

it's in our nature to explore

KIMBERLEY EXPEDITION & KIMBERLEY HIGHLIGHTS

The traveller sees what he sees.
The tourist sees what he has come to see.

G.K. Chesterton

Nothing can fully prepare you for the dramatic contrasts of Australia's north-west, rich in Aboriginal culture and galleries of ancient artwork. Towards the west, in the historic pearling town of Broome, the colours of nature are vibrant and intense: rich red earth, azure blue seas and brilliant white sand beaches. North of Broome lies the ragged Kimberley coast, a place you can only comprehend from the sea. Rugged gorges, inlets, waterfalls plunging 80 metres all combine for an awe-inspiring experience you simply can't have by travelling overland. *Orion's* 10 night Kimberley Expeditions in 2008 will undertake an in-depth exploration of this remote coastline, either one way between Darwin and Broome (Kimberley Expedition) or return from Darwin (Kimberley Highlights).

DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY – *embark or disembark*

Latitude: 12°28'S | Longitude: 130° 49'E

Darwin is Australia's closest city to the equator and the gateway to the Top End. Following bombing during World War II, Darwin was more a frontier town of crocodile and buffalo shooters and pioneer cattlemen. After Cyclone Tracy wiped out the city in 1974 it was rebuilt as Australia's cosmopolitan northernmost tropical capital. Despite this, much architecture remains from the city's early periods, with museums, markets and an incredible diversity of restaurants to entertain you.

The harbour foreshore is a great place to discover the city's maritime links: take a relaxing cruise on an old pearl lugger, a thrilling flight in a seaplane or a gentle hovercraft trip. You can spend a day out fishing for barramundi, jewfish, golden snapper and threadfin salmon, or go Scuba diving around

shipwrecks. At sunset, savour a taste of Asia at the night markets at Mindil Beach, where you can browse the food stalls for a picnic dinner on the beach. For the ultimate Arnhem Land wilderness experience, book a two night pre- or post cruise Expedition to Mount Borradaile. See Page 23.

KING GEORGE RIVER & FALLS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

– *by Zodiac*

Latitude: 13°57'S | Longitude: 127°149'E

Today *Orion* will drop anchor in Koolama Bay. Originally known as King George Bay, the area was renamed after the merchant ship Koolama was bombed near here by Japanese aircraft during World War II. The 12km journey up the King George River reveals some of the world's most spectacular scenery and a wealth of bird species. The almost vertical sheer canyon walls have been eroded over millions of years and look like stacks of sandstone reminiscent of a child's building blocks. The King George River drains the Gardner Plateau and the falls are the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80m or 262ft). Whether you experience the mighty thundering of the falls early in the season, or have the chance to get up close and personal later in the year, you'll be in awe of the sight.

VANSITTART BAY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA – *wet landing*

Latitude: 14°09'S | Longitude: 126°14'E

Our full day in Vansittart Bay in 2008 will allow us to continue to see the Bradshaw Art on display at Jar Island and also to learn about the WWII history and culture of Mungallala Truscott Airbase with the traditional owners.

Orion will anchor off Jar Island, at the southern end of Vansittart Bay. The island was named after the shards of pottery found there by the explorer Phillip Parker King, most likely left behind by Macassan traders. After landing ashore from one of the ship's Zodiacs the expedition team will lead a guided walk along the beach and inland to the outdoor art gallery of Gwion Gwion (otherwise known as Bradshaw) rock art. Named after Joseph Bradshaw, the first European person to record them in 1891, the rock images are hard to date. It is believed they were created at least 17,000 yrs ago with some theories indicating they could be even older, potentially up to over 50,000 years, a time when humans first explored Australia. If this is the case, the images are possibly the oldest known to man.

Truscott was the "secret air base" for Australia during World War II and as such is rich in Australian history. The site was chosen because it is the point on the Australian mainland closest to Java, where Japanese forces were concentrated. RAAF fighter squadrons were also based there. Today the history of this remote region will be illustrated through the aircraft relics, and narrated by the traditional owners.

BIGGE ISLAND, WESTERN AUSTRALIA – *wet landing*

Latitude: 14°33'S | Longitude: 125°10'E

Bigge Island is a rugged and barren moonscape. Small Monjon rock wallabies and the Northern Quoll thrive here free of feral predators found on the mainland. The island is famous as a site for some amazing rock art, including "first-contact" art spread over many sites. Join the expedition team as they point out the Wandjina art that is in evidence. The Wandjina figures are distinctive for what appear to be haloes around the head of each figure. Painted by the Wunambal people, you will also see images of sailing ships and figures smoking pipes which have been interpreted as representing seafaring European visitors in the 19th century.

HUNTER RIVER (FOR MITCHELL FALLS),

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – *wet landing*

Latitude: 15°05'S | Longitude: 125° 25'E

Morning light reveals arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast. Prince Frederick Harbour and the Hunter River are lined with green rainforest, mangroves and soaring red cliffs. Cliffs at the river mouth are some 200 metres high and to the north Mt. Anderson rises to an impressive 480 metres. *Orion* will drop anchor close to Naturalist Island, the proper name of which is "Wunumpurramarra", on the northern side of the harbour. Join the expedition team for a guided Zodiac excursion upstream into the mangrove-lined tributaries to see and hear the prolific birdlife and perhaps spot saltwater crocodiles. These waters are rich with fish so don't miss the opportunity join your guide in *Orion's* fishing boat for some

sport. It is from the beach on Naturalist Island that the helicopters will depart for a spectacular flightseeing excursion to the Mitchell Falls. En route you'll cross the vast Mitchell Plateau, much of which is inaccessible by road and is now a national park because of its scenic and biological importance. At the massive canyon formed by the falls you may walk, swim in the waterhole or just sit back and soak up the dramatic surroundings.

