

NOBLE CALEDONIA

SPECIAL
OFFER – SAVE
£200
PER PERSON

WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

A VOYAGE FROM MALTA TO ATHENS WITH
GUEST SPEAKER LOUISE SCHOFIELD
ABOARD THE MS SERENISSIMA

1ST TO 10TH OCTOBER 2020



The seas between Malta and Athens offer access to a wealth of ancient sites. Join us aboard the MS Serenissima in October and take advantage of comfortable temperatures and the absence of high season crowds. As we journey from Malta across the Mediterranean, our small ship will take us on a voyage through the playground of the Greek Gods learning of the myths and legends before our arrival in Athens, the cradle of Western civilisation.

We will visit some of the Ancient World's most fascinating sites including Olympia, the principal shrine of Zeus and Hera and the site of the original Olympic Games, set in a lush mountain valley beside the River Kladeos. We also visit Mycenae, the home of Agamemnon which stands atop a remote hill in the southern Peloponnese and Epidaurus, one of the most renowned of Greece's ancient sites. In addition to these we visit the equally interesting Byzantine town of Mystras, a Medieval ghost town set on a cliff overlooking the site of ancient Sparta and one of the best preserved Byzantine towns in Greece, with excellent examples of 14th and 15th century architecture. Our penultimate port of call is the town of Nafplion, one of the most beautiful towns on mainland Greece where we have the advantage of an overnight mooring.

Our custom-made itinerary focuses mainly on many places that the mega cruise ships cannot access and, in addition to our included guided excursions, we will visit vineyards in both Greece and Italy to sample the local wines and enjoy ample time at leisure for some independent exploration.



Guest Speakers



Louise Schofield

Louise Schofield, recently appointed Visiting Professor of Archaeology at the American University of Rome, is an archaeologist specialising in the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean world. Formerly Curator of Greek Bronze Age and Geometric Antiquities at the British Museum, her book *The Mycenaeans* was co-published by the British Museum and the Getty Museum in 2007 and she made a television programme on the Trojan War with the BBC Horizon team. Leaving the British Museum in the year 2000, she now works on large-scale archaeological projects - including (for seven years) at Butrint (Albania). The statue of a Roman Emperor that she found in her trench there in 2005 now has pride of place in the museum at the site.

Our View

“The route from Malta to Athens is full of rich sites from the Ancient World and so when planning this itinerary it was difficult to decide what to omit. This cruise ensures we see some of the highlights including Mycenae, Olympia and Sarande all with the advantage of berthing in the most convenient ports and travelling in small numbers so we do not overrun these wonderful locations. In addition we can use our small ship to moor in central berths in Syracuse and Nafplion where we can take the opportunity for a pre dinner drink or after dinner walk once the day trippers have left. We also have the added bonus of having our Guest Speaker join us on the excursions and provide talks on board to bring the legends of these ancient places to life.”

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Valletta, Malta.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima moored in Valletta. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner on board as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Syracuse, Sicily.

Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 BC and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the Mediterranean and rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. We will visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park where we find a well preserved Greek theatre with seats carved from limestone. Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove, was the primary source of that limestone and is the site of the curious 'Dionysus' Ear', a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. We will continue to explore the island of Ortigia where we find the Temple of Apollo, considered to be Sicily's

most ancient Doric temple and the Baroque Cathedral, erected over the remains of the Temple of Minerva. The afternoon is free to explore independently before we sail tonight.

Day 3 Crotona, Italy.

After a morning at sea we arrive in Calabria and the port of Crotona which is on the site of the ancient Greek City of Kroton. Whilst little remains of the Greek city it was one of the most important settlements of Magna Graecia, where Pythagoras set up a school in 530 BC and whose athletes were very successful at the Olympic Games. We will take a scenic drive inland this afternoon to Santa Severina, one of Italy's prettiest towns overlooking the Neto River valley. We will explore the majestic Carafa Castle which was built by the Normans in 1076 and is surrounded by strong, crenellated walls with a moat on three sides and contains



Olympia



Syracuse



Mystras



Nafplion

intricate underground labyrinths and stables, with the remains of Medieval frescoes. Also see the cathedral, the beautiful Byzantine baptistry and wander the town's tangled streets. As we return to the ship we will stop at one of the vineyards that produce famous Calabrian wine, *Ciro*, for a tasting accompanied by typical Calabrian food.

Day 4 Otranto & Lecce. 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 'Leccese 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, 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. Enjoy a light lunch of local specialities before a concert of traditional music of the Salento region called *La Pizzica*, a popular Italian folk dance, originally from the Salento peninsula which later spread throughout the Puglia region. Return to Otranto for some free time to explore the town before we sail this evening.

Day 5 Sarande for Butrint, Albania. Our morning in Albania sees us discover the archaeological and ancient city of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the

ruins that feature the remains of many eras and cultures. From the Hellenistic period there are temples, the promenade and the 4th century BC theatre. From the Roman era are the public baths, gymnasium and fountains. From the Byzantine era we see chapels and the large Basilica of St Peter and St Paul, whilst the Venetians are represented by a watchtower and a small castle with commanding views over the Straits of Corfu. Return to the MS *Serenissima* for lunch and spend the afternoon at sea.

