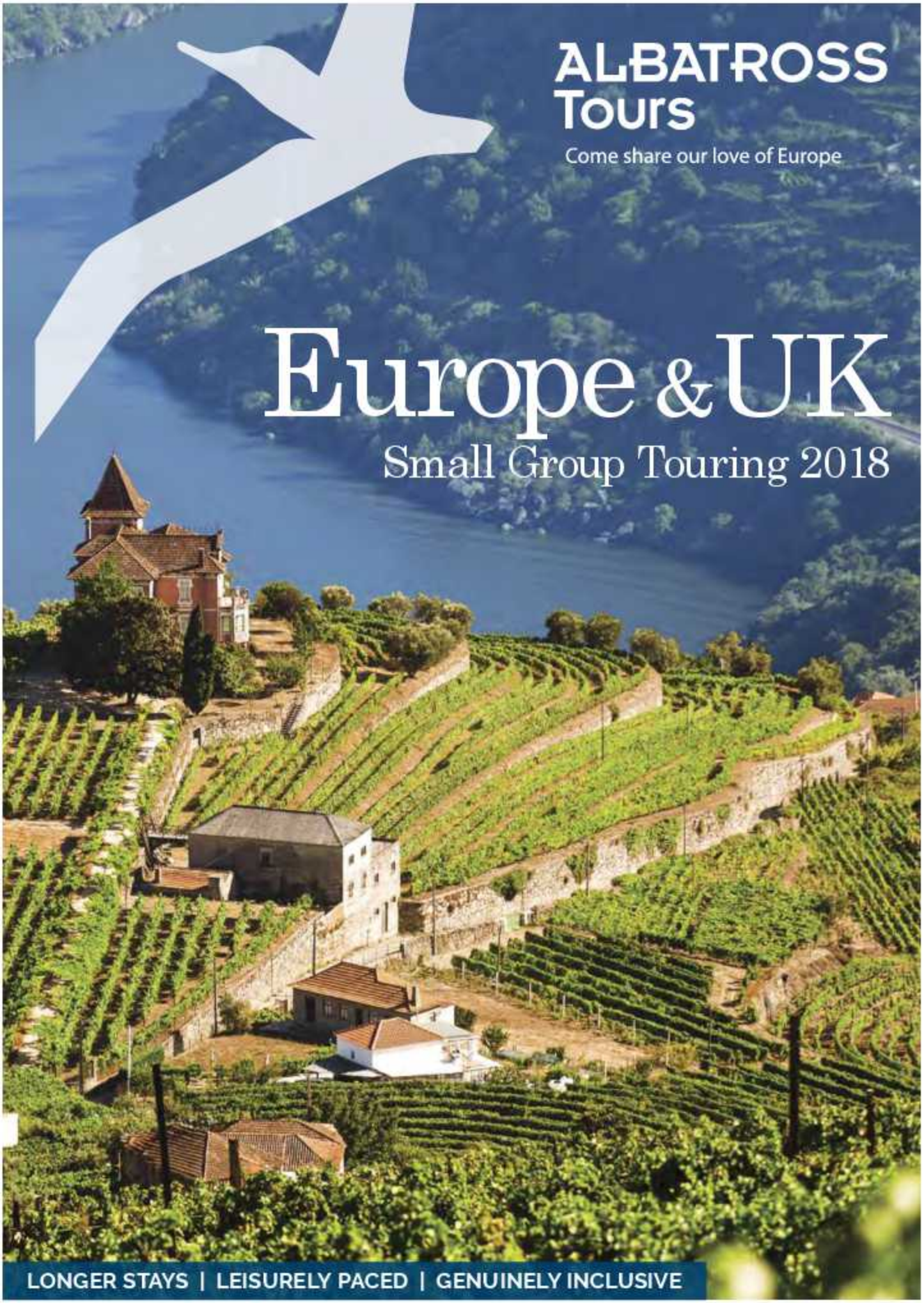
ALBATROSS Tours

Come share our love of Europe

Europe & UK

Small Group Touring 2018



LONGER STAYS | LEISURELY PACED | GENUINELY INCLUSIVE

Tour departures April – October 2018

Verona, Italy

We design tours for people like you!

Since 1995, our sole focus has been the design, creation, and operation of European tours for Australians and New Zealanders. A more leisurely holiday tailored for like minded people travelling to the far side of the world. People just like you, who want to see more and truly enjoy their European holiday.

The formula for our unique itinerary design is actually quite simple. Avoid early morning starts and tiresome one night stops. Make sure there is always significantly more sightseeing time and that the pace is always more leisurely with 2, 3, 4 and 5 night stays in wonderful authentic hotels.

We also ensure your vital free time remains precisely that - free! Believe me, having a sensible balance between included activities and 'My Time' will make a huge difference to the enjoyment of your holiday.

Just like you, I hate doing anything and suddenly discovering there are hidden extras. That is why I insist our tours are always genuinely inclusive and promise that you will never step onboard one of our coaches and be given a long list of later charged, expensive 'optional' extras (so common elsewhere), which can create stress and play havoc with your budget.

With decades of European touring experience, I also believe it is vital to limit our tour group size to a maximum of 28 on all our European Summer tours, which gives you a much more personal experience.

People must like what we do as they come back to us time and again! I am proud of what we, as an expert team, create and deliver.

Come share our love of Europe.

Euan Landsborough, 'The Mo', Managing Director & Tour Designer

What's New for 2018

Through Bohemia & Saxony
15 days
See page 30

La Petite France
10 days
See page 66

Italian 'Alternativo'
15 days
See page 90

Come share our love of Europe

The Ireland Connection
14 days
Dublin roundtrip Page 54

Best of British
16 days
London roundtrip Page 48

NEW

La Petite France
10 days
Paris roundtrip Page 66

La Grande France
16 days
Paris to Nice Page 72

Northern Spain & the Pyrenees
17 days Madrid to Barcelona Page 108

'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal
18 days
Madrid roundtrip Page 102

An Alpine Adventure
17 days
Zurich to Milan Page 36

Italian Lakes & Tuscany
16 days
Milan to Venice Page 84

Black Forest, Bavaria & Tyrol
15 days Frankfurt to Munich Page 42

EDINBURGH
BELFAST
Ireland
DUBLIN
Britain
CARDIFF
LONDON
Germany
BRUSSELS
Belgium
LUXEMBOURG
PARIS
France
BERN
Switzerland
Italy
MONACO
Andorra
Portugal
MADRID
Spain
LISBON
GIBRALTAR

Contents

Welcome to Albatross Tours

Why are Albatross Tours so popular?	6
Enjoy longer stays	8
Our unique style of touring	10
Small group touring	12
So much included!	14
Authentic experiences	16
'My Time' guaranteed!	18
Where you stay is important	20
Savour the regional flavours	22
Travel in style	24
Our expert tour managers	25
Your loyalty rewarded	26
Exclusive Albatross inclusions	27
Special offers	28
Frequently asked questions	114
Connect with us	122
Tour booking conditions	123

Austria, Czech Republic, Germany & Switzerland

15 Days	Through Bohemia & Saxony	30
17 Days	An Alpine Adventure	36
15 Days	Black Forest, Bavaria & the Tyrol	42

Britain & Ireland

16 Days	Best of British	48
14 Days	The Ireland Connection	54

Croatia

13 Days	Croatia & the Adriatic	60

France

10 Days	La Petite France	66
16 Days	La Grande France	72

Italy & Sicily

18 Days	The Italian 'Grande'	78
16 Days	Italian Lakes & Tuscany	84
15 Days	Italian 'Alternativo'	90
17 Days	Italy, the Deep South & Sicily	96

Spain & Portugal

18 Days	'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal	102
17 Days	Northern Spain & the Pyrenees	108

Christmas & New Year Tours 116

Exciting New Tours Coming Soon 118

2020 Oberammergau Tours 120

Why are Albatross Tours so popular?

Discover a different style of touring. A better way, that delivers to you genuine, in depth European experiences, and more enjoyable and fulfilling holidays.

Especially for you

Unique tour itineraries designed to suit the travel needs of you - Australians and New Zealanders, who travel halfway across the world, seeking a more authentic European travel experience.

Longer stays

Enjoy a leisurely and more sensible pace with 2, 3, 4 and even 5 night stays in each captivating city or region.

See more, experience more

Packed with fabulous local dining, high quality excursions, authentic activities and unique experiences - and they are all included!

Unique accommodation

Stay in first class, character style accommodation in superb locations. In a historic mansion, a centuries old castle, a palace or even a beautiful French château hotel.

Because people like what we do!

Small, more intimate groups

Enjoy a more personal experience travelling with a small group of like-minded travellers. Our group sizes range from just 10 to 28!

Genuinely inclusive

We guarantee there are NO 'optional' activity costs – even your 'end of tour' tips are included. View the outstanding value inclusions in each of our itineraries.

'My Time' guaranteed!

Your days are easier. With our sensible and leisurely pace, we guarantee your 'My Time' so you can relax and truly enjoy the destinations you have travelled so far to see.

Experience you can trust

With well over 20 years of experience in successfully creating and operating market leading European tours, you know you are in safe hands.

Enjoy longer stays

"We were particularly drawn to the longer stays at each location, a major reason why we chose Albatross Tours. In this we were not disappointed, the longer stays were great, we felt so much more relaxed. We really felt that we were on holiday! Each day brought with it a sense of adventure at an enjoyable pace." Irene

Cruise on Lake Como during a 4 night stay. Image taken by Albatross traveller, J. Vernon

Stay 4 nights in Dubrovnik, with time to explore the old town when the crowds have gone

Relaxing 3, 4 and even 5 night stays

Our tours are always designed to have a more leisurely pace with 3, 4 and even 5 night stays in each captivating city or region. We consider 2 nights stays to be the absolute minimum!

Let's face it nobody likes continuously checking in and out of hotels, unpacking their bags each evening, and then having to re-pack them again early the next morning. That is why, apart from possibly the first or last night of the tour, **there are no '1 night stops' on any of our tours. None!**

Your days are easy

With our leisurely style of hub and spoke touring, we can include more of the most essential element of your holiday – time! Since you are not constantly rushing to get to your next destination, Albatross can specifically plan and factor in your included excursions and sightseeing highlights. Whether it be cruising across Lake Como or taking a fantastic cable car up to the top of the Alps we always have time on our side, so we can make sure to do them all properly and we also allow time for you to do what pleases you. We call this 'My Time'.

The pace is always relaxed

Since you are not constantly changing hotels, or travelling long distances each day, early morning departures are extremely rare. And, as a bonus you will usually spend lunchtimes in charming towns and villages - not at uninspiring motorway service stops!

Soak up the atmosphere in a local café

You deserve more than just photos

On many other tours of Europe, with their regular 1 or 2 night stops and repetitive long drives, you may snap some great photos, but that is just about all you will get! You lose precious time packing and un-packing your luggage daily, waiting for luggage to be handled, checking in and out, settling bills, loading coaches, losing shoes and toothbrushes... the list goes on. That is exhausting, and is a waste of your precious time. Crazy! Wouldn't you rather stay longer, enjoy leisurely breakfasts, explore more, see more, experience more, yet still have time to enjoy lunchtime in a trattoria – 'people watching'... rather than 'clock watching'! There is a massive difference in the way Albatross do things!

Our unique style of touring

Enjoy time to stroll the local streets

Relax over a leisurely meal. Image taken by Albatross traveller, J. Vernon

Wander through local markets

Our tours are to be enjoyed not endured!

Thirty years ago, I was a Tour Manager (working for global tour company) on a coach heading into Austria. The sky was blue, the sunshine was drenching the glorious green meadows and the Bavarian mountains soared either side. It was heavenly! Yet every single person on that coach was fast asleep and oblivious to the surrounding beauty because they were all so tired. It was yet another very long day on the coach, after another early start and an all too rushed one night stay. To me, it felt so wrong, and what is so sad is that those same, horrifically tiring style of itineraries are still so common.

I learnt a big lesson that day which drives me to continue to improve our tours. You see, I believe tours should be enjoyed and not endured. That is why Albatross avoids 1 night 'mad dash' stops, and aim for more 3 and 4 night stays which enable us to plan a healthy balance of terrific sightseeing along with satisfying and necessary leisure time.

Our hub and spoke style of touring really works!

Ride up a cable car to the Republic of San Marino

The benefits of our style of touring

- More time for local sightseeing
- No packing and unpacking suitcases every day
- No waiting on others as they pay their bar bills
- Stay in specially selected character hotels and get to know the locals
- Have time to do your laundry and know that before you move on it will be dry
- Enjoy time to relax instead of having to constantly lug your suitcase in and out of rooms
- Have time to get to know the local bars and restaurants and be able to choose the one that suits you
- Get beneath that thin tourist veneer and genuinely explore each region
- Enjoy 'My Time' to feel the ambience and flavours of each region
- Look forward to enjoying full day excursions knowing you will come back to your hotel room and your clothes are already unpacked!

Tours designed to suit you

Each and every one of our tours have been designed specially for you – Australians and New Zealanders. Like-minded travellers, like you, seeking a more fulfilling European holiday experience. We understand you want more from an escorted tour than a few hurried, all too brief visits to the destinations you have travelled so far to see. Which is why we have developed our hub and spoke style touring.

Why our hub and spoke touring style works

Our hub and spoke style touring makes your days easier and more enjoyable. We usually settle in to a charming hotel for 3, 4 or even 5 nights and take day trips out to explore the local region. This allows you to experience a huge variety of exciting excursions and activities. Not just the usual highlights, but also many more, unique, authentic, regional experiences, often well away from the bustling tourist crowds. Best of all, it also means we can factor in genuine, essential leisure time for you - 'My Time'!

Small group touring

Just 10 to 28 travellers

The average group size with Albatross is just 22 passengers – on a full-size coach! We cap our tours at 28 travellers and give you the peace of mind to know we guarantee our tours will depart with as few as just 10!

Albatross Tours was one of the earliest innovators of small group touring. We saw the enormous benefits our travellers would enjoy when combining smaller, more personal groups with longer stays at each delightful destination. There is a massive difference!

Everything is more personal

You've travelled far to experience Europe. With Albatross Tours, you'll never feel like just one of the crowd, you'll feel special. Our smaller group size means our client to Tour Manager ratio is halved and you are guaranteed a much higher level of personal service and attention.

Stay in the delightful Sassi caves, perfect for small group touring

The benefits of travelling in a small group

- Personalised service from your Tour Manager
- Priority access at attractions
- Dine in delightful, local restaurants
- Stay in hotels based on style, character and location
- More personal space and comfort on the coach
- Swifter getting on and off the coach, in and out of hotels and attractions
- Easier to get to know your fellow travellers

"We had 16 on our tour and that was a great number. Pre-dinner we would all meet at a passenger's room for drinks and nibbles. The tour was very personal and just naturally led to this type of entertainment.

We have been travelling for the last 12 years to a large number of destinations with numerous travel companies and we found Albatross Tours to be up there with the very best.

That's where Albatross shines. We visited exclusive areas that only small groups can access. Albatross deliver what they preach. We would travel with Albatross Tours again without hesitation." Kevin

So much included!

ALL SIGHTSEEING & ENTRANCE FEES

EXPERIENCED TOUR MANAGERS

FIRST CLASS ACCOMMODATION

BUFFET BREAKFAST DAILY

LOCAL DINING EXPERIENCES

BEVERAGES WITH ALL DINNERS

LUXURY COACH TRAVEL

WIFI IN HOTELS & COACHES

ALL TIPS ON TOUR

ALBATROSS TRAVEL APP

ON TOUR TRAVEL MAP

SOUVENIR PHOTOBOOK

Exceptional value with NO hidden extras

Albatross tours are genuinely inclusive and already include special excursions, feature dinners and sightseeing tours for you – we even include tips to your Tour Manager and Driver! You will never be confronted with a long 'optional activities list'. We believe these expensive, later charged, hidden extras (usually costing over $100 per person per day) are entirely predictable – **so we have already included these experiences for you in our tours.**

What's always included with Albatross

- ALL sightseeing excursions, activities, locally guided tours and entrance fees as described
- First class, specially selected authentic style hotel accommodation in superb locations
- The services of a highly experienced and professional Tour Manager
- Buffet breakfasts daily, often with a local flavour
- Dinners on the majority of evenings, including dining in special feature restaurants
- A complimentary beverage, plus tea and coffee with included dinners
- Spacious first class coach travel, with window seats for most guests
- WiFi in hotels and on most coaches
- Tips for local guides, hotels, porters, restaurants
- End of tour tips for your Tour Manager and Driver
- Personal audio headsets on tour
- Albatross Travel App featuring 'My Time' travel tips, weather reports and maps
- Albatross 'On Tour' Travel Map to track your journey
- A stunning Albatross Memories Photobook

When travelling with Albatross there is complete transparency on where your money is going. You will find it so much more reassuring knowing exactly how far your budget will go – giving you the peace of mind of being able to enjoy every magical moment.

I hate hidden extras!

Just like you, I hate doing anything and suddenly discovering there are hidden extras and still more to pay! I think it is only fair and honest that if something should be included, it is. That is why I insist our tours are always genuinely inclusive and I promise that you will never step onboard one of our coaches and be given a long list of expensive 'optional' extras (so common elsewhere), which can be so stressful, and play havoc with your budget. Our Tour Managers are not reliant on kickbacks from special shops or optional extras with grossly inflated prices. At the end of you tour, when our Tour Managers' put out their hand, it is not for a tip, it is simply to say farewell and to wish you well on your onward journey.

Authentic experiences

Cruise the picturesque Calanques
La Grande France
DAY 13

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

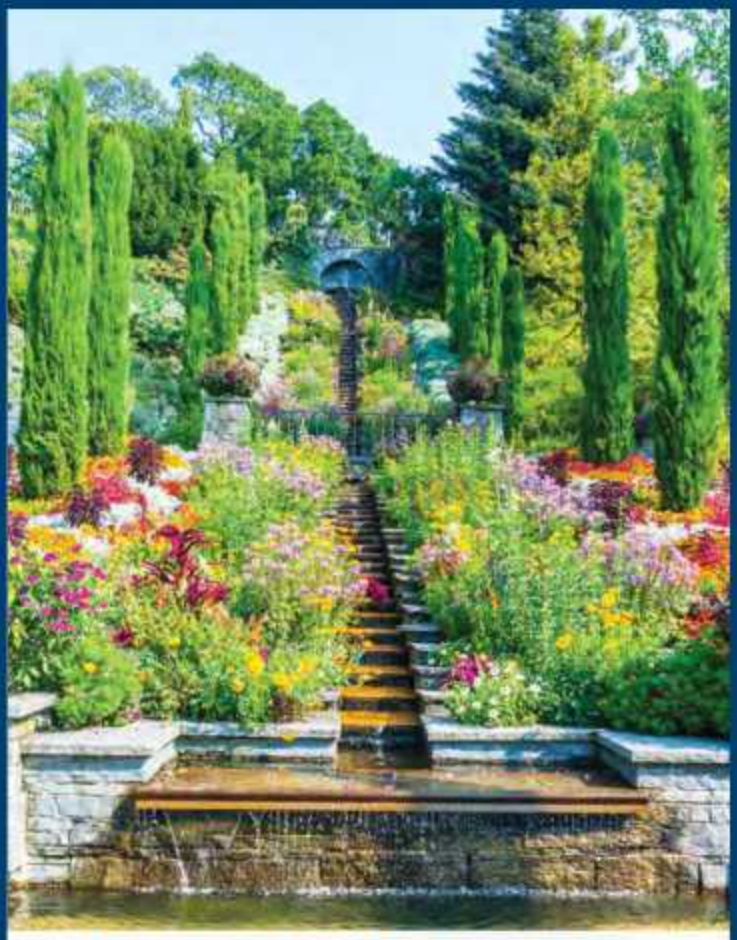
Hand Selected Experiences – especially for you

With our unique touring style, we don't just touch on countries, we explore them. When we design our tours, we look at each region and consider what can be done, and what should be done.

We then assemble a carefully balanced touring programme.

Whilst we emphasise that you always get quality 'My Time' whilst on tour, please do not think that our tours are in any way 'empty'! Far from it. In fact, our style of touring means we can pack our itineraries with specially 'hand selected' experiences. And, since we are not always rushed we can make sure we do each justice, and do them all properly. Some excursions might be guided visits to towns and cities whereas on other days we will add enjoyable, unique activities that are distinctly provincial, maybe quirky or possibly even something for the simple pleasure of it.

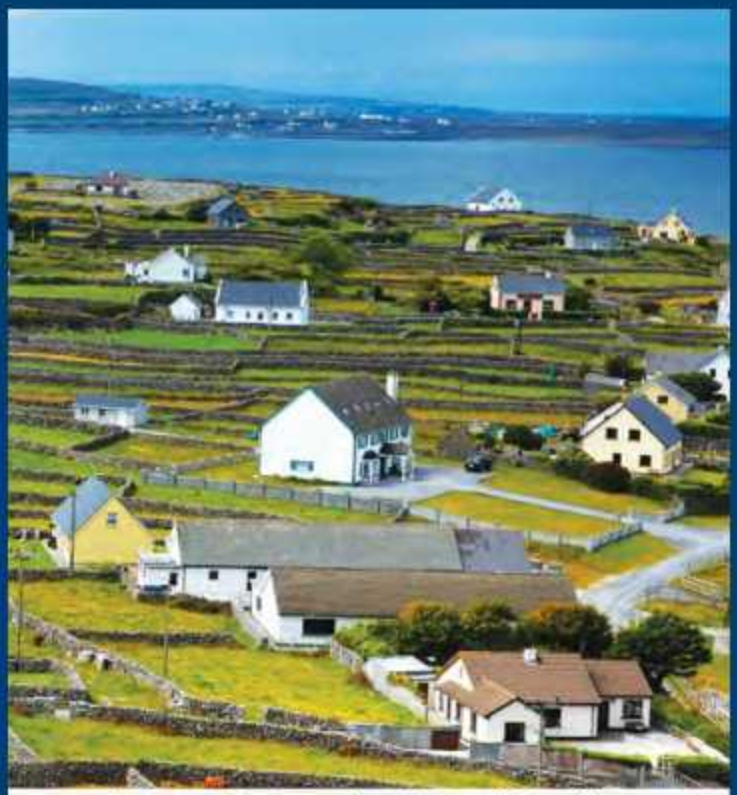
Remember, all of these incredible activities are already included. Always included – never an 'optional' expense! Mae West once said, "You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough!" We agree!



Visit the palatial Gardens of Mainau
Black Forest, Bavaria & the Tyrol
DAY 6

Step back in time in Potsdam
Through Bohemia & Saxony
DAY 4

Drink vinho verde at an historic vineyard
'Magnifico' Spain & Portugal
DAY 12



Enjoy a day on the Aran Islands
The Ireland Connection
DAY 10

Cruise on Lake Como
The Italian 'Grande'
DAYS 1-4

‘My Time’ guaranteed!

Relax for an afternoon while soaking up the local atmosphere with new-found friends. Image taken by Albatross traveller, S. Deaves.

Your free time is essential

Albatross Tours is proud to introduce a new concept to coach touring – 'My Time'. 'My Time' enables for more time for you to relax, to explore, **at your own pace.** Time to immerse yourself in each destination, perhaps to window shop, wander the streets of delightful towns and villages, or mingle with the locals at a café.

How important is it to you?

Because we feature longer stays on all our itineraries, you are guaranteed to enjoy **'My Time' on every Albatross tour.** We have designed our holidays to ensure adequate, well planned 'free time'. That is the Albatross *difference*.

It's about balance

Beautifully balanced itineraries with a unique range of quality sightseeing and excursions, plus planned leisure time for you to relax and discover hidden delights at your own pace. On an Albatross tour, exciting activities are always included and time is set aside to do them properly. When you have your free time, *it stays exactly that – free to do as you please!*

Make the most of your 'My Time'

'My Time' ensures you will experience and enjoy so many benefits of travelling with Albatross Tours

- **Late starts –** Sleep in or take a morning stroll before enjoying a late breakfast.
- **Free evenings –** Whilst we include many, we don't include every dinner so you will have some nights free to do your own thing. Find that romantic trattoria in the gorgeous Umbrian town of Spoleto, or taste the flavours of famous tapas bars in Northern Spain when wandering the streets of San Sebastian.
- **Free afternoons –** There is no need to rush back to the coach. Enjoy a long lunch then go and visit a local art gallery. Or maybe squeeze in a bit of shopping!
- **Free days –** Many Albatross tours feature a free day for you to do as much or as little as you please. Your expert Tour Manager will be on hand to give you advice, recommendations, or provide directions for you.

Our Albatross Travel App also features many local suggestions for you to best take advantage of your 'My Time'.

We will never steal your free time

I know from experience that, whilst travelling, it is essential you have enough free time to relax, explore or simply 'do your own thing'. Optional sightseeing so commonly offered elsewhere can only steal from your free time. Another reason why we do not offer them! Our noticeably longer stays and already included sightseeing and activities guarantee that your essential, relaxing free time remains completely untouched. Perfect for you to properly enjoy and savour each wonderful destination.

You might only travel this way once. With Albatross Tours you will know you've made the most of every precious moment.

Where you stay is important

Stay in the beautifully restored Sassi caves in Matera, Italy

Stay in a French château in the Loire Valley

Stay in the grand Castel Brando in the foothills of the Italian Dolomites

Enjoy an exclusive night in Leeds Castle. Image taken by Albatross traveller, S. Bovery-Spencer

Unique hotels, superb locations

Picture yourself relaxing on the geranium-trimmed balcony of a family run Gasthof, or waking up in a stunning palace hotel.

In addition to centrally located first class city hotels, we believe your European experience should be enhanced with memorable stays in unique hotels, steeped in local character. So, in Italy you'll sleep in a grand villa or a beautifully renovated 'Sassi' cave, in France in a 16th century château and our 'Best of British' tour culminates in the exclusive use of magnificent Leeds Castle.

Comfort guaranteed

You may be staying in historic buildings but that doesn't mean you have to compromise on comfort. Our small group sizes mean we can handpick modestly-sized hotels that still meet our exacting standards. Imagine coming home telling tales of waking up in a 500-year-old inn or a 13th century castle. Every room in your hotel could well be different, but all have quality private facilities. Porterage and WiFi is included at each of your hotels.

Friendly locals

Many of our selected properties have been family owned for generations. How nice is it to be personally welcomed by the hotel owners who take pride in their property and what they offer? Efficient check-ins and porterage are provided at every stop, so all you need to worry about is enjoying the rich diversity of your surroundings. And, as two night stays are a minimum on our tours, you won't be packing and unpacking every day!

Solo travellers?

Require a single room? In most hotels, we offer **double rooms for single use**. Alternatively, if you wish we can try and match you with another solo traveller of the same gender in a twin room.

Soak up the alpine ambience at the Hotel Alpina in Klosters

Stay in the Alhambra Palace Hotel with spectacular views

Our hotels have memories

George Bernard Shaw once said, "I dislike feeling at home when I am abroad." Mr Shaw, you were so right. This makes so much sense, so where possible, we purposefully avoid those large, impersonal, international chain hotels cloned around the world. They have so little character, no uniqueness, depth or history. The only 'memory' these hotels have is the last corporate conference staged there. Waking up, you could be anywhere, so why on earth would we want to stay in one of those? We choose our hotels because they have 'memories'. Emperor Napoleon once stayed in 'our' hotel in Triberg, in the Black Forest. So, when you stay there, you can add those memories to yours, making your holiday experiences so much richer. If it is good enough for Napoleon...

Savour the regional flavours

Visit one of the many tapas bars in Spain

Included

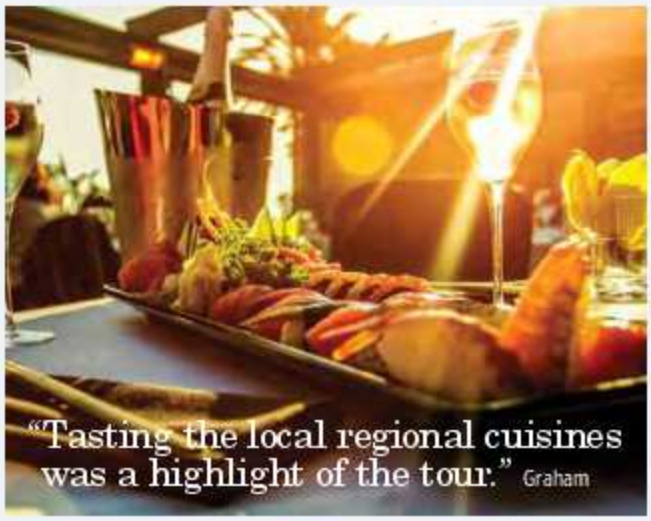
- Full buffet breakfasts daily
- Most dinners, including the first night and special feature dinners
- A complimentary beverage, plus tea and coffee with all included dinners
- Genuine local dining experiences
- Special diets are catered for
- Feature lunches included on some tours

Authentic culinary experiences

Just like you, we know that enjoying great local cuisine is an integral part of your travel experience. We love fine dining, but the real enjoyment is more than just that. It is also about the location, style and ambience created for that moment. For example, in Spain we savour traditional paella accompanied by the sounds of a Flamenco guitar; in Tuscany, we enjoy an 8-course antipasto feast of cured and cooked meats, cheeses and bread in an Olive Farmhouse Estate; and in Italy we toast with prosecco whilst dining in a castle cellar.

