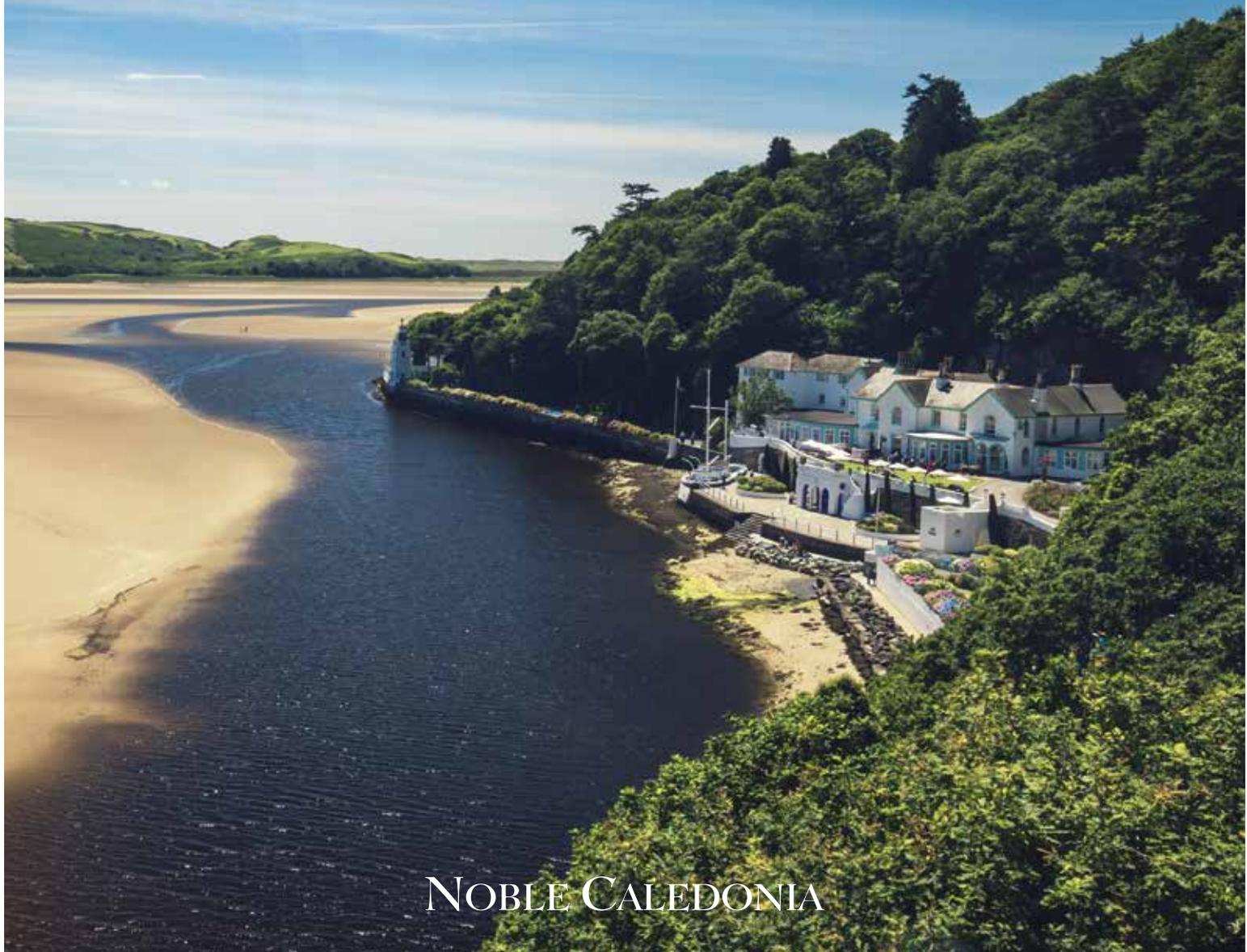


FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA

Discover the Hidden Gardens of North Wales with Alan Mason
& performances by London Festival Opera

12th to 17th May 2019

NOBLE CALEDONIA



Stay with us in the enchanting village of Portmeirion from where we will explore some of the most beautiful gardens in Wales, land of ‘Song and Poetry’. Some of the gardens are close to the sea and river estuaries, others with dramatic mountain backdrops but all have a special element that makes them outstanding. Our base for the five nights will be the wonderfully grand Hotel Portmeirion, which opened in 1926 as the focal point of Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis’ proposed Village as well as Portmeirion Village. For us, one of the most important rules in planning a botanical tour is that it should not be rushed. So, apart from guided visits to some very special gardens, there will also be free time to explore individually, take in the vistas, and to sit and wonder at what nature and man have created in the most memorable of settings.

