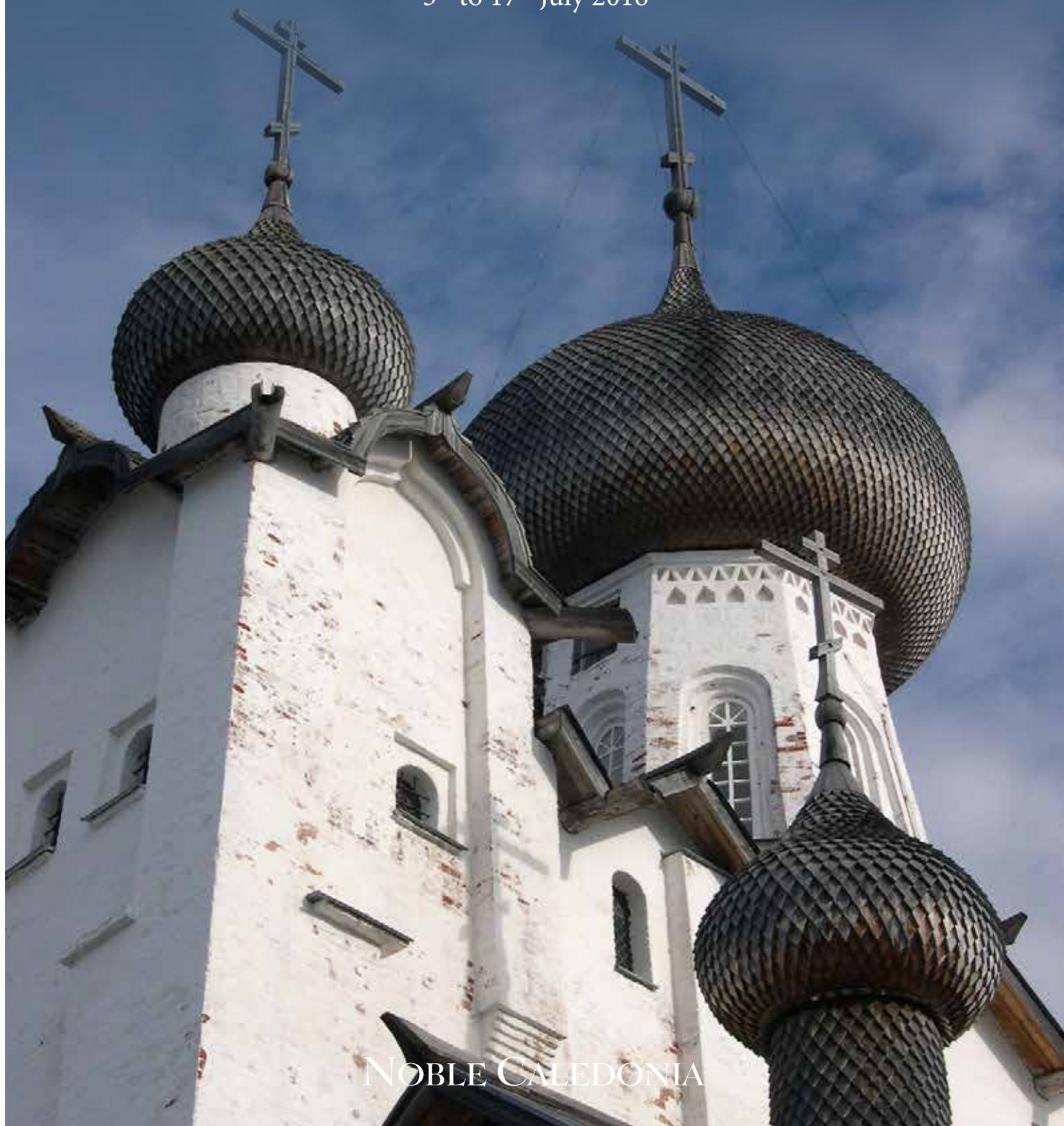


# EXPLORING THE WHITE SEA

A journey to the Northern Cape and beyond to Russia's White Sea  
with Sir Tony Brenton aboard the MS Serenissima

3<sup>rd</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018

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



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Solovetsky Monastery

For decades the White Sea was a forbidden area and today because of its geographic isolation it remains a region of great mystery. During this voyage we will have six days in the region where we will concentrate on Archangel and the Solovetsky Islands. It was on the Solovetsky Islands that Stalin built one of his infamous Gulags, the ‘Red Army’ established a vital submarine base and an important shipbuilding industry was founded.

