

it's in our nature to explore

THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT

COMMONWEALTH
BAY

Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.

Helen Keller

During the peak of the southern hemisphere summer, *Orion* offers travellers a unique opportunity to venture to the continent of Antarctica. In 2008/09, her fifth season of expeditions, *Orion* sails between Australia and New Zealand, crossing the Antarctic Circle to places redolent with history and adventure. These modern-day expeditions follow in the footsteps of Australian explorer Sir Douglas Mawson who, in 1911, led the Australasian Antarctic Expedition. He established the base camp at Cape Denison in Commonwealth Bay and the huts (along with their undisturbed contents) remain today, providing a fascinating and eerie insight into the hardships intrepid explorers faced on this last frontier.

Along the way the wildlife we will encounter will astound you. The sub-Antarctic islands are home to penguin breeding colonies numbering in the millions, to Elephant Seals and Hooker Sea Lions, and the endangered Wandering Albatross. Our expeditions are led by husband and wife team Don and Margie McIntyre. In 1995 the McIntyres spent a year living at Cape Denison, close to the location selected by Mawson who dubbed the area the 'kingdom of blizzards'. Although our itinerary to the extreme sub-Antarctic and Antarctic regions is based on many years of collective experience, prevailing weather and ice conditions in this area of the world are unpredictable, mother nature dictates our course. These are not cruises they are true expeditions to what can be the most inhospitable region on earth. Bring with you a spirit of adventure and flexibility.

BLUFF (INVERCARGILL), NEW ZEALAND – embark

Latitude: 46°35'S | Longitude: 168°18'E

The largest urban centre in New Zealand's Southland is Invercargill, a city of 49,000 people. Visitors come to admire the elegant Victorian and Edwardian buildings, gardens and landscaped parks. The fishing port of Bluff is a half hour drive south from Invercargill and is home to the famous Bluff oyster and a lively annual seafood festival. From Bluff, visitors can catch a ferry to Stewart Island – a haven for native bird life and the only place in New Zealand where you can readily see kiwi in their natural habitat. On day of embarkation a coach transfer will operate between Invercargill and Bluff.

CROSSING THE SOUTH OCEAN

Heading south from Bluff *Orion* journeys into the Southern Ocean where we transit a vast wilderness in the company of sea birds (especially albatross and petrels), whales and dolphins. Further south again, we cross the Antarctic Convergence Zone where warm currents meet cold which rise to the surface resulting in nutrient laden waters, a sudden and substantial drop in temperature and abundant marine life. A band of fog defines the convergence and the first icebergs may be sighted from here on. Look to the south for Aurora Australis, nature's own light show.

THE SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS

Isolated, windswept, beautiful and fragile, the sub-Antarctic islands are unique and irreplaceable. Described by the United Nations Environment Program as "the most diverse and extensive of all sub-Antarctic archipelagos", they have been honoured with World Heritage status. The islands are notable for the large number of seabirds and penguins that nest there.

SNARES ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND – Zodiac cruising

Latitude: 48°34'S | Longitude: 179°55'E

Two small rocky islands, North East and Broughton, comprise The Snares, the closest sub-Antarctic islands to New Zealand. The islands are covered with heavy tussock grass and wind-beaten forests of tree daisies. Weather permitting we'll launch our Zodiacs for an exploration of the sheltered eastern coastline as the island's wildlife protection program precludes landings. The Snares are home to huge numbers of breeding birds, 99 recorded species including Albatross, Antarctic Terns and Snares Crested Penguins.

AUCKLAND ISLANDS, NEW ZEALAND – wet landing

Latitude: 50°45'S | Longitude: 166°0'E

Today this island group is a nature reserve, New Zealand's highest status of protected land, and a World Heritage site. Our primary objective is to undertake Zodiac landings in Carnley Harbour. Join the expedition team on a rewarding walk to the Albatross colony at South West Cape. Zodiac cruising can include Camp Cove and Tagua Bay – be sure to watch for rare Yellow-Eyed Penguins swimming around the Zodiacs. Zodiac cruising in Sandy Bay on nearby Enderby Island may afford views of a large Hooker Sea Lion colony with pups all jostling for position.

If we are fortunate, we may see Yellow-Eyed Penguins as they move to and from their nests in the forests beyond the beach.

MACQUARIE ISLAND, AUSTRALIA – wet landing

Latitude: 54°29'S | Longitude: 158°56'E

Often described as one of the "wonder spots" of the world, the sub-Antarctic island of Macquarie has been said to rival South Georgia in its magnificence, scenic diversity and prolific wildlife. Designated a wildlife sanctuary in 1933 and a World Heritage Site in 1977, Macquarie now operates a full-time manned station where biological and meteorological research is conducted.

The station, located on the isthmus at Buckles Bay, is where we will collect the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife rangers who will be our guides. Sandy Bay, situated halfway down the island's eastern seaboard, is our planned landing site. The Zodiacs will traverse break-waters of giant kelp before reaching rocky beaches where landing conditions can best be described as "wet and challenging". Once ashore you'll find the bay, with its rugged backdrop of mountains and tussock covered headlands, is home to 20,000 breeding pair of Royal Penguins, King Penguins, Rock Hopper Penguins, Gentoo Penguins and Elephant Seals. This profusion of wildlife wasn't always so protected, the rusting remains of

machinery used by whalers being stark reminders of the exploitation which took place on the island during its early history.

