

NOBLE CALEDONIA

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£300
PER PERSON

WILDFLOWERS,
HISTORY &
GARDENS OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN

A springtime voyage from Athens to Naples
aboard the MS Island Sky with Dr Toby Musgrave
22nd April to 3rd May 2017



Achillion Palace gardens, Corfu



Argostoli lighthouse

Join us for this relaxing and informative voyage as we explore the Mediterranean and all its wonders. Our small ship is perfect for this journey of discovery as we cruise to some of the most culturally fascinating and scenically beautiful places in Greece and Italy. The combined effect of the natural beauty of the islands and coast with the intriguing history and stunning architecture of the towns and cities makes this journey unforgettable. The itinerary has been planned to ensure the balance is just right between exploring ashore, relaxing on board and with some time at leisure on some of the picturesque islands for individual exploration. It is the most perfect time of year; verdant gardens, landscapes awash with blossoms, moderate temperatures and all with the absence of high season crowds.



For this exploration we are working with our Australian associates and experts in botanically themed tours, Botanica World Discoveries who have chartered our very own MS Island Sky for the voyage. With just 100 or so like-minded souls and an expert team on board, together with informative local guides, by the end of the voyage you will have seen and learnt so much. All this will be achieved with great ease from the comfort of the all-suite MS Island Sky which has the advantage of being able to access many of the region's ports which the big ships simply cannot.



Wild poppies, Crete

Tour Highlights

- Private garden visit to Marquess of San Giulliano's garden
- Private garden visit to Princess Borghese garden
- Explore the Island of Ischia & La Mortella garden
- Have a choice of touring options in selected locations
- Learn about the plants and gardens from your Botanical Guide, Dr Toby Musgrave

Guest Speaker



Dr Toby Musgrave

is one of the UK's leading authorities in garden history and design.

With a degree in horticulture and a Ph.D. in garden history, since 1994 Toby has embarked on a freelance career as a television and radio presenter and consultant, author, journalist and photographer, designer and lecturer.

Since 2004 he has shared his time between the UK and Denmark. As a garden designer Toby has created gardens in the UK, the USA, India and in Denmark. In the UK Toby contributes to a number of magazine and newspapers. Most recently Toby was Consultant Editor and major contributor to Phaidon's "The Gardeners Garden". He specialises in Italian and French gardens and Mediterranean plants.



Wild flowers, Kalamata



Kerkyra

The Itinerary

Day 1 London Heathrow to Athens, Greece.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky for embarkation and set sail for Crete.

Day 2 Heraklion, Crete. Arrive this morning in Heraklion and from our berth it is a short distance to the Palace of Knossos, legendary home of the Minotaur and the greatest survivor of the Minoan period, which predates even Homer. Wander around the site impressively excavated by Sir Arthur Evans seeing some of the 1300 rooms adorned with lively frescoes where King Minos held court. We will then travel inland, enjoying lunch enroute, through the charming countryside and picturesque villages to one for the three great mountain ranges, Mount Dikti, where we hunt for spring flowering plants including wild tulips and anemones before returning to the MS Island Sky.

Day 3 Rethymnon, Crete. This morning we will call into Rethymnon and visit the Fortezza Castle which was built by the Venetians for protection. It is star shaped with three gates and six bastions. In the middle, the church of St Nicolo was converted into the Mosque of the Sultan Ibrahim Han. Continue on a scenic drive to Gaios Kampos which is renowned for endemic Cretan plants and seek out crown anemones, turban buttercups, narcissus tazetta, orchids, irises and Bulbocodium species, before we visit the Minoan cemetery at Armernoi. Return to the ship for

lunch and then either spend the afternoon exploring at leisure or join an excursion inland to the Botanical Park and Gardens of Crete with nearly 20 hectares of fruit trees, herbs, medicinal and ornamental plants to explore.

Day 4 Kalamata, Greece. Enjoy a choice of full day excursions. From our berth at Kalamata enjoy a scenic drive through the beautiful and fertile Peloponnese countryside to Agios Nikona where we hope to see an abundance of springtime euphorbia and wildflowers. Continue to Areopolis, centrally located on the Mani peninsula, it is regarded as the heart of Mani and one of the most attractive villages in Greece. There will be time to explore the village at leisure before enjoying a traditional lunch and returning to the ship. Alternatively choose to visit the extraordinary site of Mystras, a remarkably intact Byzantine town that once housed a population of 20,000 people. Here we visit the Cathedral of Agios Dimitrios. On the floor of the church is the two headed eagle, the symbol of the Palaeologos Dynasty, carved into a plaque and according to tradition, this is where Constantine XII stepped when he was crowned king. Strolling through the narrow, hillside paths of the dead city, we will also visit the Church of Agia Sophia, the Palace of the Despots and the Monastery of Pantanassa, with its brilliant frescoes.