The most fascinating aspect of the Solovetsky islands is the 16th century Solovetsky Monastery. This vast Medieval fortress with its fascinating and turbulent history is remarkably well preserved. It is believed that Vikings, both English and Norman came to the White Sea to fish and trade for furs up until the 13th century when global cooling made navigation difficult. In 1553 captain Richard Chancellor was shipwrecked in the White Sea whilst seeking a northern sea route to China. Never one to miss an opportunity, he negotiated trade privileges with Ivan the Terrible which opened diplomatic relations between England and Russia and resulted with a monk from the ancient Nikol-Karelski Monastery becoming the first Russian ambassador to England.

The region is awash with intriguing history, much of which both ancient and modern will be brought to life by our local guides and our guest speaker. Beginning our journey in Norway’s northern port of Tromso we also have the opportunity of exploring the region of

the North Cape as well as Murmansk, the largest city north of the Arctic Circle in the world. Here we will visit the cemetery of the officers and



soldiers of the Allied Forces who bravely manned the convoys during World War II. To add to your experience, you will be joined on board by an expert team including naturalists who through onboard briefings and lectures will add to your understanding of the geology, flora and fauna of the region.

## Guest Speaker – Sir Tony Brenton



Sir Tony Brenton is a distinguished British diplomat and commentator on public affairs issues. He served for over thirty years with the British Foreign Service, including postings in the Middle East, the European Union, Washington DC, and Russia. In particular he was in charge of the British Embassy in Washington through the Iraq War, and was British Ambassador to Russia through a particularly tense time in UK/ Russia relations. He has been a lead UK negotiator on such problems as global climate change and international energy and human rights issues. He has written a well received book, “The Greening of Machiavelli”, on international environmental politics. On retirement from the Foreign Service he has settled in Cambridge, where he is a Fellow of Wolfson College and a Senior Fellow at the International studies Department. His book “Historically Inevitable?” on the Russian revolution was published in June 2016. He is now also a regular commentator and contributor on international affairs on the BBC and in such publications as the Daily Telegraph.



Beluga whales



Archangel

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London Stansted to Tromso, Norway.** Fly by specially chartered flight from a private terminal at London Stansted airport. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima, sail this evening.

**Days 2 & 3 North Cape.** We will spend a day and a half taking a close look at the magnificent landscape of the area known as Finnmark. This wilderness area is home to many thousands of Sami people and we will visit North Cape Hall with its panoramic views and exhibits of the history of the Cape. There will be the opportunity to explore the wildlife and scenery on foot and by Zodiac. The deeply carved fjords and unspoiled islands of this little-known area are just perfect for expedition cruising. We hope to use our Zodiacs to explore the magnificent bird cliffs at Gjesvaerstappen Island, home to thousands of gannets, guillemots, puffins and razorbills. We will round the North Cape and see the monument erected on top of the 307 metre cliff of Mageroya Island and drive to the North Cape Plateau from the port of Skarsvag.

**Day 4 Murmansk, Russia.** Our first call in Russia will be at the historic city of Murmansk. Founded in 1916, the city of Murmansk today has a population of approximately half a million. Murmansk was the last city founded in the Russian Empire and during the Cold War was a centre of Soviet submarine activity. After clearing Russian customs we will have the

afternoon to discover more of the city. See the impressive Palace of Culture and the Memorial Complex to the Defenders of the Polar region with the imposing statue of Alyosha facing out to sea. You can then choose to visit the Museum of the Northern Fleet detailing the formation of Russia's first navy and the Murmansk convoys during the World War II or alternatively see the Museum of Regional Studies devoted to the history of the Pomor and Lappish people as well as the flora and fauna of the area. If time permits we also hope to visit the Lenin Icebreaker, launched in 1957 as the world's first nuclear powered ship and now a museum.

