



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF EDWARD LEAR

" I have always loved Edward Lear's landscape paintings and drawings. When I think of an area or place in Greece or the Balkans often the first image I see in my mind's eye is one of Lear's paintings. He magically captures the very essence of the place and time in a way photographs rarely do. Not only a great artist, he was also the master of the pen and during this voyage, the talks on board will not only be illustrated with his paintings but with extracts from his journals and letters, especially the delightfully light-hearted ones to his sister Ann. His words and images from over 150 years ago are still as meaningful and fresh today and will add a welcome dimension to our travels through remarkable landscapes and historic sites. Our journey will take us to many of the places he visited, some still looking much the same as he encountered where we can share his moods, feelings and humour. The splendid legacy of his paintings and drawings can be seen as all the more remarkable considering that throughout his life he suffered from chest complaints, epileptic fits, poor eyesight and depression. Added to this he had to contend with a fear of horses and often severe sea-sickness but through all trials, he was at his best whilst on the move. A troubled soul, but undoubted genius, he was an English eccentric of the very best kind. Lear, like Byron, was captivated by the rugged beauty of Albania and in particular the daily life and bazaars. His landscapes of the Ionian Islands illustrate his brilliance in portraying nature and in the mountains and ancient sites he showed his unique talent at its best. Join us aboard the MS Monet in the good company of George Hart (2020) & Tim Stimson (2021), great enthusiasts of Edward Lear and renowned classicist as we journey through Greece, its

islands and along the coasts of Albania and



Montenegro.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Athens, Greece.

Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the NJV Plaza Hotel and check in for an overnight stay. Enjoy time at leisure before



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we meet for dinner this evening.

Day 2 Athens.

Lear visited Athens in 1848 with his friend Charles Church, spending a number of weeks here and producing over 100 paintings and drawings. We will spend the morning visiting the Acropolis and Parthenon as well as the Acropolis Museum, before taking lunch and driving to the port of Piraeus to embark the MS Monet in the late afternoon.

Day 3 Corinth Canal & Delphi.

Spend a leisurely morning on board as we navigate the narrow Corinth Canal and cruise along the Gulf of Corinth to berth at the port of Itea. After lunch on board we will visit Delphi, one of the most evocative of ancient Greek sites. Lear obviously thought so "Delphi clinging to the rocks above a sea of olive trees". Nestling on the slopes of Mount Parnassos, the site is of significant religious and political importance; pilgrims flocked from all over the Hellenic world to the Oracle of Delphi. Take some time to enjoy the austere beauty of the valley and the Sanctuary of Athena and the Sanctuary of Pythian Apollo. We hope to visit the museum before returning to the ship for dinner as we sail out into the Ionian Sea.

Day 4 Argostoli, Cephalonia.

Spend the morning at sea bound for Cephalonia. After lunch, explore the island including the ruins of the fortress of San Giorgio. Lear painted the castle in 1863 whilst working on his 'Views in the Seven Ionian Islands' hoping that the publication would find commercial success. The timing fitting in with the British administration returning the islands back to Greece. First fortified by the Byzantines and later developed by the Venetians, San Giorgio lost its importance and decay and the 1950's

earthquake sealed its fate. Our island drive will include the capital of Argostoli and the Aghii Theodori Lighthouse.

Day 5 Preveza.

Returning to the Greek mainland we head for the little known ancient city of Nikopolis, one of the largest and most important sites in the whole of Greece. Built by the Roman Emperor Octavianus Augustus following his victory at Aktium in 31 BC over Antony and Cleopatra, inside its extensive walls are the Odeum, the Theatre, the Nymphaeum and the monument to Augustus. Later, the city flourished in the early Christian period as the seat of the archbishop of old Epiros but earthquakes and invading Goths and Vandals led to its demise. Lear visited Nikopolis in 1849 and his lithograph of the site shows little has changed in the last 170 years. Spend the afternoon exploring Preveza at leisure.

Day 6 Igoumenitsa.