Day 5 Argostoli, Kefalonia. The largest of the Ionian islands, Kefalonia is immortalised in the

novel Captain Corelli's Mandolin and has great charm. We will arrive this morning in the capital Argostoli and drive to the nearby Botanical Gardens which were founded in 1998 to display and preserve the wild and endemic plants of the island. We will then make our way to Mount Ainos National Park renowned for its dense forest of Kefalonian Fir trees and endemic flowers including orchids. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure to relax on board or explore Argostoli independently.

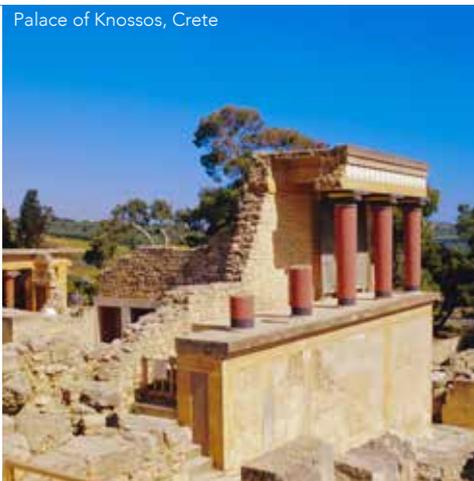
Day 6 Kerkyra (Corfu town), Corfu.

Arrive this morning on the island of Corfu, one of the most richly endowed of all the Greek Isles. Praised by Homer in 'The Odyssey' and selected by Shakespeare as the setting for 'The Tempest', the island retains evidence of cultural heritage from each of its past rulers - Byzantium, Venice, France, Russia and Great Britain. On our morning tour visit the Achillion Palace and see the beautifully landscaped gardens full of exotic flowers and guarded by elaborate statues of mythological heroes. Return to Kerkyra and enjoy a guided walk through the old town including a visit to St Spyridon Church, an ornate 16th century place of worship with a wealth of incredible silverware before returning to the ship for lunch and spending an afternoon at leisure. Alternatively join a full day tour including Mon Repos Palace, surrounded by rare plants, herbs and trees, and enjoy

the scenic beauty of the Island before lunch in a local taverna.

Day 7 Otranto, Italy. From the port of Otranto we will drive to Lecce, often referred to as 'The Florence of the South' with its amazing collection of Baroque architecture including an abundance of churches and noble palaces decorated with the "Lecce stone", a chalky stone ranging in colours which became the local style due to its ease to work with. A guided tour will include a visit to the beautifully decorated Santa Croce Basilica and Piazza Duomo, considered one of the finest and most impressive squares in southern Italy. After the tour, and before returning to the ship, there will be an exclusive, private visit to the 15th century Palazzo Tamborino-Cezzi. The owner of the palazzo will personally take us on a tour, sharing interesting stories and anecdotes regarding his family and the palazzo itself. Spend a leisurely afternoon at sea as we sail for Catania.

Day 8 Catania, Sicily. After a morning at sea arrive in Catania, an attractive port which lies in the shadow of Mount Etna. The architecture here is particularly impressive but a little forbidding being mainly constructed from black lava stone from Mount Etna. After lunch on board visit the fabulous gardens of Princess Borghese who will personally show us around and introduce us to a vast array of Mediterranean fauna including yuccas, palms, flowering trees (Jacaranda and Judas),



Palace of Knossos, Crete

Rethymnon

together with more exotic plants such as Xanthorrea Arborea and Encephalartos Horridus.

Day 9 Syracuse, Sicily. Syracuse once rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. Our tour will begin in the Archaeological Zone and include the well preserved spectacular 15,000 seat Greek theatre. Paradise quarry is now an attractive garden and orange grove but was the primary source of limestone and the site is famous for the curious 'Dionysus Ear', a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. We then continue to the old town to the remains of the Temple of Apollo, the Fountain of Arethusa and the Temple of Athena which is located in the cathedral. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon enjoy a private visit to the gardens of the Marquess of San Giuliano. See the Mediterranean, Arabian and Tropical gardens which owe much to the head gardener, Rachel Lamb.

