

LOVE OF COUNTRY

A JOURNEY AROUND THE NORTHERN & WESTERN ISLES
ABOARD THE MS SERENISSIMA
WITH GUEST SPEAKER JOHN LOVE
24TH JULY TO 2ND AUGUST 2021

A SPECIALLY ARRANGED VOYAGE IN SUPPORT
OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND



**NATIONAL
TRUST *for*
SCOTLAND**

NOBLE CALEDONIA



Iona



Gannet colony



Inverewe Gardens

We are delighted to have the opportunity to offer this unique cruise which has been exclusively designed for the National Trust for Scotland. Noble Caledonia introduced small ship cruising, often referred to as expedition cruising, to Scotland almost 30 years ago. Scotland soon became one of the most important areas for our fleet of small ships which operate in every continent of the world.

The geography of Scotland lends itself well to exploration by sea, perfect for our small ships that carry up to 100 passengers. The very essence of our journeys is to take small numbers of travellers to fascinating places and enhance the experience with our onboard teams of experts. This is not a 'traditional' cruise but a thought provoking voyage of discovery for those who wish to see and learn more about the natural world and the culture of remote communities. The Trust has a long history of running cruises for members and we are delighted to be involved with their plans for 2020.

A well-tuned itinerary is like a good book, each day being a new chapter offering insight, wonder and reflection. Join us as we explore Shetland, Fair Isle and St Kilda and cruise to the Hebridean islands of Canna, Skye, Staffa, Iona and Colonsay. For the gardeners we have included the magical gardens of Inverewe and the Castle of Mey.



Expert Team

Joining you on board will be an expert team who will enhance your experience immeasurably with their knowledge of the botany, ornithology and history of the places we visit. They will hold lectures on board and accompany you ashore during guided walks.

John Love – Guest Speaker



We are delighted that John Love will be part of the team. Born in Inverness, John graduated in zoology from Aberdeen University. In 1975 he went to live on the Isle of Rum where he managed a highly successful project to reintroduce the sea eagle. While he remains

involved with birds of prey, seabirds are another passion. In the 1990s John acted as guide and lecturer on several small charter vessels around the Hebrides and he has lectured on cruises around Scotland and to Norway for the National Trust for Scotland. He first worked for Noble Caledonia in 2009 and now participates in various expedition cruises around the UK and the Hebrides in particular.

The Itinerary

Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland. Embark the MS Serenissima in the afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen airport and railway station at a fixed time.

Day 2 Fair Isle & Lerwick, Shetland. This morning we anchor off the island of Fair Isle, the most remote inhabited island in the UK, owned and cared for by the National Trust for Scotland. Located midway between Shetland and Orkney, the tiny population of 60 or so islanders always extend us a warm welcome. Enjoy a three mile walk across the island, with a Stevenson lighthouse at each end, visit the community hall for a cup of tea or maybe purchase some of the famous knitwear. Return to the ship for lunch before we sail the short distance to Lerwick, where the afternoon is free to explore this historic port at your own pace.

Day 3 Unst & Yell. Continue our exploration of Shetland with a visit to the islands of Unst and Yell. Unst is Britain's most northerly inhabited island. The Trust owns seven parcels of land on Unst, the nearby small uninhabited island of Daaey and some croft land on Yell. The islands are of special interest to geologists, botanists and birdwatchers. We will visit the Heritage Centre to learn

Loch Scavaig



about the islanders' struggles over the centuries as well as the industries that have prospered. Arriving at Yell in the afternoon, we will have free time to explore the pretty village of Burravoe.

Day 4 Inverewe. We will spend the morning at sea as we sail towards Inverewe for our visit to the impressive garden, surely one of the finest sited gardens in all Scotland, cared for by the National Trust for Scotland. First designed by Osgood Mackenzie in the late 19th century it is home to exotic and tender plants that thrive in this northerly location warmed by the effects of the Gulf Stream and protected by over 40 hectares of woodland shelter. As well as the garden, you can explore Inverewe House, an interactive museum and explore the estate which has many designations recognising its importance as a species-rich habitat.

Day 5 Canna & Loch Scavaig. Strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape, with remains dating from all periods of settled occupation in Scotland. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by the National Trust for Scotland. The fertile soil and diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life. We see Canna House, and wander across grassy plateaus to the 600 feet cliffs in the north. Sail during lunch to lovely Loch Scavaig on the island of Skye. This is great walking country, but for those who prefer a less energetic afternoon our Zodiacs will explore the coastline.

