

it's in our nature to explore

NEW ZEALAND SOUTH ISLAND EXPLORATION

If it would not look too much like showing off,
I would tell the reader where New Zealand is.

Mark Twain

These 11 night *Orion* expeditions feature the contrasting scenic grandeur of New Zealand's South Island including both the largest and smallest of New Zealand's exquisite National Parks. Experience vast untracked southern wilderness in Fjordland National Park, the remote and rarely visited sub-Antarctic Snares Islands, the sun drenched northern coast of Abel Tasman National Park and the picturesque vineyards and wineries of the Nelson Region.

This is New Zealand at her most beautiful, where the air is pure and valleys steep. Where waterfalls plunge from the sky and primeval forests are shrouded with gentle morning mist.

MILFORD SOUND – embark 19 Nov

Latitude: 44°36'S | Longitude: 167°50'E

Orion is the perfect viewing platform from which to see World Heritage listed Milford Sound; a memorable scenic cruise that includes glacial carved hanging valleys, the iconic 1600 metre high Mitre Peak and magnificent Stirling Falls. The Maori were the first to ascribe creation of the fjords to a "titanic mason", Tute Rakiwhanoa – a concept you will find totally believable as *Orion* slips beneath sheer granite cliffs, not yet worn smooth by time.

DOUBTFUL SOUND & DUSKY SOUND

– wet landing

Latitude: 45°18'S | Longitude: 166°59'E

Experience spectacular cruising through pristine wilderness in the very heart of Fjordland National Park, the largest in New Zealand and one of the largest in the world. The park is bordered to the east by glacial lakes and to the west by the 14 fjords that give Fjordland its name. *Orion* enters via Thompson Sound enroute to Doubtful and Dusky Sounds.

At 421 metres depth, Doubtful is the deepest of these fjords. Exuding a peaceful serenity it is sometimes called "the Sound of Silence". Abundant in both flora and fauna, these fjordlands are renowned for their excellent dolphin and seal viewing opportunities, either from *Orion* or onboard one of *Orion's* Zodiacs. Fjordland Crested Penguins are often seen on many of the small islets at the entrance of the fjord and at Nee Islets there is a New Zealand Fur Seal colony.

SNARES ISLANDS – scenic Zodiac cruising

Latitude: 48°0'S | Longitude: 166°37'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 Penguin.

PORT PEGASUS & HALFMOON BAY, STEWART ISLAND

– wet landing

Latitude: 47°13'S | Longitude: 167°42'E

Stewart Island is the southern-most island of New Zealand, the forest a haven for bird-life including Kaka, Parakeets and Bellbirds as there are fewer predators than on the mainland. New Zealand's national bird, the Kiwi, is found all around the island, often seen feeding on Sandhoppers at the beach. Most sand is golden however there is black iron sand on some beaches while others are white with quartz, or red with garnet.

Orion guests will enjoy a morning Zodiac cruise of Port Pegasus before *Orion* makes her way along the sheltered eastern coast of Stewart Island (Rakiura), 96% of which is designated as Rakiura National Park.

We will anchor in Paterson in the afternoon to visit the quaint fishing village of Oban in Halfmoon Bay with its art and craft shops as well as the wildlife sanctuary on Ulva Island.

OTAGO HARBOUR, DUNEDIN – dry landing

Latitude: 45°50'S | Longitude: 170°35'E

Orion's shallow draft will allow her to cruise all the way into Dunedin city wharf (whereas other vessels berth at Port Chalmers) to provide guests a full day ashore to enjoy this charming city, regarded as one of the best preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Otago region was settled by Maoris over four centuries ago, with Scottish migrants establishing a small town in 1848. After gold was discovered Dunedin rapidly developed to (then) become New Zealand's biggest city and the country's industrial and commercial heart, with many ornate heritage buildings dating from this period still standing today. It was the first city outside the USA to have its own tram system. The Botanic Gardens, New Zealand's first, are located at the northern end of the city on the lower slopes of Signal Hill.

AKAROA – dry landing

Latitude: 41°18'S | Longitude: 148°18'E

Today dawns with relaxed scenic cruising of the outer Banks Peninsula, followed by arrival and anchorage at the historic French settlement of Akaroa (population 680), an historic French and British settlement nestled in the heart of an ancient volcano.

A gentle stroll around the village will reveal fascinating colonial architecture, interesting craft stores to explore and intimate cafés – perfect for reflection and contemplation. The beautiful harbour, home to the world's smallest and rarest dolphin, the Hector's Dolphin, dominates the landscape.

KAIKOURA PENINSULA – wet landing

Latitude: 42°25'S | Longitude: 173°41'E

After a spectacular arrival at Kaikoura, its mountain backdrop ablaze with the reflected sunrise, *Orion* will anchor in sheltered waters adjacent to the township. Kaikoura is a wildlife habitat and the area affords plenty of opportunities to see whales, dolphins, fur seals, albatross and mollymawks.

