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ANCIENT JEWELS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN - GREECE, ITALY & SICILY LUXURY CRUISE

Starting in Valletta, step aboard Le Bougainville for an 8-day cruise between the majestic Maltese coast and Greece. Throughout your journey, you will benefit from an excursion included per person per port of call, to choose from a selection offered by PONANT. During this cruise, meet a famous puppeteer in his workshop in Syracuse, discover the typical villages of Lefkes and Naoussa on the island of Paros, or visit the former Rodolico shipyard in Aci Trezza, near Taormina. The diversity of experiences on offer promises you intense and varied moments (to discover the full range of excursions, go to the itinerary tab). Then, Southern Italy promises suspended moments where the beauty of the shores combines with the beauty of its historical remnants, which remain fascinating. In Syracuse, the Sicilian soul unfolds across the island of Ortygia - the oldest part of the city -, a maze of small streets dotted with churches, palaces, ancient remnants, sheltering a majestic cathedral in its very heart. You will take the sea to discover Taormina, overlooking Etna's blanket of snow. Its streets will lead you to its famed ancient Greek theatre, where the quality of the acoustics is exceptional. In Puglia, Gallipoli, meaning "beautiful town" in Greek, reveals its Hellenic origins and offers up its singular atmosphere, where life is good. You will then set sail for Galaxidi. You will be charmed by this picturesque village where calm and tranquillity reign. You will then cross the Corinth Canal and stop off at Hydra, a small island of old-worldly charm where motorised traffic is banned. Finally, your ship will call at Paros. Nestling in the heart of the Cyclades archipelago, this island reputed for its sublime white marble offers a real concentration of Greek beauty, from whitewashed houses to

olive groves to ancient monuments. Athens, the mythical city dominated by the Acropolis and its monuments, which form the most extraordinary architectural and artistic ensemble bequeathed to the world by Ancient Greece, will mark the end of this



exceptional odyssey.

ITINERARY

Day 1 ATHENS

The Greek capital city is located on the edge of the Saronic gulf, in the east of the country. It bears a plural name in reference to the first villages that surround the Acropolis. You will be enchanted by the rocky plateau presided by its monuments

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listed as UNESCO World Heritage. In the city below, you can visit some of the liveliest districts in Athens: Plaka, with its maze of colourful streets, and where, in the evenings the drifting aroma of moussaka and garlic prawns will tickle your taste buds. The National Archaeological museum and the Cycladic Art Museum are also some of the city's key attractions and allow visitors to discover Athens' cultural past.

Day 2 PATMOS

Patmos is one of the legendary must-see islands in the Dodecanese. This is where Saint John resided, presumed author of the last book in the Bible. The cave of the Apocalypse and the Saint John Monastery are dedicated to him. These sites, which are listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, are located at the top of a hillside planted with vines and orchards. On the shore, the crystalline coves of Kambos and Lampi offer absolutely gorgeous swimming areas.

Day 3 HYDRA & CROSSING THE CORINTH CANAL

This unusual gem belonging to the Saronic islands is located to the east of the Peloponnese. There are no cars here. Named after the island, the harbour town is layered up the slopes of a mountainous bay. You may be surprised to see beautiful stone mansions. These are traditional here, as are the multi-coloured caiques along the quays. Further along the shore, you will discover the Historical Archives Museum. Collections from Athens National History Museum are exhibited in the elegant villa Koundouriotis. The Corinth Canal cuts through the Isthmus of Corinth, turning the Peloponnese into an island as it separates the region from the Greek mainland. Inaugurated in 1893, the canal is a little over six kilometres long and enables merchant vessels and passenger to avoid a long 400-km detour around the peninsula. The two sides of the canal reach a height

of approximately fifty metres. From the exterior decks, don't miss this unique opportunity to watch the ship as it navigates along the narrow strip of water encased between tall, ochre cliffs. What an experience!

Day 4 ITEA

Tucked away in the Gulf of Corinth, this little port is situated in continental Greece, north-west of Athens. Take an easy stroll along the old cobblestone quays, while gazing at the summits encircling the Bay of Itea. We wouldn't be surprised if you are tempted by a visit to the Delphi Sanctuary. The sanctuary is located on a plateau on the slope of Mount Parnassus, just ten kilometres from Itea. A listed UNESCO World Heritage site, this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience whose ancient ruins are surrounded by steep mountains.

Day 5 KATAKOLON

This picturesque village stretches along the Ionian sea in the west of the Peloponnese. Its main harbour offers a vast panorama of the coastline's wooded hillsides. Dazzling white, the church of Saint-Nicolas houses a selection of sumptuous icons. You can also pay a visit the archaeological site of Olympus on the slopes of Mount Kronos.

Day 6 SYRACUSE, SICILY

Its undulating rocky coastline, the endless sandy beaches, the menacing form of Mount Etna which surveys its island like a patriarch, the flowery gardens on the hillside... Sicily lays out its varied landscapes like a shopkeeper displays his wares. Described by Cicero as "the most beautiful city in the world", Syracuse was one of the most prestigious cities in Sicily and at her height was even a rival for Athens. A central city of Ancient Greece, it was home to a succession of civilisations, each of

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which has left their mark. The blend of Arabic, Roman, Norman, Byzantine and Spanish cultures makes Syracuse a town that is extraordinarily rich in fragrances, colours and flavours.

