

## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## THE TRAVELS OF EDWARD LEAR

Edward Lear was one of the most prolific and well-travelled landscape artists of the nineteenth century and we have devised this unique itinerary aboard the MS Island Sky which will follow in his footsteps through the Mediterranean. The splendid legacy of his paintings and drawings can be seen as all the more remarkable when we consider that throughout his life he suffered from bronchitis, monthly epileptic fits, poor eyesight and on his numerous journeys to remote and dangerous destinations he had to contend with a terror of horses and severe sea-sickness. With the MS Island Sky as our base, we will follow some of his most exciting journeys in the lands around the Mediterranean Sea with special talks illustrated by his paintings and with extracts from his journals and letters (especially the delightfully light-hearted ones to his sister Anne) enabling us hear his words from over 120 years ago. One of Lear's outstanding accomplishments was his journey through Albania where his stunning pictures revealed for the first time its rugged beauty to a wide audience. There he was particularly fascinated by the life in the bazaars of the town of Berat but also tells of his frustration at the local hostility to his sketching and of his escape from a pack of odious hounds. His landscapes of the Ionian Islands illustrate his brilliance in portraying nature, especially the twisting trunks and branches of trees. Elsewhere we can admire his mastery in depicting precipitous cliffs dashed by surging waves and dramatic ruins while one result of his sojourn in Sicily was his evocative portrayal of the Quarries of Syracuse forever tied to fate of the thousands of Athenians who perished, imprisoned there 2500 years ago. In many of the ports and destinations we visit we can

share his moods, feelings and humour - but most of all enjoy the perceptive topographical art of the incredibly talented



Edward Lear.

### ITINERARY

Day 1 - London to Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival, transfer to the MS Island Sky and embark. We sail late this evening.

Day 2 - Kotor, Montenegro.

This morning we will enter the stunningly beautiful Kotor Fjord in Montenegro. Be on deck to enjoy this lovely spot as we make our way up the fjord, past towering mountains to the town of Kotor. Step ashore within close walking distance of Kotor and enjoy a morning walking tour through the little courts and

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squares faced with Renaissance buildings to the 12th century cathedral of St Tryphon. This afternoon enjoy some free time in Kotor before we depart and cruise through some stunning scenery in the late afternoon.

### Day 3 - Vlore, Albania.

During today's full day excursion, drive to nearby Apollonia, the ancient city of Illyria. The city reached its zenith around the 4th to 3rd centuries BC when it is believed the population numbered over 70,000. See the city council building with its surviving facade, the library, triumphal arch and temple of Artemis. We drive inland to historic and beautiful Berat to view the collection of white Ottoman houses which climb up the hill to the castle, earning its title of town of a thousand windows. This UNESCO World Heritage Site in its rugged mountain setting and towering minarets inspired Lear to paint some of his most engaging works in Albania which he visited in 1848 and 1857.

### Day 4 - Corfu & Paxos, Greece.

Today, is devoted to Corfu and its islands where Lear spent many years during the British occupation that lasted from 1815 to 1863. He found the beauty of the islands astonishing but was not fond of the British lifestyle. Be on deck as we approach Corfu Town for a wonderful view of the Old Fortress and then spend the morning exploring the town with its idyllic pastel coloured Venetian mansions and fine museums. We return to the vessel for lunch and sail out of Corfu Town for an afternoon of leisurely cruising along the eastern shore of Corfu and across to its tiny neighbour, Paxos. Take a stroll before dinner on this enchanting island of pines, olive groves and splendid beaches and in Galos admire the Venetian inspired architecture, the English Governors house and tiny churches.

### Day 5 - Preveza.

Sail at first light for the Greek mainland, arriving after breakfast. Lear visited this region of north western Greece in 1849, painting and sketching in Parga and Nicopolis. It is the latter which will occupy our morning as we learn of the Battle of Nicopolis in 31 BC in which the army of 100,000 led by Antony and Cleopatra were defeated by Octavian who marked his victory by building a great city. Amongst the ruins is one of the largest and best preserved Roman theatres in the Eastern Mediterranean. We return to the vessel for lunch and have the afternoon to explore this pretty yacht lined harbour town and nearby beaches.

