



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

Sarina Bratton signs for *Orion II*

Curacao, 22 May 2011.

Sarina Bratton, Founder and Managing Director of Orion Expedition Cruises, is in Curacao for document signing and official hand-over of the 100 passenger all-suite luxury expedition cruise ship, *Orion II*.

The long term charter of a second purpose-built ship able to access remote regions in comfort is a further step to fulfilling the company's original vision to have Orion Expedition Cruises regarded as the operator of choice in the Asia Pacific.

Prior to commencing its inaugural voyage from Vancouver to Otaru, Japan, *Orion II* will visit Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle for a series of travel trade and consumer events. While in Seattle there will be an official naming ceremony for *Orion II* with three Godmothers, all past passengers of *Orion*.

Sarina commented "*Orion II represents another step on a journey that has included many fascinating destinations since Orion's first expeditionary voyage from Tahiti to Australia in March 2005. Despite difficult global financial conditions, our growth has been solid and this has been enhanced by the support of our loyal guests – many of whom are joining me onboard for the inaugural 24 night voyage.*

Orion Expedition Cruises is now able to provide exclusive expeditions from Antarctica to Asia, and the Kimberley to Micronesia and New Zealand, with the two ships offering a balance of onboard service and luxury combined with unique personal experiences in environmentally and culturally sensitive parts of the region. Together, Orion and Orion II are two of the most comfortable and capable expedition cruise ships cruising in Australasia."

Orion II's inaugural voyage will be followed by expeditions to the Russian Far East, Inland Sea of Japan, the Ryukyu Islands and then a series of varying 10 night itineraries around Borneo. Later voyages in 2011 include Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Further information on all Orion Expedition Cruises during 2011 and 2012 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

.....

Attachments: Image of Orion II (as she will be with new Orion branding in 2011). Signing of documentation

.....

About Orion II

Originally launched as *Renaissance Four*, later *Clelia II*, she was re-launched in 2009 after an extensive €13 million (A\$21 million) refurbishment, with emphasis on technical enhancements and upgraded environmental systems. The ship has just completed a further scheduled dry-dock maintenance overhaul plus additional cosmetic enhancements and soft furnishing redecoration to bring her fully into the Orion style.

BESPOKE SMALL-SHIP AMENITIES: The all-suite *Orion II* offers fine small-ship expedition cruise travel.

With a crew of 70 this private yacht-like cruise ship accommodates just 100 guests in 50 suites. Each suite affords ocean views and is appointed with a sitting area or separate living room, twin or queen-size beds, spacious closets, flat screen television and DVD, iPod dock and air conditioning.

Decorated with rich fabrics, handsome wood, polished brass, rare antiques and fine works of art, the ship's public spaces are warm and inviting. These include:

- Library with Internet access
- 2 Lounges with audiovisual facilities
- State-of-the-art gym/spa
- Beauty salon
- Boutique
- Medical centre
- Elevator serving all passenger decks
- Dining room
- Two sun decks
- Jacuzzi
- Swimming platform

Orion II complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigation and communications technology as well as retractable fin stabilizers for smooth sailing, an ice-strengthened hull for Antarctic voyages and a fleet of Zodiacs to enable easy shore access in remote locations.

About Orion Expedition Cruises

Founded in early 2004, Orion Expedition Cruises is the only world class expedition cruise line operating from Australia to pristine wilderness areas in Antarctica, the Kimberley, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia and Asia. Orion is known worldwide for its new and diverse itineraries and sustainable operations.

Orion is designed to fulfil the desire of the sophisticated traveller for experience driven, cultural and nature based tourism that allow for a more informed and in-depth interpretation of, and interaction with, destinations and their people. Providing the comfort and luxuries that today's travellers expect in a specially

designed vessel that provides access to areas otherwise largely unreachable through conventional means, Orion provides a path less travelled.

In 2012 we are proud to be offering 69 voyages to 17 countries and more than 174 often-remote destinations, many exclusive to Orion;

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

For further media information please contact:

**Michael Corbett
Public Relations Manager
Orion Expedition Cruises
Phone: (61-2) 4572 1885
Mobile: 0417 469 228
Email: mcorbett@orionexpeditions.com**