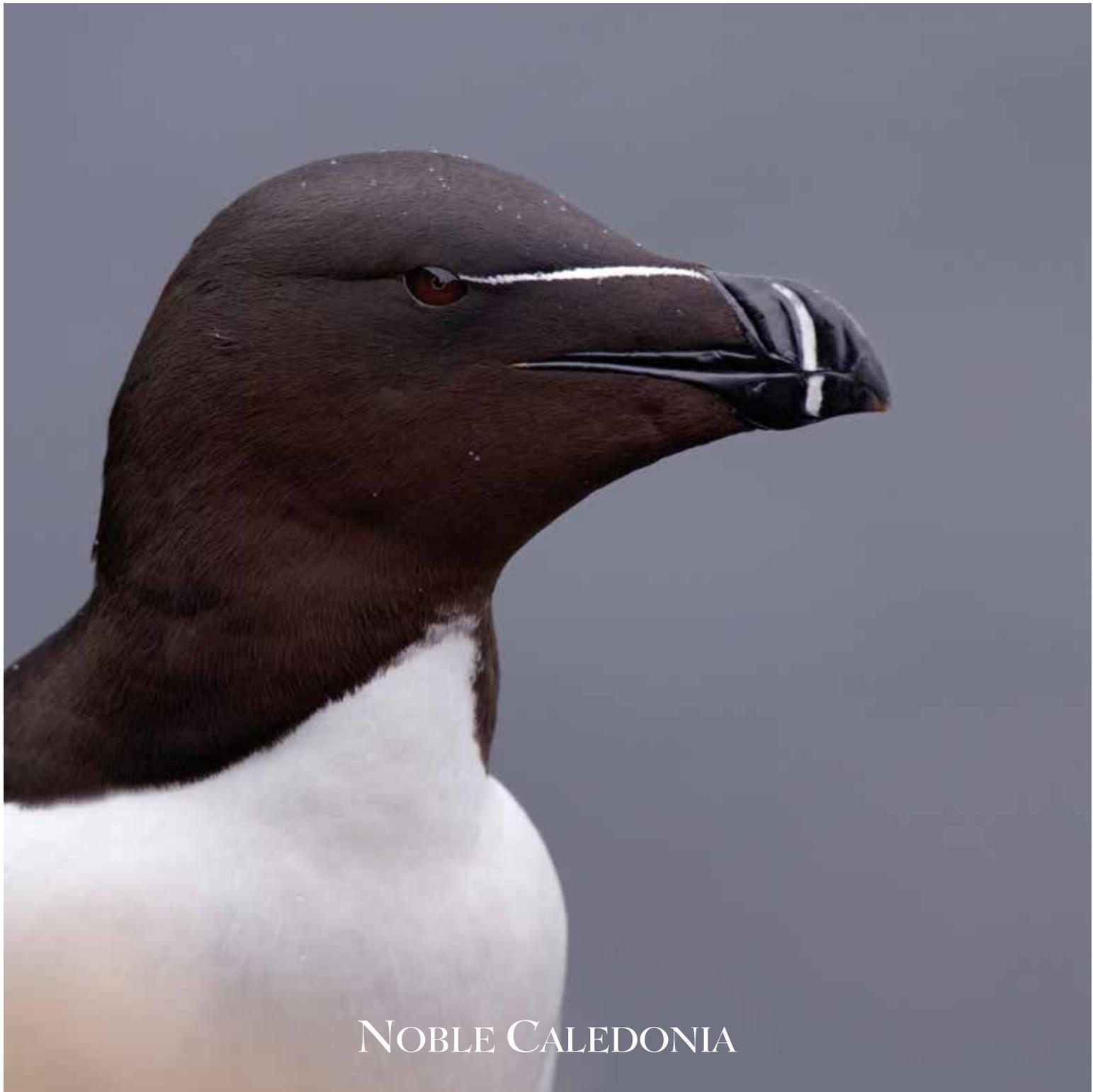


# HEBRIDEAN SECRETS

Discover Scotland's beautiful landscapes  
aboard the MS Serenissima

14<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019



NOBLE CALEDONIA

If ever an archipelago was made for expedition cruising it is the islands off Scotland's west coast. You can travel the world visiting all manner of exotic and wonderful places, but remember that some of the finest scenery, fascinating history and most endearing people may be found close to home. Nowhere is that truer than around Scotland's magnificent coastline, an indented landscape of enormous natural splendour with offshore islands forming stepping stones into the Atlantic.