### Day 6 - Otranto, Italy.

Our journey continues across the Ionian Sea to the heel of Italy and the port of Otranto. Once an ancient Greek colony and later a Roman port it is from here we take the short drive to Lecce, often referred to as The Florence of the South. Our guided walking tour in the old town takes us past a wonderful collection of Baroque palaces and churches decorated in the Lecce stone. See the dazzling decoration of Santa Croce Basilica and the Piazza Duomo, surely one of the finest squares in Southern Italy.

### Day 7 - Crotone.

Sail across the Gulf of Taranto to Calabria and the ancient city of Crotone. Lear travelled extensively in Southern Italy including Calabria and in 1847 witnessed outbursts of the revolution. Our guided tour will begin in the old quarter with a visit to the Castle of Charles V and the cathedral. We then drive to nearby Capo Colonna where once stood the temple of Hera Lacinia. Or choose to travel inland to Santa Severina, a hilltop castle fortress surrounded by genteel dwellings, churches and tangled





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streets.

### Day 8 - Syracuse, Sicily.

Lear arrived in Sicily in 1847 travelling overland from Palermo to Syracuse. Writing to his sister from Syracuse he told her, the vast quarries whence this enormous city was dug are now used as gardens, and being sheltered are really quite like paradise. Lears work from this period included a five foot canvas entitled the city of Syracuse from the ancient quarries where the Athenians were imprisoned which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853. Our exploration of Syracuse which once rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world will begin in the Archaeological Zone and a well preserved Greek theatre. Then onto Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove and site of the curious Dionysus Ear. In the afternoon stroll through the Medieval quarter of Ortygia with its splendid Renaissance palaces.

### Day 9 - Agrigento.

Sailing along the south coast of Sicily we reach Porto Empedocle for our visit to nearby Agrigento. Lear wrote, nothing of earth can be so beautiful as Girgenti (Agrigento) with its six temples. I speak of the old town and the flowers and birds are beyond imagination lovely. Just as lovely today is the Valle dei Templi, a series of Doric temples and the most captivating of Sicilian Greek remains, and a grouping unique outside Greece. Surrounded in greenery of olive and almond trees, admire the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concord, the Dioscuri Temple, the Temple of Olympian Zeus and the Temple of Hercules. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

### Day 10 - Erice & Segesta.

From our berth in Trapani we travel to the nearby town of Erice, famed in antiquity for its temple dedicated to the goddess of love, the Phoenician Astarte, Greek Aphrodite or Roman Venus. A tour will take us to this beautifully preserved Medieval town set high above the sea with views over Trapani and the Egadi islands beyond. Here, legend says, the son of Venus and Poseidon established a town and built a temple to honour his mother, the goddess of love, almost ten centuries ago. This afternoon we continue to Segesta to view one of the grandest Doric monuments to survive, the unfinished temple dating from 424 B.C. which sits atop a hill.

### Day 11 - Lipari Islands.

On Lipari we will find an amazing collection of ruins from the prehistoric through to the Roman period. Lipari town is a thriving small town, attractively located between two harbours. Our half day guided tour includes a visit to the Upper Town set within the fortress walls, a drive around the volcano followed by a visit to the Archaeological Museum which houses relics from nearby excavations. This afternoon is free for independent exploration before we sail in the late afternoon for the island of Stomboli, one of the most active volcanoes in the world with regular eruptions. We sail past this Lighthouse of the Mediterranean on our way to Campania. Please note that the vessel will be at anchor today and Zodiacs will be used to access Lipari.

### Day 12 - Amalfi.

From 1838 to 1848 Lear spent a number of years in Rome and it was from here that he explored Italy both to the north and south of the capital. On our penultimate day of the cruise we can follow in his footsteps with a visit to Amalfi. According to his sister Ann, he liked to wander slowly in a stopping, prying, lingering mode of travel and where better to do this than the

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enchanting Amalfi Coast which he visited in 1838. Alternatively join a half day excursion to Paestum. Founded by Greeks in 600 BC this well-preserved and fascinating site was rediscovered in 1752. We will see the impressive Temple Poseidon, the Basilica, Amphitheatre and Aethenian before spending some time in the museum, adjacent to the site. Please note that the vessel will be at anchor today and Zodiacs will be used to access Amalfi.

Day 13 - Rome to London.

Disembark in Civitavecchia after breakfast and transfer to Rome for our return scheduled flight to London.





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## YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

**YOUR SHIP:** Island Sky

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly

comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is

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also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.



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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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## PRICING

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