The Restaurant 'Twist'

It should be clear that we already include most dinners. But look further and you will see the Albatross 'difference'. We already include all those special, local restaurant dining experiences and they are therefore never offered on any tour as 'options'. The 'twist' is that our inclusive policy is quite the reverse of what most mainstream tour companies do. They often sell these highlight dinners in each city as extra, costly 'optional' excursions. With Albatross if an evening is left intentionally free - it stays free!



Dine with the locals

Dining with the locals makes up so many of your travel memories. Since our tours are limited in size, we are able to hand select authentic local restaurants. Places where the locals go. From cosy taverns, restaurants, and farmhouses to beautiful wine estates with delightful local cuisine reflecting the produce and culinary style of the regions you are visiting.

Also, many of our authentic, regional hotels have their own excellent character restaurants, so eating in at your hotel is an added pleasure and experience.

Dine as the locals dine. You can tell the difference as outside of our restaurants, you will find lines of parked cars – not big coaches!

'My Time' to dine

We have purposefully left some evenings free for you to discover your own private dining experience in a local bistro or traditional trattoria. Your Tour Manager is always on hand bringing his or her local knowledge and experience 'to the table' providing you with ideas and dining suggestions to suit your taste and budget.

Special diets catered for

We can cater for most special diets on all our tours. Simply let us know your requirements.

Travel in style

Take in the scenery through panoramic windows

Enjoy spacious seating on a full-size coach

You will love our drivers. Image taken by Albatross traveller, A. Telenko

Spacious, first class travel

You will always have plenty of space on our coaches. Imagine relaxing on a full-size coach with around 22 other travellers!

Albatross Tours use first class, full-size, modern touring coaches with 40-45 seats. Even if your tour group is full you can be certain there will always be between 12 and 17 spare seats. We guarantee that on our touring coaches you will enjoy more personal space and that essential extra 'elbow room'.

Enjoy the best views from your seat

With so many spare seats available, we guarantee you panoramic views and, more often than not you will have a window seat. You will be able to sit back and admire the evolving landscapes from the comfort of your seat.

Travel in exceptional comfort

You will always enjoy a more comfortable ride on our full-size coaches featuring high quality reclining seats, spacious leg room, additional luggage space, great sound insulation and comfortable suspension. Our coaches also feature 2 doors to make it easier to get on and off the coach, and of course on-board toilet for emergencies. WiFi is available on most coaches.

Our expert tour managers

Our professional, highly-experienced Tour Managers are passionate about providing the very best touring experience that you can imagine. With a reputation for being some of the finest in the business, they'll attend to your needs, share their knowledge, join in the fun, and take care of every detail to ensure your holiday runs smoothly.

And, because Albatross Tours are so inclusive, your Tour Manager won't be concerned with 'selling' optional extras or taking you to 'special' stores. Their only interest is being friendly, helpful and knowledgeable travelling companions and guides, which is why they receive such overwhelming praise from our guests.

Prisca Demolli

"Prisca was an absolute stand out. What a fabulous asset she is as a Tour Manager. She was so efficient, helpful and patient with all of us, and had a great sense of humour." Mandy

Darren Wheatley

"Darren was exceptional, very knowledgeable, extraordinarily talented and fluent in languages, plus very helpful and caring." Barbara

Eve Charlier

"Eve was excellent, professional and nothing was too much trouble – she always went the extra mile. And she has a great sense of humour!" Jan

Gilberto Bionda

"Gilberto was amazing. He was so good with everyone and was knowledgeable, helpful and absolutely reliable. He is a very special person who made our tour excellent." Cheryl

Your loyalty rewarded

Many of our travellers return to Europe with us time after time, and receive some very special rewards for doing so.

CLUB ALBATROSS

Following your first Albatross tour you will receive complimentary membership of Club Albatross, with these benefits:

- An additional $200 per person saving on any European Summer tour
- A complimentary Albatross Memories Photobook when you return home from any European Summer tour
- Club Albatross e-newsletter
- An invitation to join Club Albatross exclusive tour departures
- Priority access to Albatross Traveller gatherings

For full terms and conditions please visit www.albatrosstours.com or contact our office.

CLUB ALBATROSS Sapphire

After you have completed three Albatross tours you will receive a complimentary membership of Club Albatross Sapphire, with these benefits:

- An additional $400 per person saving on any European Summer tour
- A complimentary Albatross Memories Photobook when you return home from any European Summer tour
- Club Albatross Sapphire e-newsletter
- Exclusive Club Albatross Sapphire gatherings
- An invitation to join Club Albatross exclusive tour departures
- Priority access to Albatross Traveller gatherings

Mt. Etna, Sicily – Image taken by Albatross traveller, P. Thornton

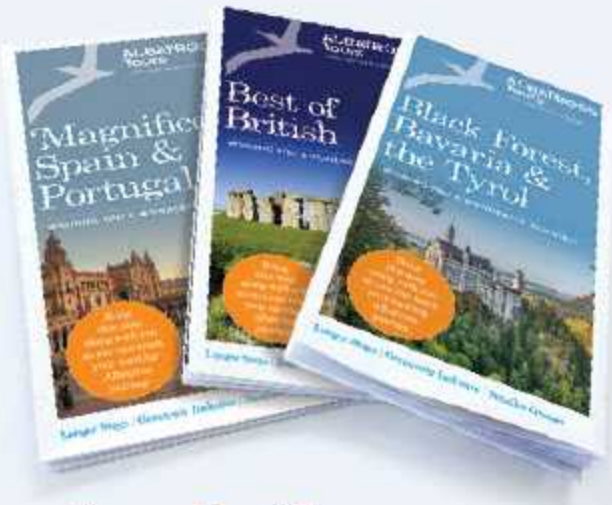
Exclusive Albatross inclusions

The Albatross Travel App

Albatross Tours has partnered with Vamoos to provide our guests with a Travel App customised for each of our European tours. Featuring daily travel information, 'My Time' recommendations, interactive maps, weather updates and more, the Albatross Travel App will certainly enhance your travel experience.

Albatross Memories Photobook

To keep the memories alive from your Albatross holiday, all passengers travelling on a European Summer tour will receive a complimentary Albatross Memories Photobook when you return home. Featuring over 20 pages of stunning holiday imagery, your Photobook will be a cherished holiday souvenir for years to come.



Albatross Travel Map

For each of our European Summer tours we have created a special map for you to track your journey whilst on tour. As an essential travel tool, your Albatross Travel Map will help you become more familiar with the wonderful destinations you will be visiting. It also makes for a great souvenir!

Special offers

Earlybird savings

SAVE $350 PER PERSON!

Book by 31 October 2017 and save!

Book and deposit on any 2018 Europe & UK Summer tour by **31st October 2017** to receive a $350 per person discount off the tour price. That's a saving of **$700 per couple!**

SAVE $200 PER PERSON!

Book by 22 December 2017 and save!

Book and deposit on any 2018 Europe & UK Summer tour between the **1st November and 22nd December 2017** to receive a $200 per person discount off the tour price.

*All discount offers apply to our 2018 European Summer Tours and are not applicable to any additional pre or post tour hotel accommodation booked. Albatross Tours reserve the right to at any time withdraw or amend any or all of the discounts and special offers featured on this page. *Terms and conditions apply, please contact us for details. Free tour space is based on a half-twin share room.*

CLUB ALBATROSS MEMBERS
Save $200 per person

Have you travelled with Albatross Tours before? If so, we look forward to welcoming you back and we would like to offer you our Club Albatross Discount of $200 per person off the price of any of our 2018 European Summer tours.

CLUB ALBATROSS SAPPHIRE MEMBERS
Save $400 per person

Have you travelled on 3 or more Albatross tours? If so, we welcome you to Club Albatross Sapphire. We would like to offer you our Club Albatross Sapphire Discount of $400 per person off the price of any of our 2018 European Summer tours.

MULTI TOUR DISCOUNT
Save $200 per person

If you are **new** to travelling with Albatross Tours and book any two different Albatross tours from our 2018 European Summer touring programme, our $200 per person Club Albatross discount will be applied to the price of your second tour.

SMALL GROUP DISCOUNT
Save $200 per person

If you are travelling in a small group of 6-9 people on one of our 2018 European Summer tours, and the tours are booked at the same time, you and your group members are eligible to receive an additional $200 per person discount.

WOULD YOU LIKE A
Free trip?

If you gather a group of just 10 friends to travel on the same tour, on the same date, and book together as a group, the 11th space is free*.

SOLO TRAVELLERS CAN CHOOSE TO
Share a twin room

Solo passengers can request to be matched in a twin room with another individual of the same gender. Should a match not be available, you will stay in a single room and the single supplement cost will not be charged, if a twin room is available.

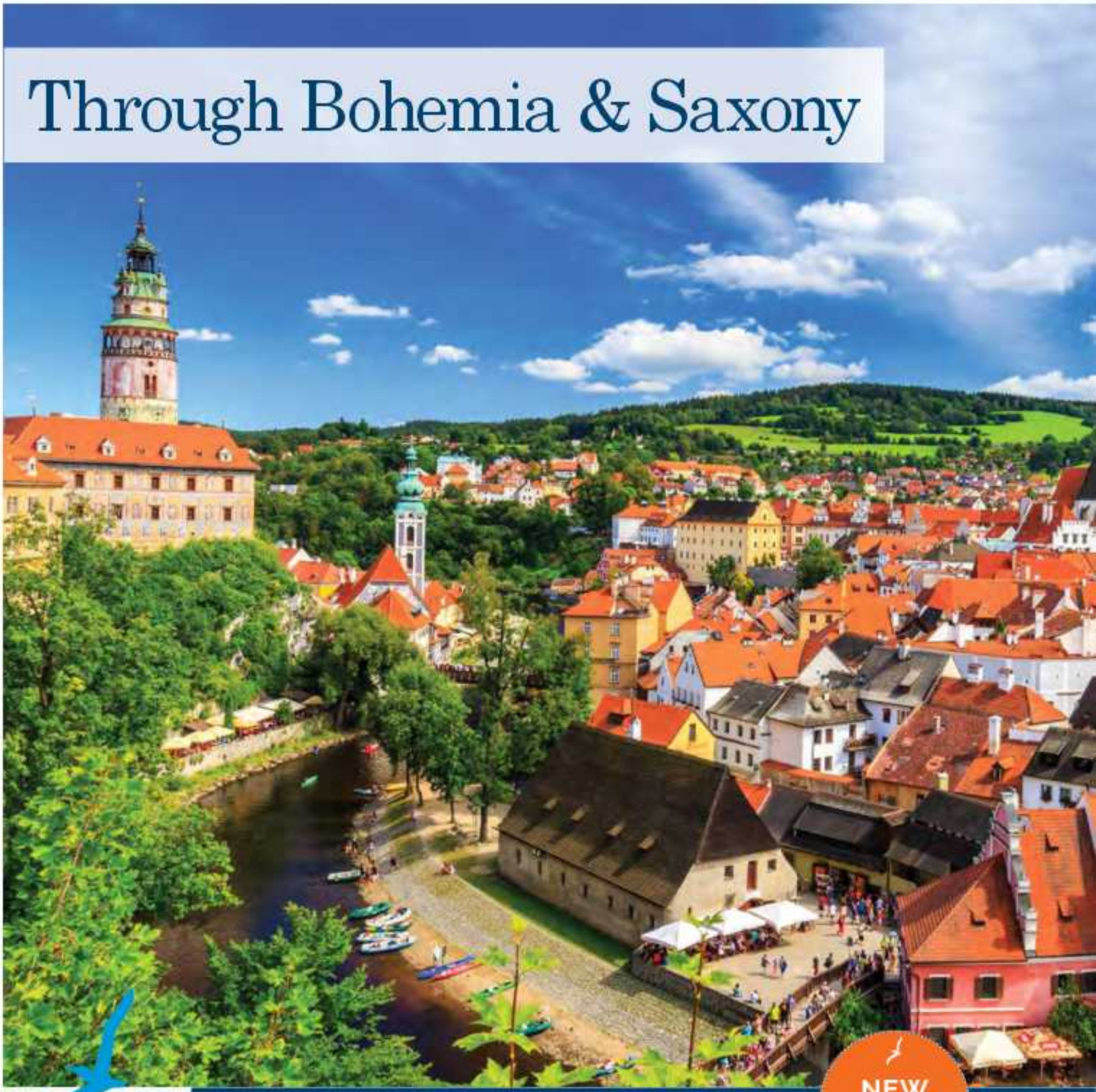
PEACE OF MIND
Price Guarantee

Once you have booked and deposited your tour, you can rest easy as we guarantee that if the value of the Australian dollar drops, your tour price will not increase. That's our Albatross guarantee to you!

Ready to book or looking for expert European tour advice?

We welcome your phone call, email or online enquiry. Our professional European tour consultants are available to assist you, or contact your preferred travel agent.

Through Bohemia & Saxony

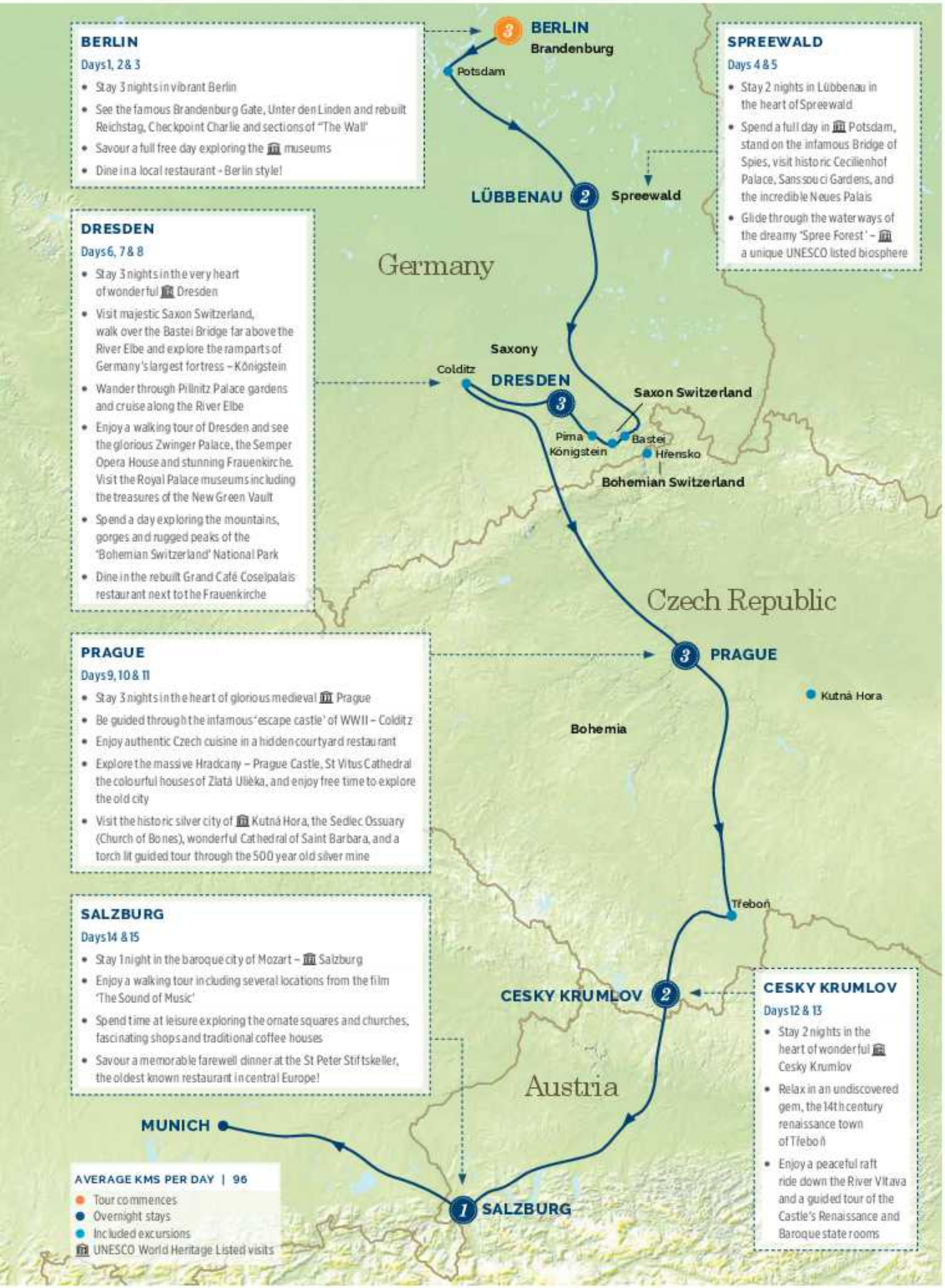


Relax on a peaceful boat ride down the River Vltava in Cesky Krumlov

NEW FOR 2018

15 Astonishing Days
Berlin to Munich

See Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie, Potsdam's Palaces and 'Bridge of Spies', Prague's medieval Hradcany Castle and WWII Colditz. Stand on the Bastei Bridge and giant Königstein's ramparts. Relax in the magnificent Saxon Switzerland National Park, float on a punt through Spreewald's marshes, cruise along the River Elbe to Dresden's Royal Palace and glide down the Vltava in Cesky Krumlov, and more!


BERLIN
Days 1, 2 & 3
• Stay 3 nights in vibrant Berlin
• See the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie and sections of "The Wall"
• Savour a full free day exploring the museums
• Dine in a local restaurant - Berlin style!
DRESDEN
Days 6, 7 & 8
• Stay 3 nights in the very heart of wonderful Dresden
• Visit majestic Saxon Switzerland, walk over the Bastei Bridge far above the River Elbe and explore the ramparts of Germany's largest fortress – Königstein
• Wander through Pillnitz Palace gardens and cruise along the River Elbe
• Enjoy a walking tour of Dresden and see the glorious Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House and stunning Frauenkirche. Visit the Royal Palace museums including the treasures of the New Green Vault
• Spend a day exploring the mountains, gorges and rugged peaks of the 'Bohemian Switzerland' National Park
• Dine in the rebuilt Grand Café Coselpalais restaurant next to the Frauenkirche
PRAGUE
Days 9, 10 & 11
• Stay 3 nights in the heart of glorious medieval Prague
• Be guided through the infamous 'escape castle' of WWII – Colditz
• Enjoy authentic Czech cuisine in a hidden courtyard restaurant
• Explore the massive Hradcany – Prague Castle, St Vitus Cathedral the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulièka, and enjoy free time to explore the old city
• Visit the historic silver city of Kutná Hora, the Sedlec Ossuary (Church of Bones), wonderful Cathedral of Saint Barbara, and a torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine
SALZBURG
Days 14 & 15
• Stay 1 night in the baroque city of Mozart – Salzburg
• Enjoy a walking tour including several locations from the film 'The Sound of Music'
• Spend time at leisure exploring the ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses
• Savour a memorable farewell dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller, the oldest known restaurant in central Europe!
SPREEWALD
Days 4 & 5
• Stay 2 nights in Lübbenau in the heart of Spreewald
• Spend a full day in Potsdam, stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, visit historic Cecilienhof Palace, Sanssouci Gardens, and the incredible Neues Palais
• Glide through the waterways of the dreamy "Spree Forest" – a unique UNESCO listed biosphere
CESKY KRUMLOV
Days 12 & 13
• Stay 2 nights in the heart of wonderful Cesky Krumlov
• Relax in an undiscovered gem, the 14th century renaissance town of Třeboň
• Enjoy a peaceful raft ride down the River Vltava and a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 96
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits
BERLIN
Brandenburg
Potsdam
LÜBBENAU
Spreewald
Germany
Saxony
Colditz
DRESDEN
Saxon Switzerland
Pirna
Königstein
Bastei
Hřensko
Bohemian Switzerland
Czech Republic
PRAGUE
Kutná Hora
Bohemia
Třeboň
CESKY KRUMLOV
Austria
MUNICH
SALZBURG

Where 'old' is often newer than the 'new'

Berlin and Dresden were decimated in WWII. Now, risen from the ashes, they are two of the most exciting and rewarding cities in Europe. Particularly in the old 'East', they have vigorously rebuilt many of the old cathedrals and churches, grand buildings and stately palaces. Simply stunning, the glory days are back but with a conundrum. The newer, modern looking buildings (post war) are now often much older than the majestic old cathedrals and palaces, which are of course the new ones!

Bursting with classic sights and major museums, these cities have so much to offer. One of my most cherished memories was enjoying a 'nourishing', cool beer in a Dresden café, with the late afternoon sun shining down on the glorious Frauenkirche. And in front of me was a busker, playing classical pieces on a white, grand piano. For that sort of experience you need time, and that is why we insist on staying 3 nights in Berlin, Dresden and Prague.

I also planned special 2 night stops in amongst the idyllic waterways of Spreewald and in historic Cesky Krumlov. Breaking up the journey like this allows us so much more time to relax and savour each destination plus enjoy boat rides, scenic walks and full days exploring places like Potsdam's Palaces, glorious Saxon Switzerland, Kutná Hora and Třeboň. Packed with huge highlights, adventures, and bags of quality leisure time - you will not find another itinerary remotely like this one!

"Albatross truly stands out as exceptional in value the choice of hotels, the informed local guides & the many extras that your company includes." Jenny

Enjoy 3 nights in vibrant Berlin

DAY 1

Berlin welcome

Your tour commences this evening in vibrant Berlin – a city now united and rebuilt in even greater glory. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Berlin hotel – Park Plaza Wallstreet, Berlin Mitte

This first class hotel is centrally located within easy reach of all the major sights, squares and shopping.

**18 May departure stays at Movenpick Hotel Berlin. 6 September departure says at Maritim Berlin.*

DAY 2

Berlin sightseeing

This morning we are joined by an expert local guide on our panoramic tour taking in all the major sights from the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag to the Victory Column in the Tiergarten, Potsdamer Platz, Checkpoint Charlie and remaining sections of "The Wall". Your afternoon and evening is entirely at leisure. The shopping is amazing and the city brims with world class sights and museums. This evening discover your own local restaurant for dinner. Maybe dine 'al fresco' in Gendarmenmarkt square, dramatically flanked by two beautiful cathedrals and the Berlin Concert Hall. **Meals: B**

DAY 3

Berlin 'My Time'

Your day is at leisure in Berlin. There is so much to see and do and your Tour Manager is of course on hand to help and advise you. Perhaps visit one of the five world class museums on UNESCO Heritage listed Museumsinsel (Museum Island) or the riveting Checkpoint Charlie museum and moving Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Tonight we take you to a local restaurant for dinner – Berlin style! **Meals: B,D**

DAY 4

Potsdam Palaces and Gardens

A full day amongst the UNESCO Heritage listed glorious palaces and gardens of Potsdam! Joined by our expert local guide we enjoy a photo stop on the famous Bridge of Unity – more famously known as the 'Bridge of Spies'. Later we visit Cecilienhof Palace, the last palace built by the German Kaiser, and the site of the 1945 Potsdam Convention where Churchill, Truman and Stalin famously met. Inside is a fascinating museum! The furniture, private reception rooms and huge conference table remain exactly as they were when these great leaders met to carve up a ravaged, post war Europe.

After lunchtime in Potsdam's pretty Dutch Quarter, we stop on the elegant terraces of Fredrick the Great's Sanssouci Summer Palace. This afternoon we visit the astounding Neues Palais with its newly restored paiatial rooms, including the Gottensaal (Grotto Hall) and Marmorgalerie (Marble Gallery). Later we drive south to Lübbenau in Spreewald, where we stay the next two nights. **Meals: B, D**

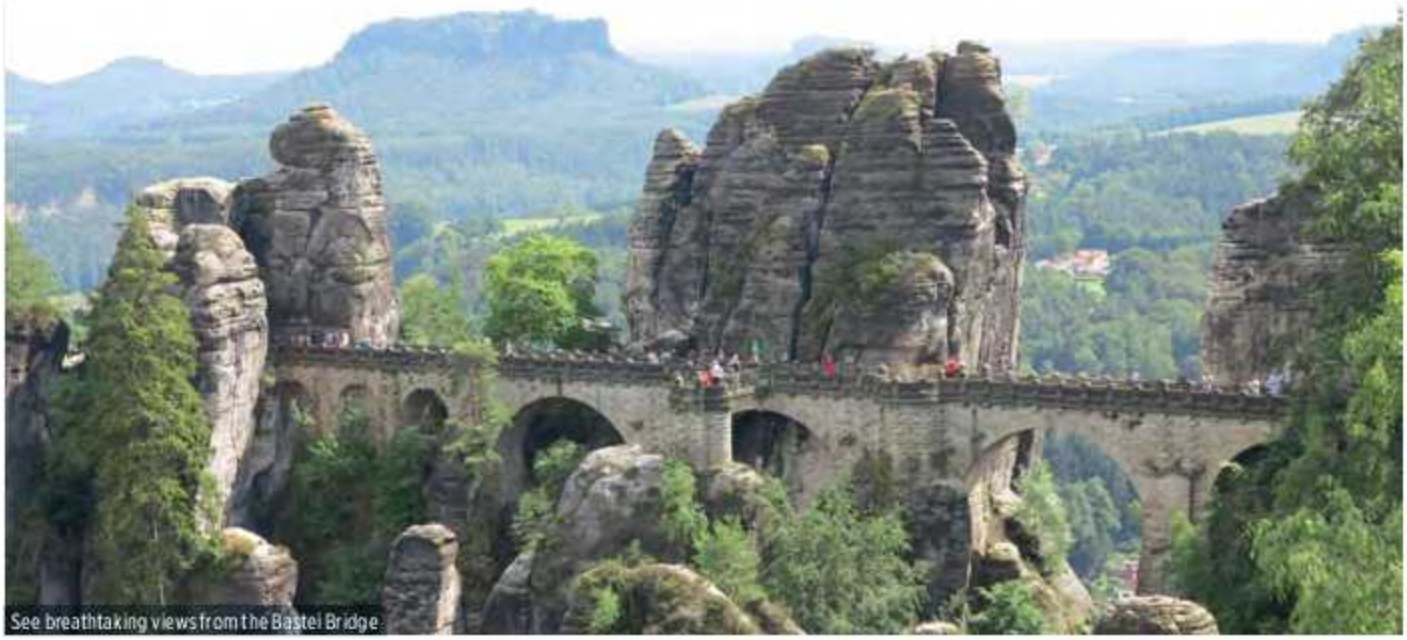
STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Spreewald hotel – Hotel Schloss Lübbenau

Perfectly situated a short walk from the edge of town, this wonderful 4-star hotel offers first class amenities and an award winning restaurant. Visit www.schloss-luebbenau.de

18 May, 15 June & 6 July departures visit Potsdam on Day 3 and have a free day in Berlin on Day 4 before transferring to Lübbenau.