COMMONWEALTH BAY – AN OVERVIEW

Latitude: 67°0'S | Longitude: 141°44'E

On 8 January 1912 Sir Douglas Mawson landed on the Antarctic continent after a journey from Hobart that took 36 days aboard the *Aurora*, a ship of just 612 tons. During this voyage to the Antarctic continent, *Orion* will be positioned in and around Commonwealth Bay on the Adelie coast of Antarctica. Your expedition team will lead a variety of opportunistic landings which may include sites at Cape Denison, Port Martin and Dumont d'Urville. In each instance landings ashore and Zodiac explorations are wholly subject to prevailing weather conditions, in an area Mawson described as "the home of the blizzard".

CAPE DENISON – wet landing

Latitude: 67°0'S | Longitude: 147°44'E

Our expedition leaders Don and Margie McIntyre have called Cape Denison home, having spent more time there than any other person alive today. It is the windiest place on the face of the earth and is surrounded by spectacular ice cliffs. The area is home to 60,000 Adelie Penguins, Snow Petrels, Giant Petrels, Wilsons Storm Petrels and Cape Pigeons. Weddell, Leopard and Elephant Seals may be seen stretched out on the ice. Cape Denison is the site of Sir Douglas Mawson's hut from the historic 1911-13 expedition. This is one of the Antarctic's least visited sites and, as the first Australian scientific base on the Antarctic, is of great historical significance and the subject of an ongoing multi-million dollar preservation program. Apart from the main living hut and workshop, there is the absolute magnetic hut, the magnetograph house, the transit hut and the memorial cross erected in memory of Ninnis and Mertz who died tragically in 1913. The main hut is surrounded by historic debris and artifacts including clothing, shoes, food crates, sleds, ropes and kerosene tins. An Australian Antarctic Division guide will accompany guests into Mawson's Hut.

PORT MARTIN – wet landing

Latitude: 66°49'S | Longitude: 142°39'E

Enroute to Port Martin, *Orion* will maneuver through a large gallery of up to 100 grounded icebergs of various sizes, making it possible for close proximity views and photography. Port Martin is the former site of the French Antarctic base. Built in 1950 by the third French expedition to Terre Adelie, the region was so named by Dumont d'Urville for his wife. The area is in the small French Antarctic claim, sandwiched between the two

Australian claims. The base was abandoned after it was partially destroyed by fire on the night of 24 January 1952. The site is scattered with artifacts and has an Adelie Penguin rookery, nesting McCormack Skuas, a spectacular backdrop of ice cliffs and a snow ramp to the Antarctic Plateau.

DUMONT D'URVILLE – wet landing

Latitude: 66°40'S | Longitude: 140°01'E

The French scientific base at Dumont d'Urville is on Petrels Island, located at the south-eastern end of the Geologie Archipelago. The base is named for French explorer Jules-Sebastien-Cesar Dumont d'Urville and was built in 1956 to replace the base at Port Martin some 100km to the east. The spectacular area is an important centre for the study of the rich local wildlife, including seals, petrels and penguins - the Adelie Penguin being named after Dumont d'Urville's wife. Emperor Penguins may be observed on some ice-floes behind the controversial and now unused airstrip (the French destroyed some Adelie Penguin rookeries to build it). Adelie Penguins abound around the base – in fact right up to the front door of most buildings!

HOBART, TASMANIA – disembark

Latitude: 42°52'S | Longitude: 147°19'E

Set on the River Derwent, Hobart is very much a city of the sea with views of the Derwent estuary appearing around every corner. Historic 19th century waterfront warehouses remain, still bordering the commercial fishing harbour, though today it is easier to feast on seafood at one of the restaurants they now house. Hobart is the finishing line for the famed blue water Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and its deep harbour precinct once bustling with whalers, soldiers, petty bureaucrats and opportunistic businessmen. A walk through the town will reveal that the city has resisted the pressure to move with the times, having retained and preserved old buildings such as the Parliament built by convicts in the 1830's.



ORION SUPPORTS MAWSON'S HUTS FOUNDATION

Orion Expedition Cruises is a proud sponsor of the Mawson's Huts Foundation. The foundation has been established to conserve in perpetuity these unique historical buildings, base for one of the most significant expeditions in Antarctic history.

More details can be found at www.mawsons-huts.org.au

16 Night Antarctic Continent – Commonwealth Bay

Day 1	Bluff (Invercargill), NZ
Day 2	Snares Islands
Day 3	Auckland Islands
Day 4	at sea
Day 5	Macquarie Island
Day 6-8	at sea
Day 9-11	Commonwealth Bay Region
Day 12-16	at sea
Day 17	Hobart, Australia

2008 : December 11

Expedition Fares

Ctgy	Type	16nt
B	Stateroom	\$15,790
A	Stateroom	\$18,325
JS	Junior Suite	\$21,775
DS	Deluxe Suite	\$23,845
BS	Balcony Suite	\$28,445
OS	Owners' Suite	\$33,055

Expedition Fares – per person in Australian Dollars