London Festival Opera



We are delighted that London Festival Opera will be joining us for our stay and presenting two concerts in the superb settings – performing a selection of celebrated arias and ensembles from the operas of Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet and Puccini as well as some lighter pieces from the world of operetta and musicals. We have long been associated with London Festival Opera and each year our music themed tours grow in popularity. London Festival Opera has achieved a considerable reputation for presenting opera in the UK and overseas and has performed for Presidents, Prime Ministers and senior members of the British and European Royal Families. The company has performed at 10 Downing Street, the British Embassy in Paris, the President’s Palace in Malta and as a guest company in one of Italy’s greatest opera houses, La Fenice in Venice. Bringing together artists from the major British opera companies including the Royal Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne, the programmes presented include a wide and varied range of repertoire.





Portmeirion's colourful architecture



Plas Newydd

Guest Speaker – Alan Mason



Alan Mason is one of the most experienced and best qualified garden designers and consultants in Europe. He is a founder member of The Professional Gardener's Guild and the founder of Senior Garden Advisors consultancy group. Alan started his garden design consultancy business in 1987 following a period where he was the youngest Head Gardener in the country, at Bramham Park and Garden Manager to the Queen's cousin Lord Harewood at Harewood House in Yorkshire. Here, he and his team elevated the gardens into the top ten most visited gardens in the country. During the 80's and 90's he presented television programmes from around Europe, including "Le Manoir", the making of his own garden in Brittany, and the long running

"Gardens without Borders" from around France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Holland. Alan is also a judge of the show gardens at the prestigious Sandringham Flower Show and a garden design lecturer for The Royal Horticultural Society.

Tour Leader – Chantal Cookson



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.



Plas Cadnant Gardens

The Itinerary

Day 1 Llandudno to Portmeirion, North Wales.

Transportation will meet us at Llandudno Junction Railway Station for a spectacular drive through Snowdonia National Park to the village of Portmeirion in Gwynedd. Now owned by a charitable trust, Portmeirion will be our home for the next five nights. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner at the hotel this evening.

Day 2 Plas Cadnant & Plas Newydd. Drive to Plas Cadnant, a hidden historic garden, which is slowly being uncovered – a Welsh 'Lost Gardens of Heligan'. Three different gardens have been discovered, including an unusual walled garden with curving walls and a pool, a secret valley garden with three waterfalls and a river, and an upper woodland garden with stone outcrops and the remains of a 19th century folly. Work started on restoring the gardens and grounds in 1997, which was a huge undertaking as large areas had not been maintained for more than 70 years. Since then large parts of the gardens have undergone a spectacular transformation and have been restored to their former glory. After lunch we set off a short distance to Plas Newydd, an enchanting mansion and gardens, with spectacular views of Snowdonia. Set on the shores of the Menai Strait amidst breathtakingly beautiful scenery, James Wyatt redesigned this elegant house in the 18th century. The 1930s restyled interior is famous for its Rex Whistler association and contains his exquisite romantic mural and the largest exhibition of his works. A military museum contains relics from the First Marquess of Anglesey's tenure, who commanded the cavalry at the Battle of Waterloo. Visit the house and walk through the fine spring garden and Australasian arboretum, with an understory of shrubs and wild flowers and an Italianate-style summer terrace. A woodland



View across the Menai Strait towards Snowdonia



Bodnant Garden



Plas Brondanw

walk gives access to a delightful spring and early summer rhododendron garden. From the house and grounds, the views across the Menai Strait to the mountains of Snowdonia are simply stunning.

Day 3 Portmeirion & Plas Tan y Bwlch. This morning we will amble in to Portmeirion, the famous Italianate village. Sir Clough Williams-Ellis acquired the site for Portmeirion in 1925. Over the course of 50 years, the village was developed into a wonderfully eccentric style, while at all times staying in harmony with the natural surroundings. Much work has been carried out in recent years to improve the gardens, enhancing the beauty of the architecture. We will take a walk in 'The Gwylt', a woodland display where the major concentrations of rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias were planted, with a wide variety of choice trees. In the afternoon, we will discover the beautiful gardens of Plas Tan y Bwlch, a spectacular Victorian garden nestled in dramatic mountain scenery within the Snowdonia National Park. Covering 13 acres, this garden for all seasons' hosts a variety of rhododendrons and azaleas in spring, including a 120-year-old rhododendron tunnel. Overlooking the garden is a dramatic Victorian-Gothic mansion that was once home to wealthy slate quarry owners, the Oakeley family. This evening prior to dinner we will enjoy a performance by London Festival Opera in the Hercules Hall at Portmeirion.

Day 4 Nanhoron Estate & Plas Brondanw. This morning we will visit the gardens surrounding Nanhoron, a beautiful Regency mansion house hidden in some of the most beautiful landscape in Wales. The home of the Hardens, whose family has owned this estate for 700 years, The

park and gardens that you see today were originally laid out in the second half of the 18th century. The layout of the landscape with its park running down to the lake follows the classic 18th century plan. This afternoon we visit Plas Brondanw, at Croesor, Gwynedd. Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, who inherited the house from his father, created this Italianate garden. The courtyard is enclosed by clipped yew hedging punctuated by towering columns of Italian cypress. A low panel of elegant ironwork marks a narrow gap in these green walls and the view beyond takes your breath away. The ground falls steeply to the wide plain, rising again in the form of Moel Hebog, a mountain the bulk of which is accentuated by a single tall foreground pine. In the shade by the house grow billowing white-flowered Japanese anemones, purple aconites, astilbes, hostas and ferns. On the sunny side of the path are crocosmia, buddleja and cistus.

