

Australia's Iconic Kimberley

From **27/07/2022**
to **06/08/2022**

Ship: **LE SOLEAL**

From **Darwin**
to **Broome**



Set sail for the **wild and grandiose landscapes of Kimberley**, following an exceptional **PONANT** itinerary.

From **Darwin** to **Broome**, embark for an **11-day expedition cruise** to **one of the last unspoiled regions on the planet**.

In one of the most picturesque parts of the region, the **Hunter River**, you will see wild mangrove forests where **saltwater crocodiles** live along with many species of birds.

The highpoint of this cruise will undoubtedly be the discovery of the **King George River and the majestic Twin Falls**, the highest falls in Western Australia.

At **Ashmore Reef**, gaze out over the shades of blue of the Timor Sea off the mainland. The corals are home to extraordinary marine life in this incredibly beautiful paradise.

You will also visit **Collier Bay**, where you will be able to admire the Montgomery Reef, home to vast expanses of lagoons and immense coral reefs.

Your ship will take you along the most spectacular coasts in the entire region.

With their falls, abrupt gorges, savannah, calm waters and desolate mountain chains, the wild lands of Kimberley are the promise of **an exceptional adventure**.

We are privileged guests in these extreme lands where we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions. Landings on certain sites and the observation of certain wildlife cannot be guaranteed. They vary from day to day, making each PONANT cruise a unique experience. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, whilst complying with the necessary safety rules and precautions.



The information in this document is valid as of 18/08/2022

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

DARWIN

Embarkation 27/07/2022 from 15:00 to 16:00

Departure 27/07/2022 at 17:00

Darwin is located in Australia's Northern Territory which is also known as the "Top End". It is the **capital city** and the most populated town of the Northern Territory. Darwin is a beautiful tropical city, a **melting pot of people and cultures**, over 50 different cultures live and work side by side that prides itself in its unique and friendly laid-back lifestyle. Come discover the town's still recent history through its emblematic buildings such as the new **Parliament House** opened in 1994, a magnificent example of tropical architecture or **Admiralty House** declared heritage place, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.

KING GEORGE RIVER

Arrival 28/07/2022

Departure 28/07/2022

The journey up the **King George River** is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display varying degrees of weathering of the ancient Warton sandstone. The colours and textures of the gorge change with the light as you travel further up the river creating a continual changing scenery that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the **King George twin falls**; the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80 m or 260 ft). Fed by wet season run-off the level of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year. Your Expedition Team will escort you in either the zodiacs or ships tenders to the foot of the twin falls, and explain all about the stunning geological formations of the canyon.

VANSITTART BAY

Arrival 29/07/2022

Departure 29/07/2022

Jar Island contains ancient rock art galleries depicting the Gwion Gwion style unique to the Kimberley region. Mainly neglected by, or unknown to, the early European researchers of Aboriginal culture in the Kimberley in favour of the dominant and more dramatic Wandjina art, Gwion Gwion art has in recent years gained world prominence. It is generally thought that this art may extend back to over 30,000 years before our time and represents the first wave of seagoing colonisers of the Australian continent. As it is, these are **the oldest detailed depiction of human figures in the world**. Join your Expedition Team ashore for a short walk, past some fascinating rock formations, to the site of the Gwion Gwion art galleries.

ASHMORE REEF

Arrival 30/07/2022

Departure 30/07/2022

Located in the Timor Sea, the **Ashmore Reef Marine Park** is a sanctuary for many marine species and a designated important bird area (IBA). Every year, more than 100,000 seabirds breed here, including crested terns, white-tailed tropicbirds and greater frigatebirds. It was recognised as a wetland of international importance in 2003 for its vital role in providing a haven for the tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds which turn up to feed each year. In addition to the prolific birdlife, beneath the clear tropical waters, the coral reefs, seagrass meadows, sandflats and lagoons of Ashmore Reef are home to a colourful array of marine life including 255 species of reef building coral, the greatest number of any reef on the Western Australian coast. Ashmore Reef provides a unique opportunity to combine a zodiac tour to view the abundant birdlife and marine life with the opportunity to experience a magical moment snorkelling or a refreshing swim.