Itineraries are subject to change.

Day 7 GOZO & VALLETTA

Located to the north of Malta, a lot less urbanised than its larger sibling and protected from mass tourism, the small island of Gozo has managed to remain natural and authentic. Lush hills and valleys alternate with a mosaic of cultivated fields. The buildings, some of which are medieval, are built from honey-coloured limestone and blend in perfectly with the surrounding scenery. Gozo also boasts a unique historic site that is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site: the megalithic temples of Ggantija near the town of Xaghra. An archaeological museum adjoining the site presents a number of objects that were found there. Red-sand beaches and a crystal-clear sea add to the calm and serenity of Gozo.

Day 8 VALLETTA

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is UNESCO World Heritage listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. Saint-John's cathedral and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the Barrakka Gardens will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

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YOUR SHIP: L'AUSTRAL

YOUR SHIP:	L'Austral
VESSEL TYPE:	142 metres. Passenger Capacity: 264 (200 in Antarctica). Built: 2011
LENGTH:	2011
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	

Luxury Expedition / Cruise Ship This superb mega-yacht with 132 cabins is the result of the expertise of the Italian Fincantieri shipyard and French sophistication, as interpreted by designer Jean-Philippe Nuel. L'Austral has a unique atmosphere, a subtle blend of luxury, intimacy and well-being. A sleek silhouette softened by elegantly smooth contours and large, arched windows opening up to the sea and the light: so many features come together to give L'Austral her distinctive shape. Precious materials, discreet elegance and a perfect balance between chic and casual, combine to make you feel as if you are on your own private yacht. A design blending tradition and innovation, where a nautical mood has been subtly recreated. Precious materials in soothing neutral tones are brought to life with splashes of cheerful reds. So many personal touches create the spirit of a "private yacht". Suites and staterooms You can expect magnificent ocean views as 124 staterooms and suites have balconies. Individually-controlled airconditioning · Cabin layout: kingsize bed, or twin beds, communicating cabins available (children welcome) · Minibar · Flat screen satellite TV · iPod™

players · Desk with stationery · Electronic safe · French bath products · Dressing table and hairdryer · Bath robes · Satellite direct line telephone · 110/220 volts · 24hr room service · WiFi · Balcony Cuisine Loyal to the great French tradition, the haute cuisine on board is worthy of the finest restaurants, where discreet, attentive service is the hallmark. Choose from two restaurants for breakfasts, lunch and dinner. The Gastronomic Restaurant is situated on Le Liberte Deck and serves you French and international cuisine accompanied by fine wine. On the Grill Restaurant, you have the opportunity to eat outside and enjoy buffet lunch and themed dinner. Life On Board Whether you want to join other guests in the theatre or games area (Wii™ consoles, etc), or relax on your own in a quiet corner of the library, L'Austral has been designed to meet the needs of every guest. Everything has been done to preserve the independence of each guest to suit their personal tastes: lounges for lectures and shows, a spa in partnership with Sothys™, but also more intimate spaces such as the library and internet corner. Comfortable cabins, nearly all with private balcony, are available for families either as triples or as communicating cabins. There is also a games area with Wii™ consoles, children's menus, and a baby-sitting service. Just as if you were on a private yacht, your time is your own to do as you please. Fitted with the latest equipment (Kinesis Wall, running machine) and in partnership with the famous Sothys™ brand, the Beauty Centre on L'Austral welcomes you for some unforgettable moments of relaxation and pampering (beauty treatments, hairdresser). Wheelchairs 3 specially adapted wheelchair cabins (Deck 3 = Superior cabin no. 307, no balcony, Deck 4 = Prestige Cabin no. 407 - with

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balcony and Deck 5 = Prestige Cabin no 509, with balcony) and lifts to all decks/areas. Details Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant



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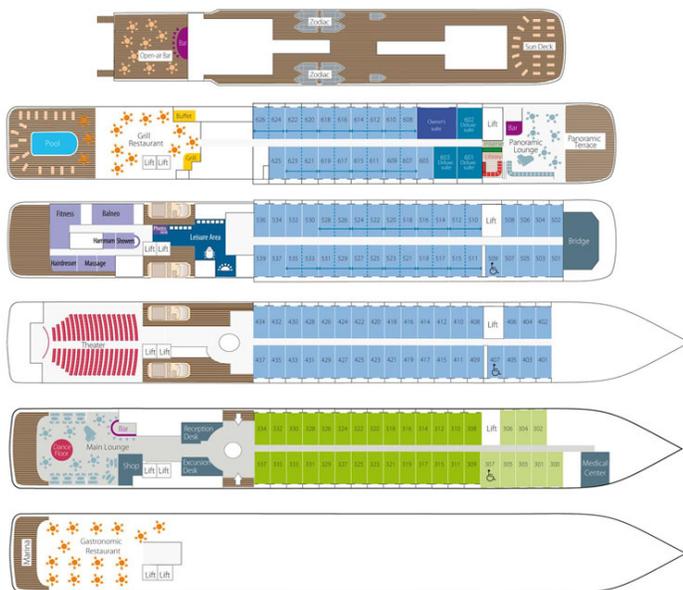
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