

pathways

DISCOVERY

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2011

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The continuing
quest to provide
**extraordinary
experiences**



Sarina's
Camp Leakey
Blog

Fly free to
the Kimberley
in 2012

Ambassador
Winner
Announced

Photography
Competition
Winners Inside



Dear *pathways* guests,

Ever since the idea of developing an Australian-based expedition cruise experience started to form in my mind during the early 2000's I have endeavoured to create the best expedition cruise product in Australasia and in due course, perhaps, the world. A product to be proud of and happy to recommend to family and friends in its totality – from booking to embarkation, onboard and ashore - a series of positive experiences at every level.

As *pathways* guests you well know that the entire Orion team works hard to provide expeditions that are meaningful, memorable experiences, and above all, genuine - invigorating for mind, body and spirit. A combination of style *and* substance; because we have never wanted to deliver 'beige' travel.

Let me update you on our second ship, *Orion II*, in operation with us since June this year after the late delivery. As you may know we have encountered teething problems both with the ship itself, with some of the shore side expeditions and third party operators. I am pleased to say that we have addressed these problems and are now building towards a level of operational reliability that replicates our established (and your expected) Orion standards.

We have just completed work to overcome an annoyingly intermittent *Orion II* issue, an unreliable air-conditioning system. Despite a substantial overhaul in 2009, before we took over the ship, and further inspections by technicians reporting it to be operating correctly, it has let us down on a number of occasions, seemingly exacerbated by the high temperatures and humidity encountered in and around the tropics. Separately, we have been experiencing issues with the main engine turbo chargers, the elevator, and the Jacuzzi.

Solutions to these problems required specialist technicians and parts (many from Europe with long lead times), and major engineering work - not easy to resolve when operating in such remote parts of the world - so we made the difficult decision to cancel two scheduled sailings, using the time alongside in Singapore to install two new air conditioning compressors and undertake a full overhaul of the starboard main engine and turbo charger. We are back on schedule now and reports from the ship are positive.

With regard to the expedition programme; you will be aware that we spend considerable time scouting our destinations – Borneo has taken a number of years to develop the four distinctly unique itineraries – notwithstanding this, the nature of expedition cruising is such that the programme continually evolves. It is easy to forget that it took some years of refinement before our PNG voyages ran the way we wanted them to – but that really is the nature of pioneering operations in parts of the world largely untouched by tourism.

Our expeditions are not follow-the-leader, established mass market tourism products moving on a well worn route like a fairground river-caves ride. In many instances we are breaking new ground which, apart from occasional unexpected problems, including the need to educate third party operators on our delivery standards, can also reveal exciting opportunities that we can incorporate into future visits.



I am pleased to say that most of our new shore experiences are delivering up to or beyond expectation. Some, such as the Russian Far East, have exceeded all expectations, while others in different parts of Borneo, for example, have been patchy. I have been told by some guests that we oversold the Borneo wildlife experiences, where guests expected to see more animals, closer. Two of the four Borneo itineraries have exceptional wildlife experiences whereby the other two are more culturally focussed. Perhaps we should have better explained the differences in each of these itineraries, the fact that the wildlife are endangered species – rare in a world context – and by their rarity are not thick on the ground (or in trees). Yet from other guests I have had overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding their encounters with wildlife. As with African game reserves seeing one or two of the Big Five is special – and the same goes for endangered wildlife in Borneo, be it orangutan, sun bear, pygmy elephant or proboscis monkey.

My own experiences, shared with our guests on our first voyage to Camp Leakey are included in this edition of *pathways* as an example of a wonderful – emotional – experience. The type of rewarding experience we strive for on every voyage.



Despite difficult global economic times international market interest has picked up with the introduction of our new ship and expanded repertoire of voyages.

Many *Orion* and *Orion II* sailings in 2012 will depart fully booked, leaving some disappointed potential guests behind, so I urge you to reserve space on the voyage of choice as far ahead as possible. Elsewhere you will read about our early booking incentive reductions for the 2012 season – book before 30 November this year to receive substantial reductions on voyages – these vary by destination and seasonality, but can be as high as 40%!

And we have a special offer for our *pathways* guests who have not yet been to the Kimberley (or would like to return once more). We have selected three voyages in 2012 to include FREE FLIGHTS from your Australian capital city – inclusive within the voyage cost.