Day 6 Olympia, Greece. The port of Katakolon will be our base today for our excursion to Olympia. Pastoral and lush, Olympia's plentiful ruins are shaded by Aleppo pines and olive trees. The fame of Olympia rests upon the Olympic Games. During the celebrations that accompanied the Games, competitors, while not forgetting that they were Athenians, Spartans or from other city states, remembered that they were Greeks and regarded an Olympic victory as the highest honour. We will see the gymnasium, the stadium and the palestra or wrestling school. We will also explore the Altis, or sacred precinct of Zeus, which houses structures including the Temple of Zeus, one of the largest temples on the Greek mainland and the Archaeological Museum which houses some fine sculptures and artefacts from the site. After our visit either choose to return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon or stay for an independent lunch in Olympia and have an afternoon to explore further and maybe visit the Olympic Museum, before returning to the ship this afternoon.

Day 7 Kalamata & Mystras. Arrive this morning in Kalamata which grew from the ancient city of Farai to the second largest city on the Peloponnese due to the fertile soils producing olive oil and figs. This morning we drive inland to Mystras, a remarkably intact Byzantine town that once housed a population of 20,000 people. Here we visit the Cathedral of Agios Dimitrios, where the two-headed eagle, which is the symbol of the Palaiologos Dynasty, is carved into a plaque on the floor. According to tradition, this is where Constantine XII stepped when he was crowned king. Strolling through the narrow lanes 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. Before returning to the vessel, refreshments will be served at the picturesque tavern located just beneath the site offering sweeping views over the local terrain. The afternoon is free to explore Kalamata at your own pace.

Day 8 Nafplion. Looking out across the translucent water of the bay towards the Arcadian Mountains, Nafplion's sheltered location below a rocky headland and large natural fortress crowned by a Venetian castle is perhaps unrivalled in Greece. After breakfast we will enjoy a scenic drive through the Argos Plain to Nemea, the site of a religious sanctuary which hosted the pan-Hellenic athletic games every two years from 573 BC until 271 BC. Nemea was not a town or settlement but a venue where festivities were held during the games and our tour will include the Temple of Zeus, the bath house and the stadium before spending time in the small but excellent



Epidaurus theatre



on site museum. Nemea is also famous for its red wines and we will enjoy a wine tasting at a local vineyard before we continue to the famous citadel of Mycenae which is located high above the confluence of two boulder strewn ravines and accessed by way of the Lion Gate. Once inside the gate, we will explore the Royal Palace, the shaft graves and the remains of the city walls. An archaeological briefing within the Treasury of Artreus (also known as the Tomb of Agamemnon) will add to our understanding and appreciation of the sights. We will enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before returning to Nafplion this afternoon where we will remain moored overnight.

Day 9 Nafplion. This morning we will visit one of the most renowned of Greece's ancient sites. Situated on the slopes of a beautiful and wooded valley, Epidauros was

known throughout the Hellenic world for its unique medical facilities and healing treatments. Dedicated to Aesclepius, the god of healing, the city was filled with curative spas and baths and only priests had access to certain secret rites. Most of the ruins of Epidauros have been reduced to their foundations, with the exception of the astonishing theatre. Still used for special performances, the theatre is in an admirable state of preservation. Built into the ground, rather than above it, it is known for its fantastic acoustics, which we will observe during our visit. Return to Nafplion and have the afternoon at leisure to wander the twisting labyrinthine streets and view the Venetian and Turkish architecture.

Day 10 Athens to London. Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

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

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
2	Standard Stateroom	£4150	£3950
3	Classic Stateroom	£4400	£4200
4	Superior Stateroom	£4750	£4550
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5250	£5050
6	Junior Suite	£5750	£5550
7	Owner's Suite	£5950	£5750
8	Serenissima Suite	£6200	£6000
10	Standard Single	£4950	£4750

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

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Pre-Cruise Malta Extension

29th September to 1st October 2020



If you would like to spend some time in Malta before embarking the MS Serenissima we are offering a two night stay at a centrally located hotel offering the chance to explore Valletta and the surrounding area.

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Malta. Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay and spend the remainder of the day at leisure. Meet tonight for a welcome dinner in the hotel.

Day 2 Valletta. After breakfast in the hotel we will embark on a city tour of Valletta, the 16th century "Fortress City" built by the Knights of St John. We will explore Merchants Street containing the surviving auberges built by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, together with the palace where Napoleon Bonaparte is believed to have stayed in 1798. Our final stop will be at St John's Cathedral. The afternoon and evening are free for independent exploration.

Day 3 Mdina. Enjoy time at leisure before we check out of the hotel in the late morning and transfer to Mdina which was the fortified capital of the island before the arrival of the Knights. We will have lunch in one of the restaurants and transfer to the MS Serenissima moored in Valletta.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£545**
Single: **£895**

Price Includes: Two nights hotel accommodation with breakfast, tours as described, lunch on day 3, dinner on day 1, Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers. **Not Included:** Travel insurance, meals not mentioned in itinerary.