Glide through the UNESCO Spree Forest


See breathtaking views from the Bastei Bridge

DAY 5

Spreewald punt ride and Lübbenau 'My Time'

Spreewald, or 'Spree Forest', is an utterly entrancing UNESCO listed biosphere reserve. Boarding our punts we are 'poled' silently through a dreamy forest on a lacework of channels and canals, lined with wooden cottages, jetties and hamlets. In the heart, at the village of Lehde, we enjoy a lunchtime stop at a waterside restaurant and 'biergarten'. Back in Lübbenau, your afternoon and evening is at leisure. Free time to relax or shop in this delightful inland harbour town. For the more active maybe take a walk or a bike ride along the forested pathways. And the local food speciality? Gherkins! **Meals: B**

DAY 6

Saxon Switzerland National Park sightseeing

We have an incredible day planned in Germany's 'Saxon Switzerland' National Park. First stop will be at the dramatic 75 metre long (easily accessible) stone Bastei Bridge which links the incredible rock formations, walkways and lookouts, 200 metres above the River Elbe. The panoramic views are stupendous! In the distance you will see the massive rock ramparts of Festung Königstein, which we visit next. Dating back to the 13th century, this is the largest fortress in Germany, and one of the very best castle visits in all Europe! The main entrance tunnel is so impressive, as is the 152 metre deep well, barracks and old wine cellars. The 1.5 kilometre long cliff top ramparts, often lined with restored cannon, are a thrill to walk along. Later, at Pirna, we stop to see the park and ornate gardens of Pillnitz Palace, before taking a cruise down the beautiful River Elbe. Journeying past palaces and mansions, and the UNESCO listed river farmlands, we arrive into Dresden at Brühl's Terrace, nicknamed 'the balcony of Europe. We stay here three nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Dresden hotel – The Westin Bellevue

Overlooking the Elbe River, this excellent period style first hotel is in a fantastic location just a short walk across the bridge from Dresden's Baroque old town.
See www.westinbellevuedresden.com

DAY 7

Dresden sightseeing

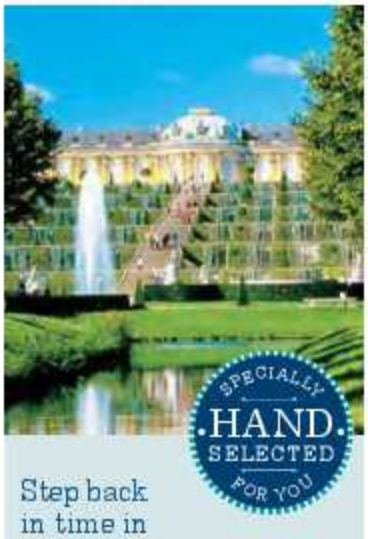
Rebuilt after the massive bombing raids of WWII, Dresden has once again bloomed into one of the most beautiful and elegant cities in Europe, reflecting the grandeur of this capital of the Electors of Saxony, who once ruled a powerful empire. On our morning walking tour you will see the glorious Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House and the symbolic Frauenkirche dominating the massive, ancient market square. Following the Fürstenzug – a dramatic, 100 metre long painted porcelain mural depicting the procession of Princes – we visit the Dresden Royal Palace. We have included entrance to the museums including the Armoury, Turkish Chamber, Riesensaal (Giants' Hall) and the fabulous New Green Vault with over 1,000 beautiful gold and silver bejewelled objects. Simply stunning! The rest of your day is at leisure to explore this delightful city. **Meals: B**

DAY 8

Bohemian Switzerland or Dresden 'My Time'

A wonderful choice today! Stay and explore Dresden independently – shopping or simply relaxing in the old squares and cafés. Alternatively, we have included a special activity just over the Czech border, amongst the wild sandstone mountains, gorges and rugged peaks of the 'Bohemian Switzerland' National Park. Here you have a range of stupendous walks and activities to choose from, as easy going or energetic as you wish. Maybe a short easy, flat walk along the bottom section of the picturesque Kamenice River gorge, before time at leisure browsing amongst the street side souvenir shops of Hrensko. For the more active there are two stunning walks from nearby Mazni Louka. The first, again easy and flat, is all the way down the Kamenice gorge, where the verdant forest clings to often vertical walls between 50 and 150 metres high above the river. Sometimes the gorge is so narrow you will walk beneath rock ledges and tunnels. Two sections, the Edmund Gorge and Wild Gorge, are so narrow they are only passable using delightful ferry rides on punts. The second, more vigorous walk, is up through the woods to the massive 'Pravcicka Brana' natural arch. The views from the café underneath it are simply magnificent. This evening, back in Dresden, we have included dinner in the Grand Café Coselpalais, right next to the Frauenkirche, where the cake selection is fantastic! **Meals: B,D**

continued



Step back in time in Potsdam

Often called the 'Prussian Versailles', Frederick the Great's iconic Sanssouci Palace is certainly magnificent. But there is so much more to Potsdam! Between 1730 and 1916, 500 acres of parks, lakes and gardens were lavishly developed along with 150 palaces and ornate buildings. There is even a giant windmill! UNESCO designated the entire area as World Heritage listed, and that is why we spend a whole day exploring it! Sanssouci Palace was Frederick's smaller and more intimate home, and naturally we visit his spectacular terraced gardens. We also visit inside the enormous 'New Palace', which was sumptuously built to impress the world! Incredibly, it is 16 times bigger than Sanssouci! We enjoy lunchtime in Potsdam's rejuvenated Dutch Quarter; we send you back in time as you stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, and in the Kaiser's Cecilienhof Palace, beside the table where a Dictator, a President and a Prime Minister changed the world forever! What a day! **See Day 4.**

Stay 3 nights in the heart of medieval Prague

4 Additions to your bucket list

Many people do not realise that Germany and the Czech Republic boast some truly extraordinary scenery, much of it so easily accessible. Take Spreewald, for instance. By staying 2 nights here, right in the delightful inland harbour town of Lübbenau, we can enjoy an incredible day exploring the amazing labyrinth of pretty waterways. So beautiful, so rewarding, and the hardest thing you have to do is just sit and relax on a punt! Then, there are the two stunning National Parks of Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. The Bastei Bridge and Königstein Castle are simply dramatic. And, for those that want a true adventure we take you deep into the Bohemian National Park, unless of course that day you choose to stay and relax and shop in glorious Dresden. The Bastei, Königstein, Saxon Switzerland, Bohemian Switzerland? Never heard of them? 'Google' images of them and you will be simply amazed how quickly they rise up your 'bucket list'. **See Days 5, 6 and 8.**

DAY 9

Colditz Castle and Prague

Travelling west we reach one of the most infamous castles of WWII – Colditz. Subject of numerous books and films, this enormous castle became the prison for all the greatest POW escapees of the war. Ironically the Nazis therefore created an incredible escape training school! The museum is full of the most amazing array of escape tools and memorabilia. Our local guide will also show us some of the most impossible tunnels and escape routes. Utterly fascinating! Later we arrive into Prague where we stay three nights in the very heart of the old city. Dinner this evening will be authentic Czech cuisine in the U Pinkasu restaurant – enjoyed in a hidden courtyard beside a church. **Meals: B,D**

Your Prague hotel – Hotel Adria*

This hotel combines the nostalgic charm of old city Prague with all the modern features of a 4-star hotel. The Adria is perfectly located on Wenceslas Square in the heart of Prague's cultural and historic centre. Each room offers a uniquely different style. See: www.adria.cz

STAY 3 NIGHTS

*18 May departure stays at Ramada Prague City Centre.

DAY 10

Prague sightseeing

This morning we are joined by our expert local guide for a tour through this fascinating city to the Hradcany – Prague Castle. Covering 7 hectares it is the largest ancient castle in the world. We also visit St Vitus Cathedral and the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulièka, or Golden Lane, named after the goldsmiths who lived here in the 17th century. The afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore the laneways, churches and bridges of this beautiful, UNESCO Heritage listed city. **Meals: B**

18 May, 15 June & 6 July departures: visit Kutna Hora on Day 10 and Prague Castle on Day 11

DAY 11

Prague 'My Time' or Kutná Hora sightseeing

Perhaps enjoy a day at leisure exploring Prague, or alternatively join us on a full day included excursion to the nearby UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Kutná Hora. Fortune-hunters flocked to Kutná Hora in the 13th century to dig out the silver-rich ore discovered here. Once bigger than medieval London, the city minted coins used all across Europe, and its wealth underpinned the power of the Bohemian kings. Here we will visit the Sedlec Ossuary (Church of Bones), with macabre décor of bone art, and the wonderful Cathedral of Saint Barbara, a masterpiece of late Gothic fantasy. You will also have free time to relax and explore the lovely old town. For those at ease within narrow, dark spaces we have also included an incredible torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine labyrinth, deep under the city. **Meals: B**

DAY 12

Třeboň and Cesky Krumlov

Driving south we spend lunchtime in the spa town of Třeboň, an undiscovered gem that sits in the heart of this UNESCO listed biosphere. Since the 14th century, man has transformed the surrounding land into an idyllic countryside filled with over 6,000 lakes and islands and it is famous for its... fishponds! The town centre, Schloss and Masaryk Square are a delightful mixture of colourful renaissance buildings and 'al fresco' cafés serving fish, and there are so few tourists! Later we continue to the perfectly preserved 13th century city of Cesky Krumlov. Originally built as a hamlet around the impressive castle, the wealth from the silver and gold mining, plus Catholic aristocrats seeking refuge during the Reformation, made Cesky Krumlov the most important city in southern Bohemia. We stay the next two nights in the very heart of this extraordinary, UNESCO World Heritage listed time capsule. On arrival we board large wooden rafts to enjoy a leisurely float slowly down the placid River Vltava. From your seats you will get the very best views up onto the castle walls and into the old town. What better way to introduce you to the city? **Meals: B,D**

Your Cesky Krumlov hotel – Hotel Ruze

In 1584 Vilhelm of Rožmberk, master of the house of Rožmberks, knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece – highest order of Prague, invited the Order of Jesuits to Cesky Krumlov. The university monastery he built for them has now been extensively reconstructed preserving the beautiful Renaissance architecture and creating your 70 room hotel – The Ruze. The furniture, rooms and public areas are a delight. Set in the absolute centre of town, the terrace has beautiful views down onto the Vltava River. Your stay here will be an unforgettable experience. See www.hotelruze.cz

DAY 13

Cesky Krumlov tour and 'My Time'

This morning we have included the services of an expert local guide to bring to life the history and background of this extraordinary town. You will also enjoy a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms. Your afternoon and evening is at leisure in UNESCO Heritage listed Cesky Krumlov to relax and enjoy free time amongst the cobbled stone streets, cafés, restaurants, shops and ancient winding alleys. **Meals: B**

DAY 14

Salzburg guided tour and 'My Time'

Heading into Austria we soon reach Salzburg – the baroque city of Mozart. On arrival a local guide will accompany us on a walking tour of this enchanting UNESCO Heritage listed city, including several locations used in the film 'The Sound of Music'. Your afternoon will be at leisure to explore the ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses. The views from the enormous Festung (Fortress), sitting high above the city, are magnificent. This evening we have included a memorable farewell dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller. First mentioned as an Inn as far back as the year 803, this is the oldest known restaurant in central Europe! **Meals: B, D**

Your Salzburg hotel – Radisson Blu Hotel Altstadt

This 4-star hotel could not be more central! Set in the cobbled streets barely 100 meters from Mozart Platz, it dates back to 1377, and features elegant rooms, wooden ceilings, intricate stucco and antique artwork.
See www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-salzburg

DAY 15

To Munich

Your tour ends on arrival in Munich, mid-morning. We will make drop offs in the city centre and at Munich airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**

Wander through the Mirabell Gardens in Salzburg

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,500 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 14 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 22 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 8 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Berlin
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Spreewald punt ride, Elbe River cruise, Vltava raft ride, Kutná Hora silver mine visit, 'Bohemian Switzerland' adventure day
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and local guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply - See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

15 days from $6,599 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Berlin	Ends Munich	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
18 May	1 June	$6,899	$1,249
15 June	29 June	$6,799	$1,249
6 July	20 July	$6,599	$1,089
2 August	16 August	$6,699	$1,189
6 September	20 September	$6,899	$1,249

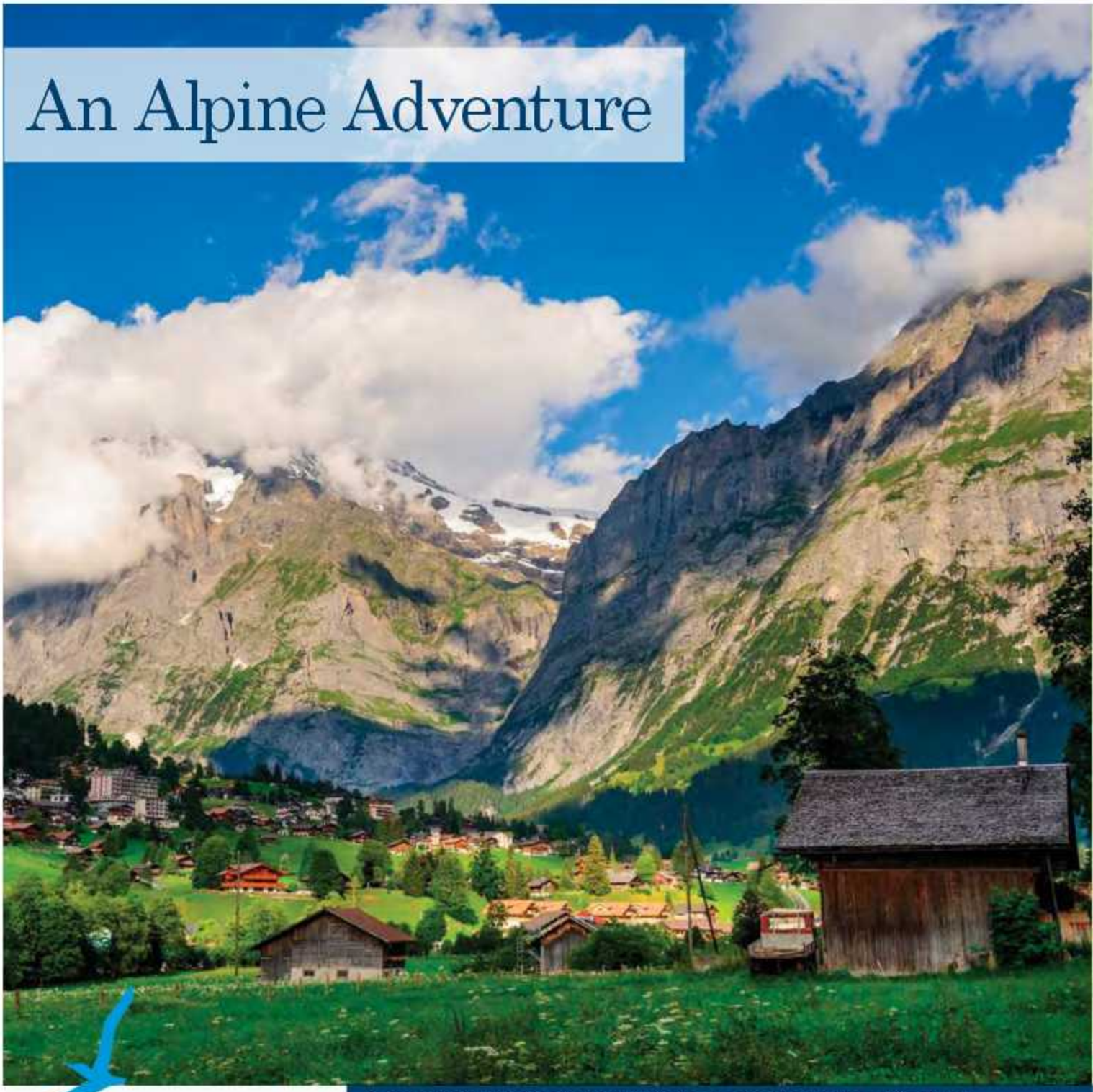
Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.
Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

An Alpine Adventure



Relax over 3 nights in Grindelwald, in the heart of the Bernese Oberland

17 Exciting Days
Zurich to Milan

Discover the breathtaking scenery of the French and Swiss Alps from the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to the meadows of the Bernese Oberland, see Zermatt and the mighty Matterhorn, ride across the breathtaking Alps on the Glacier Express and explore delightful Lake Garda.

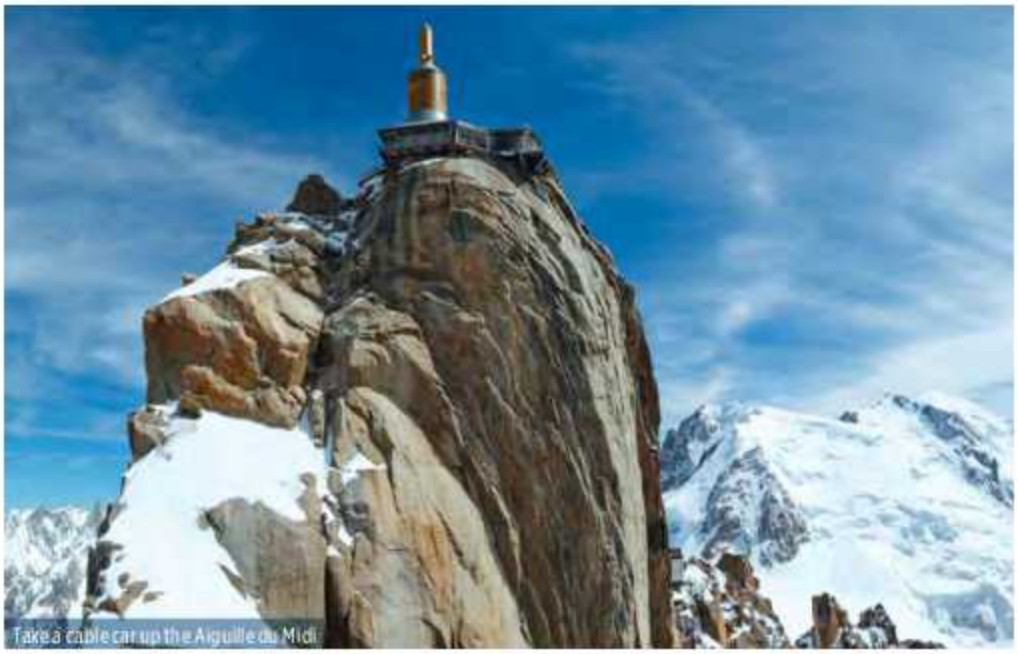
THE BERNESE OBERLAND
Days 5, 6 & 7
• Stay 3 nights in a superb spa hotel in Grindelwald
• Drive over the spectacular Forclaz Pass
• Enjoy a guided tour of Byron's Château de Chillon in Montreux
• Explore hilltop Gruyères, one of the great sights of Europe
• Relax in Grindelwald with a day at leisure to explore the spectacular Jungfrau Mountain region
• Visit lovely lakeside Luzern
• Wander the medieval cobbled stone streets of Bern
ZURICH
Day 1
• Stay 1 night in Zurich
• Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner
KLOSTERS
Days 10 & 11
• Stay 2 nights in a chalet style hotel in the mountain resort of Klosters
• Ride in panoramic carriages on the amazing Glacier Express, passing over chasms and through the mighty Alps
• Explore Chur, Switzerland's oldest village
Germany
France
Switzerland
ZURICH
1
Luzern
Bern
GRINDELWALD
3
Gruyères
Lauterbrunnen
Montreux
Lake Léman
Geneva
Chur
2
KLOSTERS
Glacier Express
The Alps
Bolzano
Forclaz Pass
2
ZERMATT
3
Annecy
Megeve
CHAMONIX
Italy
Lake Garda
Salo
Calvagese
4
BARDOLINO
MILAN
1
Verona
THE FRENCH ALPS
Days 2, 3 & 4
• Stay 3 nights in Chamonix under the shadow of the Mont Blanc massif
• Explore the Swiss city of Geneva and see the Jet d'Eau fountain
• Experience two incredible mountain rides – a cable car to the top of the stunning Aiguille du Midi (3,842 metres high!) & the famous 'Little Red Train' up to Montenvers station
• Visit the exclusive, chic ski resort town of Megeve
• Enjoy a guided tour of the delightful lakeside town of Annecy
ZERMATT
Days 8 & 9
• Stay 2 nights in the stunning village of Zermatt with views of the mighty Matterhorn
• Visit Lauterbrunnen, in the magnificent 'Valley of the Waterfalls'
• See the thundering Trummelbach Falls inside a mountain inside
• Experience the spectacular scenery of 'Le Valais'
• Enjoy a day free to explore the chic mountain resort of Zermatt and surrounding areas
MILAN
Days 16 & 17
• Spend your final night in stylish Milan
• Discover Milan on a guided panoramic tour
• Enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant
LAKE GARDA
Days 12, 13, 14 & 15
• Stay 4 nights beside stunning Lake Garda
• Enjoy lunchtime in centuries old Bolzano
• Spend a day at leisure exploring the lakeside port and villages of Lake Garda
• Enjoy a guided tour of Romeo and Juliet's Verona
• Enjoy a morning visit to historical Salo
• Enjoy a wine tasting & lunch at the Redaelli de Zinis wine estate
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 127
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Are the mountains calling you?

This 17 day Alpine Adventure is precisely that – a real Alpine Adventure! It is such a completely different experience to take a leisurely walk on well-worn trails through meadows bursting with spring alpine flowers, or to take an exciting mountain cable car ride to savour lunch on a restaurant terrace, set on a sunny plateau ringed with snow, with views stretching for literally hundreds of kilometres! To do this you need time – and with this unique Alpine Adventure that is exactly what you get!

I have an absolute love of the mountains. Every magical step, every curve and turn opens up a completely new vista, and the character changes all the time. That's why I designed this tour to really experience the complete diversity offered by the French and Swiss Alps. From standing above the clouds on the tip of the remarkable Aiguille du Midi, to being inside the Trummelbach mountain as the thundering waterfall roars down around you, shaking the ground you stand on. From delightful, lakeside Annecy and Château Chillon beside Montreux, to staying in a fantastic spa hotel in Grindelwald with views of the Eiger, or Zermatt beside the Matterhorn, and especially experiencing the incredible Glacier Express panoramic train ride that cuts through the glorious Alps.

Why Lake Garda at the end? Maybe as a logical finale completing your grand Alpine mountain traverse by relaxing beside a glacier carved, deep blue, beautiful Italian Lake? Or perhaps... just for the sheer pleasure of it! Enjoy!



Take a cable car up the Aiguille du Midi

DAY 1

Zurich welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Zurich. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Zurich Hotel – Swissotel
Conveniently located just a five minute train ride from either the centre of Zurich or the Airport, this 4-star hotel features an infinity pool on the 32nd floor. Contemporary rooms reflect an elegant & modern style, featuring panoramic views of Zurich and the Swiss Alps.
Visit www.swissotel.com/hotels/zurich/

DAY 2

Geneva and Chamonix

We arrive in Geneva around lunch time. You will have time at leisure to explore Switzerland's second largest city and once home of the Red Cross. Make sure you take a walk along the beautiful foreshore of Lake Léman (Lake Geneva) to see the city's symbolic 140 metre high Jet d'Eau fountain which is set offshore in the lake. Crossing back into France we continue deep into the heart of the mighty French Alps and the Chamonix Valley in the Haute Savoie, to Chamonix, where we stay the next three nights. Set at an altitude of 1000 metres, and surrounded by a dozen world class ski resorts, Chamonix is the world capital of skiing and mountaineering. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your hotel in the French Alps – Mercure Chamonix Centre
This traditional alpine hotel is located in the heart of Chamonix. The Mont Blanc view hotel rooms that we have confirmed provide the comfort and services of a contemporary 4-star hotel. See: www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-2808-mercure-chamonix-centre-hotel/index.shtml

DAY 3

Aiguille du Midi and the 'Sea of Ice'

Today we have included not one, but two incredible mountain rides. The first, arguably one of the world's greatest mountain rides, is by cable car up to the very tip of the Aiguille du Midi - the 'Needle of Midday'. At an altitude of 3842 metres (12,605ft) you are seemingly within reach of Mont Blanc and the views across the French, Italian and Swiss Alps are astounding. The second ride is on the famous 'Little Red Train' – a funicular railway that follows a scenic route through the forests of conifers up to Montenvers station. Soaring high above you is the spike of the Drus Mountain and the massive rock wall of the Grands Jorasse. Filling the valley below you is France's largest Glacier, the 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice'. You can even take a cable car down to explore the hand carved ice caves, beautifully illuminated deep inside this glacier*. The less adventurous can of course relax in Montenvers panoramic restaurant or enjoy an afternoon at leisure exploring the shops and boutiques of lovely Chamonix. **Meals: B**

** From the foot of the cable car you need to go down a large number of steps to access the ice caves entrance.*

Spend time in the pretty town of Annecy

"This was a magic trip... beyond expectations! Everything was just perfect, the weather, tour manager and the group we travelled with. I saw so much and loved every second of it. Thank you Albatross!"
Helen

Enjoy a guided tour of Château de Chillon

DAY 4
Chic Megeve and lakeside Annecy

First stop this morning will be in the exclusive, chic ski resort of Megeve. Running from the delightful cobbled central square, the main pedestrian street is lined with medieval buildings, al fresco cafés and some hideously expensive designer boutiques. The rest of the day will be in the delightful French lakeside town of Annecy. A local guide will show us around the cobbled stone streets, half-timbered and beautifully painted houses that sit beside picturesque canals which are criss-crossed with stone bridges. With a back drop of mountains and the turquoise lake, the Vieille Ville (Old Town) is incredibly pretty. Meals: B

DAY 5
Château de Chillon, Montreux and Gruyères

Driving over the spectacular Forclaz Pass into Switzerland we reach Montreux. Our first stop will be to enjoy a guided tour through Château de Chillon. Made famous in Byron's poem 'The Prisoner of Chillon', this 13th century fortress juts out imposingly into Lake Geneva. The rest of the morning is at leisure on the grand lakeside promenade and foreshore of Montreux. In the afternoon we visit the fortified village of Gruyères, which rises out of the flat valley floor, perched on top of a steep rocky hill. The broad cobbled stone main street, flanked by centuries old houses, is an astounding time capsule and one of the great sights of Europe. Later we drive deep into the heart of the Bernese Oberland to Grindelwald where we stay the next three nights. Grindelwald is known the world over for its dramatic setting surrounded by massive snow covered peaks and meadows. The views of the north face of the Eiger are exceptional! The village is full of restaurants, cafés and shops. On arrival we will enjoy a welcome drink, followed by dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Grindelwald hotel – Sunstar Hotel

This superior hotel is in a central location with unspoilt views of the north face of the Eiger. The atmosphere is charming and features traditional alpine design with large, comfortable rooms and modern amenities. This delightful hotel offers a wellness centre complete with a sauna, pool and roman baths. See www.grindelwald.sunstar.ch/

DAY 6
'My Time' in the Bernese Oberland

We have left this day entirely free for you to enjoy the spectacular Swiss scenery. Perhaps go for a walk in the hills or catch a train to explore nearby Interlaken. Alternatively, take the cog train which tunnels up inside the mountain to the snowbound Jungfraujoch. At 3454 metres (11,333 feet) high there is a large restaurant complex and the views are breathtaking. Here you will also find an ice cave, curling rink with ice bar and a fascinating mountain museum. Meals: B

DAY 7
Lakeside Luzern and medieval Bern

Our morning will be spent at leisure exploring the lovely lakeside town of Luzern with its quaint old town and the famous Chapel and Mill wooden bridges which cross the river. In the afternoon we set off to explore the medieval cobbled stone streets of Bern. A UNESCO World Heritage Listed landmark, this capital city is set on a spectacular bend above the River Aare, and boasts kilometres of sheltered arcaded shopping ways, an intriguing clock tower and the famous 'Bärengraben' bear pits. Meals: B

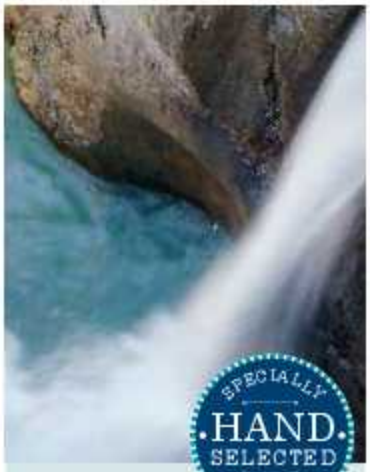
continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Mountains are meant to be conquered!

Fortunately, nowadays we can so easily capture that exhilarating mountain experience without any effort at all. Like our ride up the astounding Aiguille du Midi. To give you an idea of what a feat of engineering this is, the steel cable or hawser on just the second cable car stage is an unbelievable, continuous 7 kms long! On top, at an altitude of 3,842 metres (12,605ft), you will find observation platforms, a café, mountaineering and alpine exhibition, plus a glass bottom observation booth. Stand on that if you dare, and you will 'feel' the whole world dropping away beneath your feet! Far below you can see where the massive 'Mer du Glace' or 'Sea of Ice' is born and how it snakes its way down the valley. And 'down there' is where we go on our afternoon adventure on the Little Red Train. The Glacier moves 70 metres a year so each season they hop back inside the glacier and re-carve the cave labyrinth, lining it with blue carpets, beautiful lighting shows and adding ice sculptures and chairs. A fantastic experience! See Day 3.

