

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

15<sup>th</sup> August, 2008

**Orion's cultural expedition to Arnhem Land**

This exclusive Orion cultural expedition provides rare access to remote Arnhem Land indigenous art communities, with plenty of time ashore to meet and talk with many artists, view and purchase original artworks and visit important galleries. Orion's expedition team and specialist guest lecturers enhance the experience with comprehensive briefings and workshops.

Departing Thursday Island in Torres Strait on 25<sup>th</sup> April this 7 night voyage concludes in Darwin on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2009.

Spectacularly located at the northern tip of Australia, Thursday Island is the perfect location to commence this fascinating expedition. A visit to the Gab Titui Cultural Centre reveals exquisite Torres Strait art that reflects the many unique cultures and traditions of the island communities and the islander's bond to sea and land.

Orion then explores the remote coastal regions of Arnhem Land, stopping at some of the most important indigenous art centres, many with limited access due to their isolation and the need for permits to enter indigenous reserves. Travelling the coast on Orion is the perfect way to visit these significant art communities.

This voyage will appeal to those interested in indigenous art from both aesthetic and investment aspects as well. Colin and Elizabeth Laverty – whose lifetime of collecting Australian contemporary art has culminated in one of the world's most important collections of Aboriginal art – will join the voyage to share their thoughts on the importance of Australian indigenous art; while Howard Morphy, Director of the Research School of Humanities at the Australian National University and extensive author on Australian Aboriginal art will also offer insight to provide a better understanding of indigenous art in Australia.

They will be joined by Hetti Perkins, a member of the Eastern Arrernte and Kalkadoon Aboriginal communities. Currently Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the Art Gallery of NSW Hetti has worked with indigenous visual art for over twenty years.

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At Yirrkala Orion's guests will be met by a local Yolngu family. Following a traditional 'cleansing' with a time honoured smoke ceremony there will be face painting and tasting of oysters, freshly cooked mud crab and speared fish. Guests will receive first hand insight and share some distinctive Yolngu cultural experiences. The Buku – Larrangay Mulka Art Centre is one of the most prominent indigenous art centres in northern Australia.

Yolngu Art is based upon inherited designs which originate with ancestral beings that created the land. A special feature of Elcho is the Morning Star poles: feather decorated funeral rite poles each distinctive to their clan groups.

Recognised nationally and internationally, Maningrida is one of the powerhouse art areas of central Arnhem Land. Bark painting, pandanus weaving and wood carvings – especially the Mimi spirits – are all distinctive features of the artistic endeavour. A visit to the excellent Djiom Museum is a highlight, showcasing the richness of the ceremonial apparel and intricacies of the material culture.

Before arrival in Darwin, guests will visit the Munupi Arts at Pirlangimpi to view the distinctive features of Tiwi art, including ceramics and carved totemic Pukumani funeral poles. In addition *Orion* guests can take a journey back in time by visiting the remnants of Fort Dundas – one of the original attempts to colonise the Top End.

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**Fares Guide: 7 night Orion voyage / 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009:** Thursday Island, Torres Strait; Yirrkala, Northern Territory; Elcho Island, NT; Maningrida, NT; Pirlangimpi (Melville Island); Darwin, Northern Territory.

Fares begin from A\$5,200 per person for an ocean view Category B stateroom  
Suites begin from A\$7,075 per person for a Junior Suite  
Owners' Suites with French Balcony are A\$10,615 per person

***Ranked #2 expedition cruise ship in the world in the current Berlitz Cruise Guide, Orion is the world's latest and Australia's only purpose-built luxury expedition cruise ship.***

***With 75 crew and a maximum of just 106 passengers Orion offers the highest staff to guest ratio and guest to public space ratio of any ship based in Australian waters.***

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