One of Europe's true last remaining wilderness areas affords the traveller a marvellous island hopping journey through stunning scenery accompanied by spectacular sunsets and prolific wildlife. With our naturalists and local guides we will explore the length and breadth of the isles, and with our nimble Zodiac craft be able to reach some of the most remote and untouched places. There is no better way to explore this endlessly fascinating and beautiful region that will cast its spell on you than by small ship. Whether your interest lies in wildlife, gardens, photography, ancient history or simply an appreciation of this unique corner of the kingdom, this voyage has something for everyone. With no more than 95 travelling companions, the atmosphere is more akin to a private yacht trip and ashore with our local experts we will divide into small groups thereby enjoying a more comprehensive and peaceful experience. Learn something of the island's history, see their abundant bird and marine life, but above all revel in the timeless enchantment that these islands exude to all those who appreciate the natural world.



St Kilda



Puffins



Canna House

## THE ITINERARY

**Day 1 Oban, Scotland.** Embark the MS *Serenissima* this afternoon in Oban. Transfers will be provided from Glasgow Central Railway station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time. Sail this evening.

**Day 2 Barra & Mingulay.** Today we will land on Barra which is near the southern tip of the Outer Hebrides and visit Castlebay, which curves around the barren rocky hills of a beautiful wide bay. Here we find the 15th century Kisimul Castle, seat of the Clan Macneil and a key defensive stronghold situated on a rock in the bay. We have time to explore the castle and then explore the town and maybe visit the 'Dualchas', the Heritage Centre with collections showcasing the history of the islands. In the afternoon, we will sail the short distance to Mingulay which is nearly 1600 acres and the largest of the group of islands south of Barra. Its towering cliffs and stacks face the Atlantic while the east side slopes gradually down to the sandy beach of Mingulay Bay. Despite there being a continuous population on the island for at least two thousand years, evacuation began in 1907 and the island was completely abandoned in 1912. Ruins of the village remain close to the shore which we will explore on a guided walk. The islands are also a nature reserve with important breeding populations of razorbills, guillemots, black guillemots and puffins.

**Day 3 St Kilda & Stac Lee.** This morning arrive at 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 two dozen 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 guided walks on the island. Later, we will cruise past one of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee. The impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

**Day 4 North Rona & Sula Sgeir.** Spend the day around North Rona, an isolated island some fifty miles north of Cape Wrath. The last islanders left North Rona in 1844 and today it is home to thirteen species of breeding seabirds including large colonies of great black-backed gulls, great skuas and puffins. There is also a large population of grey seals which we hope to observe on a Zodiac cruise. If weather permits we will also visit the gannet colony on Sula Sgeir,

home to over 5000 breeding pairs and renowned as the least visited national nature reserve in Britain.

**Day 5 Stornoway & Shiant Islands.** On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, today's tour takes you across the island to the beautiful west coast and to Callanish. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000BC. 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. Visit the excellent visitor centre to learn more about the site and venture out amongst the stones themselves to experience their mysterious atmosphere. Continue around the west coast to the site of 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. We then head north to Gèarrannan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses where people and animals lived in close proximity. The houses are 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 at 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 6 Handa & Inverewe.** Arrive over breakfast at Handa where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the magnificent sea cliffs of Torridonian sandstone which rise from the Atlantic. The island comes alive each summer when nearly 100,000 seabirds gather to breed including internationally important numbers of guillemot, razorbill, puffins and great skua. This afternoon we sail towards Inverewe for our visit to the imposing gardens of Inverewe, surely one of the finest sited gardens in all Scotland. Designed by Osgood Mackenzie in 1862 it is home to exotic and tender plants which thrive in their northerly location warmed by the Gulf Stream and protected by over 100 acres of woodland planted as shelter.

**Day 7 Canna & Muck.** Strategically placed between the mountains of



Mingulay Beach



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. 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. Canna and Sanday have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled occupation in Scotland. 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. Later today we sail past the island of Rum to the neighbouring island of Muck. The smallest of the Small Isles measuring just one mile by two we have the afternoon to explore on foot. The energetic may want to climb to the highest point on Beinn Airein and enjoy the views across the islands or alternatively join one of our onboard team for a nature walk on the lookout for seals and birdlife.