In 2012 we are proud to be offering 74 voyages to 17 countries and more than 174 often remote destinations, many exclusive to Orion. A multitude of exciting destinations for you to contemplate, including Vietnam, Japan and Papua New Guinea voyages and exciting new destinations such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and the islands of Micronesia.

As we wind up the 2011 season I would like to thank all involved in helping make this another outstanding year for Orion Expedition Cruises – the crew on both ships, our office staff and you, our loyal guests, without whom we would not exist.

Orion is all about delivering extraordinary experiences that you are happy to recommend to family and friends.

I look forward to welcoming you back onboard soon.

Sarina Bratton
Founder & Managing Director - Orion Expedition Cruises

EXTRACTS FROM SARINA BRATTON'S CAMP LEAKEY VOYAGE BLOG

30 September 2011

What an incredible two day experience we have just had during our inaugural visit to Camp Leakey and the OFI Care Centre. The combination of *Orion II's* Zodiacs and the local klotok boats make this almost inaccessible area in southern Borneo possible.

We broke into two groups. One group spending a full day travelling up to a feeding station on the Sekonyer River and then on to Camp Leakey with the second group travelling to the infant care centre in the morning followed by an afternoon of cultural display, tree planting and learning of conservation initiatives.

On day one, my daughter Bianca and I headed up to Camp Leakey. It was an early 6.30am departure in the Zodiacs making our way up the river. Initially there wasn't a lot of wildlife as we headed into the Sekonyer, however as we got deeper into rainforest, we started to see significant wildlife. Our first stop at one

of the Tanjung Puting feeding stations was exceptional with one alpha male orangutan and about five females in and around the platform. Tom, the male orang was in control of the platform and certainly took the majority of the milk that the rangers had brought along for their feed. We were treated to quite a display of natural evolution – Tom decided to mate with one of the younger females on the platform in full view of our group! Dr Galdikas explained later that this was quite a rare event to witness.

After the feeding platform we then embarked on local boats called Klotoks. These are quite comfortable and provide an excellent vehicle to view wildlife. Well, did we see wildlife – approx. 30 proboscis monkeys put on an amazing display of aerial acrobatics, flying from one tree to another as well as across the river. These are the skydivers of the primates.

Dr Galdikas spent the morning at the Infant Care Centre with the other group from *Orion II* and then came to greet our group in Camp Leakey. This was a great experience for our guests as she is an inspiration when one understands just what she has created, her passion for the orangutans and the

incredible steps she has taken in providing an environment within which they can flourish. Dr Galdikas welcomed us to her home and we sat around her porch talking about her time in the Camp. We were accompanied by about five orangs, one happily sitting on the porch - a unique experience and privilege for us all.

We had a long, leisurely ride back down the river at sunset. This is the time when the macaques and proboscis monkeys are out and about. We saw 100s of them, not as playful as in the morning, but just as magnificent through their sheer numbers. Later into the trip we saw thousands of fire flies, lighting



the trees up as if it was Christmas. Then, in the dark, we were greeted by the Zodiac, with Tracey and staff providing welcome cocktails and beers for the rest of the klotok ride.

The following day, we disembarked at 7:45am for the Infant Care and Quarantine centre, an introduction to the volunteers and veterinarians by Dr Galdikas and an explanation of the program they undertake at the centre. Here I presented Dr Galdikas with vitamins and nappies for the infants. Very grateful, she presented me with an OFI t-shirt and took us on a tour of the facilities including the operating room, radiology room, and scientific laboratory, explaining the detailed process they take to monitor and document the orangs in the centre. This was

another unique experience for Orion guests and a privilege considering members of the public have previously not been allowed to the centre.

After a modified surgical hand wash the group was separated into three smaller groups rotating between the jungle training area, the play pen and the infant nursery, spending approx. 45 minutes at each. I can't tell you how often I heard guests say "I've fallen in love".

Beginning with a group of around 6 or 7 males, the guests took turns carrying the orangs into the jungle training section of the forest whereby they spend 4-5 hours, allowed to explore and play under the supervision of the carers. This is done alternating days with

male and female orangs in order to prepare them for eventual release into the forest.

The play pen consisted of two adjacent shelters with a large suspended maze of tyres and rope structures, with guests able to come in close contact and play with the animals. It became quite humorous with the infants climbing over people, stealing items of clothing, glasses or cameras as well as water bottles which had been hidden in the bushes.

The infant nursery stole people's hearts. These young orphaned infants, missing their mums, just loved the females holding and cuddling them. We were able to give the carers a break for a while whilst we enjoyed this very privileged experience.

