we shall visit some of the best in the United Kingdom and Ireland; the splendid gardens of Gigha which defy the Atlantic elements so admirably and some stunning Irish gardens which have a unique quality, the 'soft' weather and green mountain backdrops make for lovely views whether you are in the dramatic Wicklows or in the more gentle countryside of Waterford.

## The Itinerary

### Day 1 Portsmouth, England.

Embark this afternoon in Portsmouth. Transfers will be provided from Portsmouth Harbour railway station at a fixed time.

### Day 2 Guernsey & Sark, Channel Islands.

Arrive this morning on Guernsey, the 'Island of Flowers'. There will be the option of a walking tour of St Peter Port including a visit to Castle Cornet, a 12th century battlement which guards the entrance to St Peter Port Harbour. Alternatively enjoy an island drive including Sausmarez Manor where we can explore the house and subtropical gardens which are the setting for over 200 sculptures by over 90 international artists. Afterwards we enjoy the wonderful scenery and views of the coastline before travelling to the Little Chapel. We will admire this fascinating building which was built in 1914 to replicate the grotto at Lourdes and is beautifully decorated with seashells, pebbles and colourful pieces of broken china. Over lunch we sail to Sark where we will use our Zodiacs to land on this peaceful, traffic free island. Horse drawn carriages take us along the narrow lanes alive with the songs of chaffinches, skylarks



and mistle thrush and bright with the colours of the wildflowers on the banks. We will see the narrow isthmus which joins Little Sark and Big Sark and the enchanting gardens at La Seigneurie.

**Day 3 Penance.** Today we arrive off Penance, our base for our day in Cornwall. A morning excursion will visit St Michael's Mount, the family home of the St Aubyn's who have resided here since 1647. Cut off from the mainland at high tide, it is a fascinating place with an intriguing history. It was here in 1588 that the first beacon was lit to warn of the approaching Spanish Armada. After lunch onboard join the excursion to the beautiful Helford River and



Garnish Island



Powerscourt



Beaumaris



Comeragh Mountains



the 26 acre ravine garden of Trebah. This sub-tropical paradise of rare and exotic plants, trees and shrubs winds down the Helford river bank to a secluded private beach.

**Day 4 Isles of Scilly.** Spend the morning on traffic free Treco, walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous sub-tropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries. Enjoy time to wander at your own pace along the paths, maybe visit the Valhalla collection of ship figureheads from ships wrecked on the islands or relax in the cafe. After lunch we will tender ashore to Bryher, the smallest of the inhabited Isles of Scilly. Our naturalists will lead a number of guided walks along the tracks that cross the island amongst hedgerows and fields bursting with wildflowers. The active may wish to climb Watch Hill, where in the past islanders would keep watch for ships in distress or alternatively take a stroll to one of the beautiful beaches.

**Day 5 Garnish Island and Bantry Bay, Ireland.** Sail this morning into the sheltered harbour of Glengariff. Here local boats will

take us to Garnish Island and the beautiful Innacullin Gardens. The sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. We return by local boats sailing past 'Seal Island' the home to 250 common seals before enjoying lunch onboard. This afternoon you may wish to stay onboard, enjoy some free time in the small town or join the excursion to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens.

**Day 6 Waterford.** From our berth in the town of Waterford we will drive to Mount Congreve, a spectacular woodland garden on the banks of the River Suir. This privately owned seventy acre garden has a collection of over three thousand trees and shrubs and is particularly stunning in spring when the gardens are awash with magnificent sweeps of flowering azaleas, camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons. Enjoy time to walk the numerous paths bordered with wisterias or bluebells and visit the vantage points with views over the landscape and meadows beyond. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon

at leisure to explore Waterford independently.

**Day 7 Dun Laoghaire.** From our berth at Dun Laoghaire we will drive out into the Wicklow Mountains and the wonderfully sited gardens of Powerscourt. Spread out over 47 acres we will explore the Italianate Terraces, the Japanese Garden where the azaleas should be in bloom and maybe take a walk through the wooded Tower Valley. We will enjoy lunch before continuing to Mount Usher, a lovely romantic garden on the banks of the River Vartry with over 5000 species of plants and shrubs. We hope to see magnolias and crocuses line the pathways as we stroll through the grounds. Alternatively you may prefer to spend the day in Dublin, our onboard staff will be able to advise on travel arrangements to the city centre.

**Day 8 Beaumaris, Anglesey.** Translated from 'beau marais' meaning fair marsh, it was here that Edward I chose as a garrison town building one of his 'iron ring' of castles aiming to stamp his authority on the Welsh. Today the impressive 13th century castle is a wonderful example of architectural and ingenious design of fortifications.

