



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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EXPEDITION TO THE HEART OF NEW ZEALAND - 12 DAYS FROM AUCKLAND TO DUNEDIN

On this cruise, PONANT invites you to discover New Zealand, a unique destination with a multitude of natural treasures. Set sail aboard Le Soleal for a 12-day cruise from Auckland to Dunedin. Surrounded by the blue waters of the Pacific, the twin islands of New Zealand are the promise of an incredible mosaic of contrasting panoramas. You will first explore the many treasures of Rotorua from Tauranga: volcanoes, hot springs, geysers, rivers and gorges, and lakes that range in colour from deep blue to orange tinged. Following the warm and translucent waters of the South Pacific Ocean, Le Soleal will sail towards Gisborne. The first city on Earth to see the sun rise each day, it is distinguished by its enchanting environment of sandy strips and subtropical forest. Here you will learn about M ori culture and local history and will be invited to taste some of the products of this rich farming region, renowned in particular for its chardonnay. After calling at Napier, a charming city with Art Deco influences, you will sail to the Marlborough Sounds, a veritable maze of hilly islands and drowned river valleys. Marlborough is also a renowned wine region of striking beauty. Then the Banks Peninsula will reveal wonderful landscapes of lush hills and rugged coasts during your calls in the bays of Akaroa, an ancient, flooded volcano crater. There you will experience a unique mix of M ori, French and European cultural heritage. Your ship will first chart a course south-west of the South Island to discover the magnificent Fiordland National Park, which is an integral part of the Te Wahipounamu, a UNESCO World Heritage area. Dusky Sound, Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound: you will discover these fjords shaped by successive glaciations, bordered by majestic cliffs. You will finally discover Dunedin,

your port of

disembarkation.

ITINERARY

Day 1 AUCKLAND

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. It is one of the few cities in the world to have two separate harbours : Manukau Harbour on the Tasman Sea and Waitemata Harbour on the Pacific Ocean. You will understand why Auckland is known as "the City of Sails" when you see the forest of masts in the marina. The 328 metre-high Sky Tower offers splendid views of the city. Surrounded by dormant volcanoes such as Mt Eden, Auckland is noted for its abundant nature and magnificent black-sand beaches. A blend of Maori, European and Asian cultures give the city a vibrant atmosphere.

Day 2 TAURANGA

Located to the north of Rotorua, Tauranga stretches the length of the Bay of Plenty, sheltered from the ocean by the island of Matakana. This coastal city boasts a flourishing economy thanks to its port, and is a pleasant and pretty town with a peaceful, relaxed feel. The seafront area is contemporary and lively, dotted with cafes and restaurants. The town centre reveals more picturesque charms, while the surrounding area is packed full of natural delights. Travel on to the town of Rotorua to visit the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland: a fantastic opportunity to experience an absolutely exceptional geothermal phenomenon.

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Day 3 GISBORNE

Gisborne, called "Gizzy" by the locals and Teoneroa by the Maori, is located to the north of a large bay surrounded by fertile hills and long, wild beaches that attract walkers and surfers. At the southern end of the bay, the magnificent cliffs of Young Nick's Head majestically keep watch over the ocean's tides. In Ngatapa, a few kilometres north of the city, the Eastwoodhill Arboretum stretches out over more than 130 hectares (320 acres) and is home to magnificent exotic and native plants. In the city, you can learn about Maori culture and the local history at the Tairawhiti Museum or enjoy some of the products of this rich farming region, renowned in particular for its Chardonnay.

Day 4 NAPIER

On the east coast of the North Island, south of Hawke's Bay, you'll find Napier. Mostly destroyed by an earthquake in 1931, reviving from its ashes in less than two years, it grew into a magnificent Art Deco style city, very in-vogue at the time. With its pure lines mixed with traditional Maori designs, the singular New Zealand character of this city will intrigue you. You'll discover all this extraordinary architectural heritage as you take a stroll through the city. Famous for its vineyards, wine lovers will be able to taste some of the best wines from the region.

Day 5 MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

At the northern end of New Zealand's South Island, the Marlborough Sounds are a vast network of submerged valleys. These 1,200 km (745 miles) of coastline form a maze of peninsulas and hilly islands, in the curves of which nestle small bays and inlets drowned by the sea at the end of the most recent ice age. This great wine-growing region of New Zealand, highly renowned for its sauvignon blanc, boasts a temperate climate and very sunny weather. You will discover the untouched

and wild beauty of the landscapes in this maritime park. They display an infinite palette of greens and blues set off by the glints of silver that appear as the sun's rays dance along the surface of the water.