We all came away with such admiration for Dr Galdikas and her work. Every one of us wishes to assist her in her efforts, and I believe we have just commenced a worthwhile and enduring relationship with a very special woman and organisation.

One guest who was too emotional to voice her thoughts, wrote me a short note. Part of her message was: *My trip has more than fulfilled my expectations. Thank you SO much.*

"In life we leave "fingerprints" on all we touch, but more importantly it's the "heart prints" that we leave behind, that give us insight and memories".

Your insight and gift of memories are a true legacy. Joan Matthews.

EARLY BOOKING REWARDS FOR YOU

There are significant early booking savings for *Orion* and *Orion II* 2012 itineraries - new levels of savings between 15% and 40% available on future sailings. The level of savings will vary according to itinerary and destination. Select from 5 to 20 nights including the Great Barrier Reef, Papua New Guinea and Micronesia, the Kimberley and Arnhem Land, Borneo, Russian Far East, Japan, New Zealand, Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands.

This offer is only guaranteed through until 30th November 2011. After this date, the savings will be reduced and/or limited by grade of accommodation and demand. This will be yield managed on a weekly basis with the best available fares updated on our website www.orionexpeditions.com, or by contacting Orion's Customer Service Team on 1300 361 012 (Australia), 0800 444 462 (New Zealand) or +612 9033 8700 (International) or contact local travel agent.



AMBASSADORS

Congratulations to Irene Robertson, the winner of our *pathways* Ambassador Competition. Irene and a friend will enjoy an upcoming Orion expedition. Thank you for all your entries. Your personal recommendation is critical to our ongoing success and we thank you for your continued support.

If you would like to introduce your family and friends to the Orion family, you can request a copy of our Introductory Brochure to be sent to them. Simply send their contact details to sales@orionexpeditions.com and we can send a brochure on your behalf.



GROUPS

An expedition with Orion is perfect for family reunions, the celebration of birthdays or anniversaries, marking special events or simply as a special opportunity for those with a common interest to enjoy a shared experience.

As an Orion ambassador, if you and your friends and family wish to travel together in 5 cabins then we will provide the 6th cabin free of charge. Contact us for further details.

FLY FREE TO THE KIMBERLEY IN 2012

The majority of our past guests started their Orion journey in the magnificent heritage-listed Kimberley region of Australia. Others chose to travel to one of our other destinations and have not as yet experienced '*Orion's Kimberley*'. For those past guests who have not experienced the Kimberley or for any wishing to return, we would like to offer a special inducement:

FLY FREE to experience the Kimberley with *Orion* in 2012.

If you have promised yourself that one day you must see the pristine wilderness of the Kimberley then now is the time to do it. Travel in the familiar style and comfort that you know to be *Orion* and explore one of the most visually remarkable parts of the world.

You must act quickly. This Fly Free offer is only available until 30 November 2011 on three Kimberley departures.

- This special offer applies to *pathways* guests booking a stateroom or suite on a choice of three *Orion* Kimberley voyages - 23 April, 13 May or 22 June 2012.
- In addition to the FREE FLIGHTS, you will also receive a saving of 20% off the brochure fare (which includes your 5% *pathways* saving).
- Orion's exclusive and inclusive Bungle Bungle flight-seeing excursion is all part of the Kimberley experience, again at no additional cost.

Save 20% and pay from \$7,280 per person twin share (usually \$9,100) for an Ocean view Category B Stateroom.

For full terms and conditions please visit www.orionexpeditions.com/kimberley_conditions



winners



CATEGORY: Other & Overall

'John Haddy in Men's House Owus Village II' Jerry Bennette

Congratulations to Jerry Bennette who took this photo at a welcome ceremony in the Men's House Owus Village, Papua. "I love the atmosphere and the colour in this photo - and the fact that only after viewing the faces you discover another western photographer tucked away on the edge! This is the type of experience you get on an Orion expedition" said photographer & competition judge Peter Eastway. As overall winner, Jerry will receive a Leica V-Lux 20 compact camera.



CATEGORY:
Papua New Guinea
'After Ice Cream - Before Afternoon Tea'
Tony Weldon



CATEGORY:
Kimberley
'Signs of the Zodiacs'
Adrian Brooks



CATEGORY:
Antarctica
'The Counting'
Benjamin Hillman



CATEGORY:
New Zealand &
Sub Antarctic Islands
'The King and I'
Gavin David