Enjoy a full day tour to the Byzantine city of Ioannina. Justinian was founded in the 6th century AD but it was in the late Byzantine period, 13th to 15th century, that the city flourished with the arrival of Byzantine families following the Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople. Ioannina joined Greece in 1913 following a period in the 18th and 19th centuries when the city was a major centre of the modern Greek Enlightenment. Lear was very taken with the city, in a letter to his sister Ann he commented "I think the scene of the Citadel, lake and mountains, is really one of the grandest and most beautiful I ever saw". We explore the old city on foot with its castle, museums and mosques as well as enjoying some free time in the Stoa Louli arcade with its cafes, shops and art galleries. A highlight will be the visit to Ali Pasha's house, that enigmatic symbol of Ottoman rule. We enjoy a local lunch and



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also plan a stop to visit the remote and impressive Ancient Theatre and Oracle of Dodoni. This area was a site of worship and pilgrimage from 2000 BC until Roman times and was dedicated at one time to the Mother Goddess Gaia and then to Zeus.

Day 7 Corfu.

And so, to Corfu, the island Lear loved visiting no fewer than nine times and where he spent three years. In his diary in 1866 he wrote "Can I give no idea of the Paradise island to other". Admittedly, the island has seen many changes since his time, but there are still corners where it is possible to see why he held the island in such affection. We have the day to explore and will start with a visit to the sumptuous regency style Palace of St Michael and St George Museum in lovely Corfu town. There will also be the opportunity to enjoy a drive across the island to visit the famous Byzantine Monastery of the Virgin at Paleokastritsa which is still inhabited by a community of monks. The small museum houses some priceless Byzantine icons. Spend some time in the serene monastery gardens that afford a splendid view over the turquoise waters of the bay. We will overnight in port allowing for the opportunity to go ashore to Corfu Town after dinner, the ideal time to appreciate this special place.

Day 8 Sarande, Albania.

Nearby, is the ancient city of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and must see in Albania. Its history spans two and a half millennia and for centuries was overgrown and forgotten. Lear visited in 1857 and was fascinated by the powerful fortifications but at the time there was little else for him to see as restoration only started in the 20th century. He would be truly amazed if he could see the site today, it is extraordinary. Our guided walk will reveal the ruins from many eras and cultures including the

Hellenistic theatre, Roman public baths and the Venetian Watch Tower. As well as the history, take in the spectacular views, the ancient city occupies a bluff of land which protrudes into the Vivari Channel, a stretch of water that connects the Strait of Corfu to the inland saltwater of Lake Butrint. We enjoy some refreshments before returning to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure in Sarande.

Day 9 Vlore.

Just north of Sarande is the port of Vlore and from here we drive two hours to another UNESCO treasure, the hillside town of Berat which Lear visited in 1848. Some of his most important works were painted here and even today it is an artist's dream with its steep cobbled streets and Ottoman style houses surrounded by mountains and olive and grape groves. We explore on foot the oldest quarter of the city known as Kalaja, where the castle has presided over the city for 2000 years and enjoy a local lunch here. En-route to Berat, we plan to visit Apollonia, once a great city and an important port. Founded by the Corinthians in 588 BC, it prospered under Greek colonisation and Rome. It was here Octavian learned of the assassination of his great uncle Caesar and set upon his bid for power ultimately becoming emperor. Archaeological excavations by successive French missions dating back to Napoleon III mean a large area of the site is now visible, certainly considerably more than Lear witnessed after spending a draughty night in a 13th century monastery. For a more leisurely option choose to visit Apollonia in the morning followed by a free afternoon.

Day 10 Tirana & Kruje.

Form the port of Durres we enjoy a full day excursion to explore Tirana and Kruje Castle and drive inland to the capital Tirana. Much has changed since Lear's visit in 1848 but it remains a



fascinating place with disintegrating Soviet style buildings, brand new architecture and historic buildings surrounded by picturesque upland scenery that Lear found so enchanting. After a local lunch we continue to Kruje Castle. Lear was very taken with the area, as he sat and sketched he noted “the lovely landscape in a land of loveliness, than any place I ever saw”. Built in the 6th century, perched above the town of Kruje it was the headquarters of the Dragon of Albania, Skanderberg, who resisted the Ottoman forces in the mid 15th century, hindering their expansion into Western Europe. Visit the museum in the castle dedicated to the legendary Albanian leader and the Ethnographic Museum in an interesting 19th century house.