**Days 5 to 7 White Sea.** We have three days exploring this remote and little visited area. Whilst we have a planned itinerary it will be subject to change based on weather conditions and local authorities however we hope to visit a number of the small communities and islands. Zodiacs will land us at Morzhovets Island where we can visit the lighthouse, see the abandoned military unit or join a walk to see the birdlife at the lakes. We may visit the Kanin Peninsula which divides the White and Barents Seas and hope to see owls, plovers and divers. Visit Shoina Village on the Kanin Peninsula, which was once the second largest port in the area after Murmansk but now has a population of just 300 as the town has been engulfed by sand being washed up from the sea and blown

ashore. It has been described as the "northernmost desert" in the world. Meanwhile at Dvorovaya Bay we will use Zodiacs to view the cliffs that are home to thousands of kittiwakes and guillemots that nest here in summer.

**Days 8 to 10 Solovetsky Islands.** Sitting in the middle of the White Sea is the Solovetsky archipelago, a mythical, ethereal and timeless place. We will spend three days exploring this UNESCO site of outstanding natural beauty. It is on this isolated archipelago that we will find the Solovetsky Monastery. Within its extensive defensive walls are two 16th century cathedrals, housing some stunning icons and many other buildings including watchtowers and gates, icon-painting workshop, residential chambers and a number of workrooms which allowed this impressive monastery to exist in almost complete isolation. We will visit the botanical gardens, developed by the monks in the 19th century, where because of its microclimate all manner of vegetables and fruit are able to grow. The monastery was used by Stalin as a particularly harsh gulag, but in recent years a great effort has been made to restore the complex to some of its former glory. For the active there will be an opportunity to hike to Beluga Cape to view the Beluga whales that make this area home in the summer months or climb to the top of Sekirnaya Hill with wonderful panoramas over the island and White Sea. Making the most of the almost perpetual daylight we will



North Cape, Norway

call into some of the smaller islands. On Zayatsky Island we will see the 3rd century BC Neolithic structures, the fascinating labyrinths and the St Andrew wooden church ordered by Peter the Great in 1702. Meanwhile on Anzer we can take a scenic forest walk to the islands monastery.

**Day 11 Archangel.** Archangel lies on both banks of the Northern Dvina River near its exit into the White Sea and is spread over 40 kilometres along the banks of the river and numerous islands of its delta. In the 18th century this city was the centre of Russian ship building. Today, it is a timber-logging and fishing area. On our guided walk through its streets we will learn of its intriguing history and the area's occupation by 'White Russians' immediately after the 1918 Revolution. During World War II, Archangel was a major port for both receiving from the allies and as a base for the North Sea Fleet. Amazingly, the surrounding waters are blocked by ice for up to 190 days a year, but through the use of ice-breakers remain open for most of



War memorial, Murmansk



Vardo Island in the midnight sun



Solovetsky Islands



Hammerfest

the year. A city excursion will include the old quarter with its wooden houses, Trotsky Prospect and the Orthodox Church. Also see the 17th century Merchant Yard, the site of Russia's first shipyard and home to a museum devoted to the history of the city. This evening we enjoy a Russian folk show on board before we clear Russian customs and start our journey back to Norway.

**Day 12 At Sea.** Spend the day at sea, enjoy the lecture programme or find a spot on deck.

**Day 13 Vardo, Norway.** After a morning at sea we return to Norway at the island of Vardo, the oldest town in northern Norway and the country's easternmost community. Today it is a prosperous fishing town which has had an interesting past. Here we find the 18th century, star shaped Vardohus Fortress built as a defence against Russia and also the Steilneset Memorial which honours the victims of the 17th century Vardo Witch trials. At the Pomor Museum we can learn about the "pomor trade" between Russia and Norway which was based on the bartering of fish and corn up until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. We may also be able to see the nearby island of Hornoya which is home to around 80,000 nesting seabirds including puffin, guillemots and kittiwakes.