Stay 3 nights in Chamonix. Image taken by Albatross traveller, S. Blee



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

The mighty Trummelbach Falls

Lauterbrunnen village is in a spectacular setting but the highlight of the day is actually a visit where sunlight never penetrates. Inside the sheer mountain walls, like a scene from 'The Lord of the Rings', a massive waterfall is channelled by nature to pummel down through the core of the mountain, vigorously carving and expanding the rock chambers. On carefully constructed walkways (yes, safe) you will be amongst it, right by it, feeling the sheer power and ferocity as the vibration and energy engulfs you. An extraordinary sight, feeling and sensation! See Day 8.

Enjoy 'My Time' in Zermatt

"What a trip of contrasts! The tour was full of surprises and treats. Our tour manager was organised and knowledgeable. The pace was relaxed and easy." Angela

Ride on the amazing Glacier Express. Courtesy of Swiss Tourism

DAY 8

Lauterbrunnen, Trummelbach Falls and Zermatt

Our first stop of the day will be in the nearby delightful village of Lauterbrunnen. Set spectacularly with 1000 foot sheer cliffs rising either side, this valley is often called the 'Valley of the Waterfalls' – these are the cliffs that James Bond keeps leaping off when he is being chased by the baddies. Here we visit the unusual Trummelbach Falls. Taking a funicular up inside the cliff face we then walk through the mountain caverns that are still being carved by these 'living waterfalls' which thunder right beside us, down through the inside of the mountain. An extraordinary sight and sensation! Later we drive through spectacular scenery into 'Le Valais' and Taesch where we catch a cog railway train up to the world-famous alpine resort of Zermatt. Set at an altitude of 1620 metres (5315 feet), the village is surrounded by a dozen huge peaks and dominating all is the mighty Matterhorn. Petrol-driven vehicles are banned from the village and as such the peace and quiet enhances the beauty of the wooden chalets and small winding village streets. Stunning! Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Zermatt hotel – Hotel National

This distinctly first class hotel is wonderfully located in the heart of stunning Zermatt, and offers excellent dining. The south facing rooms with balconies usually offer views onto the mighty Matterhorn mountain. Add to that an excellent wellness centre...what more could you ask for?
Visit www.hotelnationalzermatt.ch

DAY 9

'My Time' in Zermatt

Today has been left free for you to explore the town, walk on the well sign posted hiking trails to mountain restaurants and waterfalls, and relax in the crisp clean air. Alternatively pamper yourself in the hotel's excellent indoor pool, spa and wellness centre. Looking for another classic mountain ride? The Sunnegga Paradise cable car is situated right beside the hotel, or maybe jump on the nearby funicular train which takes you up to the Gornergrat station and terraced restaurant with its massive views across to the Matterhorn. Alternatively if you want to spend a day skiing, maybe catch a cable car ride up the Kleine (little) Matterhorn, where there are twenty-five kilometres of pistes and eight ski lifts which remain open all summer long! Meals: B

DAY 10

Glacier Express, Chur & Klosters

This morning we board the famous Glacier Express train which takes us along the 'Valais' through Switzerland's finest mountain scenery. Ranked as one of the world's top train trips, you will be seated in panoramic carriages as we cross some of the 291 bridges, the 2033 metre Oberalp Pass and go through 91 tunnels. Early afternoon we arrive and have time to explore Switzerland's oldest city, Chur. The traffic free zone in the old town has a wonderful atmosphere with its boutiques, shops, bars and restaurants. Later we continue to Klosters where we stay two nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Klosters hotel – Hotel Alpina

Set in the centre of town, this chalet style hotel offers Alpine style ambience, an indoor pool and spa centre and large well furnished rooms with balconies, complete with window boxes bursting with geraniums. Visit www.alpina-klosters.ch/hotel-en-us

DAY 11

'My Time' in Klosters

Your day is free to relax and explore Klosters. Meals: B

DAY 12

Bolzano and lakeside Bardolino

Today we go to Italy! Passing through the Alps, we enjoy lunchtime in the centuries old town of Bolzano. Influenced by both Tyrolean and Italian cultures, you will find intricately carved gables, painted timber façades and an elegant arcaded main street. Later we continue to the charming lakeside town of Bardolino, where we stay the next four nights. Dinner tonight will be in our hotel restaurant. Meals: B,D

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Lake Garda Hotel - Hotel Caesius Thermae & Spa Resort, Bardolino

Situated on the shores of Lake Garda and a leisurely twenty minute lakeside stroll from Bardolino town centre, this 4-star resort & spa hotel offers spacious and comfortable air conditioned rooms.
Visit www.hotelcaesiusterme.com/bardolino-hotel/

DAY 13
'My Time' in Lake Garda

We have left today entirely free. Do as little or as much as you want. Lake Garda is Italy's largest and perhaps most beautiful lake, and its shores are lined with quaint villages and colourful ports. The shopping is excellent and the cafés, lakeshore restaurants and shady gardens, all have that distinctly Mediterranean feel. Perhaps catch a ferry across the lake and wander around Gardone Riviera with its botanical gardens on the hill, or explore the characterful 'picture postcard' ports of Lazise or Sirmione. Meals: B

DAY 14
Verona and the lakeside town of Garda

Skirting the lake we will visit Romeo and Juliet's Verona. A local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, where these tragic lovers avowed a love that spanned the centuries. After free time to explore and find a restaurant for lunch, we return to glorious Lake Garda and enjoy an afternoon visit to the delightful lakeside town of Garda, after which the lake is named. Meals: B,D

DAY 15
Lakeside Salo and Redaelli de Zinis

This morning we visit the delightful lakeside town of Salo to explore its historical centre filled with lanes and little squares with noble houses, elegant shops and the longest promenade on Lake Garda. Later we continue to Redaelli de Zinis in Calvagese della Riviera. This is a famous local winery and restaurant. Here we enjoy a wine tasting and sample some of the locally sourced produce before lunch. Meals: B,L

DAY 16
Stylish Milan

We soon reach the stylish city of Milan where we enjoy a guided panoramic tour followed by time at leisure. This evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Milan hotel – Michelangelo Hotel
This modern 4-star hotel is in a brilliant location, opposite the central railway station, transport links and only two subway stops to Cathedral Square and the central shopping district.
See www.michelangelohotelmilan.com

DAY 17
Milan

Your tour ends today after breakfast. Meals: B

Explore Lake Garda

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,700 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 16 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 25 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), Lake Garda wine estate lunch (L) and 8 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Zurich and Grindelwald
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Lake Garda wine tasting, cable car excursion to Aiguille du Midi, Glacier Express train
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply - See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

17 days from $7,999 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Zurich	Ends Milan	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
27 May	12 June	$7,999	$1,289
17 June	3 July	$8,399	$1,349
1 July	17 July	$8,499	$1,369
29 July	14 August	$8,499	$1,369
14 August	30 August	$8,499	$1,369
2 September	18 September	$7,999	$1,289
23 September	9 October	$7,999	$1,289

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Black Forest, Bavaria & the Tyrol

Explore the fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle on a guided tour

15 Relaxing Days
Frankfurt to Munich

Wander down cobbled stone streets in stunning villages, explore Ludwig's fairytale castles, taste wine on the 'route Alsace du Vin', take in the spectacular mountain views from Hitler's Eagles Nest and the undulating 'Sound of Music' hills near beautiful, baroque Salzburg... ahhhh!

FRANKFURT
Day 1
• Stay 1 night in Frankfurt
• Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner
THE BLACK FOREST
Days 2, 3, 4 & 5
• Stay 4 nights in Triberg, in one of Germany's oldest hotels
• Take the funicular up to Heidelberg Castle
• Visit Gengenbach, a 'pearl among the Black Forest towns'
• Ride the 'Petit Train' in picture perfect Colmar
• Taste wine on the 'route Alsace du Vin'
• Cruise on the River Ill in Strasbourg
• Explore Lake Titisee by boat
• Relax in gothic Freiburg
SALZBURG
Days 12, 13, 14 & 15
• Stay 3 nights in the old town centre of Salzburg
• Explore Hitler's Eagles Nest and visit Berchtesgaden and the historic town Salt Mines
• Enjoy a full day to explore Salzburg
• See 'The Sound of Music' church at Lake Mondsee
• Discover the stunning village of Hallstatt
• Enjoy a very special farewell dinner at St Peter Stiftskeller, Salzburg's oldest restaurant dating back to the 1500's
1 FRANKFURT
Heidelberg
France
Germany
Alsace
Strasbourg
Gengenbach
The Black Forest
Ribeauvillé
Kaysersberg
Colmar
4 TRIBERG
Freiburg
Titisee
Munich
Austria
SALZBURG
3
Mondsee
Wieskirche
Bavaria
Oberammergau
Linderhof
Neuschwanstein
FÜSSEN
3
Lindau
Mainau
Hallstatt
Berchtesgaden
Bavarian Alps
Jenbach
Rattenberg
3
KIRCHBERG
Innsbruck
Krimml
Tyrol
Mayrhofen
Switzerland
Italy
BAVARIA
Days 6, 7 & 8
• Stay 3 nights in picturesque Füssen
• Wander around the amazing gardens of the 'Flower Island' of Mainau
• Cross Lake Constance to Meersburg and visit the old harbour of Lindau
• Explore Neuschwanstein Castle on a guided tour
• Enjoy the mountain cable car ride up to Tegelberg
• Explore the extravagant Linderhof Palace and gardens
• Visit the Passion Play Theatre and Museum in Oberammergau
• See the most beautiful church in Europe – Wieskirche
• Relax over dinner beside romantic Lake Hopfensee
THE AUSTRIAN TYROL
Days 9, 10 & 11
• Stay 3 nights in an Alpine style hotel in Kirchberg
• Explore picturesque Rattenberg and in the old town of Innsbruck see the Golden Roof
• Relax with a day free to explore the old town of Kirchberg
• Ride on a steam train along the picturesque Ziller Valley
• Visit the chic ski resort of Mayrhofen
• Drive over the magnificent Fern and Gerlos Alpine Passes
• Admire the Krimmler Wasserfälle (Waterfalls)
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 129
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Julie Andrews and that Mad King

Mad? Or just eccentric? Ludwig emptied Bavaria's treasury by building a series of Palaces and Castles inspired by Germanic Gods, the surrounding countryside and the composer, Wagner. Castles like the 'Fairytale' Neuschwanstein Castle. Who doesn't identify Austria's undulating hills, deep blue lakes and gorgeous church steeples with the first scene of the iconic film 'The Sound of Music'? Julie Andrews, arms outstretched singing 'The hills are alive'? I do!

These regions are riddled with palaces, baroque churches, mountains and medieval towns, ripe to be visited. You may never tire of the 'chocolate box' perfection. I find it really strange that virtually every mainstream tour out there spends just a few scant hours in these entire regions en route to their next all too brief overnight stay. Ridiculous!

Neuschwanstein Castle is wrongly treated to a 'happy snappy' roadside photo stop or hurried morning visit, the other castles and sights are completely ignored, and you never have time to relax by 'those' lakes or ride high up on 'those' magical Austrian hills. Madness! Aren't these iconic sites the reason you are going to these regions in the first place?

I believe these magnificent, romantic, and beautiful regions deserve better. That is why Albatross spends 4 nights exploring the Black Forest, 3 nights amongst Bavaria's castles, 3 nights in the Austrian Tyrol and 3 nights in 'The Sound of Music' Salzburg.

It is absolutely the only way these hills can come alive!

See stunning scenery along the Alsace Wine Road

DAY 1

Frankfurt welcome

Your tour commences this evening in wonderful Frankfurt: a city of contrasts – from modern skyscrapers to beautifully maintained old buildings. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Frankfurt hotel – Hilton Frankfurt

This first class hotel is in a superb location near the city centre. All rooms have private facilities, telephone, TV, mini bar, hair dryer etc.

STAY 1 NIGHT

DAY 2

Heidelberg, Gengenbach and the Black Forest

We spend the morning in the nearby ancient university town of Heidelberg. Set in the wooded Neckar Valley, it is noted for its twin-towered bridge and red sandstone castle. We have included a funicular ride up to the castle and entrance to the castle courtyard and terrace. From here you can enjoy the magnificent views of the city and Neckar River below. Entrance is also included to see the world's largest wine barrel and the German Apothecary Museum. Later, we drive deep into the Black Forest to enjoy an afternoon stop in Gengenbach. With its watchtowers and market square surrounded by lovely half-timbered houses, it is easy to see why it has been called a "pearl among the Black Forest towns". We continue to nearby Triberg, where we spend the next four nights. Meals: B,D

Your Black Forest hotel – Parkhotel Wehrle, Triberg

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Situated in downtown Triberg, the 4-star Park Hotel Wehrle is one of Germany's oldest operating hotels. Famous guests include Napoleon Bonaparte when he conquered Germany in 1806. Hotel guests will enjoy complimentary use of the Sanitas Spa facilities, including swimming pool, sauna and more. The hotel's location provides an excellent base for all of our included excursions to the surrounding areas. See www.parkhotel-wehrle.de

DAY 3

Colmar and the Alsace Wine Road

Crossing the Rhine in France, we spend the morning in postcard perfect Colmar. On arrival we will enjoy an orientation tour through the heart of town on the 'Petit Train'. Brightly painted, half-timbered houses on narrow, twisting lanes make a perfect backdrop. The River Lauch winds its way through the centre, known as the Little Venice district. Your afternoon will be spent on the Route Alsace du Vin (Alsace Wine Road). Stretching from Strasbourg to Colmar, we will drive through the pretty villages of Ribeauvillé, Riquewihr and Kaysersberg on this famous wine road. At one of the manicured vineyards we will enjoy a wine tasting of various classic local wines. Meals: B

DAY 4

Strasbourg cruise and Triberg

Our morning will be spent in Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament. On arrival we board a glass topped boat to enjoy a river cruise around the heart of this beautiful city. Retaining its old world charm there are three bridges spanning the River Ill, massive fortified towers and the pedestrian streets around the Place de la Cathédrale and Place Broglie are a delight. Take time to enjoy one of the numerous cosy bistros and cafés. Late afternoon and evening is at leisure in Triberg, in the very centre of the Black Forest, famous for cake, and home to the world's largest cuckoo clock. Meals: B

"It was our first visit to Germany, the land of fairy tales and castles. I will never tire of the snow-capped mountain peaks or the picture perfect homes that look like giant Cuckoo clocks"
Paul

Tour the extravagant Linderhof Palace and Gardens

DAY 5
Lake Titisee and gothic Freiburg

This morning we visit the beautiful lake and town of Titisee and enjoy a cruise on the crystal clear waters of this famous lake. Lunchtime is at leisure in the capital of the Black Forest – the gothic city of Freiburg. Sensitively restored, Freiburg is one of the most charming of German cities, located where the Black Forest meets the Rhine Plain. Arcaded shopping streets and little streams lead through the old town to its great gothic cathedral. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 6
Flower Island of Mainau to Bavaria

Heading south-east we soon arrive on the western shore of Lake Constance. Crossing a short causeway we visit the Flower Island of Mainau where a local guide leads us through the 111 acres of beautiful gardens and landscaped grounds. Originally created nearly 200 years ago by Prince Nikolaus, these magnificent botanical gardens also boast an arboretum and an Italian rose garden complete with pergolas, sculptures, fountains and 500 varieties of roses. In summer it is splendid with its rhododendrons along with huge displays of over 350,000 flowers. After catching a ferry across Lake Constance to Meersburg, we follow the northern lakeshore to enjoy an afternoon break in the old harbour town of Lindau. Later we continue to Füssen, in the mountains of Bavaria. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your hotel in Bavaria – Hotel Hirsch in Füssen

Superbly located in the picturesque town of Füssen, Hotel Hirsch, built in the 'Art Nouveau' style, has been owned by the same family for four generations. The hotel combines elegantly modern comfort and the Bavarian ambience. All rooms have private facilities, TV and telephone.
Visit www.hotelfuessen.de

DAY 7
Neuschwanstein Castle and Tegelberg

We start the day in Hohenschwangau. On one hill overlooking the little village you have the neo-gothic castle of Hohenschwangau and on the other side above the village is a wooded mountain spur and Neuschwanstein – the fairytale castle of 'mad' King Ludwig. We take a leisurely stroll up the wooded road to enjoy a guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle's state rooms, king's apartments, halls and throne room; all reminiscent of a Wagner operatic saga. Later this afternoon we will take a cable car ride up to Tegelberg to take in the excellent views down onto the fairytale castles far below. Your evening is at leisure in Füssen. **Meals: B**

Please note: The guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle incorporates climbing up and down a number of staircases and, as there are no elevators, the inside visit to the castle this morning may not be suitable for those with walking difficulties or limitations.

DAY 8
Linderhof Palace, Oberammergau and Wieskirche

There is nothing quite like a day in the mountains! Our first stop will be a visit to Linderhof, an extravagant French Rococo Palace – yet another of King Ludwig's amazing creations. Lunchtime will be in the nearby village of Oberammergau with its ornately painted buildings where the famous Passion Play is performed every ten years. To complete your visit we have included entrance and a guided tour through the fascinating Passion Play Theatre and Museum. In the afternoon we drive through Bavarian farmlands and forests to make a stop in arguably the most beautiful church in Europe – Wieskirche (the 'Church in the Meadows'). Surrounded by green fields, the interior of this World Heritage Listed church is an astounding Rococo creation. **Meals: B,D**

continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

The palatial Gardens of Mainau

It would be too easy to simply take the quickest route from Triberg to Bavaria. However, we don't and we won't. Instead we choose to stop at one of Europe's classic palatial gardens that cover the entire island – Mainau on Lake Constance. Different flower gardens and displays bloom depending on the season, as they have done for hundreds of years. This is European grand garden design at its finest, and it is a wonderful heritage experience. **See Day 6.**

Enjoy 3 nights in Salzburg, with a full free day to explore

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

A day in the mountains

Since modern Alpine skiing originated in Austria it makes absolute sense to combine a visit to the classic ski resort of Mayrhofen with a wonderful day exploring high mountain passes, cascading waterfalls, picture perfect wooded meadows and valleys. We even throw in a steam train ride! This is the authentic essence of Austria. With our 3 night stay you not only see the mountains but you get to truly experience them – to enjoy them the way the locals so proudly do. See Day 11.

DAY 9

Innsbruck, Rattenberg and Kirchberg

Taking the beautiful Fern Pass across the Bavarian Alps we descend into the Inn Valley to visit the nearby winter resort city of Innsbruck. There will be time at leisure to explore the sights of the Alstadt (old town) such as the Hofburg Imperial Palace, cobbled stone streets and the renowned Golden Roof. Later we follow the dramatic Inn Valley through the rolling Tyrolean hills and villages, to enjoy a short afternoon stop in the pretty village of Rattenberg. We then continue to Kirchberg where we stay for the next three wonderful nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Tyrolean hotel – Hotel Kirchberger Hof

Located in the centre of Kirchberg, this 4-star hotel offers rooms furnished in modern Alpine style and feature balconies offering views of the surrounding mountains. The elegant restaurant serves traditional Tyrolean specialities and international cuisine. The wellness facilities on offer include a sauna, a steam bath, an infra-red cabin and an indoor swimming pool. Visit www.kirchbergerhof.at

DAY 10

'My Time' in the Austrian Tyrol

Your day is entirely free to explore the old town of Kirchberg and maybe the nearby town of Kitzbuhel. Why not take a cable car up one of the surrounding peaks and enjoy lunch in one of the mountain top restaurants. Alternatively relax on a sun terrace and soak up the glorious surroundings. Tonight we have arranged tickets to a local Austrian Folk Show. Relax and enjoy an evening of typical Tyrolean song and dance, performed by the local townspeople. Meals: B,D

DAY 11

Ziller Valley, Mayrhofen and the Krimml waterfalls

An exciting day in the mountains. Driving to Jenbach we board the old wooden carriages of the historical Zillertalbahn steam train. Sit back and relax as the train puffs its way up the full length of the Ziller Valley, through conifer forests and rich green meadows, to reach the chic ski resort of Mayrhofen.

This is a perfect place to enjoy lunchtime amongst the numerous shops, cafés and restaurants surrounded by the soaring Alps. Meeting up with our coach we enter the Hohe Tauern National Park and drive over the spectacular 1630 metre high, 12 km long Gerlos Pass. Stopping at Krimml we visit the Krimmler Wasserfälle (Waterfalls) – the highest in Austria – where we enjoy a walk along the valley pathway to a number of spectacular viewpoints. Meals: B,D

DAY 12

Berchtesgaden, Eagle's Nest and Salt Mines

A fascinating day ahead as we visit Berchtesgaden and Hitler's Eagles Nest. A local guide joins us as we take a breathtaking bus journey up the winding Kehlstein road and then, in Hitler's personal luxurious brass elevator, we ascend inside the mountain for a guided tour of the Kehlsteinhaus. This alpine retreat is better known as Hitler's Eagles Nest and the mountain views are spectacular.

Lunchtime will be spent in the picturesque and historic town of Berchtesgaden. Later we visit the old Salt Mines near Berchtesgaden. After dressing up in a salt miner's uniform, we enjoy a fun filled ride on a small train deep underground, take wooden slides (or steps) and then float on a barge across a crystal clear underground lake, beautifully illuminated by a light show. Next stop Salzburg, where we stay three nights. Meals: B,D

"We loved the extended stays in the towns of Triberg, Fussen and Kirchberg in "family" hotels. It was a very pleasurable experience." Anthony

Your Salzburg hotel – Altstadthotel Stadtkrug

This 4-star hotel is located in the old town centre of Salzburg and just a few minutes' walk to all the notable sights of town. The hotel occupies a 700 year old building at the foot of the Kapuzinerberg Mountain and features elegant rooms. See stadtkrug.at

DAY 13

Salzburg and 'My Time'

We have allowed a full day to explore Salzburg – the baroque city of Mozart. A local guide will take us on a walking tour of this enchanting city, including several locations used in the film 'The Sound of Music'. Your afternoon will be at leisure to explore the myriad of narrow, cobbled stone streets, ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses. The views from the enormous Festung (Fortress), sitting high above the city, are magnificent. **Meals: B**

DAY 14

Lake Mondsee, Hallstatt and Salzburg

There is nothing like a day exploring the Austrian Lakes District! After a leisurely start we spend the morning beside Lake Mondsee and visit the church made famous in the wedding scene of the film 'The Sound of Music'. Later we drive deep into the Lakes District to enjoy lunchtime exploring the picturesque town of Hallstatt. Set on a rocky terrace jutting into the quiet dark water of the lake surrounded by towering peaks, this is considered the oldest inhabited village in Europe and perhaps the most beautiful in Austria. Our return journey to Salzburg takes us alongside Wolfgangsee (lake) and around Lake Fuschl. This evening we have included a farewell dinner at St Peter Stiftskeller, Salzburg's oldest restaurant dating back to the 1500's. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15

To Munich

Bidding Austria farewell, we drive to Munich where your tour ends on arrival, mid-morning. Drop off points will be in the city centre and Munich airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**

Explore picturesque Hallstatt

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,500 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 14 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 24 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 10 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Strasbourg river cruise, Lake Titisee cruise, cable car ride to Tegelberg and Ziller steam train ride, local Austrian folk show
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350pp

Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

15 days only $6,399 pp twin share

Single supplement $989
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Frankfurt	Ends Munich
20 May	3 June
24 June	8 July
8 July	22 July
12 August	26 August
9 September	23 September

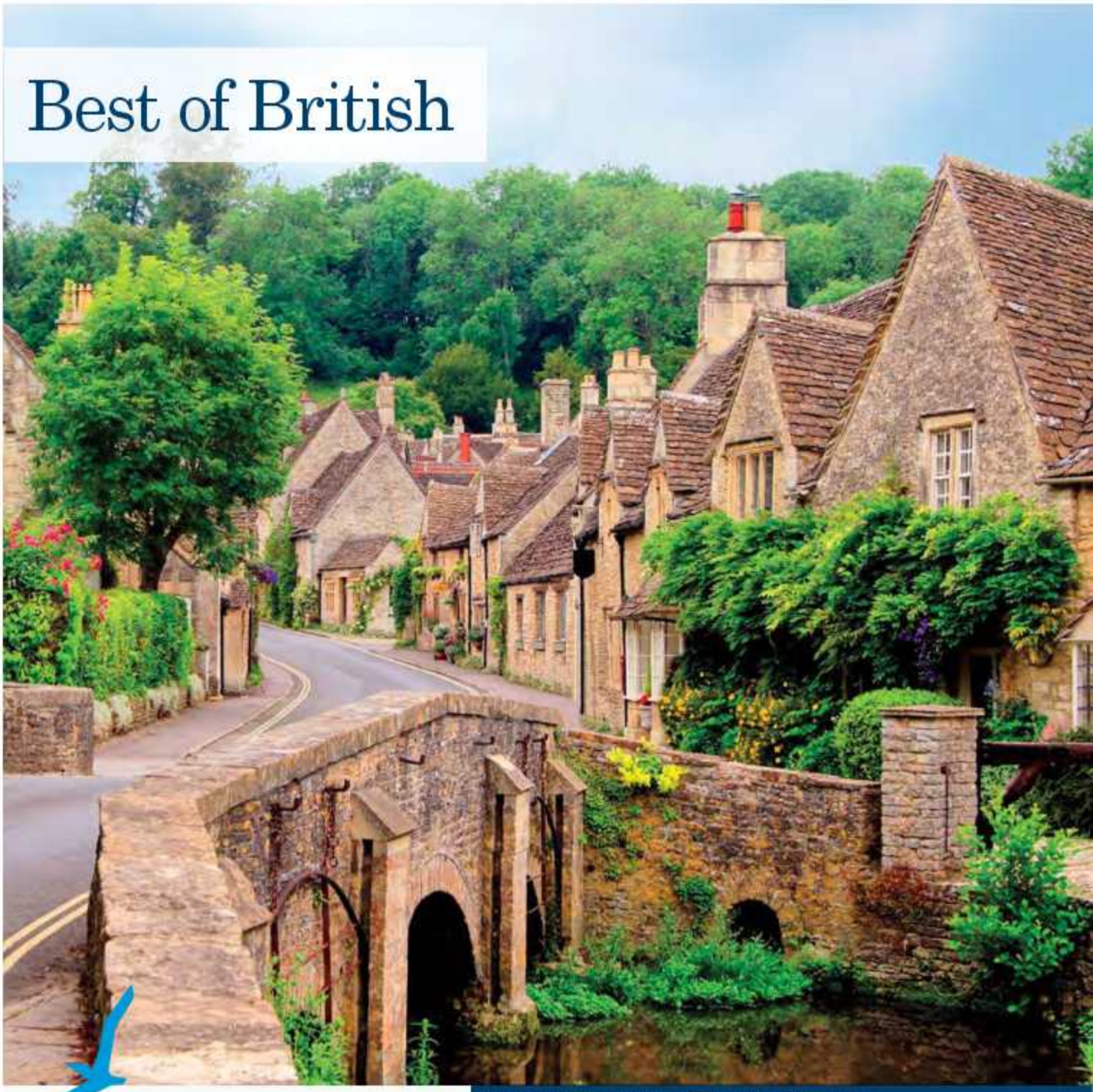
Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Best of British



Explore the beautiful streets of the Cotswolds

16 Magical Days
London to London

We take the time to do Britain justice... from Stonehenge to the 'bravehearts' of Scotland and Tintern's romantic Abbey. Discover the Kingmakers of Warwick and Australia's own heritage in Captain Cook's Whitby and stay overnight in magnificent Leeds Castle!

