



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

27th August, 2008

[Join Orion in 2009 to discover the other side of Asia](#)

Orion, acclaimed for its expeditions to the Kimberley and Arnhem Land, Papua New Guinea and the Antarctic is heading to places less visited in Asia as part of its 2009 Calendar of Sailings.

The coastline and islands of Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia beckon and there is no finer way to experience these culturally exotic destinations than as a guest onboard the purpose-built 5 star expedition ship, Orion.

In addition to visiting some of Asia's major centres, Orion's *Gulf of Siam* and *Vietnam Explorer* expeditions provide the opportunity to experience Asia from a different perspective, often far away from the crowds.

Pulau Tioman, lying off the east coast of Malaysia, is endowed with miles of coconut palm lined white beaches and crystal clear water – no wonder it was the setting for the film *Bali Hai*. It remains one of the world's most beautiful islands and an Orion destination.

From the unhurried lifestyle of fishing villages to exploring the undeveloped parts of Koh Samui and Koh Kut, Orion's languorous voyage contrasts wondrous sights of waterfalls, free flowing streams and snorkelling over pristine reefs with wide boulevards and historic buildings of the French colonial influence in Ho Chi Minh.

Visit a beguiling 200 year old village at Nha Trang, in Vietnam, where home-made beer is still sold, roadside, from the keg, and stroll beaches secreted away from the resorts where vendors carry buckets of lobsters and crabs for sale. Market economy rules, even in thinly disguised communist states.

Unlike larger ships that occasionally visit Ho Chi Minh (mooring at sea) Orion will berth 60 kilometres up the Song Sai Gon (Saigon River) virtually in the middle of the city, just minutes walk from the French built Post Office, Notre Dame cathedral and the shopping areas, art galleries, museums, bustling markets and top quality restaurants and bars.

Reach out and touch some of Australia's modern history. With Orion as your base, connect with the Vietnam War at the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels (where they still show anti-American Vietnam War propaganda films), and visit places the names of which are etched into Australian's minds – Da Nang, Vung Tau, Nui Dat, Long Tan.

These voyages provide a balance of history, culture and relaxation on sublime islands and beaches as well as exposure to Asian chaos in the markets. From Sihanoukville in Cambodia, guests will be able to visit Phnom Penh and the

renowned UNESCO world heritage listed temples at Angkor Wat, with exquisite bas-relief Hindu stories on the walls and ancient temples overgrown with trees and foliage.

For a different view, experience a tethered balloon flight above the temples, an elephant ride to witness sunrise from the top of a temple or travel through rice paddy fields in a horse cart enroute to an extraordinary village – complete with schools, homes, and shops – literally floating in a lake.

These two exclusive *Asian Orion Voyages of Discovery* cultural expeditions balance traditional and modern Asia, with plenty of time to mingle with the locals and take in the sounds, colours and fragrances of these fascinating destinations.

Orion's expedition team and specialist guest lecturers enhance the experience with comprehensive briefings and onboard workshops designed to provide insight and understanding.

The two itineraries can be taken back to back to provide an exciting voyage highlighting much of Asia's mystique.

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Gulf of Siam Explorer – 29 September 2009 - 11 nights. Singapore, Tioman Island, Kuala Terengganu, Ko Samui, Ko Kood, Kampot (for Angkor Wat), Ho Chi Minh.

Vietnam Explorer – 10 October 2009 - 11 nights. Ho Chi Minh, Da Nang (overnight for Hue), Nha Trang, Vung Tau, Sihanoukville, Ko Phangan, Singapore.

Fares Guide:

Fares begin from \$8,600 per person for an ocean view Category B stateroom

Suites begin from \$11,860 per person for a Junior Suite

Owners' Suites with French Balcony are \$18,010 per person

An additional fuel charge of \$50 per person per night applies

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Orion information: When referring to Ho Chi Minh it is always written as such but in spoken reference it is still referred to as Saigon.

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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.

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

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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