**Day 14 Hammerfest.** Spend the morning cruising before we arrive in the world's most northernmost

town during lunch. During World War II the city was the Germans main U-boat base in Finnmark and a supply centre for their vessels attacking Russia however during their retreat in 1945 the city was destroyed. This afternoon we can visit the Museum of Reconstruction which documents the rebuilding of the region and also the Polar Bear Society which showcases the town's proud traditions of hunting and fishing in the Arctic. Also see the Meridian Column, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which commemorates the 19th century survey conducted by Russian scientist, Friedrich Struve, to determine the arc of the global meridian and calculate the size and shape of the earth. Alternatively enjoy a walk up to the Salen viewpoint offering views over the bay and islands.

**Day 15 Tromso to London Stansted.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our specially chartered flight to a private terminal at London Stansted airport.

### SHIP TO SHORE

This cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, however Zodiac landing crafts will be used on some days to explore coastlines and to transport passengers ashore. Some remote destinations which we will be visiting are only accessible by Zodiacs.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

#### SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£6295	£6095
2	Standard Stateroom	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
4	Superior Stateroom	£7195	£6995
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£7495	£7295
6	Junior Suite	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
7	Executive Suite	£8795	£8595
8	Owner's Suite	£8795	£8595
9	Inside Single	£6295	£6095
10	Standard Single	£6695	£6495
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class return air travel aboard specially chartered flight • 14 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis • House wine and beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner on board • Noble Caledonia onboard team • Shore excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, Russian visa.

# MS SERENISSIMA



Harald Lounge



On Deck



The Restaurant

The handsome MS Serenissima began her career as Harald Jarl, cruising the Norwegian coastline and fjords. Extensively renovated in 2003 she was rechristened MS Andrea and began her career as a classic cruise ship, and was chartered by Noble Caledonia for a number of years. In spring 2012 MS Andrea was purchased by our long-standing associates Volga Dream and renamed the MS Serenissima. After a thorough renovation and upgrading, the charming MS Serenissima commenced cruise operations in April 2013 and since then we have chartered her for multiple voyages. With her small size she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships. She appears an impressive sight when moored, and is capable of both destination and expedition cruising.

## Your Cabin/Suite

Accommodating no more than 100 passengers, the cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an en-suite bathroom with shower 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. Bottles of still and sparkling water are provided and replenished daily. There are 10 different grades of cabin arranged over five decks, and with the exception of the 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 executive suites of 25 square metres boasting private balconies, minibar and all the mod cons.

## 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 a 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, soft drinks, and water is included at lunch and dinner. In good weather there are alfresco dining facilities available and tea and coffee are available around the clock in the Andrea Lounge.

## Your Space

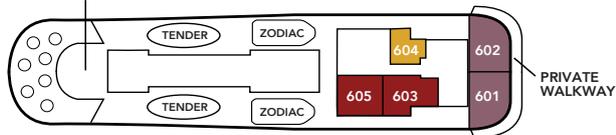
The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library and Wi-Fi is available at an extra cost throughout the vessel. The outside areas really are something special. A spacious observation deck allows 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with Jacuzzi and outside bar. The newly built 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 Gustavian style interior. This bright Swedish 18th century influenced, country house style 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

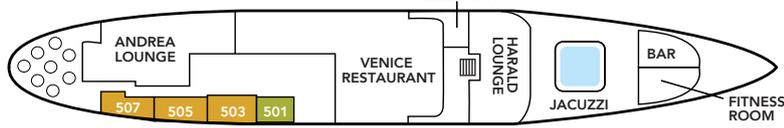
DECK 7



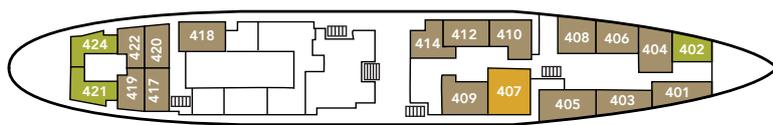
DECK 6



DECK 5



DECK 4



DECK 3



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

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



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



**EXECUTIVE SUITE**  
(25 square metres)



**JUNIOR SUITE**  
(21 square metres)



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



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



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



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



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



Lido Deck



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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: The church of Solovetsky monastery, Russia.