MONTGOMERY REEF & RAFT POINT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

– wet landing

Latitude: 15° 56'S | Longitude: 124° 12'E

Arriving at high tide, you'll see very little of Montgomery Reef. However as the tide drops rapidly away a raging torrent of water, cascading off the top of this 400ha reef, erupts as miles of surrounding reef appears to slowly rise out of the ocean. A Zodiac will manoeuvre you into a channel in the reef as water cascades down on either side. It's the perfect spot to watch cormorants, egrets and sandpipers forage for sea life trapped on the surface of the reef. Below the waterline opportunistic sea turtles, reef sharks and many larger fish also take advantage of this feast. After landing ashore by Zodiac at Raft Point, your expedition team will guide you on a climb up to a saddle of rock that forms a spectacular outdoor Aboriginal art gallery.

TALBOT BAY/HORIZONTAL WATERFALLS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

– by Zodiac

Latitude: 16°19'S | Longitude: 123°52'E

The Horizontal Waterfalls in the Buccaneer Archipelago are a product of the huge tides in the region, and the effect is created by the rapid tidal fall on the ocean-side of gaps in the cliffs. When conditions are right it is possible for a "waterfall" several metres high to form as the waters trapped on the landward side cascade out through the narrow gap to the ocean side. A flotilla of *Orion's* Zodiacs will take you for an exhilarating trip to witness the phenomenon of the falls. Later in the day join expedition team members on a Zodiac excursion to Cyclone Bay where the tortured geological folds of what was once seabed will be explained.

CAPE LEVEQUE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

– wet landing

Latitude: 16°23'S | Longitude: 122°55'E

Cape Leveque is situated just over 200km north of Broome on the tip of Dampier Peninsula and is often referred to as the most photographed place in the Kimberley. The stunning red-orange sandstone features of the cape contrast sharply with the white sand beaches and cast-iron white painted lighthouse stands guard on the point. The lighthouse was erected in 1912 and marks the western entrance to King Sound. Cape Leveque was named after a French hydrographer

who sailed past on board the *Geographe* in 1803. The road from Broome is open only during the dry season and there is a small camping style resort in the area.

THE LACEPEDES ISLANDS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

– wet landing

Latitude: 16°51'S | Longitude: 122°07'E

The Lacepedes Islands offer a plethora of wildlife. They are home to the world's largest colony of Brown Boobies. With no natural predators these birds are able to breed and thrive on these beautiful uninhabited islands. Their closest neighbours are the green sea turtles who also choose this pristine environment to mate and hatch their eggs. You may have heard of the Lacepedes Islands in relation to the incident where an American involved in the mining of Guano raised the American Flag in an attempt to claim the islands for American possession in the late 1800s.

BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA*

– embark or disembark

Latitude: 18°0'S | Longitude: 122°13'E

The charismatic town of Broome has a colourful history and a unique, cosmopolitan feel, which stems from its early pearling days when over 400 luggers plied the coast. The town is full of contrasts: stroll along kilometres of pristine white sand and swim in the clear water of Cable Beach or skim across tidal flats aboard a hovercraft to Gantheaume Point, home of the 130 million year old Dinosaur Footprints.

OPERA UNDER THE STARS® IN BROOME

If you are an Opera Lover or an Opera Novice, be aboard *Orion's* Kimberley Expedition voyage departing Darwin on 29 August. OPERA UNDER THE STARS® is a one night only event and a definite "must". Imagine relaxing beneath a star filled Kimberley sky on a balmy August night and being serenaded by the crème de la crème of Opera with the beauty of a Broome sunset as a backdrop. Opera tickets and transfers are included in your fare.

*Please note that due to additional time in Broome for the Opera, this itinerary will not include the Lacepedes.

Itineraries for voyages in these regions are influenced by extreme tides, wildlife encounters and prevailing weather conditions. Exact schedules will be announced on board.

10 Night Kimberley Expedition

Day 1	Darwin, Northern Territory
Day 2	at sea
Day 3	King George River & Falls, WA
Day 4	Vansittart Bay, WA
Day 5	Bigge Island, WA
Day 6	Hunter River (for Mitchell Falls), WA
Day 7	Montgomery Reef/Raft Point, WA
Day 8	Horizontal Waterfalls/Talbot Bay, WA
Day 9	Cape Leveque & the Lacepedes, WA
Day 10	Broome (overnight), WA
Day 11	Broome, Western Australia

2008 : April 30, May 10*, June 18, July 9, 19*, 29, August 8* . *These expeditions operate in reverse:
2008 : August 29 – Opera Under the Stars

10 Night Kimberley Highlights

Day 1	Darwin, Northern Territory
Day 2	Vansittart Bay, WA
Day 3	Hunter River (for Mitchell Falls), WA
Day 4	Horizontal Waterfalls / Talbot Bay, WA
Day 5	Broome (overnight), WA
Day 6	Broome, WA
Day 7	Montgomery Reef/Raft Point, WA
Day 8	Bigge Island, WA
Day 9	King George River & Falls, WA
Day 10	at sea
Day 11	Darwin, Northern Territory

2008 : May 20, September 8

Expedition Fares

Ctgy	Type	10nt
B	Stateroom	\$ 7,995
A	Stateroom	\$ 9,285
JS	Junior Suite	\$11,030
DS	Deluxe Suite	\$12,090
BS	Balcony Suite	\$14,420
OS	Owners' Suite	\$16,755



Expedition Fares – per person in Australian Dollars

Early Booking Rewards are offered on a "First-in, best-dressed" basis - refer to page 5