**Day 8 Lunga, Staffa & Iona.** 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 sea birds, in particular kittiwakes, shags, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and puffins. Later today we hope to drop anchor off Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face feature an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which have been cut by the sea into cathedralesque

caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. Northwest of Staffa lie the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. Iona will be our final stop for today. Iona has been occupied for thousands of years, but also 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 or perhaps walk along the white sandy beaches or go in search of the corncrake amongst the irises.

**Day 9 Colonsay & Jura.** Lying between Mull and Islay, we will spend the morning exploring the island of Colonsay, with her craggy, heatherbacked hills, sparse woodland yet impressive array of plant and birdlife. Near Colonsay House, built in 1722 by Malcolm MacNeil and bought by Lord Strathcona in 1904, we will visit the attractively dilapidated wooded gardens which protect the tiny, enigmatic 8th century St Oran's Cross. Return to the vessel for lunch as we sail to Jura, arriving in the late afternoon. 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 to taste the local product. Alternatively, join one of our naturalists on a walk along the shore or join the local bus for a short drive around the island.

**Day 10 Oban.** Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow International Airport and Central Station at a fixed time.



### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price
2	Standard Stateroom	£3595
3	Classic Stateroom	£3795
4	Superior Stateroom	£3995
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4195
6	Junior Suite	£4595
7	Owner's Suite	£4995
8	Serenissima Suite	£5495
10	Standard Single	£3195

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

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

# MS SERENISSIMA



Harald Lounge



On Deck



The Restaurant

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. In December 2018, the vessel will once again undergo a significant refurbishment and, after a re-configuration of the deck plan will accommodate a maximum of just 95 guests.

## Your Cabin/Suite

Accommodating no more than 95 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. From January 2019, there will be eight different grades of cabin arranged over five decks, and all 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.



## 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

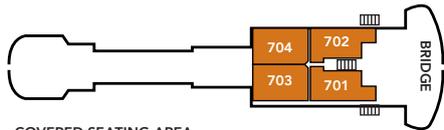
served a la carte and is four courses, except at the Captain's Dinner, which is a six course affair. Where possible, local produce is sourced for an authentic dining experience. A choice of red or white wine, beer, soft drinks, and water is included at lunch and dinner. In good weather there are al fresco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

## Your Space

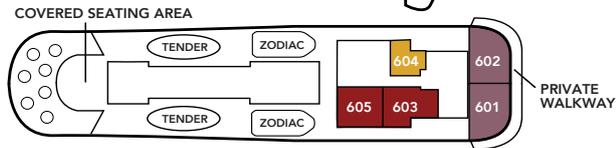
The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library and Wi-Fi is available at an extra cost throughout the vessel. The outside areas really are something special. A spacious observation 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 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

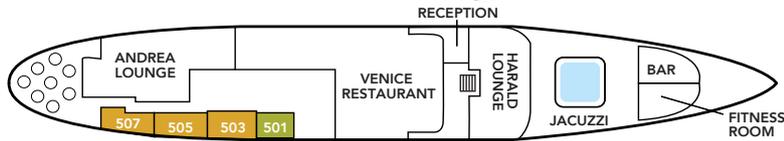
DECK 7



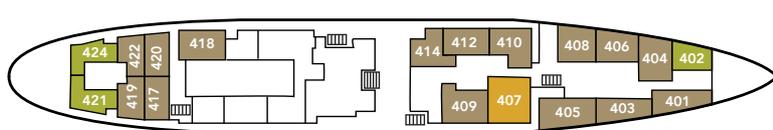
DECK 6



DECK 5



DECK 4



DECK 3



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> STANDARD STATEROOM  | <span style="color: gold;">■</span> DELUXE STATEROOM | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> SERENISSIMA SUITE   |
| <span style="color: green;">■</span> CLASSIC STATEROOM  | <span style="color: red;">■</span> JUNIOR SUITE      | <span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> STANDARD SINGLE |
| <span style="color: brown;">■</span> SUPERIOR STATEROOM | <span style="color: purple;">■</span> 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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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: Razorbill.