Day 6 AT SEA

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 7 AKAROA

Located at the tip of a peninsula on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island, Akaroa is a popular resort destination, nestled in a cove formed by volcanic eruptions millions of years ago. In the mid-19th century, French and British settlers competed for control of the area, and the architecture of the present-day town reflects these colonial influences in the galleries, craft shops, and cafes that line its streets. But what draws most people to this remote area is the abundant wildlife. Hector dolphins (the world's smallest), Blue Penguins, fur seals, and Orcas populate the waters of the harbor, and the cliffs that surround the bay are nesting sites for thousands of birds.

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Day 8 AT SEA

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Day 9 DUSKY SOUND & DOUBTFUL SOUND

Dusky Sound is one of the most isolated fjords in Fiordland National Park. This huge, protected natural zone situated in the south-west quarter of New Zealand's South Island is listed as UNESCO World Heritage. The sheer cliffs, waterfalls, shimmering lakes and primitive forests here are each more beautiful than the next. These spectacular landscapes sculpted by successive glaciations are a source of endless wonder. In 1773, the British navigator James Cook spent a few weeks at Dusky Sound, as demonstrated by a plaque that can be seen at Astronomer's Point. During your sailing, observe the richness of the local wildlife: cormorants, seagulls, New Zealand fur seals, but also Fiordland crested penguins, a rare and endemic species. Weather and time permitting you may explore the Sound from our fleet of zodiac.

Referred to as the "Sound of Silence", there is a secluded serenity that surrounds Doubtful Sound in contrast with the

better-known Milford Sound. Both are part of the Fiordland National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Lieutenant James Cook named 'Doubtful Harbour' in 1770 as he was uncertain if it was navigable under sail. Doubtful Sound is the deepest of the fiords with a maximum depth of 421 m. It contains three distinct 'arms' and several outstanding waterfalls in the area from Deep Cove to the open ocean. Your ship will spend time navigating around Secretary Island through both Thompson and Doubtful Sounds. You will enjoy the spectacular scenery from the outer decks.

Day 10 MILFORD SOUND

Milford Sound fiord is among one of the most beautiful natural sites in New Zealand. So much beauty will quite simply take your breath away. Located on the south-west coast of South Island, in the Fiordland National Park, this sumptuous inlet carved out by glaciers advances over at least 15 kilometres inland, in the Southern Alps. Majestic cliffs seem to surge out of the dark waters, rising several hundred metres high: an abrupt relief from where impressive waterfalls cascade.

Day 11 AT SEA

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine

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Day 12 DUNEDIN

Dunedin is New Zealand's oldest city and is often referred to as the Edinburgh of New Zealand. This city of the south, wears its Scottish heritage with pride. The city contains some of the best preserved Victorian and Edwardian architecture in the Southern Hemisphere. The Silverpeaks hinterland to the North West provides a picturesque backdrop and The Otago Peninsula, which lies within the city boundaries, has internationally renowned wildlife reserves, including the only mainland breeding colony of Northern Royal Albatross.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE SOLEAL

YOUR SHIP: Le Soleal

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Luxury Small Ship A sleek silhouette, a welcoming intimate atmosphere, and the same philosophy that has made her sister ships, L'Austral, Lyrial and Le Boreal, such a success. This magnificent yacht of only 132 staterooms and suites, all with balconies, has contemporary decor inspired by the luxury yachting world, with fluid lines and a modern colour scheme combining natural wood with shades of grey and white. White Corian counters in the lobby contrast with the warmth of leather to recall a boat's hull, while the central sculpture of enamelled pieces takes its inspiration from the sea. In the lounge bar, the carpet picks up a tennis stripe theme symbolising a certain idea of cruising, one synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit. Wheelchairs 3 specially adapted wheelchair cabins (Deck 3 = Superior cabin no. 307, no balcony, Deck 4 = Prestige Cabin no. 407 - with balcony and Deck 5 = Prestige Cabin no 509, with balcony) and lifts to all decks/areas. Read about our recent Ponant cruise to Antarctica Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant cruise ships.



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