

P R E S S R E L E A S E

An invitation to join an expedition to one of the most inhospitable places on earth

"Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success".

(These words are attributed to Ernest Shackleton in a newspaper advertisement seeking fellow adventurers to join him on his push to the South Pole.)

How times have changed. Now, instead of hardship and deprivation, modern day adventurers onboard the 5 star expedition cruise ship *Orion* are invited to follow in the footsteps of the 'Heroic Era' Antarctic explorers and experience the grandeur of the Antarctic – all the while enjoying the trappings of luxurious surroundings, facilities and service.

Celebrating one hundred years of polar exploration, three *Orion* expeditions during December 2011 and January 2012 explore spectacular parts of the Southern Ocean, Ross Sea and Commonwealth Bay, offering a rare chance to visit the historic Antarctic bases and experience the world of famed Antarctic explorers Scott, Shackleton and Mawson.

..... and an invitation to an exclusive centenary dinner

A once in a lifetime opportunity. To celebrate the departure of Douglas Mawson's expedition one hundred years ago, the Mawson's Huts Foundation is holding an invitation-only dinner in Hobart – and Orion's guests sailing on the 1 December 2011 voyage for Commonwealth Bay for a visit to Mawson's Huts are invited to attend.

The dinner marks the start of centennial celebrations and a precursor to the departure of *Orion* from Hobart harbour on December 2, 100 years to the day that Mawson departed. Marked by a 19 gun salute, and surrounded by an anticipated 200 hundred naval and civilian ships and boats of all shapes and sizes, *Orion* and a small number of other ships will set course for Antarctica in the wake of Mawson's *Australian Antarctic Expedition*.

Orion will cross the Antarctic Circle heading for Cape Denison to visit Douglas Mawson's historic huts, built for the 1911-1914 '*Australian Antarctic Expedition*'. These timber buildings are rare in a world context. Just six complexes survive

from the '*Heroic Era*' of Antarctic exploration, a period of great human adventure, exploration, research and discovery on the last continent to be explored.

In addition to the historic buildings, there are plentiful examples of clothing, food, crates, sleds, ropes and kerosene tins remaining, literally frozen in time.

A special post office, complete with limited edition commemorative '*Australian Antarctic Expedition* stamps, will be set up at Cape Dennison – a rare opportunity for *Orion* guests to send postcards home from the end of the earth.

The 21 January 2012 voyage to the Ross Sea will attempt to edge south to Cape Evans, at 77°38'S, where Scott's 1911 Terra Nova Hut is located. The largest historic building in Antarctica, it was used in the 1910 to 1913 *British Antarctic Expedition* for extensive scientific research and served as a base for Scott's journey to the South Pole. Entering the hut provides a time-capsule experience to the historic age of Antarctic exploration and a palpable link to those extraordinary explorers.

Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds was constructed during the British Antarctic Nimrod Expedition in 1907-1909. Adelie Penguins are slowly reclaiming the site of the world's southernmost penguin rookery. The New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust conservation program has successfully conserved a substantial number of fascinating artefacts in such a way that the hut appears to have only recently been abandoned.

[Orion's Centenary Celebrations Antarctic expeditions](#)

The purpose-built 5 star expedition ship *Orion* (with the benefits of oversized stabilisers, retractable sonar and ice strengthened hull) provides her 100 guests with the needs of today's adventurers: technology, safety and creature comforts that include fine food and wines, a gym, boutique, hairdressing, sauna and massage facilities - as well as 80 crew, specialist lecturers and polar expedition team to look after every need.

All three voyages include a visit to Macquarie Island, a seismically active World Heritage listed island, renowned as one of the greatest natural wonders of the world, and Sub-Antarctic islands abounding with wildlife including penguin breeding colonies numbering in the millions, elephant seals, Hooker sea lions, and the endangered Wandering Albatross.

It should be noted that these are not cruises; rather they are expeditions to what can be the most inhospitable region on earth. All voyages cross the Antarctic Circle, probing further south than the position of the South Magnetic Pole, where prevailing weather and ice conditions may ultimately dictate *Orion's* course and destinations on the last continent to be explored.

Expeditions start from \$19,365 per person for 18 nights.
Accommodation is strictly limited to just 50 couples per voyage.

Mawson's Antarctica - Commonwealth Bay

The 2011/12 Antarctic season will be Sir Douglas Mawson's Centenary. To celebrate, the 1 December 2011 *Orion* departure includes an invitation to an exclusive Mawson's Huts Foundation Centenary Dinner in Hobart.

2011 Departure - December 1

19 nights Hobart, Tasmania, Commonwealth Bay Region, Macquarie Island, Auckland Island, Snares Island, Bluff (Invercargill), New Zealand

Fares from \$20,440 per person for an Ocean view Stateroom

Junior Suites begin from \$28,195 per person

Owners Suites are \$42,810 per person

All prices twin share

2012 Departure - January 3

18 nights Hobart, Tasmania, Commonwealth Bay Region, Macquarie Island, Auckland Island, Snares Island, Bluff (Invercargill), New Zealand

Fares from \$19,365 per person for an Ocean view Stateroom

Junior Suites begin from \$26,710 per person

Owners Suites are \$40,555 per person

All prices twin share

For many, the highlight of the voyage is a visit to Cape Denison, the site of Sir Douglas Mawson's hut from the historic 1911-1913 expedition; a time capsule from a great era of exploration and one of the most rarely visited places on earth. The voyage also includes Port Martin, the site of 100 grounded icebergs, allowing guests to enjoy Zodiac expeditions to view these amazing sites from close quarters, and Dumont d'Urville, the French base renowned for its rich local wildlife, including colonies of Adelie and Emperor penguins.

In association with

MAWSON'S HUTS FOUNDATION

PATRON HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY AC CVO MC (RETD.)
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA



Scott & Shackleton's Antarctica - Ross Sea

2012 Departure - January 21

20 nights *Bluff (Invercargill), New Zealand, Enderby Island, Macquarie Island, Ross Sea Region, Campbell Island, Snares Island, Bluff (Invercargill), New Zealand*

Fares from \$21,515 per person for an Ocean view Stateroom

Junior Suites begin from \$29,675 per person

Owners Suites are \$45,060 per person

All prices twin share

These voyages cover some of the polar regions famously charted during the first race to the South Pole by pioneering explorers Scott and Shackleton. The Ross Sea coast extends from the ice shelf northwards until it reaches the very tip of Victoria Land and Cape Adare. During Orion's time in the Ross Sea Region there will be a variety of opportunistic landings, subject to weather conditions.

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Details of 2011 and 2012 Antarctic itineraries available at

www.orionexpeditions.com/expeditions/antarctica/voyage_summary

Further information on Orion Expedition Cruises can be obtained by visiting the website www.orionexpeditions.com

For reservations or to obtain a brochure of 2011 or 2012 voyages call Orion Expedition Cruises: 61-2 9033 8777 (Sydney callers) 1300 361 012 (regional and interstate) / 0800 444 462 (New Zealand) or see your travel agent.

Email: info@orionexpeditions.com
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