EDINBURGH
Days 6, 7 & 8
• Stay 3 nights in the heart of 🏛 Edinburgh
• Visit 🏛 New Lanark's 18th century Cotton Mill village
• Sample a 'wee tipple' at The Scotch Whisky Experience
• Cross the drawbridge to visit Edinburgh Castle
• Explore the Trossachs in Rob Roy country
• Enjoy a William 'Braveheart' Wallace tour of Stirling Castle
THE LAKE DISTRICT
Days 4 & 5
• Stay 2 nights on the shore of Lake Windermere
• Explore the walled city of Chester
• Spend a day touring the stunning Lake District
• Visit Wordsworth's Dove Cottage
• Cruise on Lake Windermere
• Enjoy a steam train ride through Beatrix Potter country to Haverthwaite
YORKSHIRE
Days 9, 10 & 11
• Stay 3 nights in the charming spa town of Harrogate
• Visit the lavish and famous Alnwick Castle
• See 🏛 Durham's magnificent cathedral
• Relax in York and go shopping in the historic 'Shambles'
• Indulge in a decadent afternoon tea at Betty's Tea Rooms in Harrogate
• Board a heritage train and ride to Whitby
• Enjoy lunchtime in Whitby, once home to Captain Cook
• Explore the stately home of Castle Howard
Callander
The Trossachs
Stirling
3 EDINBURGH
New Lanark
Scotland
Alnwick Castle
Gretna Green
Durham
Grasmere
LAKE DISTRICT 2
Windermere
Whitby
Castle Howard
3 HARROGATE
York
Yorkshire
North Sea
Ireland
Irish Sea
Chester
England
Nottingham
Midlands
Warwick
Wales
3 STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
Chipping Campden
Monmouth
Tintern Abbey
Cotswolds
Oxford
Bourton-on -the-Water
Windsor
LONDON
Bristol
BATH 3
Glastonbury
Stonehenge
Salisbury
1 LEEDS CASTLE
BATH
Days 1, 2 & 3
• Stay 3 nights in historic Bath
• Visit the remarkable stone megaliths of 🏛 Stonehenge
• Explore the ruins of Glastonbury and 🏛 Bath's Roman Baths and Pump room
• Enjoy Tintern's Cistercian Abbey
• Take in the majestic Clifton Suspension Bridge above the River Avon
LEEDS CASTLE
Days 15 & 16
• Enjoy your final night with an exclusive stay in Leeds Castle!
• Visit the old town of Windsor
• Explore Leeds Castle on a private tour
• Indulge in a pre-dinner drink in the Castle library
• Experience a grand farewell Dinner in Lady Baillie's Dining Room
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
Days 12, 13 & 14
• Stay 3 nights in Shakespeare's Stratford-Upon-Avon
• Experience the notorious National Justice Museum
• Visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage
• Explore medieval Warwick Castle with an expert local guide
• Relax and wander the streets of Elizabethan Stratford-upon-Avon
• Discover Oxford on a guided walking tour
• Spend an afternoon exploring the Cotswolds villages
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 170
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
🏛 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Think of Twiggy in her mini

40 to 50 years ago, when super-model Twiggy was driving her sparkling mini along Britain's newly laid motorway systems, it was quite possible to zip around the country in no time at all. In that long ago era British coach touring itinerary styles evolved and even then, they were at a mad pace, littered with one night stops. Half a century later this same senseless touring style is still promoted everywhere yet these motorways are now so clogged they are more like car parks! Despite incredible congestion combined with massively increased tourist numbers those itineraries have not changed. Due to these new time constraints they have no time to explore the gardens of a stately home or grab a leisurely drink in a delightful country pub! Astonishingly, incredible sites and landmarks are actually disappearing from itineraries or becoming snappy photo stops. One example is Warwick Castle. A fantastic, amazing visit for which you need to set aside about 3 hours to really enjoy. Yet virtually all 'those' itineraries find this inconvenient so they have dropped it! Ridiculous!

Albatross will not do that. I am so proud of our Best of British tour. With 2 and 3 night stays throughout and our unique style of touring we have time to do Britain justice. Just look at the pace of our tour and the incredible list of unique excursions and events we are able to include. Isn't this why you are visiting Great Britain?

"The places we visited were wonderful We enjoyed the unique hotel accommodation and the most special place was of course Leeds Castle where we were made to feel very important." Ellaine & Kim

Visit the remarkable megaliths of Stonehenge – courtesy of English Heritage Library

DAY 1

Stonehenge and Bath

Your tour departs from London at 9am. Travelling west we reach Salisbury Plain where we visit the remarkable megaliths of Stonehenge. After time at leisure in nearby Salisbury, we continue to Bath where we stay for the next three nights. Meals: D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Bath hotel – Francis Hotel

Located in the heart of the historic city of Bath, the Francis Hotel is a Regency style townhouse close to galleries, markets and the Georgian buildings on The Circus. The hotel features individually designed guest rooms as well as a bar and lounge to relax in the afternoon. Visit www.francishotel.com

DAY 2

Glastonbury and 'My Time' in Bath

A leisurely start this morning before we drive into Somerset to visit Britain's earliest Christian sanctuary – the famous ruins of Glastonbury. Legendary burial place of King Arthur and his Queen Guinevere, Glastonbury was once the grandest and richest abbey in England. Later we visit Bath's famous Roman Baths and Pump room. The remainder of your afternoon and evening is at leisure to explore Bath 's picturesque cathedral, the Georgian crescents, sights and shops. Meals: B

Explore the ancient ruins of Tintern's Cistercian Abbey
Image taken by Albatross traveller, G. Coward

DAY 3

Tintern Abbey, Chepstow Castle & the Clifton Suspension Bridge

This morning we take a scenic drive beside the winding, picturesque River Wye through the delightful Welsh borderlands. The highlight of your day will be a visit to the ancient ruins of Tintern's Cistercian Abbey, romantically set in a peaceful forest and providing inspiration to poets through the centuries. We will also visit Monmouth and enjoy a photo stop at Chepstow Castle. Set high above the River Wye, this Norman Castle dates back nearly 1,000 years. On the outskirts of Bristol we will also stop to take in the majestic Clifton Suspension Bridge, designed by the great Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, which gracefully spans the River Avon. Later we return to Bath. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 4

Medieval Chester & Lake District

Heading north, we arrive into Chester late morning. Rich in Roman ruins, Chester also has a wonderfully preserved medieval centre, full of half-timbered houses and the famous 'Rows' – double level, balconied shopping arcades that date back to the Middle Ages, 700 years ago. Whilst exploring this incredibly historic town make sure you take a walk along the perfectly preserved, red stone, Roman city walls. Mid afternoon we continue to the picturesque Lake District where we stay two nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Lake District hotel – Macdonald Old England Hotel and Spa

Standing directly on the shore of Lake Windermere, the historic Macdonald Old England Hotel and Spa is set in the heart of the Lake District National Park. One of the finest 4-star Lake District hotels, the hotel offers modern rooms with all the essential amenities. See www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/oldengland

Explore Edinburgh during your 3 night stay

DAY 5
Lake District sightseeing

We will spend a delightful day touring the famous Lake District. This morning we visit Ambleside and Grasmere where we have included entrance to the Wordsworth Museum and a guided visit through Dove Cottage, once home to the poet William Wordsworth. In the afternoon we enjoy a cruise to Lakeside, on Lake Windermere. Here we board a beautifully preserved steam train for a short 6 kilometre ride through the glorious countryside of Beatrix Potter to Newby Bridge and Haverthwaite. **Meals: B**

DAY 6
New Lanark and Edinburgh

Crossing into Scotland we enjoy a morning tea stop in Gretna Green before we reach the New Lanark World Heritage Site, a sensitively restored 18th century cotton mill village in South Lanarkshire. The giant mill wheels still sit over the torrential river and the 200 year old terraced houses have been restored offering an intriguing look at the workers family life two centuries ago. Later we continue to Edinburgh, where we stay for the next three nights. Before arriving at your hotel we have included a tour and tasting to sample a 'wee tipple' at the Scotch Whisky Experience. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Edinburgh hotel – Apex Hotel Grassmarket*

This contemporary 4-star hotel is located in the heart of Edinburgh's old town area. The comfortable bedrooms offer all the essential modern amenities. See www.apexhotels.co.uk/edinburgh-hotels

**3 September departure stays 3 nights at the Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel.*

**Subject to availability of tickets, the 13 August departure may include attending a performance of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo one evening during our Edinburgh stay.*

DAY 7
Edinburgh sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a hearty Scottish breakfast, we are joined by a local guide to discover this city's rich history. The highlight of your morning will be crossing the drawbridge to visit Edinburgh Castle, which dominates the city's skyline. Your afternoon and evening are at leisure in this grand city. **Meals: B**

DAY 8
Callander and ancient Stirling

This morning we travel to the Trossachs and the town of Callander, in the heart of Rob Roy country. Set dramatically beneath high, wooded crags, this delightful town with its tearooms, craft and woollen shops makes the ideal morning tea stop. Continuing on we visit Stirling, the ancient capital of Scotland, that lies at the heart of the nation's history. The streets of the old town wind upwards towards the castle, 250 feet up on a craggy rock. Our local guide takes us through this grand fortification, with its splendid views across the countryside to the Wallace Monument – built in commemoration of this legendary Scottish hero, William 'Braveheart' Wallace. Tonight we have arranged an unmissable evening. Enjoy dinner, including a taste of haggis, neeps and tatties & traditional Scottish entertainment including bagpipes, fiddles and dance. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 9
Alnwick Castle & Durham

Crossing the border into England and Northumbria, we reach striking Alnwick Castle where we have included a privately guided visit. Dating back 1000 years the grand staterooms and lavish furnishings will not disappoint. Home to the current Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle is also famous for having featured in numerous TV series and movies such as special editions of Downton Abbey, and of course as mysterious 'Hogwarts' in the Harry Potter series. In the afternoon we will also enjoy a stop in the beautiful city of Durham with its majestic cathedral. Later we continue to the spa town of Harrogate where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Yorkshire hotel – Crowne Plaza, Harrogate*

'The Crown' is perfectly located only a few minutes walk from Harrogate's most popular sites and the picturesque town centre. While this 4-star hotel is situated in a 300 year old historic building it offers modern facilities and a high level of comfort and quality. Visit www.crownhotelharrogate.com

**3 September departure stays at the White Hart Hotel Harrogate.*

continued

See the iconic Roman Baths

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Och aye the noo'

Think of historical Scottish characters and vivid images of Rob Roy and William 'Braveheart' Wallace immediately spring to mind. What could be better than dedicating a full day in the stomping grounds of these larger than life heroes? That is why Albatross plan a fascinating day in the landscape of the Trossachs and our expert, local guide spins wee yarns as we follow their immortal footsteps through Stirling Castle. A day of legends! See Day 8.

Be treated like royalty on an overnight stay in Leeds Castle

Nottingham's notorious National Justice Museum

Nottingham's notorious National Justice Museum is the real thing and offers an amazing interactive experience. You will stand in the original old courthouse (where the Sheriff of Nottingham ruled), be charged as a 'criminal', then judged, imprisoned and executed – or sentenced to exile in Australia, much like the 3,000 unwilling colonists that went through here. Experience what it was like to be in a real deportation cell and see the actual graffiti scrawled by starving convict children. This fascinating museum has a host of exhibitions and memorabilia, the stocks, the noose and the 'Convict Ship' experience. See Day 12.

Enjoy afternoon tea at Betty's Tea Rooms

DAY 10

York sightseeing and Betty's Café Tea Rooms

This morning will be spent in the nearby city of York. After a city orientation tour the rest of the morning will be at leisure. Make sure you visit the Minster, the largest gothic church in England, go shopping in narrow streets around the historic 'Shambles' (the preserved medieval street) or maybe walk along the Roman built city walls. This afternoon we return to Harrogate to indulge in a decadent afternoon tea of dainty sandwiches, handmade cakes, scones and specialty teas experience, in the Imperial Room at 'Betty's Café Tea Rooms'. This private room with its beautiful 1920s plasterwork and oak fittings offers unrivalled views of the Montpellier Gardens. Meals: B

DAY 11

Heritage train ride to Whitby & Castle Howard

Driving east, we stop at Pickering where we board a heritage train of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for the ride to the coastal town of Whitby, once home to the famous explorer Captain Cook. Sit back and relax as we pass by charming villages, such as Goathland - known to many as Aidensfield in the television series Heartbeat, and the bewitching Hogsmeade Station in the first Harry Potter film. Lunchtime is at leisure in Whitby. This afternoon we visit Castle Howard, the setting for the famous TV drama 'Brideshead Revisited'. Meals: B,D

DAY 12

Nottingham & Stratford-upon-Avon

A special treat today as we step back in time inside the notorious National Justice Museum in Nottingham. This amazing museum uses a host of exhibitions, memorabilia, colourful historical characters & interactive activities relating to justice, the law, crime and punishment. In a court room performance you may stand trial for your heinous crime. Will you be executed? Or worse still, be deported from here to that horrendous colony – Australia! Be locked in the old deportation cells before experiencing the ordeals on the 'Convict Ship'. Arriving in Stratford-upon-Avon we visit Anne Hathaway's cottage before settling into our central hotel, where we stay for the next three nights. Meals: B

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Stratford-upon-Avon hotel – Mercure Shakespeare

This delightful half-timbered Elizabethan style hotel exudes all the character and style you would expect of a hotel set in the very heart of Stratford-upon-Avon. The 4-star hotel boasts an excellent location, within easy walking distance of all the main sights, making the 'Shakespeare' a wonderful base for you to come and go at leisure. See http://www.mercure.com/gb/hotel-6630-mercure-stratford-upon-avon-shakespeare-hotel/index.shtml

DAY 13

Warwick Castle and 'My Time' in Stratford-upon-Avon

This morning we visit nearby Warwick and its medieval castle. An expert local guide will join us to breathe life into a thousand years of secrets which hide in the shadows of the castle – tales of murder, mystery, intrigue and scandal. After also visiting Shakespeare's Birthplace the rest of the day and evening will be free to relax and wander the streets of Elizabethan Stratford-upon-Avon. Meals: B

DAY 14

Oxford and the Cotswolds

Today we visit Oxford, home to one of Europe's oldest and most famous universities. A local guide takes us on a walking tour around the city and its colleges. Later this afternoon we will wander leisurely through one of the most beautiful and unique regions in England – the Cotswolds. Our country drive will take us through famous villages such as Bourton-on-the-Water and we enjoy an afternoon stop in Chipping Camden. Tonight enjoy a traditional roast dinner with all the trimmings in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

"The last night in Leeds Castle was a very special experience - a real highlight of the tour." Rhonda

DAY 15

Magnificent Leeds Castle

Travelling south we skirt London and enjoy a morning stop in Windsor. Later we continue into the heart of Kent and arrive at Leeds Castle where we stay our last, and most memorable night! Set romantically on an island surrounded by a broad moat, the Castle, Gatehouse and Maiden's tower comprise one of the world's greatest sights. Tonight the entire castle becomes ours to enjoy! We have included a private tour through the grand staterooms, halls, library, chapel and the 13th century section of the castle. Later, in the Library, we will enjoy a pre-dinner drink before our farewell dinner in Lady Baillie's Dining Room. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your home for the night – Leeds Castle

You are in for a treat! Albatross Tours have chartered the entire castle for our own use for the evening and overnight to ensure you experience this breathtaking castle to the fullest. With a butler, wait staff and a footman available for your service you will enjoy an unforgettable experience at Leeds Castle.
Go to www.leeds-castle.com

It is important to stress that Leeds Castle is NOT a hotel. It is, as its name suggests, a genuine castle. There is no hotel room service and nor are there any other guests. There is no hotel bar, there is a drinks trolley. There are no hotel porters, the footmen will ensure your bags are taken to your rooms. The Butler acts as the major-domo to a team of white gloved wait staff ensuring service is always entirely correct.

Your rooms for the night

You have a choice of two categories of accommodation – State rooms or Battlement (Servants) rooms. A full set of details and pictures are displayed on the Best of British tour page on our website www.albatrosstours.com.

The tour price is based on Battlement (Servants) rooms.

BATTLEMENT (SERVANTS) ROOMS – 7 ROOMS

Beautifully renovated and still using quality, period style furniture. These converted servants' living quarters are spacious and the bathrooms have all been completely modernised. Each room tells a story and is sensitively décorated in keeping with the role of the original servants who lived there. These rooms have limited views.

STATE ROOMS – 10 ROOMS

The largest of all the rooms available, they have a grand style with 20's style period piece furniture and retain the original, older style bathrooms.

Please note, spaces in each room category are naturally limited and will be sold specifically on a first come first sold basis.

Book early to avoid possible disappointment.

Additionally, whilst each room in each accommodation category has a specific name, we are not able to allocate any particular named room to a booking. You can only book a category of accommodation. Requests for specific named rooms are not guaranteed.

Note: there is NO lift in the Castle. The State rooms are on the first floor. The Battlement (Servants) rooms are on the second floor.

DAY 16

To London

Mid morning, after a leisurely breakfast, we will transfer to St Pancras and Paddington stations, in central London, where your tour ends. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 24 Meals – including English/Scottish breakfast daily (B) and 9 dinners including a traditional Scottish evening, roast dinner in Stratford-Upon Avon and farewell dinner in Leeds Castle (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Afternoon tea at Betty's tearooms in Harrogate
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Cruise Lake Windermere, Train rides Lakeside to Haverthwaite and Yorkshire Moors
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

16 days from $7,599 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Leeds Castle State room supplement:
Upgrade to a State room $75 per person twin share. $150 single

Starts London	Ends London	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
21 May	5 June	$7,599	$1,739
11 June	26 June	$7,699	$1,789
23 July	7 August	$7,699	$1,789
13 August	28 August	$7,999	$1,989
3 September	18 September	$7,899	$1,989

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.
Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

The Ireland Connection

Take in the incredible views along the Cliffs of Moher

14 Inspiring Days
Dublin to Dublin

Ireland in depth... a unique itinerary, with longer stops packed with wonderful sightseeing, from Temple Bar in Dublin, Killarney and the Wild Atlantic Way, to the Aran Islands, ancient megalithic tombs and the Titanic Experience in Belfast, plus the fascinating story of the mass emigration and deportation of the Irish to Australia.

BELFAST

Days 11, 12, 13 & 14

- Stay 3 nights in a grand 19th century hotel set on 12 acres of beautiful gardens just a short drive from Belfast
- Explore the 🏛 ancient megalithic tombs of Newgrange
- Visit the haunting Monasterboice monastic ruins with its round tower and enormous Celtic High Crosses
- Follow the famous Causeway Coastal route to visit the 🏛 Giants Causeway
- Enjoy a tour and tasting in the Bushmills Whiskey Distillery
- Visit the fascinating Ulster Folk Park and the Titanic Experience in Belfast
- Dine on a Titanic themed menu for a special farewell dinner

GALWAY

Days 8, 9 & 10

- Stay 3 nights in vibrant Galway
- Enjoy Irish Coffee and a tour of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum
- Take in the incredible views along the Cliffs of Moher
- Drive through The Burren and reflect at the 'Boy at the Workhouse Door' memorial
- Admire the magnificent scenery in Connemara National Park
- Explore Kylemore Abbey and Gardens
- Visit the dramatic Aran Islands
- Experience Ireland's very best folklore show – the 'Trad on the Prom'

DUBLIN

Days 1 & 2

- Stay 2 nights in the Temple Bar district – in the heart of Dublin
- Enjoy a panoramic city tour of Georgian Dublin
- Take a fascinating 'below decks' tour through the Jeannie Johnston Famine Ship
- Tour the famous Guinness Storehouse and sample a pint of the 'black stuff'
- Dine in a beautifully renovated 300 year old church along with live Irish music

KILLARNEY

Days 5, 6 & 7

- Stay 3 nights right in the very heart of vibrant Killarney
- Visit the beautiful and haunting 'church on an island' at Gougane Barra
- Enjoy a scenic cruise of Lough Léin on board The Lily of Killarney
- Relax on a jaunting car tour of Killarney National Parklands
- Explore the incredibly picturesque Dingle Peninsula
- Visit the Blasket Heritage Centre at Dún Chaoin
- Drive along the Wild Atlantic Way and around the Ring of Kerry
- Enjoy a special visit to Derrynane House, with its fairy garden and windswept beaches

CORK

Days 3 & 4

- Stay 2 nights in an 18th century country house near Cork
- Visit the Irish National Stud Farm & Japanese Gardens
- See the moving Australian Convict Memorial at Clonoulty
- Explore the iconic 'Rock of Cashel'
- Kiss the world famous Blarney Stone and visit the Blarney Woollen Mills
- Enjoy an afternoon exploring the pretty port of Cobh
- Visit the Cobh Heritage centre with its stories of the mass Irish emigration, the ill-fated Titanic and Lusitania

Top o' the morning to you

There are three clear differences about this tour which really make it stand out from the pack. By now, you will know we always emphasise 3 night stops as a standard. Why? So we can see, visit and experience so much more. Even though Ireland is considered a smaller, more compact destination, it is packed with incredible sights and experiences, so our longer stays become even more essential. For example, by staying 3 nights in delightful Killarney we see so much more. Not only do we visit both the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula, but we also enjoy a scenic lake cruise, a jaunting car ride and take time to relax and properly explore the buzzing old town.

The usual 1 or 2 night stops you commonly see elsewhere seem so senseless as they miss so much.

What a terrible tragedy it would be if you went all the way to Ireland and totally missed the visually stunning ancient sites dating back to Neolithic times.

With Albatross you will stand in the stunning stone fort of Dún Aengus, perched on the dramatic cliff walls of the wild Aran Islands, and inside a megalithic Passage Tomb, which is older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids. These world-class sites make such important and rewarding visits, so why miss them? And we have added yet another overlapping level of interest. With so many deep connections with Ireland, we also interweave the incredible story of the mass Irish migration and convict exportation to Australia. This 'Ireland Connection' tour is truly unique, and delivers the most rewarding and complete Irish experience.

Explore the historic port of Cobh

DAY 1

Dublin welcome

Your tour commences this evening in vibrant Dublin. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Dublin hotel – The Morgan Hotel

This boutique hotel is located in the very heart of the vibrant Temple Bar district. The contemporary guest rooms are comfortable and stylish and feature elegant furnishings, ensuite bathrooms and minibar. Visit www.themorgan.com

DAY 2

Dublin sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we have included a half day panoramic Dublin city tour which takes in all the sights from Trinity College to St Patrick's Cathedral. Starting in the beautiful 18th century Merrion Square we get a real sense of the glory of Georgian Dublin. Here many significant Irish lived including Daniel O'Connell, the poet W B Yeats and Oscar Wilde. Nearby we make an intriguing visit to the three masted, Jeannie Johnston Famine Ship to understand what life was really like below decks for those fleeing poverty stricken Ireland two centuries ago. Later we visit the famous Guinness Storehouse, and enjoy a pint of the 'black stuff' in the Gravity Bar, which offers extraordinary views across Dublin. Your afternoon is free in this most beautiful city of poets, literary giants and political reformers. This evening we have included a special dinner in a beautifully renovated 300 year old church, complete with a giant pipe organ, stunning carved wooden balconies, and a traditional Irish band! Meals: B,D

DAY 3

Irish National Stud Farm, Clonoulty and Rock of Cashel

First stop this morning will be near Kildare where we enjoy a fascinating tour through the paddocks and stables of the Irish National Stud Farm, with their breeding stock of elite racing horses. After time to explore the beautiful Japanese Gardens we continue to the little village of Clonoulty to see the moving Australian convict memorial and hear the intriguing story. Later we have included entrance to the famous 'Rock of Cashel' with its sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Standing there at the top by the ruined church it is fascinating to know as you look around that 70% of all Irish emigrants to Australia came from the land within a 50 mile radius. Later we continue to Cork where we stay the next two nights. Meals: B,D

Your Cork hotel – Vienna Woods Hotel

The Vienna Woods hotel is an 18th century country house located in 22 acres of wooded grounds, in the Glanmire Valley, just a 10 minute drive from the centre of Cork. Abundant in vintage charm, the hotel offers modern amenities including complimentary WiFi in guest rooms. See www.viennawoodshotel.com

Wander the iconic Temple Bar District, Dublin

"It was a privilege to be on this tour. The group size was nice and the information and commentary was outstanding. I feel I have really seen and understood the 'real' Ireland. Thank you." Brian

DAY 4

Blarney Castle and Cobh

This morning we have included a visit to Blarney to explore the castle grounds, 'poison garden' and delightful paths through the woodland. After an opportunity to kiss the world famous Blarney Stone, we will enjoy our morning break at the very popular Blarney Woollen Mills. Later we will continue to Cobh – "huge harbour". Here we visit the excellent Cobh Heritage Centre, with its stories of the Titanic (Cobh was its last port of call), the ill-fated Lusitania, the early assisted emigration to the colonies from Cork and the convict transportation to Australia. Between 1791 and the early 1850s Cobh Harbour was the departure point for dozens of convict ships heading for Sydney and Hobart. Later we have time at leisure to explore this attractive, historic Irish port with its waterside cafés, bars and shops. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 5

Lake cruise and Jaunting Cars in Killarney

This morning we head west to Killarney. With time in hand, we take the scenic route through Macroom, and side track to visit incredibly picturesque Gougane Barra. This makes a perfect stop, with St Finbarr's little church set romantically on a small island in the lake. Later we continue to Killarney where we stay the next three nights. This afternoon we have included a scenic lake cruise on Lough Léin on board The Lily of Killarney. Later, at Ross Castle, we board our horse drawn Jaunting Cars, for a tour through the Killarney National Parklands. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Killarney hotel – Killarney Plaza Hotel & Spa

This excellent 4-star hotel is located right beside the old town centre, overlooking Killarney National Park. Perfectly positioned for maximizing your free time to explore Killarney properly, this classic hotel features graceful, contemporary décor, excellent service and extensive leisure facilities.
See more at: www.killarneyplaza.com

DAY 6

Picturesque Dingle Peninsula

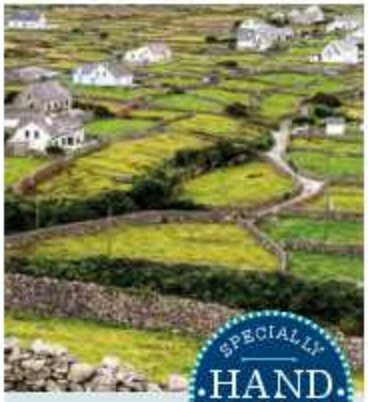
Today we enjoy a scenic drive around the incredibly picturesque Dingle Peninsula, famous for its beauty and as setting for many of the scenes in the film "Ryan's Daughter". At the far end of the peninsula we stop and visit the Blasket Heritage Centre at Dún Chaoin (Dunquin). This fascinating museum focuses on the unique Blasket community who lived on the wild and remote Islands until their evacuation in 1953. With its interactive displays, models, and artwork the centre tells the story of traditional subsistence life on the island, their culture and struggle for existence. All this, with a fantastic backdrop of sweeping views across to the islands. Later we make an afternoon stop in the quaint village of Dingle, on Dingle Bay. Your evening is at leisure in Killarney. The vibrant town full of shops, restaurants and music bars is waiting for you, right outside your hotel door. **Meals: B**

continued

Relax on a jaunting car ride in Killarney

Explore the iconic Rock of Cashel

Visit the beautiful 'church on an island' at Gougane Barra

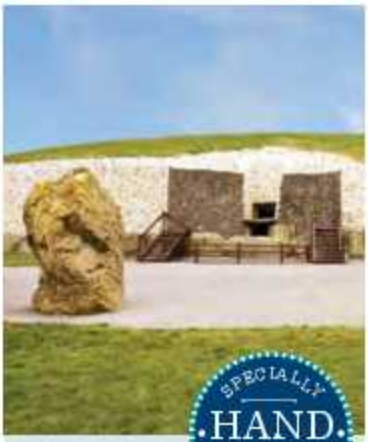


SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

The 'Islands of Saints and Scholars'

Standing atop the wild and rugged Cliffs of Moher on the 'Wild Atlantic Way' is an experience in itself, with its views across the ocean to the ancient Aran Islands – the 'Islands of Saints and Scholars'. Many Irish saints had connections with Aran and at one time there were a dozen monasteries on Inishmore alone. Now you will find literally dozens of Christian and Celtic mythological monuments and heritage sites. Everywhere you will see a lacework of ancient stone walls which were built to keep livestock in, and here too are some stunning cliff top forts, built to keep others out. Dún Aonghasa (Dún Aengus) fort is one of the oldest archaeological remains in Ireland and you will also see early dry-stone clochàns – beehive huts dating back to early Christian times. An amazing experience.
See Day 10.

Drive through stunning Irish landscapes



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

The ancient megalithic tombs of Newgrange

Half way between Belfast and Dublin you will find what some have described as being "the great national monument of Ireland". At the UNESCO World Heritage listed Brú na Bóinne (Boyne) Visitor Centre there are a series of ancient megalithic passage tombs – Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth which pre-date the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge by 500 years. They epitomise ancient Neolithic history, so we ensure we visit Newgrange. Archaeologists now recognize that as well as being a passage tomb, they are also a place of astrological, religious, spiritual and ceremonial importance. At the base of the huge mound covering an acre, are 97 decorated kerbstones, and the inner passage to the central chamber is 19 metres long. See Day 11.