Post-Cruise Athens Extension

10th to 12th October 2020



If you would like to spend some time in Athens upon disembarking the MS Serenissima we are offering a two night stay at a centrally located hotel.

The Itinerary

Day 1 Athens. Disembark after breakfast and drive to the Acropolis, a symbol of the glory of ancient Greece. Stand in awe of what is considered the most perfect example of classical architecture in the world – the Parthenon, designed as a shrine to Athena. A brief walk will bring you to the new Acropolis museum with artefacts from the site. After our visit we will make our way to Plaka for a traditional Greek lunch. After checking into the hotel the remainder of the day and evening is at leisure.

Day 2 Athens. Today is free to explore independently. Meet this evening for dinner.

Day 3 Athens to London. After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£545**
Single: **£875**

Price Includes: Two nights hotel accommodation with breakfast, tours as described, lunch on day 1, dinner on day 2, Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers. **Not Included:** Travel insurance, meals not mentioned in itinerary.

MS SERENISSIMA



Harald Jarl Lounge



Andrea Lounge



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.

Your Cabin/Suite

Accommodating no more than 95 passengers, there are eight different grades of cabin arranged over five decks, and all feature either windows or portholes. The cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an en-suite bathroom with shower (please note cabins 601 - 605 and 507 have a bath with shower attachment) 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 replenished daily. Due to the very nature of the ship, the cabins vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm.



Your Dining

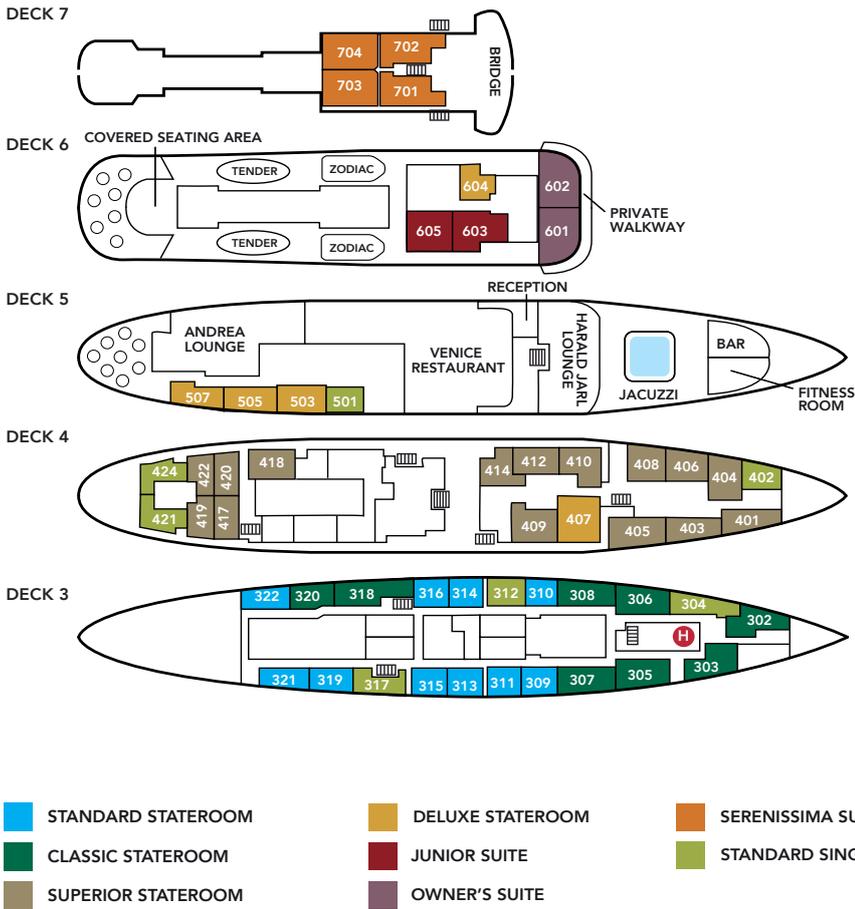
The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting and, with its Deck 5 location, all of the tables benefit from great views. The picture windows also make the restaurant wonderfully light and airy. Breakfast is served buffet-style with cooked dishes available and eggs to order 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 Jarl 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



SERENISSIMA SUITE
(25 square metres)



OWNER'S SUITE
(22 square metres)

NB. Please note cabin sizes vary in each category and measurements shown are approximate.



DELUXE STATEROOM
(15 to 25 square metres)



SUPERIOR STATEROOM
(11.5 to 18 square metres)



JUNIOR SUITE
(21 square metres)



STANDARD STATEROOM
(10 to 11.5 square metres)



STANDARD SINGLE
(7 to 12.5 square metres)



CLASSIC STATEROOM
(14 to 19 square metres)

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Byzantine Church, Mystras