We will anchor in the bay at Beaumaris and use our Zodiacs to tender ashore for a morning excursion to Bodnant Garden. Situated above the River Conwy the gardens have stunning views across Snowdonia. Begun in 1875, Bodnant Garden is the creation of four generations of Aberconways and features huge Italianate terraces and formal lawns on its upper level, with a wooded valley, stream and wild garden below. There are dramatic colours throughout the season, with herbaceous borders, roses, hydrangeas, water lilies and clematis delight throughout the summer. We return to the ship via the magnificent landscape of the Snowdonia National Park, through the beautiful villages of Betws-y-Coed and Llanberis which lies beside the Llyn Padarn Lake in Snowdonia and we will take the incredible Llanberis pass that skirts the base of Snowdon. This afternoon we will have time to explore the castle, the 19th century jail or the shops in the town of Beaumaris at your own pace before sailing this evening.

**Day 9 Strangford Lough & Mount Stewart, Northern Ireland.** From our anchorage at Portaferry we will go ashore to the famous



Bantry Bay House & Gardens



Sieigneury Gardens, Sark



Gigha

gardens at Mount Stewart which were planted in the 1920s by Edith, Lady Londonderry and are of international importance. The magnificent series of outdoor 'rooms' and vibrant parterres contain many rare plants that thrive in the mild climate of the Ards Peninsula. The formal areas exude a strong Mediterranean feel and resemble an Italian villa landscape; the wooded areas support a range of plants from all corners of the world which are particularly vibrant in spring. There will be time to explore the opulent house which reveals a fascinating heritage and historic world-famous artefacts and artwork. Do not leave without taking in the magnificent views of Strangford Lough from Temple of the Winds. Return to the ship for lunch and if weather permits this afternoon we will use the Zodiacs to explore the Lough further.

**Day 10 Holy Loch Marina & Isle of Bute, Scotland.** Our first call in Scotland is the Cowal Peninsula where we find the magnificent Benmore Botanic Garden situated in a mountainside setting. During springtime there is a blaze of colour as the 300 species of rhododendrons put on a spectacular display. Take time to walk the paths, see the Victorian

Fernery and walk along Redwood Avenue, a line of 50 sierra redwoods planted in 1862. During lunch we sail the short distance to the Isle of Bute where we will visit one of Britain's most astounding Victorian Gothic mansions, Mount Stuart House. After the original building was destroyed by fire the mansion was rebuilt between 1880 and 1912 using the finest craftsmen of the time. After viewing the house we will visit the wonderful grounds made up of over 300 acres of pasture, woodland and gardens combining exotic and native plants. Maybe enjoy one of the trails that pass through the woodland down to the shoreline or visit the Rock Garden and Kitchen Garden situated closer to the house. Alternatively you may prefer to stay in Rothesay and explore the small town and its impressive 13th century castle.

**Day 11 Gigha & Jura.** Today we will visit the gardens of Achamore House on the small island of Gigha. The Horlick family have created a stunning garden with their collection of azaleas, rhododendrons and exotic plants. Gigha is a place apart; heather covered hills, deserted beaches and a single lane verged with wild flowers that meander for some six miles between cottages

and farms. Privately owned by its 120 inhabitants, it is a gem of a place and somewhere not easily forgotten. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail the short distance to Jura. Dominating the views of Jura are the three hills called 'The Paps of Jura', the highest being Beinn an Oir at 785 metres (2576 feet). We will go ashore at Craighouse and will be welcomed in the cooperage where we will be

given an introduction to the Jura Distillery and an opportunity for a dram. Alternatively enjoy some free time to explore Craighouse, join one of the naturalists on a walk or join an island drive.

**Day 12 Oban.** Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow Central Station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

BOOK EARLY & SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	N/A	N/A
2	Standard Stateroom	£3795	£3595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£3995	£3795
4	Superior Stateroom	£4750	£4550
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5050	£4850
6	Junior Suite	£5395	£5195
7	Executive Suite	£5895	£5695
8	Owner's Suite	£5895	£5695
9	Inside Single	£3795	£3595
10	Standard Single	£3795	£3595
1	Inside Twin/Double for sole use	£3995	£3795
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5995	£5795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£6295	£6095

**Price Includes:** 11 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.



# MS Serenissima

After a thorough renovation and upgrading, the charming, 100-passenger MS Serenissima commenced cruise operations in April 2013 and we have chartered her for the majority of each year since knowing her to be perfect for small ship cruising. 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 Space

The facilities onboard include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library with a computer for internet access. The outside areas are something special with a spacious observation deck allowing for 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with fitness room, Jacuzzi and outside bar. The covered seating area at the back of deck 6 is ideal for relaxing with a drink in hand.