DAY 7

Ring of Kerry, Derrynane House and Killarney 'My Time'

Today we will drive along the Wild Atlantic Way around the entire Iveragh Peninsula, known better as the Ring of Kerry. Renowned for its grand scenery, we make a special visit to Derrynane House, which was the ancestral home of the "great Liberator of Ireland" Daniel O'Connell (there is a statue of him by Parliament House in Melbourne). The house makes a fascinating visit having been restored to its former glory with genuine period furnishings. Make sure you take a stroll through its 'fairy garden' and along the windswept beach to the rocky headland. The remainder of the day is at leisure in Killarney. This evening, maybe visit a local pub for some music and the 'craic'. Meals: B

DAY 8

Foynes, Cliffs of Moher and Galway

Driving north we make our first stop at Foynes to enjoy a guided visit of the Flying Boat Museum. Foynes has some important connections to Australia. The destination of two of the last flying boats ever to leave was 'Down Under'. Foynes also claims to be the birthplace of Irish coffee and we enjoy a demonstration on how to make it properly. Naturally we must ensure they still make it right, so we enjoy a cup too! We will also stop to reflect at the incredibly moving 'Boy at the Workhouse Door' famine memorial near Ennistymon. Later we continue to the Cliffs of Moher to take in the incredible views along the mighty cliffs battered by the incessant Atlantic waves. Driving through 'The Burren' we continue to Galway where we stay three nights.
Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Galway hotel – Menlo Park Hotel*

The award winning Menlo Park Hotel is family run and offers spacious and elegant guest rooms. Located just a 15 minute walk from the city centre, this 4-star hotel is within easy walking distance of all the main sights. Visit www.menloparkhotel.com

See the spectacular Giant's Causeway

DAY 9

Connemara National Park and Galway 'My Time'

This morning we will travel through Connemara National Park and visit Kylemore Abbey, romantically set in woodlands beside a beautiful lake. We also make sure you have time to visit the stunning Victorian walled garden. Your afternoon and evening is at leisure in Galway town with its shops, buskers, restaurants and buzzing bars. Meals: B

DAY 10

Aran Islands and 'Trad on the Prom'

Today we visit the Aran Islands. What an experience! Crossing to Inis Mór (Inishmore) – 'the big island' – we board our 'Wild Atlantic Bus' for a private tour of the island. Home of the Aran sweater, the island is laced with over a thousand kilometres of ancient stone walls and cliff top stone forts that date back thousands of years. Here we visit the remarkable Dún Aonghasa (Dún Aengus) fort. One of the oldest archaeological remains in Ireland, this stone fort sits atop the huge cliffs, and the views down to the wild Atlantic rollers are inspiring. In Kilronan town, we will also enjoy lunch in Joe Watty's pub. This evening, after dinner, relax and enjoy what has been voted the best Irish music and dance show in all Ireland – the 'Trad on the Prom'. Meals: B,L,D

Visit the Titanic Experience in Belfast

DAY 11
Newgrange Tombs and Belfast

Driving across Ireland we reach the Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre where we stop to visit the ancient megalithic tombs of Newgrange. Stepping back in time, these UNESCO World Heritage listed passage tombs pre-date the Egyptian pyramids and epitomize ancient Neolithic history. Later we visit one of the most emotive sites in Ireland – the ruined monastic site of Monasterboice, with its round tower and tall Celtic high crosses. Peacefully surrounded by trees, the beautiful Muiredach cross is acknowledged as being the finest example of Celtic stonework. Entering Northern Ireland we reach Belfast where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Belfast hotel – Culloden Estate and Spa
Originally built as an official Palace for the Bishops of Down, the Culloden Estate stands in 12 acres of beautiful secluded gardens and woodlands. Just a 10 minute drive from the city centre, the hotel features a spa, pool and fitness suite. See www.hastingshotels.com/culloden-estate-and-spa

DAY 12
Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Distillery

Today we follow the Causeway Coastal route on the Antrim Coast to visit the UNESCO Heritage listed Giant's Causeway. Supposedly built by an Irish giant called Finn McCool, this unique geological feature consists of 40,000 hexagonal, basalt columns cutting through the broad beaches, forming an intriguing, patterned promontory stretching out to sea. We also enjoy a tour through Bushmills Distillery – the oldest licenced whiskey distillery in the world. Time for a tipple! **Meals: B**

DAY 13
Belfast Titanic Experience and Farewell Dinner

This morning we explore this rejuvenated city. Highlight of the morning will be a visit to the Titanic Experience. This multi award winning museum is an audio and visual feast as it reveals the story behind 19th century industrial Belfast and how this was indelibly linked to the story of the building of the Titanic. In the afternoon we also visit the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum – a heritage time capsule of Ireland, north and south, throughout the centuries. Back at our hotel our farewell dinner promises to be special, as we feast on a Titanic themed menu. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 14
To Dublin

Your tour ends today after breakfast. For those departing from Belfast, the airport is a short taxi ride away. We have included a morning group transfer to Dublin, with stops at the airport and the city centre. We recommend you book flights that depart Dublin after 2pm. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,400 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 13 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 23 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), lunch in Joe Watty's pub (L), 9 dinners including a special farewell dinner with 'Titanic themed menu' (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Dublin, Guinness Storehouse visit and tasting in Dublin, Irish coffee demonstration and tasting in Foynes, Bushmills whiskey tour and tasting
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Lake Cruise and Jaunting Cars Killarney, Aran Islands boat ride, Trad on the Prom Folklore show
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

14 days only $6,299 pp twin share

Single supplement $1,389
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Dublin	Ends Dublin	Starts Dublin	Ends Dublin
27 May	9 June	12 August	25 August
17 June	30 June	2 September	15 September
8 July	21 July		

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Croatia & the Adriatic

Explore the Old Town of Dubrovnik during your 4 night stay

13 Magnificent Days
Trogir to Dubrovnik

Explore the Adriatic region before escaping to the 'lavender island' of Hvar. Sip wine in Jelsa, discover lovingly rebuilt Mostar and historic Sarajevo, dine on oysters in Mali Ston, take the cable car up to Mount Srd and soak up the panoramic views of Dubrovnik!

TROGIR
Days 1, 2 & 3
• Stay 3 nights in the 🏛 city of Trogir
• Cruise by Krka's wonderful waterfalls
• Visit Šibenik's remarkable 🏛 Cathedral of St James
• Enjoy a guided tour of charming squares and alleys of Trogir
• Take in the magnificent views from Klis Castle
• Explore Split and the 🏛 Diocletian Palace
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
Days 7 & 8
• Stay 2 nights in Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina
• Explore lovingly rebuilt 🏛 Mostar on a walking tour
• Walk over the striking Stari Most humped back bridge
• Visit the War Tunnel Museum in historic Sarajevo
• Dine in a local restaurant
Krka National Park
Šibenik
Croatia
Sarajevo
Balkan Peninsula
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Dinaric Alps
TROGIR 3
Klis
Split
2 MOSTAR
Brač
Stari Grad
Vrboska
Jelsa
HVAR 3
Drvenik
Sucuraj
Korčula
Mali Ston
Ston
Montenegro
Mt Srd
DUBROVNIK 4
Adriatic Sea
Cavtat
Dalmatian Coast
Perast
Kotor
Gulf of Kotor
HVAR
Days 4, 5 & 6
• Stay 3 nights on the beautiful island of Hvar
• Enjoy a day free to explore Hvar and the nearby islands
• Visit Stari Grad, Hvar's oldest port and Vrboska
• Sip wine in Jelsa
• Drive along the stunning 'Lavender Mountain Road'
DUBROVNIK
Days 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13
• Stay 4 nights in 🏛 Dubrovnik, superbly located right beside the Old Town
• Discover the walled city of Ston
• Experience a wine and oyster boat ride
• Enjoy lunch at the Bota Sari restaurant in Mali Ston
• Take a cable car up Mount Srd and soak up the panoramic views of Dubrovnik's dramatic walls
• Explore Dubrovnik's old town on a guided walking tour
• Visit the old Franciscan Monastery and Apothecary
• Cruise from Perast around the islands of St George and Our Lady of the Rock
• Visit the beautifully preserved walled city of 🏛 Kotor in Montenegro
• Enjoy a cruise along the coast to Cavtat for a special farewell dinner
Italy
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 79
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
🏛 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Get out your walking shoes!

The most amazing thing about the cities on the Dalmatian Coast is that virtually every one of the old, walled, town centres are perfectly preserved, traffic free zones – because cars simply cannot fit down the narrow winding back alleys and cannot negotiate the ancient stairways. That is why these towns are just so incredibly attractive.

Personally one of my life's greatest travel highlights was 'walking the Dubrovnik walls'. But it is imperative you pick the right time of day. You see, anything up to a dozen massive cruise ships disgorge multitudes of passengers each day, who clog up the quaint narrow alleys until mid-afternoon, when they simply disappear, sailing off in their massive cruise ships. Afterwards, peace and serenity abound and this glorious 'Lady of the Adriatic' drops her veil, entrancing you with her beauty. The evenings here are long, the late afternoon sun golden, and the two kilometre walk around the city, on top of the ramparts, is absolutely delightful. On one side are the colonnaded squares and terracotta rooftops and on the other is the deep blue Adriatic. This is something most cruise and coach tour passengers on all too brief tour itineraries, completely miss, and why I insist we stay here 4 nights, in a hotel that is within easy walking distance of the old town.

"The tour was fantastic, everyone was friendly and mixed really well. Our accommodation was great and the view from the Grand Villa Argentina in Dubrovnik was stunning as we looked towards the Old City and out to the Adriatic." Debra

Enjoy a guided tour of the charming squares and streets of Trogir

DAY 1

Trogir welcome

Your tour commences this evening in the delightful town of Trogir. Join us for a welcome drink at your hotel before we walk to the nearby old town, to enjoy a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your hotel in Trogir – Trogir Palace

This family run 4-star hotel is in a fantastic location only 200 metres from Trogir's UNESCO World Heritage Listed old town. Featuring modern, comfortable accommodation, the Trogir Palace Hotel is the perfect location to discover Trogir. Visit www.hotel-palace.net

DAY 2

Krka National Park and Šibenik

First stop of the day will be in the beautiful Krka National Park. A boat takes us to the dramatic Skradiniski Buk falls before heading down stream to the town of Skradin. Later we stop in Šibenik, the oldest native Croatian town on the Adriatic. Here we are joined by a local guide who takes us into the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Cathedral of St James. Your evening is at leisure in Trogir. Meals: B

DAY 3

Trogir and Split sightseeing

This morning enjoy an orientation tour of this remarkably preserved town. Heavily influenced by the Greek, Roman and Venetian Empires, the core of Trogir is a mass of tiny alleys and charming squares, filled with shops and restaurants. In the afternoon we are joined by a local guide as we drive up into the rugged hills behind Split to visit the ruined castle of Klis. This is the most famous fortress in all of Croatia with a remarkable history spanning a thousand years, and the views down across Split and the Adriatic are astounding. Continuing to the port of Split our guide will take us on a walking tour through the vast 4th century Diocletian Palace complex, the Cathedral and pedestrian friendly town centre. Later you will enjoy free time to explore the beautiful old town which is littered with numerous alfresco cafés, and where the shopping is rumoured to be the best in Croatia. Tonight we enjoy a local restaurant dinner before returning to Trogir. Meals: B,D

DAY 4

Travel to the island of Hvar

Mid morning we return to Split to catch a ferry over to the famous Adriatic island of Hvar. Cruising out between the islands of Brac and Solta we arrive at the oldest port on the island, Starigrad. Time to enjoy a break and stroll through the town before crossing the island to the delightful harbour of Hvar town, where we stay the next three nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Hvar Island hotel – Amfora Hotel

Situated on a secluded bay, this hotel offers a private beach and a multi-level pool. Offering views across the Paklinski Islands and just a 10 minute walk from the centre of Hvar, the Amfora Hotel features modern amenities, poolside restaurant and stylish lounge area. All guest rooms have balconies. Visit www.suncanihvar.com/amfora-hvar-grand-beach-resort.html

DAY 5

'My Time' on Hvar Island

Your day is completely at leisure to do as much or as little as you choose! Hvar port is regarded as perhaps the most beautiful within the Dalmatian Islands. The cobbled alleys which wind up from the big, open main square are littered with restaurants, cafés and shops. For the more active, you can go on boat trips to the nearby islands, or perhaps take an energetic walk up to Castle Spanjola. From here, there are breathtaking views across the islands and down onto the picturesque harbour – teeming with expensive cruisers and yachts. Meals: B

Visit the stunning Krka National Park

Stay in lovingly rebuilt Mostar

DAY 6
Hvar sightseeing

A day to explore the island! First stop of the day will be on the other side of the island in the little village of Vrboska, set on the World Heritage Listed Stari Grad Plain. Later we will visit a local winery to enjoy a light lunch accompanied by a tasting of the excellent local wines. Afterwards we will spend time exploring the pretty port of Jelsa. We return to Hvar along a spectacular ridge that forms the spine of the island. This incredibly scenic old mountain road is called the 'lavender road' as the steep mountainsides are covered with stone enclosed fields of lavender (lavender blooms on Hvar throughout the month of June). Your evening is at leisure in the delightful port of Hvar. Meals: B,L

DAY 7
Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina

After a leisurely start we enjoy the drive down the entire length of Hvar Island to the port of Sucuraj, where we board a ferry and cross back to the mainland at Drvenik. We continue to Mostar in the country of Bosnia-Herzegovina. On arrival we will meet a local guide for a walking tour of this amazing town. Ravaged and smashed in the Balkans War, Mostar has now been lovingly rebuilt and the locals are intensely proud of their Stari Most (Old Bridge) – a curious humped back pedestrian bridge spanning the River Neretva – a reconstruction of the original 16th century Ottoman bridge. A place where adherents of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism have coexisted for centuries, this cultural melting pot makes a fascinating visit. Mosques and churches stand side by side with charming riverside terraced cafés and the occasional, bomb damaged, bullet pock-marked ruin. We stay here two nights. This evening we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant accompanied by local wines. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Mostar hotel – Bevanda Hotel

The Bevanda Hotel is only a 10 minute walk from Mostar's Old Town. This 4-star hotel is surrounded by delightful gardens as well as a restaurant terrace featuring a flowing river. All rooms have been individually décorated and feature all the modern conveniences. Visit www.hotelbevanda.com

DAY 8
Sarajevo sightseeing and War Tunnel Museum

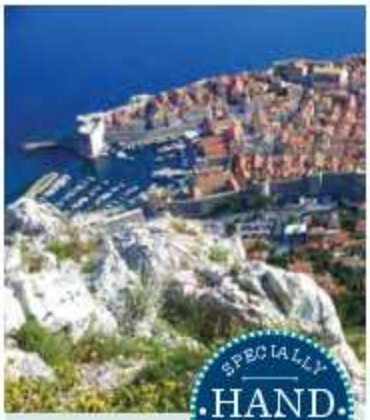
This morning we visit the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the amazing city of Sarajevo – nominated as the European Capital of Culture for 2014. Once the site of the 1984 Winter Olympics, Sarajevo suffered the longest siege of a city in the history of modern warfare (1992-1996) during the Balkans Conflict. To the locals it was the 'Bosnian War for Independence'. Since then Sarajevo's rebuilding programme has galvanised the city and here we are joined by a local guide. Highlight of the morning will be your visit to the Sarajevo War Tunnel Museum – built to supply humanitarian aid to the city during the siege. The remainder of your afternoon and evening will be free back in Mostar. A perfect time to find your own riverside terrace restaurant. Meals: B

continued

A heavenly day in Mali Ston

Whether you like oysters or not, or whether a glass of wine is your 'thing', the whole concept of cruising out to the sheltered waters of the oyster beds in Mali Ston's Bay is just so, so heavenly! Now, add the backdrop of massive walls and fortifications creeping up over the mountain and the knowledge that following this you will be enjoying a relaxing lunch on the vine shaded terrace of the famous Bota Sari Restaurant. This is a total experience that we know simply cannot be missed. See Day 9.

Relax over 3 nights on the island of Hvar



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

First impressions are important

That is why we have included a cable car ride to the top of Mount Srd which looms high over Dubrovnik city! From the lookout platforms beside the café and the symbolic fortress you will have sweeping views inland across the Dinara Mountain range, and up and down the dramatic Dalmatian Coast. But it is the view down on Dubrovnik itself which will captivate you. The historic, 500 year old city walls entirely frame this 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Outside is the deep blue sea, and inside you will watch over a maze of narrow alleys, squares and churches that litter the old town. Incredible! See Day 10.

DAY 9

Dalmatian Coast touring

Returning to the Dalmatian Coast we visit the remarkable twin towns of Ston and Mali Ston. Famous for having the longest complete city walls of any city in Europe, you will be struck by the giant fortifications extending completely over the wild mountain side linking these two small towns. Scenically, the tiny bay is wonderful however, we are here for the oysters of Mali Ston, which are reputed to be the finest in the world. On arrival we will board a small boat to visit the Oyster beds and sample fresh oysters, washed down with a glass of wine. Back ashore, it is time for a lazy lunch in the famous Bota Sari restaurant which is built into the ancient castle walls. Delightful! Later this afternoon we arrive at the famous city of Dubrovnik. Our hotel for the next four nights is superbly located within easy walking distance to Dubrovnik's old town. On arrival, join us for a welcome drink on the beach terrace overlooking the sea and Dubrovnik city. Meals: B,L

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Dubrovnik hotel – Grand Villa Argentina

Distinctly first class, the 5-star Grand Villa Argentina possesses regal, old world charm and spectacular panoramic views across the Adriatic Sea. An easy stroll to the heart of the Old Town you will be surrounded by luxury in this picturesque location. What more could you want? Visit www.adriaticluxuryhotels.com/en/grand-villa-argentina

DAY 10

Dubrovnik sightseeing and My Time

In the 15th and 16th centuries Dubrovnik became the heart of a maritime empire to rival Venice. This morning we are joined by a local guide who will breathe life into this extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage Listed, walled city – from the finely carved facades of the renaissance palaces, lining the broad pedestrian walkways and squares, to the churches and the baroque Cathedral. First impressions are so important so to begin our tour we catch the cable car up to the scenic lookout on top of Mount Srd. What a fantastic way to introduce you to the city! We have also included entrance to the old Franciscan Monastery and Apothecary. The rest of your day is at leisure. Later this afternoon, when the heat has gone from the day, and the crowded cruise ships have departed, make sure you enjoy a peaceful walk along the top of the city walls. Running almost two kilometres around the entire city, and flanked by turrets and towers, a walk along the ramparts is a wonderful experience. Meals: B

Enjoy lunchtime in the city of Kotor

Take a boat ride from the village of Perast

Enjoy views of Dubrovnik's Old Town from your hotel

DAY 11
Montenegro excursion

Today we will enjoy a full day excursion to the country of Montenegro. Reaching the dramatic fjord like Bay of Kotor we will make a stop at the little village of Perast. Here we will enjoy a boat ride out and around the twin islands of St. George and Gospa od Škrpjela (Our Lady of the Rock). Arriving in Kotor we are met by a local guide for a short orientation tour. Lunchtime will be in the beautifully preserved walled city of Kotor. Returning to our superb hotel, the rest of the day and evening is at leisure to relax in your hotel or explore Dubrovnik town. **Meals: B**

DAY 12
Dubrovnik 'My Time'

Your day is at leisure. Maybe relax in your delightful hotel located directly beside the deep blue Adriatic, or walk into town to explore the narrow alleys, squares and churches that litter the old town. Time to shop or sit and enjoy a leisurely lunch in this city which is aptly named the 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Late afternoon we board a traditional Dalmatian boat to cruise south along the coast to the picturesque port of Cavtat where we enjoy our farewell dinner in the excellent family owned 'Restaurant Leut'. We return to our hotel by coach. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 13
Dubrovnik

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

This tour requires a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues.

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,300 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 12 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 19 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), light lunch with wine tasting in Hvar and lunch at the Bota Sari restaurant in Mali Ston (L), and 5 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Trogir and Dubrovnik
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Mount Srd cable car, Cruises in Krka, Perast, Cavtat and Oyster cruise Mali Ston
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – see page 28

2018 Dates & Prices

13 days from $5,599 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Trogir	Ends Dubrovnik	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
24 May	5 June	$5,599	$1,439
7 June	19 June	$5,599	$1,439
21 June	3 July	$5,899	$1,789
26 August	7 September	$5,999	$1,889
9 September	21 September	$5,999	$1,889

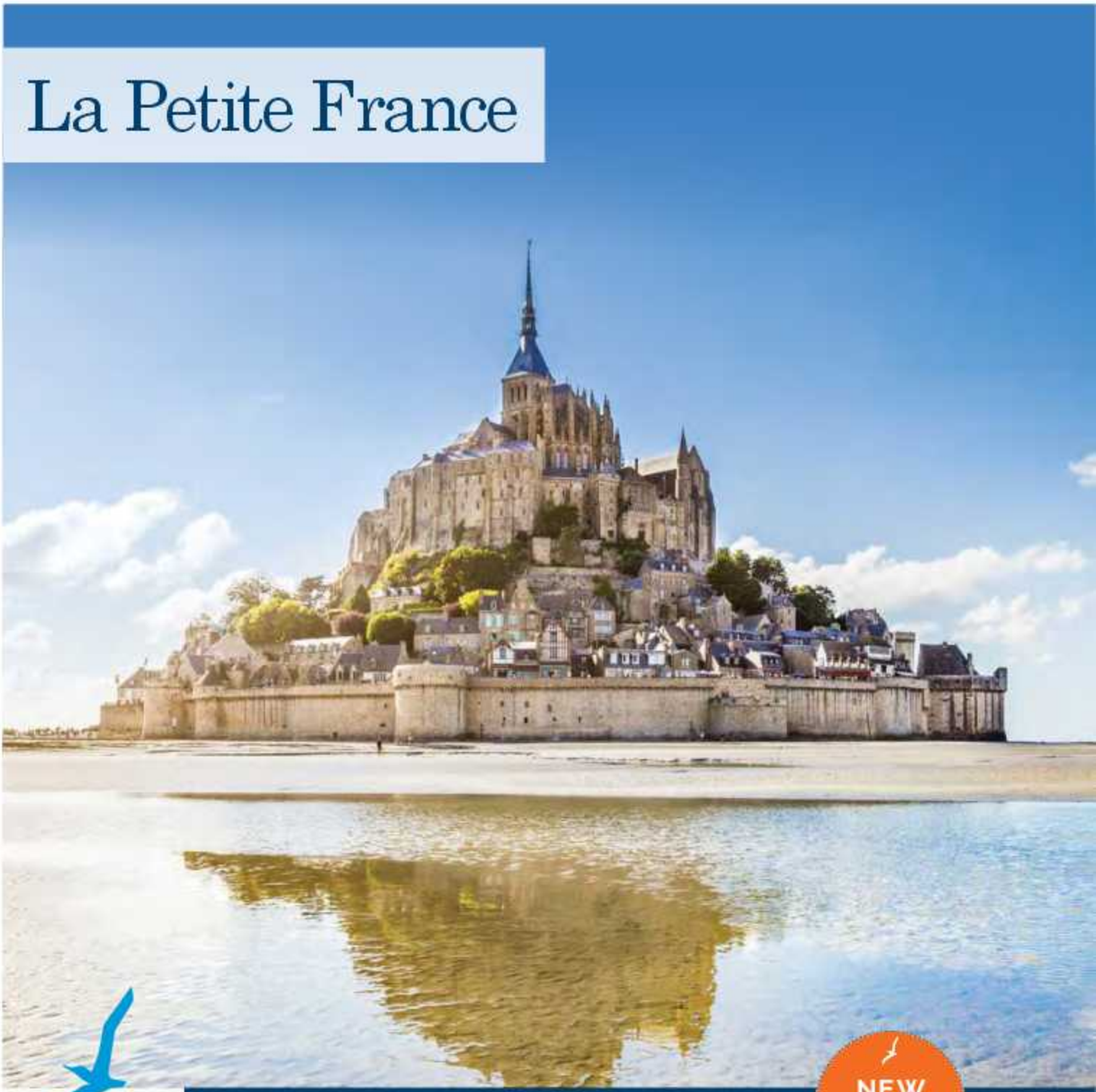
Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

La Petite France



Visit the 11th century Mont-Saint-Michel, a UNESCO World Heritage site

NEW FOR 2018

10 Wonderful Days
Paris to Paris

Sleep in a picturesque château in the Loire Valley, walk amongst the flowers of Monet's Gardens and Château Villandry and dine on exquisite seafood in the 'pirate town' of St Malo. Stand on the Normandy beaches, visit magnificent Mont-Saint-Michel and sip Benedictine in a palace! C'est magnifique...

NORMANDY

Days 1, 2 & 3

- Stay 3 nights on the verdant Normandy Coast in the classic seaside resort of Cabourg
- Wander through Monet's glorious gardens in Giverny
- Relax over lunchtime in Rouen where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake
- Visit the fascinating D-Day Landing Beaches and museum
- See the historic Bayeux tapestry
- Explore the pretty harbourside town of Honfleur
- Sip Benedictine in Fécamp where it was invented

BRITTANY

Days 4 & 5

- Stay 2 nights in the 'pirate town' of St Malo
- Explore the magnificent 11th century 🏛 Mont-Saint-Michel
- Enjoy time relaxing in the 'oyster village' of Cancale
- Visit the beautifully preserved village of Dinan
- Enjoy a lunchtime stop in the chic 18th century resort town of Dinard

THE LOIRE VALLEY

Days 6, 7, 8 & 9

- Stay 4 nights in the enchanting Château Rochecotte nestled in its own gardens and grounds, in the spectacular 🏛 Loire Valley
- See the 13th century granite castle in Angers
- Visit the famous city of Tours and explore the old town
- Enjoy a relaxing evening in the pretty village of Langeais
- Enjoy the gardens and interior of the elegant Château Chenonceau
- Visit Da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé in historical Amboise
- Visit the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud, the largest in Western Europe
- Explore Chinon and its massive castle
- Visit the classic 16th and 18th century gardens of Château Villandry
- Enjoy a farewell dinner in your Château

AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 173

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions
- 🏛 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

A 'French Affaire' must surely last more than one night

I wanted to design a tour to not only take in the great sights of the lush historic countryside of Normandy and Brittany, but one that will also immerse you in those wonderfully preserved medieval villages, sleepy Loire Valley châteaux, vineyards and local fresh produce markets bursting with ripe cheeses, pâté and crusty French baguettes. When looking at what is 'out there' on the market I am still astounded by the speed at which mainstream tours scoot from motorway to motorway either bypassing or scarcely touching so many gorgeous, distinctly French, regions. Normandy, Brittany and the Loire Valley are simply bursting with sights and tastes. That is why this unique tour does these regions justice and enjoys leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays everywhere. This is simply the best way to enjoy each of these enchanting regions and to bring to life the genuine, simple pleasures of the 'real' France.

We take time to enjoy the ambience, culture, magnificent sights, food and wine this country is so famous for. Quality time – relaxing and savouring the French way of doing things. Let's face it, isn't that why you are travelling to France?
To break French bread in France, shuck oysters in Cancale, mess with Moules-Frites in Brittany and sip Benedictine in a glorious palace right where it was invented! That is what we do! Ahhh...C'est la vie!

Monet's Garden, Giverny

Explore the pretty harbour town of Honfleur

DAY 1

Monet's Gardens at Giverny, Rouen and Cabourg

Your tour commences this morning in Paris. After meeting your Tour Manager, we board our coach and follow the River Seine north-west to Giverny for our first stop, a visit to the house and gardens of the impressionist artist Claude Monet. World famous, these colourful gardens with lily ponds and shaded walkways are instantly recognisable as the inspiration for so many of his classic art works.

Lunchtime will be spent in the medieval city of Rouen, where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431. The old town still boasts wonderful half-timbered buildings and the Notre Dame Cathedral. Later we will continue to the Normandy Coast where we will stay the next three nights in the traditional resort town of Cabourg.