Day 5 Bodnant Garden & Bodygallen Hall.

After breakfast we will drive towards Colwyn Bay where we visit the famous Bodnant Garden, situated above the River Conwy, spanning some 80 acres looking across the valley towards Snowdonia. The garden has two parts – the upper garden around Bodnant Hall, which consists of the terraced gardens and informal lawns, and the lower garden – known as the "Dell", formed by the River Hiraethlyn and containing the wild garden. Bodnant has a range of beautiful plants from all over the world, particularly China, North America, Europe and Japan, which are suited to the Welsh climate and soil. A short drive to the secluded Bodygallen Hall, in over 200 acres of parkland, with views of Snowdonia and Conwy Castle, Grade 1 listed Bodygallen Hall Hotel provides all that is best in country house hospitality for

our lunch. The Head Gardener will show us around the beautiful gardens, which include a rare 17th century parterre of box hedges filled with sweet-scented herbs, a walled rose garden and several follies. This evening enjoy a farewell concert by London Festival Opera in the Castell Deudraeth followed by dinner.

Day 6 Llandudno. After breakfast transportation will be provided to Llandudno Junction Railway Station.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

| Category | Brochure Price |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Village Standard Double/Twin | £1995 |
| Main Hotel Double/Twin | £2095 |
| Village Suite Double/Twin | £2195 |
| Village Standard for sole use | £2295 |
| Main Hotel for sole use | £2495 |
| Village Suite for sole use | £2695 |

PRICE INCLUDES: Five nights hotel accommodation at Hotel Portmeirion or Portmeirion Village on a breakfast and dinner basis including wine • Lunch on days 2 & 5 • Excursions as described including entrance fees • Two London Festival Opera Performances • Tour Leader • Guest Speaker • Group transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance, meals other than those detailed.

Please note: Due to the layout of the hotel and grounds, we do not recommend this holiday for those with walking difficulties. The lift in the Main Hotel only services the 1st floor and the rooms in Portmeirion Village may only be accessible by climbing several steps.



Portmeirion Village

PORTMEIRION

Portmeirion Village was designed to show how a naturally beautiful site could be developed without spoiling it and Williams-Ellis worked to complete his grand vision over 50 years, completing the Village as it is known today in 1976.

Hotel Portmeirion is a Grade II listed, four-star hotel overlooking the sandy beaches of the Dwyryd Estuary. It was converted from an early Victorian Villa to a hotel by Clough Williams-Ellis in 1925 and restored in 1988. Situated in the heart of picturesque Portmeirion, it is surrounded by acres of woodland gardens and impressive natural landscapes. This was converted to a contemporary hotel in 2001 and features 14 stylish bedrooms, some with lift access, a fine-dining restaurant, a bar and terrace and several relaxing lounges. Much of the Victorian interior has been retained, including an intricate Italian fireplace and a grand 18th century oak staircase.

Portmeirion Village is home to 32 individually styled, serviced rooms and suites, each with its own character and charm. These rooms have all the benefits of traditional hotel accommodation, but with the added appeal of being located in the heart of the Village. All have views of the Village or the Dwyryd Estuary and some have ground floor access.

In Portmeirion you will be assured of a warm welcome combined with some of the best food in North Wales and a friendly and professional service. There is plenty to explore – the subtropical forest at Portmeirion, affectionately known as The Gwylt (Wildwood in Welsh) features some of Britain's largest trees, secret gardens, a derelict castle and rare flowers.



Hotel Portmeirion Restaurant

Your Accommodation

For our stay we will be accommodated in both Hotel Portmeirion and Portmeirion Village, with several room types on offer. Guests in both areas of the hotel, and all room categories, may enjoy complimentary entry into Portmeirion Village and Gardens as well as use of the heated outdoor swimming pool.

Main Hotel Room: These rooms are spread over two floors, there is lift access to the first floor and the second floor is accessible via a staircase. All rooms have an en-suite bathroom, television, Wi-Fi and tea or coffee making facilities.

Village Standard: These rooms feature an en-suite bathroom, television, Wi-Fi and tea or coffee making facilities.

Village Suite: The suites benefit from a separate living room and are situated in various locations around the village. All suites have an en-suite bathroom, television, Wi-Fi and tea or coffee making facilities.

Your Dining: Fine dining is at the heart of Portmeirion and there are a number of award-winning restaurants including the Castell Deudraeth Brasserie and the Hotel Portmeirion Restaurant. Also, combining the creative Welsh food of the head chef, Mark Threadgill with the interiors of Sir Terence Conran, the Dining Room offers a unique dining experience. Here, using predominantly regional produce, the chefs are constantly developing new dishes and the restaurant has a great reputation for its ambitious and innovative food.



Chantry Row, The Dome



Village Standard



Main Hotel Room



Village Suite



Village Suite



Portmeirion

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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: Portmeirion.