

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

Orion Expedition Cruises

10th March, 2007

Antarctic 2007/8 itineraries

[The Ultimate "path less travelled..."](#)

Orion's 2007/8 Antarctic and Southern Ocean expeditions:

Orion's 18 night expeditions will transport guests to spectacular parts of the Southern Ocean and Antarctica. Departing in December 2007, Orion presents a modern day adventure and a rare chance to experience the world of the Australian Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson. *Orion* will depart from Hobart and Bluff (NZ) to explore this remote region of pack ice and spectacular auroras with up to 20 hours of daylight.

Expeditions start from \$16,920 per person for 18 nights. Accommodation is strictly limited to just 50 couples per voyage.

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Zodiacs will land *Orion's* guests on World Heritage-listed Macquarie Island, home to a vast array of wildlife including pods of killer whales and inquisitive King Penguins. The beaches are crowded with Elephant Seals, Giant Skuas, King Shags and White Headed Petrels, and rusting remains of machinery bear a stark reminder of brutal whaling days.

67° 0' South and Cape Denison is the site of Sir Douglas Mawson's historic huts, erected for his 1911-1913 expedition. These buildings are rare in a world context, being one of just six complexes surviving 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, remnants of clothing, food, crates, sleds, ropes and kerosene tins remain literally frozen in time. In a land of few visitors, this is one of the Antarctic's least visited sites.

Leading *Orion's* guests ashore to explore this site of national and international heritage significance are expedition leaders Don and Margie McIntyre, both intimately familiar with this area, having spent more time at Cape Denison than any other person alive today.

Orion will cruise Commonwealth Bay, site of the enormous Mertz and Ninnis glaciers. Threading a path through a hundred grounded ice bergs to Port Martin, with its abandoned French expedition base, should provide spectacular photography, while Dumont D'Urville is another spectacular area for wildlife, notably Adelie and Emperor penguins.

Nearer New Zealand, *Orion's* Zodiacs will be in constant demand as she calls at the sub-Antarctic islands of Auckland and Snares, rich with wildlife and steeped in turbulent maritime history. Prolific wildlife abounds including seals, sea lions, penguins and albatross.

These itineraries showcase *Orion's* specialist expedition capabilities to take her guests on paths less travelled.

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It should be noted that these are not cruises; rather they are expeditions to what can be the most inhospitable region on earth and, as such, prevailing weather and ice conditions may ultimately dictate Orion's course and opportunistic destinations.

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Orion's Antarctica

These two extraordinary 18 night expeditions depart 12th December 2007 (ex Hobart) and 30th December 2007 (ex Bluff, NZ).

Fares Guide:

18-night expedition: Hobart/ Antarctica/ Bluff (and vice versa)

Fares begin from \$16,920 per person for an ocean view category B stateroom

Suites begin from \$23,330 per person for a Junior Suite

Orion's spacious Owners' Suites with French Balcony are \$35,410 per person

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Just three years old, *Orion* is already a veteran of Antarctica, having sailed from both South America and Australia to the Antarctic Peninsula.

Orion was custom designed and purpose built for strength and stability. The ship designers focused on expedition cruising with particular consideration to the unique conditions of the Antarctic and the comfort of our passengers. While ships with icebreaking capability have rounded hulls, *Orion's* streamlined ice-strengthened hull together with state-of-the-art stabilizers, provides a smoother cruise experience through the sometimes challenging waters of the Southern Ocean.

2007/8 is the International Polar Year – an internationally co-ordinated campaign of research designed to initiate a new era in polar science.

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Orion offers 6 categories of accommodation: 26 staterooms and 27 suites. All feature ocean views, the option of queen size or twin beds, fully-equipped marble bathrooms and modern amenities like flat screen TV, DVD/CD player, internet connectivity and mini-refrigerator.

Cruise fares include accommodation, all meals in an unhurried single sitting in either the dining room or outdoor café, guest speakers and/or expedition leaders and selected landings & activities ashore. The service of 75 experienced crew members provides the highest ratio of staff to passengers on any ship permanently based in Australian waters.

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

For reservations or to obtain a brochure call Orion Expedition Cruises: 61-2 9033 8777
(Sydney callers) 1300 361 012 (regional and interstate) or your travel agent. Email:
info@orioncruises.com.au

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Additional Information

Orion Antarctic 2007/8 Expedition Leaders

Don & Margie McIntyre

Adventurers Don and Margie McIntyre are known as Australia's "Antarctic Couple". In 1995 they spent a year living together alone in a 2.4 x 3.6 metre box chained to rocks at Cape Denison in Commonwealth Bay, the windiest spot on the face of the earth. Living only 400 metres from the historic 1911 Aurora Expedition huts of Sir Douglas Mawson, they struggled to survive a frontier experience battling blizzards which at times kept them trapped in their box for up to 20 days. The effects of this self imposed isolation are the subject of an award winning documentary and best selling book 'Two Below Zero'.

As a couple their awards and accolades are many and varied. In 1996 Margie was recognised as one of Australia's 12 most outstanding women and together they were presented with the Australian Geographical Societies highest honour - a gold medal as Adventurers of the Year, the youngest ever to receive it. They both ran with the Olympic torch on the day of the Opening Ceremony and have been Australia Day Ambassadors since 1998. Don & Margie are both AAP Mawson Huts Foundation Ambassadors along with Sir Edmund Hillary, Tim Bowden and Sir Peter Durham

From 1993 to 2000, the McIntyre's organised and participated in nine sailing expeditions in their own expedition yachts and worked on Russian Antarctic tourist ships as Lecturers, Field Guides, Boat Drivers and joint Expedition Leaders. In 2000 they purchased their own 36 metre 500 tonne helicopter equipped ice ship 'Sir Hubert Wilkins' in Finland. During the next three years they sailed half way around the world and then set out on four Antarctic expeditions in support of education, research and adventure. To thaw out, the McIntyre's headed north to the Philippines on a six month treasure hunting expedition.

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