Day 11 Kotor, Montenegro.

Be on deck early this morning as we navigate the Gulf of Kotor. This beautiful fjord-like area is best seen from the water as we make our way to the town of Kotor. We will explore this Medieval UNESCO town on a guided walk seeing the 12th century St Tryphon's Cathedral and the ancient town gates. Lear painted one of his finest landscapes here, capturing the light over towering mountains. Return to the MS Monet for lunch and spend the afternoon relaxing as we sail along the coast of Montenegro and Croatia bound for the port of Split.

Day 12 Split, Croatia to London.

Disembark this morning and return to London by scheduled flight.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: MONET

YOUR SHIP: Monet

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

She has ample seating space for moments of relaxation, a mini-library with a variety of books and magazines and modern A/V equipment for presentations. Keep in shape during your cruise at the gym, featuring a variety of fitness equipment. The glass-enclosed dining room seats up to 60 passengers and allows for panoramic views of the stunning scenery you will cruise along. The bar and lounge with an open deck in the back offer an ideal spot for reading, relaxing, or dancing under the stars to the sounds of mesmerizing music. At 223 ft/68 m long, the Monet can accommodate up to 60 guests in 30 double bedded or twin cabins, located on the Camille, Parisian, and Lumiere Decks. Cabins on the Camille and Parisian Decks feature two oversized portholes, while cabins on the Lumiere Deck have large windows. All cabins offer central A/C and ventilation, a mini-bar, flat screen satellite TV, phone system, and hairdryer. The Monet is also equipped with a Wi-Fi internet connection (free of charge). The latest state of the art safety equipment is installed on board and maintained by all 29 trained crew members. The ratio of guest passenger to crew members allows for an exquisite service experience. Restaurant The restaurant is filled with elegance and the whimsy of fun and

bright colors. Sumptuous dining options are provided to entice the palate and compliment the ports of call. Enjoy conversing with fellow guests about adventures had and ahead or spend quality time with your travel partners and discuss the amazing wine. The panoramic views will stun you. Lounge The decor is tastefully stated to not over power the elegance of our guests. It is adorned with golds and neutrals. You will shine here. Providing aptly oversized seating to enjoy libations and gathering together with travel companions and new friends. Come here to relax and chat about a perfect end to a day that was filled with incredible sights, sea air and culinary delights. Deluxe Double Cabin This beautifully appointed accommodation will allow the traveler the opportunity to slumber and wake rejuvenated. Enjoy resting on a double bed, a comfortable desk/vanity, a flat screen satellite TV and a private well-appointed bathroom. The decor is warm and inviting with nostalgic art inspired by M/S Monet's history in mind. These were specially chosen to provide the utmost relaxing environment. Sleep and relaxation are invited into this space after soaking up the beauty, culture and Adriatic air. Deluxe Twin Cabin This delightfully appointed cabin allows travelers to sleep and have quiet time that salt air and sea travel induces. Rest peacefully on twin ample mattresses, a comfortable desk/vanity, a flat screen satellite TV and a private well-appointed bathroom. The decor is bright and cheery with pleasant tones. You will dream well here and be rested for yet more adventures and epicurean travels. Open Deck The deck is designed with pure enjoyment and service in mind. It is a bright and warm environment. You will find the classic detail of teak

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furniture to be the ideal seating area for reading, relaxing, dining or enjoying fine wine. The bar and lounge of the Open Deck permit the coast to be in sight as you dance and enjoy the company of fellow travelers. The seas reflect and shimmer as you partake in a true experience of traveling on a classic yacht. Sun Deck Relax on the Sun Deck and soak up the sun of the Adriatic Sea with outstanding and uncompromised views. The nautical experience of the open air accomplishes relaxation, tranquility and the true ambience of



the coast.

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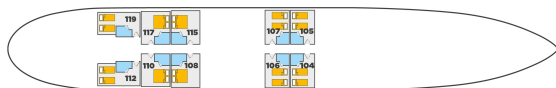
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DECK



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