Created as a fashionable French seaside resort in the 1880's Cabourg still offers that 'olde worlde' experience of café lined, seaside promenades and smart belle époque villas and hotels. Your welcome drink and dinner tonight is a perfect way to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

Your Cabourg hotel – MGallery Le Grand Hotel

STAY 3 NIGHTS

This prestigious 5-star hotel, once home to Marcel Proust, is located on the seafront and boasts a gourmet restaurant and direct beach access. Bedrooms are spacious, comfortable and elegantly décorated. Visit www.sofitel.com/gb/hotel-1282-le-grand-hotel-cabourg-mgallery-by-sofitel/index.shtml

DAY 2

WWII Normandy landing beaches and Bayeux Tapestry

We will spend a fascinating morning driving through the lush Normandy countryside, dotted with small, pretty villages, ancient farms and apple orchards, to explore the famous WWII Normandy landing beaches. At Arromanches-les-Bains we will visit the fascinating Landing Beaches Museum. From here, looking out over the English Channel you will clearly see the remains of Mulberry 'B' Harbour, often referred to as the 'key to Normandy'. This afternoon we stop in the historic town of Bayeux, which sits on the River Aure, and enjoy a visit to see the magnificent Bayeux Tapestry, depicting William the Conqueror's invasion of Britain in 1066. Meals: B

DAY 3

Cabourg 'My Time', Honfleur and Palais Benedictine in Fécamp

After time at leisure to explore Cabourg, we head east to explore the pretty harbour town of Honfleur which is located on the estuary where the River Seine meets the English Channel. Lined with 16th, 17th and 18th century houses the old harbour is filled with colourful fishing boats. It is no wonder it was one of the classic 'painting by numbers' settings. Make sure you wander around the cobbled stone streets to find the perfect bistro for lunch. In the afternoon, we will visit the Palais Benedictine in Fécamp. Five hundred years ago, a Benedictine alchemist discovered a secret elixir that we now know as Benedictine liqueur. Built by Alexandre le Grand who made a fortune with this brew, the opulent interior of the imposing gothic/renaissance style palace is rich in art, sculptures and a wonderful old library. Following a guided tour, we will enjoy a tasting of this ancient elixir. Meals: B

Stay 2 nights in St Malo with time to explore the Old Town

DAY 4

Mont-Saint-Michel and the oyster village of Cancale

Crossing to Eastern Normandy, we visit the amazing structure of le Mont-Saint-Michel. The 11th century Romanesque abbey is perched atop a rocky outcrop linked to mainland France by a kilometre long, narrow causeway. The giant monastery dominates the tiny village below, and the entire complex has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

Entering Brittany we make an afternoon stop in the 'oyster village' of Cancale. The region's giant oysters have been famous since pre-Roman times, and from the old fishing port you will see the seven square kilometres of oyster beds stretching out to sea. Take time to stop in one of the pretty fishing house restaurants and try a few freshly shucked oysters, and maybe a glass of wine.

We will stay the next two nights on the Emerald Coast, in the 'pirate town' of St Malo. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your St Malo hotel – Grand Hotel de Courtoisville

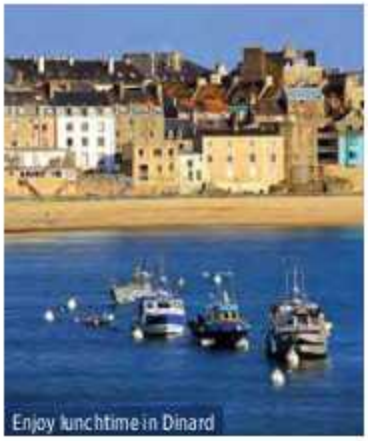
Set in its own gardens only 50 metres from the sea, this first class, elegant spa hotel has been attracting visitors for over 100 years. Set in a grand, stone, villa style building the hotel boasts an indoor pool and excellent spa facilities.
Visit www.hotel-saint-malo-courtoisville.com

DAY 5

Dinan, seaside Dinard and 'My Time' in St Malo

This morning we will visit the attractive and beautifully preserved village of Dinan. The whole upper town is filled with historic, half-timbered houses which date back up to 600 years. Down near the old port you find stone houses and bridges, and cobbled stone streets lined with craft and artisan shops. The town still has kilometres of ancient ramparts and a massive viaduct built by Gustav Eiffel. Next we enjoy lunchtime in the classic seaside resort of Dinard, with its sea front that is lined with 19th century villas and town houses. Time to shop and enjoy lunch in the old town centre. Later we catch the ferry across to the old port of St Malo. Arriving by boat we can get the very best view of this fully walled and fortified town. Originally an island stronghold, the town grew on the wealth bought in between the 16th and 18th centuries by the 'authorised' pirates and freebooters. The rest of your day is at leisure to explore the cobbled streets, alleys filled with shops and cafés. Perhaps enjoy the 2 km walk along the ramparts that completely encircle the old town. Meals: B

continued


Enjoy lunchtime in Dinard

Indulge in the oysters of Cancale

Visit the beautifully preserved village of Dinan

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

The grand châteaux of the Loire

It was once said that if all the châteaux of the Loire were ladies at a masked ball it would be Chenonceau you would beg to dance with! Set amidst beautiful gardens and straddling the River Cher, we of course include a visit to the gardens and interior of this magnificent Château.

But to do the Loire Valley justice we stay four nights here in our own château, and we also take in so many of those other ladies at that ball from Villandry and da Vinci's Château du Clos Lucé, as well as some of their suitors... Amboise, Langeais, Chinon and Fontevraud. Uniquely Albatross!

See Days 6 to 9.

DAY 6

Angers Château and Saumur

Travelling south we make our way to the verdant Loire Valley where, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the Kings of France and their courtiers created their grand holiday palaces. First stop is in the city of Angers with its massive 13th century granite château. In the afternoon we will make a stop in Saumur, famous for its castle and elite riding school. Later we reach our wonderful Château hotel where we spend the next four wonderful nights. This evening we enjoy dinner in our château. Meals: B,D

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Loire Valley Château hotel – Château De Rochecotte

Surrounded by 20 acres of parks and gardens this 4-star hotel is set within an 18th century château in the Loire Valley. Exuding french luxury and style encapsulating the extravagance of a bygone era, the Château de Rochecotte features elegant rooms and an outdoor swimming pool.
Visit www.chateau-de-rochecotte.fr

DAY 7

City of Tours and My Time at our Château

After a leisurely start, we make our way to the city of Tours. As you would expect of a regional capital there is much to see, from the Cathedral Saint-Gatien and the adjacent cloisters of La Psalette, to the shopping, the vieille ville (old town) and Place Plumereau filled with al fresco cafés and bars. A great place to relax over lunchtime. Late afternoon, after time at leisure back at our château to relax & freshen up, we enjoy an evening in nearby Langeais. The enormous château which dominates the beautiful village can still be visited, and this evening you will have the chance to discover your own intimate bistro for dinner. Meals: B

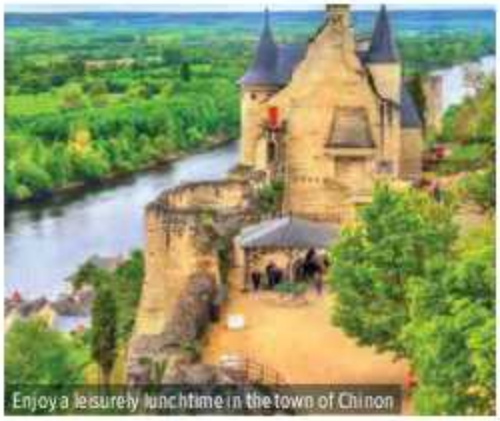
DAY 8

Château Chenonceau and da Vinci's Château du Clos Lucé

This morning we enjoy a visit to the magnificent Château Chenonceau, spanning the River Cher on a series of graceful arches. Possibly one of the most photographed of the Loire châteaux this was the former home of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. Explore the stunning gardens and interior of the château. Later we stop to explore the charming riverside town of Amboise, on the banks of the River Loire, with its Royal Palace, where Leonardo da Vinci once lived as a guest of King Francois I. We have included a visit to da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé. Here in the underground rooms you will see on display, forty machines designed by this amazing inventor. After freshening up back at our château your evening will be free in the old town of Tours around Place Plumereau, to discover your own provincial bistro for dinner. Meals: B

Spend time at the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud

Explore the gardens of Château Villandry


Enjoy a leisurely lunchtime in the town of Chinon

DAY 9

Fontevraud, Chinon and Château Villandry

Our first stop of the day will be to visit the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud. Built nearly 1000 years ago, this is the largest Abbey in Western Europe. The Romanesque abbey church with its royal tombs and the renaissance cloister, have all been beautifully restored and the complex is now a museum and cultural centre. Lunchtime will be spent exploring Chinon, with its massive castle looming over the narrow cobbled streets of this riverside town. Time permitting, in the afternoon we will detour from our route to pass through Ussé to make a photo stop at the 16th century château overlooking the Loire and Indre River Valley. Accredited as the castle in Charles Perrault's story 'Sleeping Beauty' it is also sometimes called the 'Castle of Dreams'. We then visit the gardens of Château Villandry which got its inspiration from the classic gardens of the 16th and 18th century. Different levels of the gardens include ponds, topiary, ornamental hedges and an extraordinary kitchen garden covering 12,500 square metres. Your farewell dinner tonight is included at your château. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 10

To Paris

Your tour ends today as you are transferred back to Paris. We recommend that you book flights that depart Paris after 2pm. **Meals: B**

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,100 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 9 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 13 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 4 dinners including welcome and farewell dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Paris
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Palais Benedictine tasting, boat ride to St Malo, visit the magnificent Château Chenonceau
- Local guide for visit and tasting at Palais Benedictine in Fécamp
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

10 days from $5,599 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Paris	Ends Paris	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
14 May	23 May	$5,599	$1,089
11 June	20 June	$5,599	$1,089
30 July	8 August	$5,799	$1,289
29 August	7 September	$5,599	$1,089

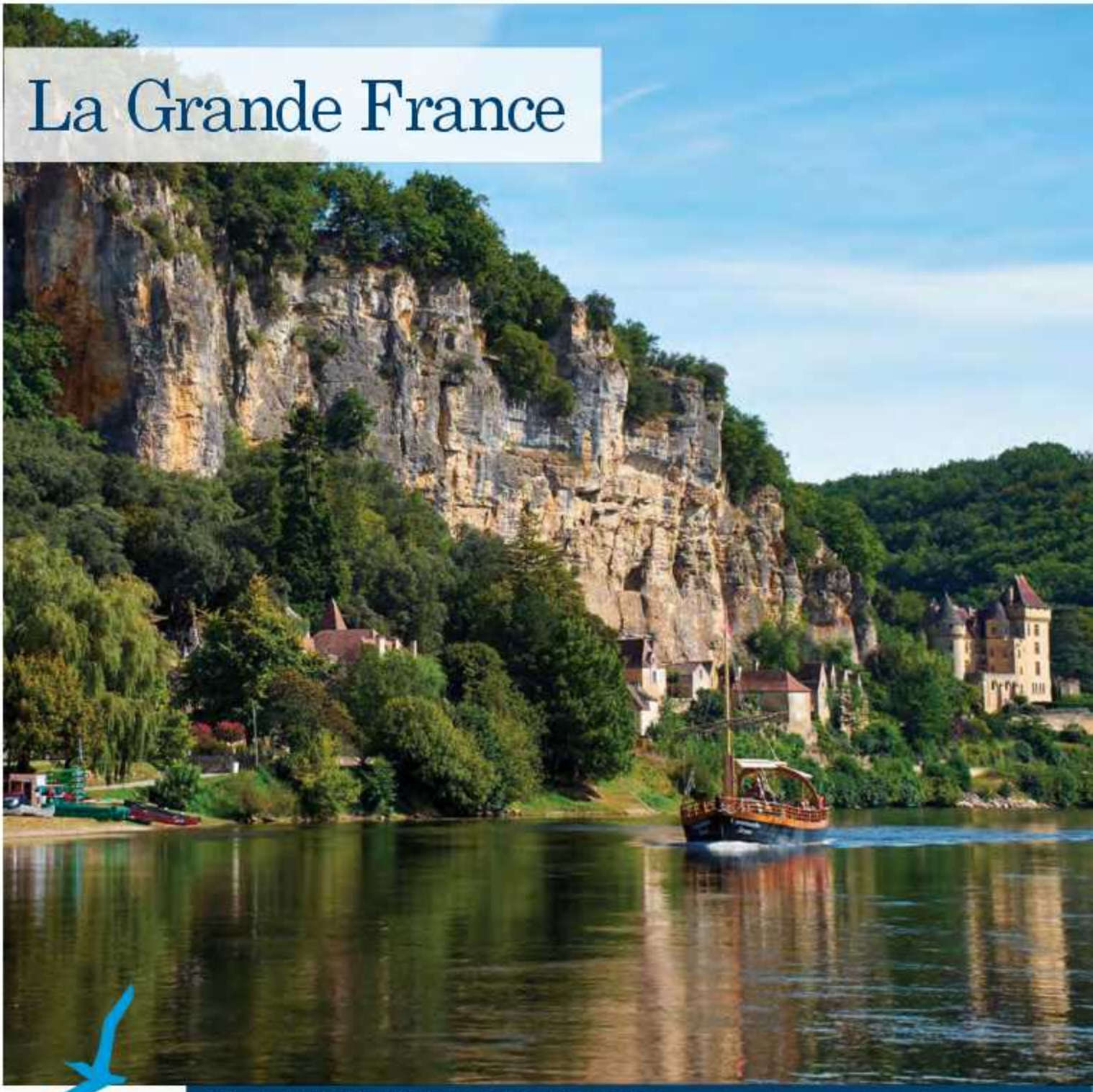
Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

La Grande France



Cruise down the River Dordogne past medieval castles. Image taken by Albatross traveller, J. Woodcock

16 Fabulous Days
Paris to Nice

Five of France's seductive regions... the graceful châteaux of the Loire Valley, the glorious Dordogne, the land of the Cathars in the Languedoc Roussillon, to ancient Provence and the stunning Côte d'Azur. Wonderful experiences... the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières, the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac and afternoon tea in Rothschild's luxuriant Villa Ephrussi.

AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 155
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits
LOIRE VALLEY
Days 1, 2 & 3
Stay 3 nights amongst the glorious châteaux of the Loire Valley
See the magnificent Château Chambord
Enjoy the gardens and interior of the elegant Château Chenonceau
Visit Amboise and Da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé
Guided visit to the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud
Explore Chinon and its massive castle
Visit the classic 16th and 18th century gardens of Château Villandry
Explore Tours and relax in the cafés on Place Plumereau
PARIS
Chambord
Château Villandry
Amboise
Chinon
Fontevraud
3
LOIRE VALLEY
Chenonceau
France
PROVENCE
Days 10, 11 & 12
Stay 3 nights in the centre of medieval Avignon
Visit the walled city of Aigues-Mortes set in the salt flats of the Camargue
Walk across the spectacular Pont du Gard
Explore the Papal City of Avignon
See the Arena of Nimes, the best preserved amphitheatre in the Roman Empire
Experience the extraordinary Carrières de Lumières sound and light show in the quarries of Les Baux
Enjoy a special Provençal dinner in St Remy
Oradour-sur-Glane
Lascaux
SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA
3
Rocamadour
La Roc Gageac
Gouffre de Padirac
Domme
Italy
The Dordogne
AVIGNON
Toulouse
Pont du Gard
3
Nimes
Provence
St Paul de Vence
Monaco
Cap Ferrat
Aigues-Mortes
St Remy
Grasse
3
NICE
Les Baux
Languedoc Roussillon
Carcassonne
Cannes
Béziers
Côte d'Azur
Les Calanques
Cassis
Mirepoix
3
Rennes-le-Château
COUIZA
Spain
The Pyrenees
Andorra
THE DORDOGNE
Days 4, 5 & 6
Stay 3 nights in perfectly preserved Sarlat-la-Canéda
See the tragic village of Oradour-sur-Glane, destroyed in WWII
See the magnificent Palaeolithic rock paintings on the cave site of Lascaux IV
Cruise down the River Dordogne past medieval castles
Take the petit train up to the beautiful town of Domme
Explore the 'pilgrimage town' of Rocamadour
Visit the incredible caves of Gouffre de Padirac
LANGUEDOC ROUSSILLON
Days 7, 8 & 9
Relax with a 3 nights stay in the delightful, 16th century Château des Ducs, in the lush Cathar countryside
Explore France's pink city, Toulouse
Enjoy a guided tour of the huge fortified town of Carcassonne
Enjoy a game of pétanque at our château hotel
Discover the medieval time capsule of Mirepoix
Visit intriguing Rennes-le-Château and hear of the famous conspiracy theories
CÔTE D'AZUR
Days 13, 14, 15 & 16
Stay 3 nights in the old town of Nice
Visit the pretty harbour town of Cassis
Discover the dramatic Calanques on a coastal cruise along the Côte d'Azur
Explore Nice, Cannes and Monte Carlo, plus visit a perfumery in Grasse
Visit exclusive Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat and have afternoon tea at Villa Ephrussi
Enjoy a farewell dinner in the artisan village of Saint Paul de Vence

Don't just tick the big boxes

Too many people go to France and just 'tick off' the major sights. With limited time they brush the surface, and miss so many incredible sights. This totally unique tour captures the essence and vibrancy of five incredibly evocative French regions... regions littered with wonderfully preserved cities and villages, incredible sights, and a proud heritage of culture, food and wine. That is why I designed this tour with necessary 3 night stops everywhere, including a 500 year old 'château castle'.

Naturally I needed to ensure we have ample time in the famous cities and towns... but I also really wanted to seek out those other activities and sights, famous or not, which exude so much of that essence and style that has made these regions world famous. For instance, have you heard of the 'ghost city' of Oradour-sur-Glane or the awesome caves of Gouffre de Padirac? What about the picturesque fishing village of Cassis, on the Côte d'Azur, beside the stunning fjord like Calanques where we enjoy a morning cruise? Why would you bypass the Canal du Midi or the magnificent Villa Ephrussi, with its treasures and gorgeous gardens all set on a spectacular rocky headland over the Azure Coast. Really, how could you?

If you don't take in these other, so special visits, then you haven't seen 'La Grande France'. I say they are a 'must' as they are what Albatross travellers love so much. At Albatross, we don't just touch on regions, we explore them!

See the tragic village of Oradour-sur-Glane

See the magnificent Château Chambord

DAY 1

Paris to Loire Valley

Your tour commences this morning in central Paris. After meeting your Tour Manager we board our coach and make our way south-west to the verdant Loire Valley where, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the Kings of France and their courtiers created their grand holiday palaces. What better way to be introduced to the wonderful Loire Valley than our afternoon stop at Chambord to view the magnificent château. This enormous château was created by King Francois I as a hunting lodge within the surrounding grounds, which consisted of over 5000 wooded hectares. Later we continue to our hotel in Tours where we spend the next three wonderful nights. This evening we enjoy a welcome drink before dinner in our hotel. Meals: D

Your Loire Valley hotel – Clarion Hotel Château Belmont

Located close to Tours old town, guests are welcomed by a grand building (we would rather not describe it as a château) set in 6 acres of manicured parklands. The hotel features a heated swimming pool, bar, restaurant and all rooms feature modern amenities amongst an elegant design. See www.châteaubelmont.com

DAY 2

Château Chenonceau, Amboise and Tours

This morning we enjoy a visit to the magnificent Château Chenonceau, spanning the River Cher on a series of graceful arches. Possibly one of the most photographed of the Loire châteaux this was the former home of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. Explore the stunning gardens and interior of the château. Later we stop to explore the charming riverside town of Amboise, on the banks of the River Loire, with its Royal Palace, where Leonardo da Vinci once lived as a guest of King Francois I. We have included a visit to da Vinci's residence – Château du Clos Lucé. Here in the underground rooms you will see on display, forty machines designed by this amazing inventor. This evening will be free in the old town of Tours around Place Plumereau, to discover your own provincial bistro for dinner. Meals: B

DAY 3

Fontevraud, Chinon & Château Villandry

Our first stop of the day will be a guided visit of the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud. The romanesque abbey church with its royal tombs and the renaissance cloister, have all been beautifully restored and the complex is now a museum and cultural centre. Lunchtime will be spent exploring Chinon, with its massive castle looming over the narrow cobbled streets of this riverside town. In the afternoon we will visit the gardens of Château Villandry. Inspired by the classic gardens of the 16th and 18th century, different levels of the gardens include ponds, topiary, ornamental hedges and an extraordinary kitchen garden covering 12,500 square metres. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 4

Oradour-sur-Glane and Lascaux

This morning we make a poignant visit to the 'ghost village' of Oradour-sur-Glane. In June 1944, without apparent provocation, soldiers from the 2nd Waffen-SS Panzer Division massacred all the inhabitants of this quiet, little village. The village was then destroyed. The village was never rebuilt and has been preserved as a memorial to this awful atrocity. We have included entrance with audio guides to the museum 'Centre de la memoire d'Oradour'. Later we will continue to Lascaux, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its magnificent Palaeolithic cave paintings. Whilst the actual caves themselves are now closed to the public, we visit the nearby Lascaux IV museum to see the superb replicas of the cave paintings found in the Great Hall of the Bulls and the Painted Gallery. As a finalé, we continue to the Dordogne Valley with its sleepy villages, medieval châteaux, meandering rivers and lush landscape that so epitomises French rural life. We stay the next three nights in the perfectly preserved Sarlat la Canéda, one of the most stunning towns in France. Meals: B,D

Stay 3 nights in the Dordogne region
Image taken by Albatross traveller, D. Woodcock

Visit the picturesque town of Rocamadour

Your Dordogne hotel – Hotel de Selves

STAY 3 NIGHTS

This contemporary 4-star hotel is situated just a ten minute walk from the medieval district. The hotel is set around beautiful gardens, large terraces and a swimming pool, guest rooms are decorated in a contemporary style and feature high quality services and offer modern comforts. Visit www.au-grand-hotel-de-sarlat.com

DAY 5

Sarlat, River Dordogne Cruise and picturesque Domme

A guide joins us for the whole day. First we explore the medieval, architectural time capsule village of Sarlat. Noted for its gourmet food, cheeses, pâté and foie gras, Sarlat is also famous for its beautifully preserved old town with its café filled squares and delightful stone alleyways. In the afternoon we will drive to the nearby village of La Roc Gageac, set beside the pretty Dordogne River. Here we will board a barge and drift slowly down the River Dordogne past medieval castles. Later we visit the incredibly picturesque village of Domme. We have included a ride on the petit train up through the ramparts to the town square. You will have time at leisure to explore the sleepy village and enjoy the sweeping views across the Dordogne Valley. **Meals: B**

DAY 6

Rocamadour and Gouffre de Padirac Caves

This morning we will visit the 'pilgrimage town' of Rocamadour. Incredibly picturesque, this town sits on a tributary of the Dordogne. High above the old town are churches and monastic buildings, whilst below is an old town dating back centuries, and which once welcomed those on the 'Pilgrims Trail'. In the afternoon we change our focus from man's creations to that of nature, as we enjoy a guided visit through the astounding caves of the 'Gouffre de Padirac'. This 25 kilometre underground system boasts massive galleries and chambers. A visual feast and beautifully lit, we also experience a 500 metre boat ride inside the caves to emerge into the spectacular 'Grand Dome'. Tonight, in Sarlat, we enjoy dinner in local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 7

'My Time' in vibrant Toulouse and Couiza

Today we visit the vibrant city of Toulouse. Set on the banks of the Garonne River, this beautiful city is nicknamed 'La Ville Rose' or Pink City, due to the extensive use of terracotta bricks and tiles. Your time will be at leisure in the magnificent main square flanked by the 120 metre long façade of the 'Capitole' – a grand 18th century town hall fronted with pink and white marble columns. Make sure you spend time wandering amongst the shops and pavement cafés of the Vieux Quartier (Old Quarter).

We now enter the land of the Cathars, in the lovely Languedoc Roussillon region. Here, in the village of Couiza we stay three nights in the wonderful 16th century, castle style, Château des Ducs de Joyeuse. Dinner is included in your château.
Meals: B,D

Your Langeudoc hotel – Château des Ducs de Joyeuse

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Dating back nearly 500 years this 'castle château' was built following the wedding and merging of two prominent families, the Voisin family and the Dukes of Joyeuse. Today it is an elegant castle hotel, with renaissance style furniture and a wonderful central courtyard where you can take breakfast. There is a medieval style restaurant and the old chapel has been turned into a wine cellar. See www.château-des-ducs.com/en

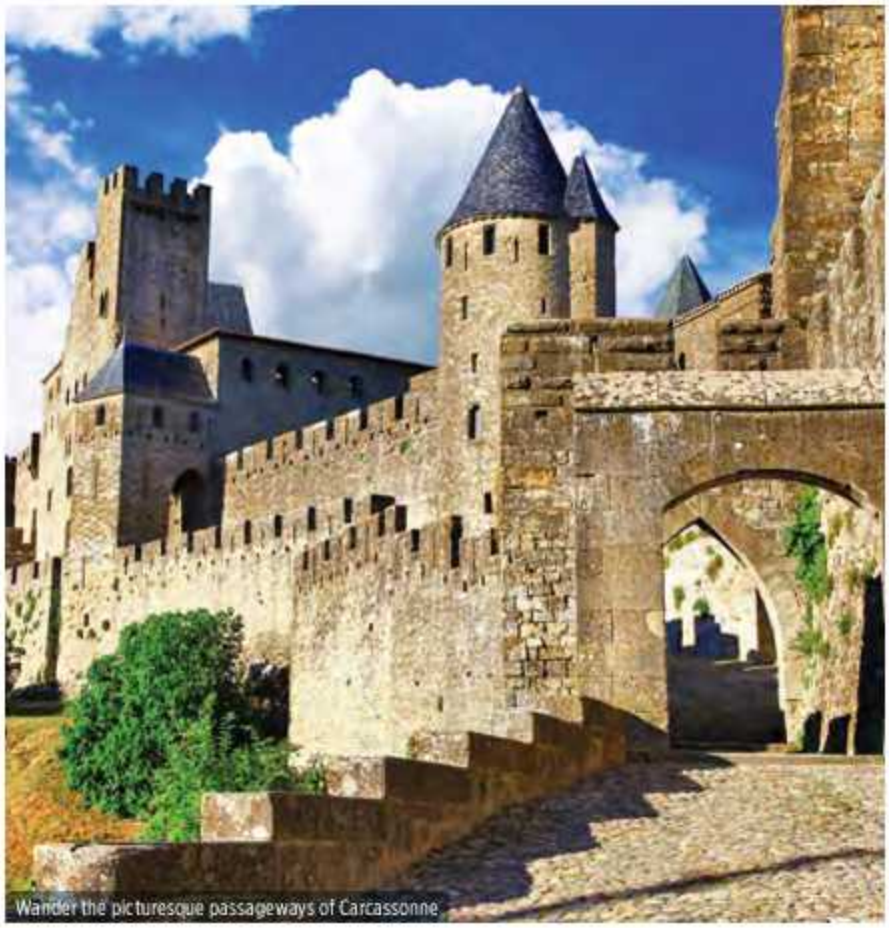
continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

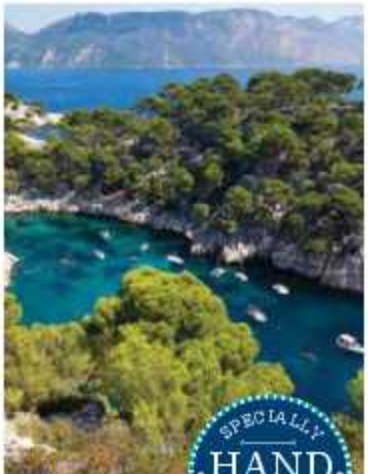
A Natural Wonder

The astounding caves of the 'Gouffre de Padirac 'are a natural wonder. Located in France's Lot region the site is the most visited in the area. You descend 75 metres into a chasm, you can do it by elevator or by foot. From there you board a boat to follow a subterranean river for 500 metres through spectacular vaulted caves such as the Lac de la Pluie (lake of rain) where a 60 metre stalactite hangs from the ceiling, and the spectacular 'Grand Dome'. Visually stunning, the extraordinary rock formations and vast rock galleries are beautifully lit. What an experience! See Day 6.

Shop at the village markets



Wander the picturesque passageways of Carcassonne



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Cruise the picturesque Calanques

If the UNESCO World Heritage Organisation think the 'Calanques' are notable and worth eternal preservation then we reckon you should see them. These deep rugged inlets cover a length of 20 kms and a depth of up to 4 kms along the coast between Cassis and Marseille. Roots of plants and bushes are anchored into colourful rock faces, which tumble down into the crystal clear azure blue waters. Perfect for our spectacular afternoon cruise on the Côte d'Azur! Uniquely Albatross. See Day 13.