## Cabins & Suites

Accommodating no more than 100 passengers, the cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an ensuite bathroom with shower, sink, toilet, a selection of toiletries including shower gel, soaps, shampoo and conditioner, hairdryer, robes and slippers. All

cabins come equipped with telephone, flat screen television, safety deposit box and other thoughtful appointments. Bottles of still and sparkling water are replenished daily. There are ten different grades of cabin arranged over five decks, and with the exception of the three inside cabins, all staterooms feature either windows or portholes. Because of the very nature of the ship, the cabins do vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm. Choose from the cosy inside cabins of approx 10 square metres, to the sumptuous newly built executive suites of 25 square metres boasting private balconies and minibar.

## Your Dining

The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting. Being on deck 5, it has great views from all tables. The picture windows mean the restaurant is 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 a la carte and is four courses, except for at the Captain's Dinner, which is a six course affair. In addition, there are al fresco dining facilities available in good weather.

A choice of red or white wine, beer, soft drinks, and water are included at lunch and dinner. Tea and coffee are served around the clock in the Andrea Lounge.



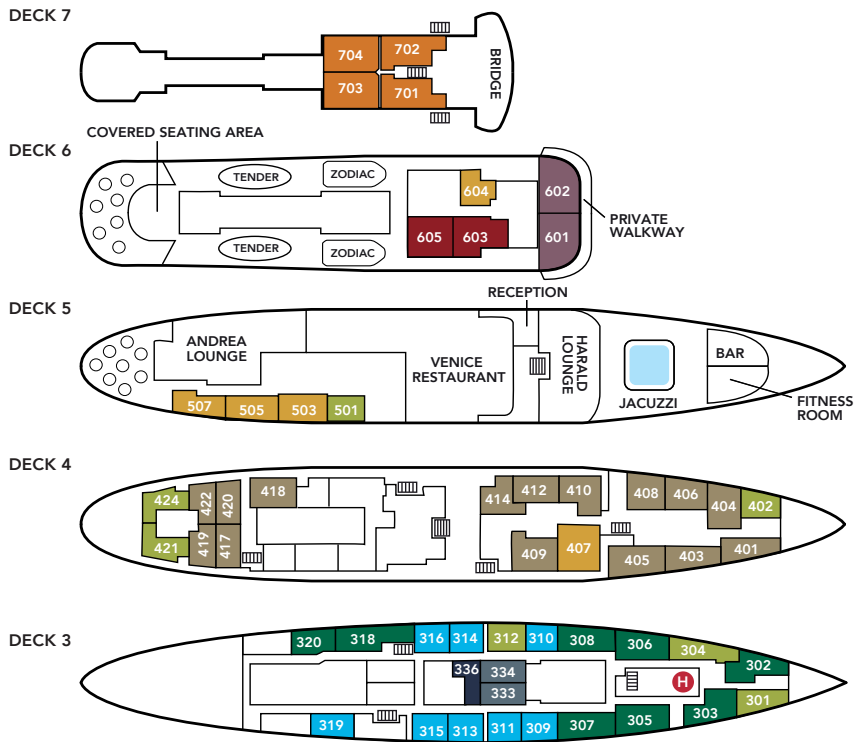
This cruise visits out of the way destinations. You will be accompanied by an expedition team and some landings ashore will be made by Zodiac landing craft. Cruises such as this will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.



Restaurant



Harald Lounge



- |                         |                  |                 |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| INSIDE TWIN/DOUBLE      | DELUXE STATEROOM | OWNER'S SUITE   |
| STANDARD STATEROOM      | JUNIOR SUITE     | INSIDE SINGLE   |
| STANDARD STATEROOM PLUS | EXECUTIVE SUITE  | STANDARD SINGLE |
| SUPERIOR STATEROOM      |                  |                 |



**OWNER'S SUITE**  
(approx. 22 square metres)



**EXECUTIVE SUITE**  
(approx. 25 square metres)



**JUNIOR SUITE**  
(approx. 21 square metres)



**DELUXE STATEROOM**  
(approx. 15 to 25 square metres)



**SUPERIOR STATEROOM**  
(approx. 11.5 to 18 square metres)



**STANDARD STATEROOM PLUS**  
(approx. 14 to 19 square metres)



**STANDARD STATEROOM**  
(approx. 10 to 11.5 square metres)



**INSIDE TWIN/DOUBLE**  
(approx. 10 square metres)



**STANDARD SINGLE**  
(approx. 7 to 12.5 square metres)

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