The Peninsula has a long history of Maori occupation, reflecting the abundance and ready availability of marine life and seafood here. In Maori, 'Kaikoura' means 'crayfish food' and today the crustaceans form part of a major export to overseas markets.

PICTON – dry landing

Latitude: 41°18'S | Longitude: 173°59'E

It was from Arapawa Island, in the strait that bears his name that Captain James Cook first saw the sea passage between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. As *Orion* enters the magnificent Marlborough Sounds via the Tory Channel, enroute to Queen Charlotte Sound, you will begin to imagine how he felt in 1770.

Picton is also the gateway to over 110 Marlborough and Blenheim vineyards, the centre of New Zealand's world renowned Sauvignon Blanc production.

Wander through the friendly town of Picton, with its attractive foreshore, gardens, walks and award winning restaurants. Picton Museum is the place to go to discover much about Picton's whaling past and a must-do is a visit to nearby Waikawa with its great Maori canoe, Waka Te Aatea Hou.

MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS MARITIME PARK

– wet landing

Latitude: 41°83'S | Longitude: 174°52'E

Maori legend describes the entire South Island as Maui's waka (canoe), wrecked on a reef during a fishing expedition. The shattered bow of the canoe became the Sounds.

For centuries, Marlborough has offered safe harbour to travellers. First to Maori traders and war parties; then to European explorers, such as Captain James Cook and Dumont D'Urville; and now *Orion* guests seeking new landscapes and rejuvenating experiences.

This relaxed sojourn will provide opportunistic Zodiac exploration and landings, perhaps including historic Ship Cove (Endeavour Inlet) where Captain James Cook was based for a period during his 1770 voyage, Motuara Island Bird Sanctuary and the adjacent Long Island Marine Reserve.

NELSON – dry landing

Latitude: 41°8'S | Longitude: 144°40'E

Nelson is situated below the northern edge of the Southern Alps, with fertile plains and a great sweep of beaches. Proudly claiming New Zealand's highest number of sunshine hours, this is another important wine region – with very stylish cool climate wines such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Pinot Noir.

An area of artists and artisans, Nelson is an irresistible blend of lifestyle and stunning landscape. With more than 300 professional artists and crafts people residing nearby, including traditional and contemporary Maori artists, the beautiful coastal and inland topography seems to enhance the production of fine wine and fine art.

ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK – wet landing

Latitude: 40°53'S | Longitude: 173°04'E

Abel Tasman National Park was created in December 1942, 300 years after the Dutch Explorer Abel Janzoon Tasman sailed into what is now known as Golden Bay. It features the world-famous Coast Track, the most popular "Great Walk" in New Zealand. This 51 km track hugs the picturesque coastline, climbing to offer spectacular views, then down again to another of its pristine golden sand beaches.

There will be opportunities for Zodiac cruising and sea kayaking on the calm turquoise waters, along with shore landings on the white sanded shoreline and easy walks in this most scenic of National Parks.

WELLINGTON – dry landing – disembark / embark 30 Nov

Latitude: 41°15'S | Longitude: 174°50'E

Wellington, the Capital of New Zealand, is located in the centre of New Zealand at the southern end of the North Island, dominated by Wellington harbour and hills. It is the world's most southern capital and the only capital in the "Roaring Forties" latitudes.

With a population of around 170,000 Wellington has a relaxed, cosmopolitan style about it and with a city centre just 2 kilometres in diameter is a convenient twenty minutes walk from one side to the other.

The city is home to an astonishing number of art galleries, libraries, museums and schools of drama, music, dance and ballet yet with over 300 eateries has more restaurants, bars and cafes per head than New York! A vibrant city, there is always plenty to do for young and old and it is worth adding a few days to your *Orion* expedition to take advantage of its offerings.

BLUFF (INVERCARGILL), NZ – disembark 11 Dec

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. A coach transfer will operate between Bluff and Invercargill on day of disembarkation.

11 Night NZ South Island Exploration

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| Day 1 | Milford Sound (coach transfer from Queenstown), NZ |
| Day 2 | Doubtful Sound/Dusky Sound, NZ |
| Day 3 | Snares Islands, NZ |
| Day 4 | Port Pegasus/Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island, NZ |
| Day 5 | Otago Harbour, Dunedin, NZ |
| Day 6 | Akaroa, NZ |
| Day 7 | Kaikoura Peninsula, NZ |
| Day 8 | Picton, NZ |
| Day 9 | Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park, NZ |
| Day 10 | Nelson, NZ |
| Day 11 | Abel Tasman National Park, NZ |
| Day 12 | Wellington, New Zealand |

2008: November 19, 30*

*November 30 operates in reverse concluding in Bluff.

| Expedition Fares | | |
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| Ctgy | Type | 11nt |
| B | Stateroom | \$ 7,525 |
| A | Stateroom | \$ 8,730 |
| JS | Junior Suite | \$10,380 |
| DS | Deluxe Suite | \$11,370 |
| BS | Balcony Suite | \$13,565 |
| OS | Owners' Suite | \$15,760 |



Expedition Fares – per person in Australian Dollars

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