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BETWEEN NEW CALEDONIA & VANUATU

From Auckland, set off to discover New Caledonia and its islands, lost in the blue immensity of the Pacific Ocean. Further on, L'Austral will head for the Vanuatu archipelago and its long mountain ranges, its vast tranquil bays and its translucent lagoons.

Day 1: Auckland (New Zealand)

Auckland is New Zealand's largest, most populated and busiest city. Located on an isthmus linking the peninsula of Northland to the expansive North island, it seems to float between land and sea. You'll soon understand why we call it "the city of sails" when you see the forest of masts in the marina. The 328 metre-high Sky Tower, offers a splendid view. Surrounded by dormant volcanoes, like mount Eden, Auckland shelters abundant nature and magnificent beaches of black sand. A blend of Maori, European and Asian culture, this place will not leave you untouched.

Day 2: Bay of Islands (New Zealand)

On the east coast of North Island, Island Bay promises an incredible journey into the origins of the "land of the long white cloud". Russell, the first harbour city founded in New Zealand by Europeans, will be your entry-point into this corner of paradise. Among white-washed houses and little gardens, Russell offers you a gentle and romantic setting. A few traces of its past remain, like Christ Church, the oldest church in the country. Shimmering waters highly prized by local fishermen, beaches of fine sand and wild nature make this New Zealand picture post card experience a perfect experience of authenticity.

Days 3 & 4: At sea

Day 5: Ilôts du Sud (New Caledonia)

Covering no less than 23,000 square kilometres, the lagoon of New Caledonia, listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, boasts of the double privilege of being the finest and the largest

ITINERARY



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in the world. From one corner of the archipelago to the other, the southern lagoon is dotted with islands, which are all dream stopovers for amateur sailors. The islets round or long, all seem spread on top of the turquoise lagoon. To navigate from one to the other and to anchor at sunset is to embrace, all the world's beauty in one glance.

Day 6: Tiga (New Caledonia)

A tiny dot of land six kilometres by two, Tiga rises up 76 metres high in the middle of the Coral Sea. Seen from afar the island looks like a dome perched above the waters. Its rounded form gave rise to a legend which is passed on through oral tradition. As legend has it, a rat, chased by the inhabitants of Lifou, escaped to a rock called "taetawanod". It cried and cried until a turtle offered to transport it on his back towards Maré. But to play a nasty trick on the rat, the turtle stopped between the two islands. And that's how the turtle turned into Tiga. The island is situated at an equal distance from Maré and Lifou and depends upon the latter in terms of administration. Light years from the mainland, the most discreet of the Loyalty Islands lives at its own speed. Without running water or electricity, the tribe carries on tradition and enjoys peaceful days. Totally dependent on the outside world for supplies, Tiga has had to learn to be self-sufficient. The first Europeans to arrive in Tiga were the English who came around 1840. Ever since that time the locals have kept the Protestant faith. As such, a church holds pride of place in the middle of the village right next to the community centre where women gather at weekends to prepare communal meals and play bingo.

Day 7: Tanna (Vanuatu)

Located in the south of the Vanuatu archipelago, the island of Tanna is the most populated in the Tafea province. Mount

Tukosmera culminates at 1,084 metres altitude. Along the south-east coastline, 700 metres lower, stands Mount Yasur, the star of the island. This is indeed one of the most easily reachable volcanoes that is in eruption nearly continuously. The vast site is conditioned by geological activity, while its approach gives you a good idea of its conical shape and lava eruptions. The many beaches on the island with their turquoise water and fine sand offer a paradisiacal tranquillity by contrast.

Day 8: Malakula (Vanuatu)

Malekula is also known by its somewhat disquieting nickname: "Cannibal Island". Rest assured, these carnivorous practices belong well in the past, and it's mostly for its exceptional diversity for which this island in the west of Vanuatu is known. The tribal masks and culture are the pride of its 25,000 or so inhabitants, but it's above all the breath-taking natural sites that will grab your attention: caves, waterfalls, luxuriant forest in the protected area of Nabi, lagoons with crystal clear waters... Malekula is great for hiking, up in the hills from where you'll get a superb view of this archipelago in the heart of the Coral Sea.

Day 9: Espiritu Santo (Vanuatu)

A Spanish expedition led by Portuguese explorer Pedro Fernandes de Queirós, established a settlement in 1606 at Big Bay on the north side of the island. Espiritu Santo takes its name from Queirós, who named the entire island group La Austrialia del Espíritu Santo in acknowledgment of the Spanish king's descent from the royal House of Austria, and believing he had arrived in the Great Southern Continent, Terra Australis. Today, Espiritu Santo is the largest island in the nation of Vanuatu, with an area of 3,955.5 km² and a population of around 40,000. During WWII James A. Michener, then a lieutenant in the American Army was stationed in Santo along



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with 100,000 other army personnel. Such was the effect of this place on him that here he wrote the legendary Tales of the South Pacific. From Espiritu Santo, Michener would gaze across the sea to the volcanic island of Ambrym, often with its summit shrouded in cloud and dream of "Bali Hai". Relics and reminders of the war remain everywhere today. Guests will be transferred ashore for a welcome and cultural performance. After which they can enjoy swimming and snorkelling from the beach. There will also be a number of optional tours that can be purchased at an additional cost. Including visiting the famous blue holes, Million Dollar Point or diving on the USS President Coolidge.

Day 10: Ureparapara & Sana Island (Vanuatu)

Day 11: Ambrym Island (Vanuatu)

The island of AMBRYM owes its name to Captain Cook who anchored off there in 1774. It means "here are yams" (ham rim in Raron language). It is often referred to as the "black" island due to its volcanic ash and because of its 'black magic' steeped in mystery. In the villages, the ancient customs play a significant part in day to day living. The "Man blong Majik" are treated with the utmost respect and practice sorcery and magic beyond all imaginings. Ambrym prides itself on some unique characteristics, such as the sculpted tam-tams, sand-drawing, black-fern masks and local dances. Ambrym is famous for its magnificent tam-tams (or slit gongs) sculpted out of tree trunks. They are the some of the most impressive items of art in Vanuatu. The dancing areas in the traditional villages are decorated with Tam Tams planted in the ground, which can measure several metres high. They are used to beat the rhythm for the singing and dancing during ceremonial rituals. There are many unique 'kastom' dances in Ambrym but perhaps the most

striking custom dance is the Rom (or masked) dance – where 9 foot covertly cloaked and masked 'spirits' stomp out ancient rhythms to the beat of the tam tam.

Day 12: Port Vila (Vanuatu)

Disembarkation

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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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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PRICING

ADDITIONAL CHARGES:

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