

NOBLE CALEDONIA

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TIMELESS LANDSCAPES OF THE LOW COUNTRIES

A journey from Brussels to Amsterdam with Guest Speaker
Michael Howard aboard the MS Charles Dickens

26th April to 6th May 2024

Our springtime exploration of Holland and Belgium is a wonderful mix of art, culture and history. For art lovers we have included the fine establishments of The Hague and Amsterdam whilst we will also visit the horticultural splendours of Keukenhof and Leiden. Not forgetting the beautiful Flemish cities, we spend time in Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges where we will explore the historic canals, cobbled streets and Medieval buildings.

From the comfort of the elegant, 100-passenger MS Charles Dickens, we will criss-cross the intricate network of rivers and waterways that make the Low Countries such a unique region and will witness the gentle landscape and picturesque cities and towns which so inspired the Old Masters.



Keukenhof Gardens

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Amsterdam's art treasures in the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh Museum
- Keukenhof Gardens at Lisse
- Antwerp's Medieval gems & Ruben's House
- The beautiful cities of Ghent and Bruges
- Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague & Delft Blue Pottery

GUEST SPEAKER – MICHAEL HOWARD



Michael is an independent scholar, writer, painter and curator. He is married to the artist Ghislaine Howard with whom he shares a passion for art and the joy and creative release that it can bring to people's lives. He has curated numerous exhibitions and examples of his own work may be found in Manchester Art Gallery and many private collections both in the UK and abroad. He is President of the Arts Society Bolton and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and for many years he taught academic and studio-based students at the History of Art Department at the Manchester School of Art [MMU]. Over the years he has given many talks for Christies, Sothebys and ACE study tours and has lectured at universities and art galleries both in the UK, USA and Europe. Michael has been a lecturer with the Arts Society for over 30 years and is the author of many books including *The Impressionists by Themselves*, *Techniques of the Masters*, (Goya and Whistler); *L.S. Lowry A Visionary Artist*; *Monet* in association with the Musée Marmottan and *Gauguin* in association with the Gauguin Museum in Tahiti.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London or Manchester to Brussels, Belgium. Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Charles Dickens and sail this evening.

Day 2 Antwerp. Spend the day in the charming city of Antwerp. In the mid-16th century it was one of Europe's most important cities and home to Baroque painter Pieter Paul Rubens. Today, Antwerp retains an intriguing Medieval heart alongside a vibrant café culture, a riverside fortress and a truly impressive Gothic cathedral. Our morning tour here will include a visit to the delightfully restored Rubens House and St Jacobskerk. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon is free to explore ashore further or join a tour to the Museum Plantin-Moretus which has acquired UNESCO World Heritage Status; an astonishing place which is home to the world's oldest printing press and priceless manuscripts. Sail this evening towards Ghent.

Day 3 Ghent. After breakfast today we will explore the highlights of this Flemish gem including St Bavo's Cathedral, home to the unique altarpiece 'The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb', painted by the Van Eyck brothers in 1432. We also visit the ancient port at Graslei with its unique row of historical buildings, St Nicholas' Church and those feeling active can explore the grandiose Castle of the Counts (Gravensteen). This afternoon is free to explore further at your own pace as we moor overnight.

Day 4 Bruges. This morning we drive to Bruges which was one of the largest and finest cities in Europe. The 15th century Belfry still dominates the centre and the Town Hall, St John Hospital and the Begijnhof border the narrow canals. We will see some of the most important places and buildings which survive from the Middle Ages including the Basilica of the Holy Blood, City Hall, the Begijnhof, Minnewater and the Belfry and Church of Our Lady. Return to the MS Charles Dickens and spend the afternoon cruising.



Antwerp



Mauritshuis Museum, The Hague



Leiden



Amsterdam

Day 5 Neunen, Netherlands. Arriving into the Netherlands we drive this morning from Cuijk to Neunen where Van Gogh lived between 1883 and 1885 and where he painted his first major work 'The Potato Eaters'. We will visit the Van Gogh Village Museum which depicts his time in the city and its influence on his painting styles. We will also see some of the locations in Neunen painted or sketched by the artist. Return to the ship and spend the afternoon cruising.

Day 6 Dordrecht & Kinderdijk. Arrive this morning in Dordrecht, our base to see the nearby marvellous Windmills of Kinderdijk, of which there are 19 in total, dating from 1740. Return to the ship for lunch and the remainder of the day is free to explore Dordrecht with its old world atmosphere and quaint shops, cottages and canals.

Day 7 Rotterdam, The Hague & Delft. From Rotterdam we depart for a full day tour. Our first stop will be The Hague for a visit to the beautiful Mauritshuis Museum with its marvellous collection of Dutch Golden Age paintings. Afterwards continue on to Delft, birthplace of Vermeer. We will have lunch in a local restaurant on arrival followed by a walking tour of this pretty town and a visit to see the Delft Blue Pottery.

Day 8 Leiden. After breakfast we depart for the vibrant city of Leiden, a treasure trove of narrow streets and canals, lined with beautiful 17th century buildings, including ancient almshouses. On our walking tour we will see the old harbour, Beestenmarkt square and the charming Wiedesteeg, where the world-famous painter Rembrandt was born. We continue with a visit to the Hortus Botanicus, the oldest botanical garden in the Netherlands.