Day 10 Giardini Naxos and Stromboli, Sicily. We anchor this morning in Giardini Naxos, the oldest Greek settlement in Sicily which dates from 735 B.C. and our base for our visit to Taormina, a walled town lying the shadow of Mt Etna. The town has been a popular tourist destination since the 19th century and our guided tour will include walking the characteristic alleys before visiting the 15th century Palazzo Corvaja and the impressive Greek Theatre, from where there are marvellous

views over the town and coast. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon we sail towards Stromboli, one of the most active volcanoes in the world, in time to scenic cruise off the island and hopefully see it lit up in the evening light. *Please note that we will anchor off Giardini Naxos and local tenders will be used to transport us ashore.*

Day 11 Naples, Italy. Arrive in the port of Naples during lunch and this afternoon choose between a tour to nearby Herculaneum. This wealthy Roman town was completely submerged by volcanic

mud following the A.D.79 eruption of Vesuvius. Since its rediscovery in 1709, excavations have revealed beautiful public baths, villas and gardens of noble families decorated with murals and floor mosaics, and the remains of a theatre. Alternatively spend the afternoon on the island of Ischia to see La Mortella, a wonderful garden originally designed by architect Russell Page for the composer Sir William Walton and his wife.

Day 12 Naples to London Gatwick. Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Magellan	Standard Forward	£5595	£5295
Magellan	Standard	£5695	£5395
Columbus	Superior	£5895	£5595
Marco Polo	Premium	£6195	£5895
Marco Polo	Corner	£6295	£5995
Erikson	Deluxe Balcony	£6495	£6195
Explorer	Owner's Balcony	£6795	£6495
Magellan	Standard for sole use	£7595	£7295
Columbus	Superior for sole use	£7895	£7595

Price Includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, 11 nights aboard the MS Island Sky on a full board basis including wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes, onboard team including Cruise Director, Tour Manager and Guest Speaker.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

N.B. It was not possible to secure return, scheduled direct flights from and to the same London airport for this holiday, however we will be providing a complimentary transfer between the two airports, details of which will be confirmed with your final documentation.

“ Our voyage combines some ‘must see’ sites together with private gardens and some rarely visited places that are totally unsuitable for vessels larger than ours. We will see some of the loveliest scenery imaginable whilst enjoying all the civilised comforts of the MS Island Sky. ”





MS Island Sky

The much loved MS Island Sky is one of the finest small ships in the world. With a maximum passenger capacity of only 114, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks.



Standard Suite



Dining on deck



Lounge

On board there is a high ratio of crew to passengers. Our friendly crew of 75 are mainly Filipino and Eastern European and our Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day.

There will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after

dinner, informative port briefings and presentations from our onboard team and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room, all contribute to making any voyage aboard the MS Island Sky a memorable experience. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly comfortable ship.

Your Space

The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book. Daily newspapers and magazines are placed in the library depending on local availability. Outside there is a rear sun deck, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a further observation and sun deck.



Deluxe Balcony Suite



Restaurant



Library

Your Dining

Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. In the main elegant dining room, breakfast is served buffet-style, with certain items cooked to order and lunch and dinner is à la carte. When weather permits, breakfast and a buffet-style lunch are also served on deck. To enhance your dining experience even further a selection of wines are included with lunch and dinner. Afternoon tea is served in the lounge and tea and coffee are available 24 hours.

over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD/CD player and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, Molton Brown toiletries, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, air-conditioning and heating.

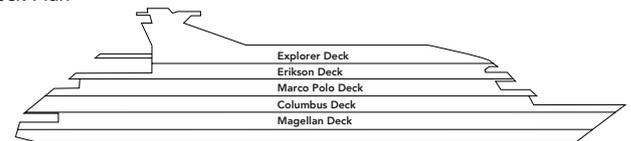


Friendly Staff

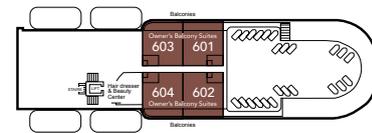
Your Suite

On board there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged

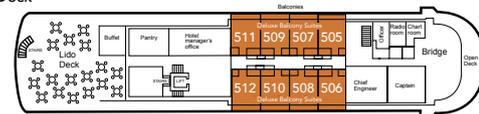
Deck Plan



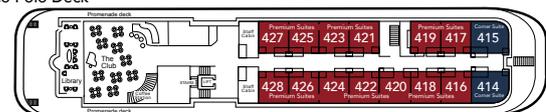
Explorer Deck



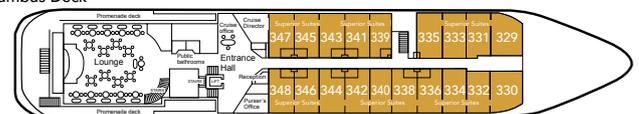
Erikson Deck



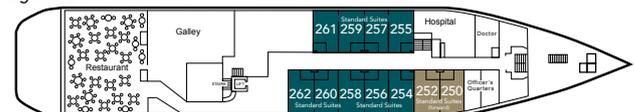
Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck



- Standard Suites (Forward)
- Premium Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites

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