CAREENING BAY

Arrival 31/07/2022

Departure 31/07/2022

Careening Bay was named by Lieutenant Phillip Parker King after his ship, *HMC Mermaid*, was careened there during his third voyage of discovery in 1820. King surveyed the western coast to complete the map initiated by Flinders 20 years earlier. The *Mermaid* had been leaking badly and King needed to find a shallow sandy bay where he could careen his boat to undertake repairs. At a high tide, on a warm September afternoon, he ran the Mermaid onto the sands. For ten days the Mermaid crew worked hard before refloating the vessel. The ship's carpenter carved the name of the vessel and the year into a conspicuous boob tree. The famous boob tree is now 3 metres wide and National Heritage listed. A reminder of a by gone era of exploration!

SWIFT BAY

Arrival 01/08/2022

Departure 01/08/2022

The **Bonaparte Archipelago**, is a stunningly rugged maze of islands stretching almost 150 km along Western Australia's remote Kimberley coast. Its colour and scale conspire to take ones' breath away. Its distant location has meant it has remained an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience. Phillip Parker King named "**Swift's bay**" after Jonathon Swift (1667-1745) the author of Gulliver's travels. The 'T' shaped bay is composed of heavily fractured sandstone providing an abundance of rock shelters. On the walls of these shelters are examples of both Wandjina and Gwion Gwion style rock art. Join your expedition team ashore for a guided walk to a number of rock art galleries depicting these unique rock art styles.

HUNTER RIVER

Arrival 02/08/2022

Departure 02/08/2022

Arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast, Prince Frederick Harbour and the **Hunter River** are lined with ancient rainforest pockets, pristine **mangroves** and mosaic sandstone cliffs. They are considered to be some of the most pristine mangrove forests in the world, containing up to 18 different species, supporting a rich and diverse

fauna. The **sandstone escarpment** at the river mouth, known as “Kampamantiya” **rises over 200 metres high** before giving way to extensive mud banks and mangrove forests home to numerous bird species and the iconic **saltwater crocodile**. Our expert Expedition Team will share their knowledge with you as you explore this pristine mangrove environment by zodiac keeping a constant lookout for wildlife. You will also have the opportunity to reach the Mitchell Falls by helicopter from Naturalist Island beach.

COLLIER BAY

Arrival 03/08/2022

Departure 04/08/2022

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of **Collier Bay** have been shaped by the **massive tidal movements** the region is renowned for, creating a photographer’s paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates **unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world**. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is **Montgomery Reef**, the world’s largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating **turbulent ‘rivers’ and mini waterfalls**. At the Southern end of the Bay, **Talbot Bay** is home to the world’s only **‘Horizontal Falls’** described by Sir David Attenborough as “One of the greatest wonders of the natural world.” Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of ancient **Rock Art galleries**. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and **Gwion Gwion** styles.

As we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions in this region, the activities mentioned above are only possible experiences and can’t be guaranteed.

LACEPEDE ISLANDS

Arrival 05/08/2022

Departure 05/08/2022

The **Lacepede Islands** are Western Australia’s most important breeding habitat for **Green Turtles** (*Chelonia mydas*), and have been named by BirdLife International as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)**. The breeding colony of Brown Boobies is possibly the largest in the world. Up to 20,000 Roseate Terns have also been recorded here. Other birds breeding on the islands include Masked Boobies, Australian Pelicans, Lesser Frigatebirds, Eastern Reef Egrets, Silver Gulls, Crested, Bridled and Lesser Crested Terns, Common Noddies, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Join your expedition team for a guided zodiac tour to view the prolific wildlife. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, landings are prohibited on the Lacepede Islands.

BROOME

Arrival 06/08/2022 early morning

Disembarkation 06/08/2022 at 07:00

Located in the northwest of the Kimberley region and in the far north of Western Australia, the town of **Broome** is reputed for its history and its glorious **pearling era**. The fascinating Chinatown district, which is the historic city centre, and the famous Japanese Cemetery, dates back to 1896, and has a past marked by the immigration of numerous Chinese and Japanese workers, attracted by the prosperous pearl industry at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Broome is also famous for the **“Staircase to the Moon”**, an optical illusion created by the Moon reflecting on the sand banks at low tide, like a staircase climbing up towards the sky, a unique spectacle

provided by nature...