Day 9 Keukenhof Gardens & Haarlem. Drive to nearby Keukenhof Gardens for a morning in this extraordinary horticultural heaven. With 32 hectares of flowers, more than seven million bulbs in bloom and 800 varieties of tulips, this is a truly unique and unforgettable experience. Return to the ship in Haarlem for lunch and this afternoon we visit the 17th century Church of St Bavo, immortalised in the artwork of Dutch painters Pieter Saenredam and Gerrit Berckheyde, and the Frans Hals

Museum, home to a spectacular display of 16th and 17th century portraits, still lifes and landscapes.

Day 10 Amsterdam. There will be a choice of tours this morning; depart for a visit to the Rijksmuseum, arguably Amsterdam's most important art venue. Housing some of the greatest examples of Western European painting and decorative arts, it boasts works by Vermeer, Goya and Rubens. Alternatively, you may like to take a canal cruise and admire the city from a glass-top boat as you glide past 17th century homes, churches and 16th century merchant houses. The afternoon is free before we have our farewell dinner on board this evening.

Day 11 Amsterdam to London or Manchester. Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London or Manchester.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

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

CAT	CABIN DESCRIPTION	DECK	BROCHURE PRICE	SPECIAL OFFER PRICE
C	Deluxe Cabin with French Balcony	Middle Deck	£4095	£3895
B	Deluxe Cabin with French Balcony	Upper Deck	£4295	£4095
A	Suite	Upper Deck	£5095	£4895
D	Standard Cabin with Window for sole use	Main Deck	£4095	£3895
C	Deluxe Cabin with French Balcony for sole use	Middle Deck	£5295	£5095

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • 10 nights aboard the MS Charles Dickens on a full board basis • House wine, beer & soft drinks with lunch & dinner and from the Bar all day • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia onboard team including Guest Speaker • Gratuities • Transfers • Port & airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



Cat A & B Cabin



MS Charles Dickens



Restaurant

MS CHARLES DICKENS

The elegant MS Charles Dickens is a stylish and well-designed vessel. Built to accommodate a maximum of 150 passengers, we will be limiting the passenger capacity to just 100 for our charters, ensuring a tranquil atmosphere on board and ample space for all. The vessel has a warm and friendly atmosphere and offers the perfect environment in which to relax and enjoy the passing scenery. The friendly crew excel in providing excellent service and after a day exploring ashore on one of the included guided tours, you will return to the comfort and peace of a well-run and exceedingly comfortable vessel.

YOUR CABIN

Cabins are arranged over three decks and are well planned and smartly furnished featuring mahogany and stylish soft furnishings. The majority of cabins feature floor to ceiling sliding glass doors opening to a French Balcony providing wonderful views and access to fresh air. The cabins with French Balcony on the Middle and Upper Decks measure 15 square metres, whilst the four suites on the Upper Deck measure 23 square metres. There are nine double cabins on the Main Deck which measure 14 square metres and feature high windows. All cabins are en-suite with shower and feature ample storage space, a writing/dressing table, television, safety deposit box and individually controlled air-conditioning.

YOUR DINING

While the most beautiful river scenery passes by, you can enjoy delicacies in the Restaurant created by the Executive Chef and his team. The restaurant features large windows and open seating, allowing you to sit where and with whom you like at each meal. Breakfast is a sumptuous buffet with omelettes and fresh eggs prepared to order, lunch is a combination of a delightful buffet and hot dishes served to order and dinner is a served four course meal. In addition, house wine, beer and soft drinks are included at both lunch and dinner as well as all day from the bar.



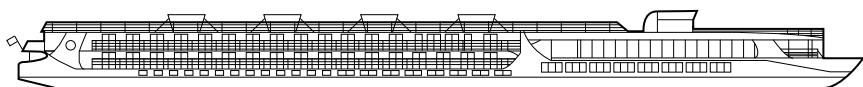
Lounge

YOUR SPACE

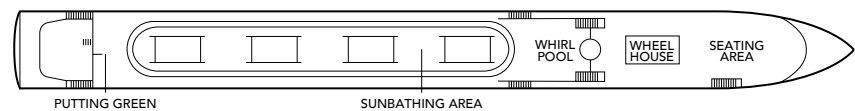
The social hub of the vessel is the spacious Lounge and Bar on the Upper Deck which benefits from floor to ceiling windows, affording excellent views as you relax or listen to the onboard lectures. The lounge also features a small library and there is a café area at the aft of the Upper Deck where tea and coffee are available all day and this area leads to some outdoor, covered seating. The huge Sun Deck

covers almost the entire length of the vessel, interrupted only by the bridge and the forward viewing area is the ideal location to watch the changing scenery. The Sun Deck features plenty of comfortable chairs and sun loungers in addition to a small putting green, large chess board and a small whirlpool for your enjoyment. There is also a small fitness room and a sauna on board.

DECK PLAN



SUN DECK



UPPER DECK



MIDDLE DECK



MAIN DECK



- Cat A – Suite with Balcony
- Cat C – Cabin with French Balcony
- Cat B – Cabin with French Balcony
- Cat D – Cabin with window

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