Day 6 Staffa & Iona. Today we explore two magical places in the care of the National Trust for Scotland. Awake this morning at our anchorage off the south side of Staffa. The perpendicular rock face features an imposing series of basalt columns, known as the colonnade, which have been shaped by the sea into cathedralesque caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer before sailing to Iona. This flat Hebridean island has been occupied for thousands of years and has been a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. Visit the abbey or enjoy a walk along the white sandy beaches.

Day 7 Colonsay & Islay. We will spend the morning exploring the island of Colonsay, with her craggy, heather-clad hills and sparse woodland yet impressive array of plants and birdlife. Near Colonsay House, we will visit the attractively dilapidated woodland gardens which protect the tiny, enigmatic 8th century St Oran's Cross. Over lunch we sail the short distance to Islay where we anchor at Bunnahabhain with its beautiful views of the Sound of Islay. Here we will learn the steps involved in creating the whisky at the local distillery, and afterwards will savour the experience with a dram in the tasting room.

Day 8 St Kilda, Outer Hebrides. We arrive this morning at St Kilda, a remarkable archipelago some 40 miles west of North Uist. Dominated by the highest sea cliffs and sea stacs in Britain, Hirta, (St Kilda's main island) was occupied on and off for at least 2000 years, with the last 36 islanders 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 and in 1957 it was bequeathed to the National Trust for Scotland. The National Trust for Scotland Ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks.

Day 9 Scrabster. This morning we will visit the Castle & Gardens of Mey, built between 1566 and 1572 by George Sinclair, 4th Earl of Caithness. The castle was purchased by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother in 1952 who restored the castle for use as a holiday home and created the beautiful gardens we will see today. After lunch on board we will drive along the coast to Dunnet Bay and Dunnet Head where we will see the lighthouse built in 1831 by Robert Stevenson. We continue to John O'Groats, the most northerly town on mainland Britain.

Day 10 Aberdeen. Disembark after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Aberdeen airport and railway station at a fixed time.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Cat	Cabin Description	Price
2	Standard Stateroom	£3995
3	Classic Stateroom	£4195
4	Superior Stateroom	£4695
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4995
6	Junior Suite	£5395
7	Owner's Suite	£5795
8	Serenissima Suite	£5795
10	Standard Single	£5495

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

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Noble Caledonia will be making a contribution to support the vital work of the National Trust for Scotland, much of which will be enjoyed during this voyage.



Harald Jarl Lounge



Serenissima Suite

MS SERENISSIMA

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. With her small size and fleet of Zodiac landing craft, she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships.

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, safety deposit box and other thoughtful appointments. Due to the very nature of the ship, the cabins do vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm.

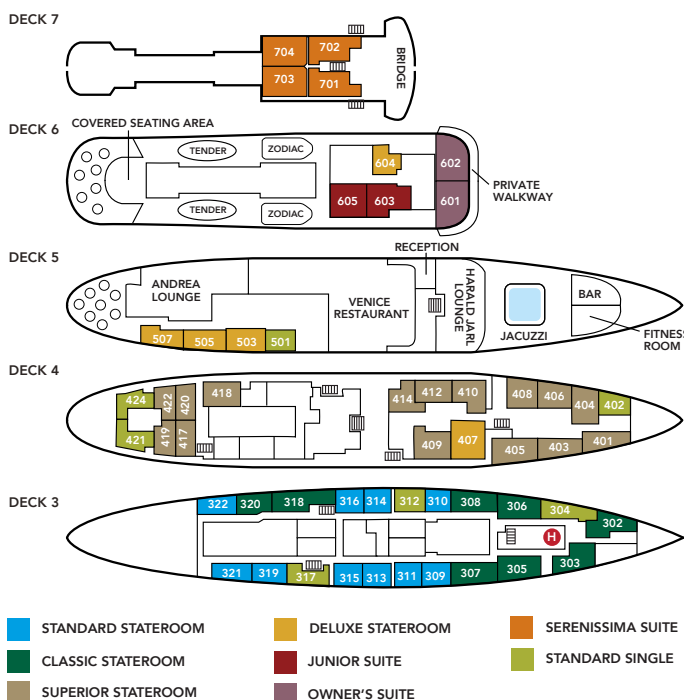
Your Dining

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. 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. 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

There are two lounges on board in addition to the outside areas which include a spacious observation deck, a lido area with Jacuzzi, outside bar and a covered seating area. Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique Swedish 18th century influenced, country house style which works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and a classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

DECK PLAN



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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