DAY 8

Old town of Carcassonne and Couiza

This morning we are joined by a local guide as we explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne. The medieval castle, with its gigantic double walled fortifications and 53 watchtowers, is the 2nd most visited site in France outside of Paris. Dating back to the 13th century, Carcassonne is an extraordinary timepiece and after our guided tour we have quality time to explore this magnificent castle city. Mid-afternoon we return to our château hotel to relax and enjoy our delightful surroundings. Here we can try our hand at Pétanque (Boules), the traditional French village sport. Playing Pétanque in front of our 500 year old château – this is the real France at its very best! Dinner tonight will be in the village at the traditional bistro, Le Carnotzet. Meals: B,D

DAY 9

Beautiful Mirepoix and Rennes-le-Château

A leisurely start today as we head across the vine covered hills to enjoy lunchtime in the perfectly preserved time capsule of Mirepoix. Without doubt this is one of the most beautiful medieval town squares in Europe, with its colourfully painted, half-timbered houses that date back to between the 13th and 15th centuries. Sitting atop centuries old wooden rafters carved at the ends with monsters, animals and gargoyles, these rows of shuttered houses provide shady covered walkways for cafés and shops. In the afternoon we will visit the Bérenger Saunière Museum and Domain in the near by hilltop village of Rennes-le-Château. This village and its church are famous for so many conspiracy theories surrounding the treasures of the Knights Templars, the secret location of the Holy Grail and even the remains of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Early evening we will assemble in our Château's old vaulted chapel to enjoy a tasting of the excellent local wines, before dinner. Meals: B,D

DAY 10

Canal du Midi and Aigues-Mortes

This morning we take a scenic drive past the dramatic, mountain perched, ruined Cathar castles of Puilaurens and Quéribus and then on to the outskirts of Béziers where we stop to marvel at the Ecluses de Fonserannes, a unique staircase of locks on the Canal du Midi. Created in the mid 19th century, and still working perfectly, these seven wooden locks stretch over 300 metres and raise the leisure boats and cruisers up over 21 metres. An extraordinary engineering feat! Later we will drive into the famous Camargue region and enjoy a visit to Aigues-Mortes. The 13th century walls of this historical town form a striking contrast to the vast salines (salt flats) that encircle it. Take the chance to climb the ramparts and walk around the city. Later we continue to medieval Avignon, beside the River Rhone, where we stay three nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Avignon hotel – Cloitre Saint Louis

Once a 16th century monastery, this historic 4 star hotel is centred around the vaulted archways and ceilings of its 'Cloitre' or 'Cloister'. Located on a quiet side street inside the old city walls, the Saint Louis, is well located just 50 metres from Avignon's main Rue de la Republique with all the sights within an easy walking distance. See www.cloitre-saint-louis.com

DAY 11

Nimes, Pont du Gard and Avignon

Today we visit Nimes, where a local guide will join us for a walking tour of this remarkable city. Dating back to the bronze age, the central part is traffic free and right in the middle you will find the Maison Carrée Roman temple, and the giant Arena of Nimes – the best preserved amphitheatre in the Roman Empire. On our way back to Avignon this afternoon, we have included a visit to walk across the spectacular Pont du Gard – an imposing 2000 year old Roman aqueduct which was built with giant stones weighing up to six tonnes. In a beautiful setting, this remarkable structure spans 200 metres between the craggy hillsides of the River Gard. Your evening is free to discover your own little restaurant or bistro in Avignon's old town. Meals: B

DAY 12

'My Time' in Avignon, Les Baux and St Remy

A leisurely morning in Avignon. Do as much or as little as you wish. Mid afternoon we journey to the crumbling castle and once deserted village of Les Baux to discover the craft shops and cafés scattered throughout the ruins. Set on the craggy hillside, this rejuvenated town is an extraordinary sight. We have also included entrance to enjoy a stunning audio visual art show – the Carrières de Lumières. Inside an abandoned quarry you will have a totally unique sound and vision experience as classic works of art are projected as massive fresco all around you, onto the walls and ceilings. We then continue to the romantic town of St Remy to explore and enjoy a special Provençal dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

Stand in awe on the Pont du Gard

DAY 13

Cassis, Calanques Cruise and Nice

First stop today will be in the old fishing village of Cassis, on the Côte d'Azur. From here we enjoy a morning cruise to explore some of the incredibly picturesque Calanques. These rugged inlets with steep cliffs tumbling into the crystal clear, azure waters are best viewed by boat. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the picturesque harbour of Cassis. Later we continue to Nice, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Riviera', where we stay the next three nights. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

Your Nice hotel – Hotel Beau Rivage

This 4-star boutique hotel with a contemporary design is centrally located in the Old Town of Nice, just a stone's throw from the sea and Promenade des Anglais and offers style, quality and warm, friendly service. The air conditioned guest rooms have modern ensuite bathrooms with amenities.
See www.hotelnicebeaurivage.com

DAY 14

Grasse, Cannes and Monaco

First stop this morning will be in the hill town of Grasse where we will enjoy a visit to a local perfumery. Then, dropping down to the coast, we will stop in the extravagant seaside resort of Cannes. Famous for its movie stars and the Cannes Film Festival, we have time to explore the old port town and 'La Croisette' – the seafront promenade lined with palm trees, upmarket boutiques, cafés and grand hotels. Late afternoon we have also included an excursion to Monaco. Following the scenic drive along the 'Moyenne Corniche' to the city of Monte Carlo we will see the Royal Palace before time in the old town to enjoy dinner at leisure. Meals: B

DAY 15

'My Time' in Nice, Villa Ephrussi and St Paul de Vence

Your morning is entirely free in the elegant resort town of Nice. Take time to stroll and shop amongst the winding streets and perhaps enjoy lunch in one of the attractive seaside restaurants. Nice also boasts a number of art museums. Make sure you visit the wonderful fresh food, local produce and flower markets which are amongst the best in France! In the afternoon we will visit Saint-Jean Cap Ferrat and the fabulous Villa Ephrussi – home of the Rothschild family. We have included a tour through this exceptional villa, perhaps the grandest on the Côte d'Azur, to see Béatrice Ephrussi's grand apartments, tapestry and porcelain collections, and the magnificent gardens. We have also included afternoon tea in the restaurant, which boasts enormous views along the Azure Coast. As a finalé, we will drive in to the foothills of the Alpes Maritimes to the old town of St Paul de Vence. With its imposing ramparts, overlooking the Provençal countryside, the wonderful natural light attracted an artists' colony. Soon they were followed by film directors and movie stars, then galleries and shops. We enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 16

Nice on the Côte d'Azur

Your tour ends today after breakfast. Meals: B

"A wonderful well-paced holiday with many varied activities and a great group of travellers. Each new destination was an unexpected treasure." Carolyn

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 26 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 11 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink Loire Valley
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - barge cruise Dordogne, Calanques cruise, visit Carrières de Lumières, Villa Ephrussi afternoon tea
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 3 night stays in each location
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350pp
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

16 days from $7,699 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Paris	Ends Nice	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
2 May	17 May	$7,699	$1,639
16 May	31 May*	$7,699	$1,639
13 June	28 June*	$7,799	$1,689
18 July	2 August	$7,899	$1,739
22 August	6 September*	$7,899	$1,739
12 September	27 September	$7,799	$1,689

These departure dates are timed to enable you to join the Italian Lakes & Tuscany tour starting in Milan the following day. See Page 84. Make your own way to Milan on Day 16, stay overnight and join the Italian Lakes & Tuscany tour starting the following morning.

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

The Italian 'Grande'

Explore the beautiful Isle of Capri. Image taken by Albatross traveller, P. Thornton

18 Stunning Days
Milan to Rome

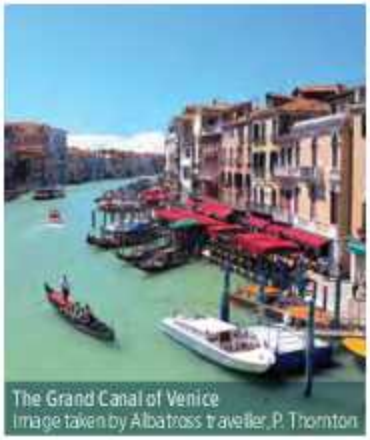
Explore Italy's evocative regions as you travel from Milan to Rome discovering regional delights and stunning scenery along the way. Cruise on Lake Como, stay in a dreamy Italian castle, explore the idyllic villages on the Cinque Terre, drink wine in Tuscany and of course stay on the stunning Amalfi Coast.

THE ITALIAN LAKES
Days 1, 2, 3 & 4
• Stay 4 nights beside Lake Maggiore in the magnificent Italian Lakes District
• Explore the magnificent gardens of Villa Carlotta
• Travel by private boat across Lake Como to Bellagio
• Visit the ancient mountain village of Macugnaga set high in the stunning Alps
• Cruise on Lake Maggiore to Isola Bella and visit Isola Pescatori
• Visit the palatial Borromeo Villa and Gardens
• Visit beautiful Orta San Giulio on Lake Orta
VENETO
Days 5 & 6
• Stay 2 nights in either a centuries old Italian Castle or a grand Venetian Villa in Mira
• Enjoy lunchtime beside splendid Lake Garda, the largest Italian Lake
• Spend a day exploring the romantic canals and squares of Venice
Switzerland
Austria
The Dolomites
Lake Maggiore
STRESA
4
Lake Como
Bellagio
Macugnaga
Orta San Giulio
2
CASTELBRANDO
MILAN
Lake Garda
MIRA
Venice
UMBRIA
Days 12 & 13
• Stay 2 nights in the Umbrian Hills staying in medieval Spoleto
• Discover the fairytale 'town of towers' San Gimignano
• Walk the beautifully preserved streets of medieval Siena
• Explore Assisi and visit the wonderfully restored cathedral with a local guide
• Relax with an afternoon at leisure in Spoleto
Italy
Cinque Terre
Lucca
Pisa
5
MONTECATINI TERME
Florence
TUSCANY
Days 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11
• Stay 5 nights in the Tuscan spa town of Montecatini Terme
• Enjoy a day discovering the beautiful city of Florence
• Relax with an entire day at leisure in Tuscany
• Explore the scenic villages of the Cinque Terre
• Discover the medieval walled city of Lucca
• See the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa and Cathedral
• Sample the regional wines, olive oil and delightful local produce in a Tuscan farmhouse
Tuscany
San Gimignano
Siena
Assisi
2
SPOLETO
Umbria
ROME
1
Caserta
Bay of Naples
Pompeii
Ravello
Capri
Amalfi
3
AMALFI COAST
ROME
Days 17 & 18
• Spend your final night in Rome
• Visit the splendid Caserta Palace
• Enjoy a guided panoramic Rome city tour
THE AMALFI COAST
Days 14, 15 & 16
• Stay 3 wonderful nights in Maiori on the Amalfi Coast
• Marvel at the ancient ruins of Pompeii
• Cruise across the Bay of Naples and explore the beautiful island of Capri
• Experience the world famous, cliff hanging 'Amalfi Coast drive'
• Visit the picturesque towns of Amalfi and Ravello on the stunning Amalfi Coast
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 169
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Italy is big. Very big!

Did you know, with motorway service station stops for morning tea and lunch, taking into consideration tolls, traffic and entering and exiting major cities it takes over eight and a half hours to travel on a coach from Florence to Sorrento or Venice to Rome! Yet so many tours have these drives as a standard day in their itinerary. Even worse they often have just one or two night stops at either end. That is why Albatross Tours breaks these journeys with five nights in Tuscany and two nights in Spoleto, en route to the Neapolitan Riviera. That is also why when we travel between destinations our days are not endurance tests. We allow leisurely stops en route! For instance, between Tuscany and Umbria we enjoy visits to both Siena and delightful San Gimignano and between Stresa and CastelBrando we have lunchtime beside Lake Garda. Aren't these sorts of visits exactly why you want to travel to glorious Italy? By providing four nights in the glorious Lakes District, two in either an ancient castle or grand villa, five in Tuscany, two in Spoleto and three in Maiori to explore the Amalfi Coast and the nearby island of Capri, and a night in Rome as the finalé, we perfectly complete your Italian experience!

It's all about a sensible touring style, a civilised pace, genuine inclusions and actually enjoying what you have come so far to see.



The Grand Canal of Venice
Image taken by Albatross traveller, P. Thornton

Take a cruise on Lake Como and soak up the surrounding beauty

DAY 1

Stresa welcome

Commencing in central Milan at 2pm we will transfer you to Stresa on wonderful Lake Maggiore, where you will stay the next four nights. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your hotel in the Italian Lakes – La Palma Hotel, Stresa

Set in its own private gardens and within an easy walking distance of Stresa's old town, this first class hotel is superbly located on the lakeside promenade with magnificent views across Lake Maggiore. The elegant dining room leads out into the hotels manicured gardens, and the swimming pool is located opposite the hotel, on the lakeshore.
See www.hlapalma.it/en

DAY 2

Villa Carlotta and Lake Como cruise

This morning we drive to the town of Como and follow the shore of the lake to Tremezzo, where we visit the world famous Villa Carlotta. This wonderful Villa is set in 70,000 square metres of romantic Italianate Gardens and faces across Lake Como to the Bellagio peninsula. The classic gardens boast fountains and pergolas and in spring time is famous for its rhododendrons and azaleas. Later we board our private boat and enjoy a cruise on Lake Como, past a number of striking lakeside villas, to delightful Bellagio. This beautiful town is situated at the tip of the peninsula separating the lake's two southern arms, with the Alps visible across the lake to the north. It's time to relax in this delightful town which boasts peaceful villas and gardens nestled by the lakeside, elegant shops and walkways plus stylish al fresco dining at its very best. Later we return to Stresa. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 3

Macugnaga and lakeside Orta San Giulio

There is nothing like a day in the mountains – especially amongst some of the highest and most dramatic in the Alps! Following a deep valley we soon reach the mountain village of Macugnaga, close to the Swiss border. Used as a location in many films, the village is famous for its beautifully preserved wooden huts and chalets, and the stunning backdrop of the Monte Rosa (Pink) Massif and the 4638 metres high Dufourspitze – Europe's second highest mountain. Your time is at leisure to explore the village and surroundings, and perhaps take a mountain cable car ride (subject to operating) to enjoy lunch and the extraordinary views. Later today we also visit the delightful town of Orta San Giulio beside the beautiful, and some say most romantic of all the lakes – Lake Orta. Your evening is at leisure in Stresa. Meals: B

DAY 4

Islands of Lake Maggiore

Boarding our private boat we visit the famous islands of Lake Maggiore. First stop will be Isola Bella where we have included entrance and a guided tour of the palatial Borromeo villa and gardens, which dominate the island. The villa boasts Murano glass chandeliers, gobelin-covered chairs, intricate tapestries and paintings. The spectacular formal gardens rise behind the ornate villa, with patterned flower beds falling in terraces, with statues and ornamental stonework completing the Italianate style. Next we visit Isola Pescatori (the Fisherman's island). Lunchtime is at leisure on this small, picturesque island with its quaint cafés and restaurants set amongst the old houses with wooden balconies, tiny boats and fishing nets. The afternoon and evening are at leisure in delightful, lakeside Stresa. Meals: B

DAY 5

Lake Garda and CastelBrando or Mira (nearby Venice)

Bidding farewell to Lake Maggiore we drive east and arrive at Lake Garda late morning. This is the largest of the Italian lakes and the meeting point of three Italian regions. With a circumference of about 100 kilometres, the lake is surrounded by lemon and citrus groves. There will be time at leisure for lunch in one of the colourful and diverse lakeside towns. Depending on your selected departure date, you stay in either the foothills of the Dolomites in the superb CastelBrando, or in a noble residence in Mira, nearby Venice, for the next two evocative nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Castle hotels – CastelBrando

Located above the village of Cison di Valmarino, this 2000 year old Roman fortress was turned into a sumptuous noble's palace in the 13th century. Access to the castle is by funicular. On arrival we have included a guided tour of the castle. Skilful restoration and sensitive modernisation have brought the original magnificence back to life. Guelph style decorative battlements, stone cellars, tapestries, swords and suits of armour set the scene for the elegant halls, dining rooms, manicured gardens and terraces overlooking the valley. Glorious for those après dinner drinks on those long summer evenings! Dinner is included both nights in 'our' magnificent Castle. See www.castelbrando.it

Or

Your grand Venetian Villa hotel – Villa Margherita in Mira*

Once a grand noble residence, this elegant 17th century villa has now been sensitively restored into an excellent, meticulously maintained 4-star hotel. The traditionally styled, elegant guest rooms offer all the modern conveniences expected from a hotel situated near the world famous city of Venice, and provide the experience of residing in an authentic Palladian style villa. Villa Margherita is surrounded by large private gardens and overlooks the Brenta River. Situated just 25 minutes from the centre of Venice, this villa is perfectly located with only a 10 minute walk from the town centre. Dinner is included both nights at your Villa hotel.
See www.villa-margherita.com

** 14 May, 31 May, 19 June, 17 September & 2 October departures stay at Villa Margherita. All other departures stay at CastelBrando.*

DAY 6

Venice sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a leisurely start we visit nearby 'Venezia' (Venice) – arguably one of the most romantic cities in the world. At Tronchetto we board a private boat to take us to St Mark's Square, where we join our expert local guide for a walking tour. The rest of the day is free to meander through the myriad of narrow, water lined streets and alleys spanned by humped back bridges. Meals: B,D

DAY 7

Montecatini Terme in Tuscany

A leisurely start today as we travel south to Tuscany. We arrive in the charming spa town of Montecatini Terme mid afternoon. This was once a favourite 'cure resort' of the crowned heads of state from all over Europe. We stay here for the next five nights, in a traditional family run, 4-star hotel, close to the major sights. As a highlight, this evening we drive into the picturesque Tuscan countryside, where we have arranged dinner at a local olive oil farmhouse estate. Meals: B,D

Stay 2 nights in an Italian castle, CastelBrando

STAY 5 NIGHTS

Your Tuscan hotels – Ercolini & Savi Hotel

Located in a Liberty style building dating back to the 19th century, the Hotel Ercolini & Savi offers a fantastic location as well as being a relaxing and welcoming place to stay. The hotel is in an extremely central location in the elegant Via San Martino, close by Piazza del Popolo. Visit www.ercoliniesavi.it

Or

Grand Hotel Francia & Quirinale*

Offering classic décor and modern features, including air conditioned rooms and an outdoor pool, the family run Francia & Quirinale Hotel is also conveniently located in the centre of Montecatini Terme. The hotel's restaurant features Murano glass chandeliers and serves Italian and Tuscan specialities. Visit www.franciaequirinale.it/en/

** 4 May, 24 May, 16 July, 7 September, 17 September & 2 October departures stay at the Francia & Quirinale Hotel. All other departures stay at Ercolini & Savi Hotel.*

DAY 8

Florence sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is dedicated to nearby 'Firenze' (Florence). We are joined by a local guide who will bring to life this truly beautiful city, which is otherwise known as the 'Cradle of the Renaissance'. Your tour starts with a visit to the famous Accademia Gallery, home to Michelangelo's 'David' and numerous other extraordinary Italian, Florentine and Renaissance works of art. We see the Duomo and take in the magnificent statues in the Piazza della Signoria. Your afternoon is entirely free to enjoy Florence at your own pace. Espresso coffee on Piazza Santa Croce where Michelangelo is buried? A gelato whilst strolling across he Ponte Vecchio? Don't forget the excellent shopping. Meals: B,D

continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Time to explore the majestic lakes

World famous Bellagio epitomises the gorgeous towns lining the shores of the majestic Italian Lakes. That is why we charter a private cruise boat to admire the sumptuous villas and mansions adorning Lake Como before enjoying a relaxing lunchtime in beautiful Bellagio. Our leisurely 4-night stay in lakeside Stresa allows you the necessary time to do this, plus another cruise on Lake Maggiore, take in the Lakes of Garda and scenic Orta, and visit the mighty Alps. Absolutely Albatross! See Days 1 to 4.

"Our tour was a trip of a lifetime, covering so many highlights of Italy and included many hidden gems." Jenny

Spend a morning in the 'town of towers' San Gimignano

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Ahhh... 5 nights in Tuscany

We used to spend 4 nights here in Montecatini Terme, but then many past clients commented on how lovely and typically Tuscan this elegant spa town is and suggested that adding an extra day here – completely free – would make the stay perfect. So we did. Yes, we fully explore this amazing region, but now, by staying 5 nights in this delightful town, we add a fabulous, authentic activity – a completely free day to 'go native' simply for the pleasure of it! See Day 9.

Take in panoramic views of the Amalfi Coast from Ravello

DAY 9

'My Time' in Tuscany

The whole of today has been purposely left entirely at leisure. This is a perfect opportunity for you to do as little, or as much as you want! Maybe take the local train back to the museums and shops of Florence. Alternatively explore Montecatini's old centre and parklands, or pamper yourself in one of the spas. Perhaps just relax in your hotel or sip wine in a café and watch the world go by! Meals: B

DAY 10

Cinque Terre sightseeing

A delightful day is planned as we explore the famous Cinque Terre. The name means 'five lands' and comes from the five unspoilt fishing villages that cling to the cliffs, overlooking the sea. We have arranged a coastal boat ride for you to admire the spectacular scenery and almost inaccessible fishing villages, and to visit Portovenere and Monterosso. Our return journey is by train through the tunnels and cliffs above. Meals: B,D

DAY 11

Medieval Lucca, Pisa and Olive Oil tasting in a local farmhouse

Our first stop today is in one of the most typically 'Tuscan' towns in the area, Lucca – a medieval walled city, filled with palaces, churches, ancient houses and the former home of Puccini, where he wrote Turandot. Walk on top of the city walls for the very best city views, or visit Piazza San Michele and stroll along the shops of Borgo Giannotti. Later we visit Pisa with its famous Leaning Tower, Cathedral and Baptistery in the magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli. This afternoon we visit a local farmhouse to enjoy an olive oil tasting accompanied by Tuscan wines and a selection of antipasto including local meats, cheese and bread – all specialities of this region. Meals: B

DAY 12

San Gimignano, Siena and Spoleto

We make the short drive across Tuscany to the fairytale 'town of towers' San Gimignano, famous for its 13th and 14th century Tuscan towers. Exploring the pedestrian walkways of this hilltop town is an absolute delight. Lunchtime will be at leisure in the beautifully preserved streets of medieval Siena amongst the great sights such as the gothic town hall and the Piazza del Campo, scene of the famous Palio horse race. Next we wind up to the hills of Umbria and the wonderful walled town of Spoleto where we stay the next two nights. Medieval Spoleto is easily explored on foot. There are numerous romanesque churches and cobbled stone alleyways lined with shops, bars and trattorias. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Umbrian hotel – Hotel Dei Duchi

This unpretentious, family run hotel is located just outside the old city walls and is known locally for its cuisine. The dining area offers wide panoramic views of the stunning Umbrian countryside. The hotel has the dual benefit of being a 'town' hotel but at the same time giving the feeling as if you are in the middle of the countryside. Visit www.hoteldeiduchi.com/en

DAY 13

Assisi sightseeing and 'My Time' in Spoleto

We spend this morning in the nearby beautiful Umbrian city of Assisi. Badly damaged by earthquakes in 1997 the city, dominated by two medieval castles, undertook a remarkable programme of restoration which soon brought it back to all its glory. On arrival in Assisi we are joined by a local guide for a tour of the Basilica of St Francis with its magnificent frescoes. Afterwards there is time for you to explore Assisi at your own pace. Returning to Spoleto, the rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Perhaps take a leisurely walk along the path around the castle and across the medieval viaduct in to the Umbrian countryside. This is the real Italy! Meals: B,D

DAY 14

Ancient Pompeii and the Amalfi Coast

Driving south past Vesuvius we visit the ancient ruins of Pompeii, where a local guide takes us through the city that was buried under volcanic ash in AD 79. Paintings, furniture, mosaics, sculptures, graffiti and even loaves in ovens are wonderfully preserved. From here it's only a short drive to the Amalfi coast and the port town of Maiori, where we stay for the next three nights. A perfect base for visiting all the local sights and soaking up the unique atmosphere of the Amalfi Coast! Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Maiori Hotel – Hotel Pietra di Luna

Located in the centre of Maiori overlooking the bay, the Pietra di Luna hotel offers modern comforts, renowned local hospitality and excellent gastronomy. Visit www.pietradilunahotel.it

DAY 15

Ferry ride along the Amalfi Coast to the island of Capri

Enjoy your day as we take you on the ferry along the Amalfi coast, and across to Marina Grande on the island of Capri, which the Roman emperor Tiberius made his capital. On arrival we meet our local guide and board a bus which takes us up to the top of the island to explore the charming village of Anacapri. We also spend time at leisure amongst the boutiques and galleries in the main town, Capri. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16

Amalfi Coast cruise to Amalfi and Ravello

The Amalfi Coast is famous for its twisting, winding scenic drive with picturesque villages and towns hugging the cliffs and craggy coves. This morning we cruise from Maiori along the dramatic coastline and spend time exploring Amalfi. Later we continue to visit perhaps one of the most scenic towns along the Amalfi Coast, Ravello. Perched on the mountain, commanding panoramic views across the coast, Ravello is evocatively described as being "nearer to the sky than it is to the sea", and has been a favourite haunt of artists and composers for centuries. Mid afternoon we return to Maiori, where the remainder of the afternoon and evening are at leisure. **Meals: B**

DAY 17

Royal Palace of Caserta to Rome

This morning on our way to Rome we have time to stop to visit the enchanting Royal Palace of Caserta. Constructed for the Bourbon kings of Naples this UNESCO World Heritage Site is described as 'a treasure of truly incomparable splendour'. This magnificent Palace, set amidst a beautiful park composed of numerous dancing fountains and waterfalls, has been described as an ideal and harmonious fusion of two other famous European royal residences: Versailles in Paris and El Escorial in Madrid.

On arrival in Rome we enjoy a guided panoramic orientation tour to introduce you to the famous landmarks of this grand city. See the magnificent fountains by Bernini, the palaces, monuments and open squares, Piazza Venezia and the massive Colosseum. After checking into our central Rome hotel, our finale will be a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Rome hotel – Hotel Mediterraneo

This 4-star hotel is conveniently located close to Rome's Termini railway station and features a roof top terrace offering panoramic views across Rome. Elegant, classically styled guest rooms offer air conditioning, large windows and high ceilings. Visit www.romehotelmediterraneo.it

DAY 18

Rome

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

This tour requires a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues.

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,800 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 17 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 29 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 12 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - private boat Lake Maggiore, Lake Como and Venice, cruises Cinque Terre, Capri and olive oil tasting in a Tuscan farmhouse
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3, 4 and even 5 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP

Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply - See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

18 days from $7,499 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Milan	Ends Rome	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
28 April	15 May	$7,499	$939
4 May	21 May	$7,749	$1,139
14 May	31 May	$7,649	$1,089
24 May	10 June	$7,899	$1,239
31 May	17 June	$7,649	$1,089
19 June	6 July	$7,649	$1,089
16 July	2 August	$7,749	$1,139
17 August	3 September	$7,499	$939
1 September	18 September	$7,499	$939
7 September	24 September	$7,749	$1,139
17 September	4 October	$7,899	$1,239
22 September	9 October	$7,499	$939
2 October	19 October	$7,899	$1,239

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Italian Lakes & Tuscany

Stay on the shores of Lake Garda for 3 nights

16 Superb Days
Milan to Venice

Discover the delightful ports and villages that litter Lake Maggiore and Lake Garda, explore Genoa, seductive Portofino and the famous Cinque Terre. Visit the fantastic Ferrari museum, dine at a Tuscan Osteria and stay in a Venetian Villa.

THE ITALIAN LAKES
Days 1, 2, 3 & 4
• Stay 4 nights in Stresa beside wonderful Lake Maggiore
• Experience a scenic train ride to Locarno aboard the Centovalli Express
• Enjoy private cruises to Villa Borromeo on Isola Bella and Bellagio on Lake Como
• Visit beautiful Orta San Giulio on Lake Orta
LAKE GARDA
Days 11, 12 & 13
• Stay 3 nights beside glorious Lake Garda
• Visit the fantastic Ferrari museum and a private collection of Maseratis
• Enjoy a light lunch at the Panini Hombre Parmesan cheese farm
• Relax with a day to explore Lake Garda
• Enjoy a morning visit to historical Salo
• Enjoy a wine tasting followed by lunch in a vineyard estate in Calvagese, near Lake Garda
Switzerland
Locarno
Ascona
Domodossola
Lake Maggiore
Lake Como
Bellagio
Orta San Giulio
4
STRESA
MILAN
Bassano del Grappa
Lake Garda
Garda
Salo
Calvagese
3
BARDOLINO
Verona
Vicenza
TREVISO
2
Venice
Italy
VENETO
Days 14, 15 & 16
• Stay 2 nights in an elegant Venetian Villa hotel near Treviso
• Enjoy a guided tour of 🏛 Verona and historical 🏛 Vicenza
• Taste Grappa in the hometown of Bassano del Grappa
• Enjoy a farewell dinner in our historic Villa
Modena
GENOA
2
Arenzano
Santa Margherita Ligure
Portofino
Cinque Terre
Portovenere
4
LUCCA
Pisa
Florence
Tuscany
LIGURIA
Days 5 & 6
• Stay 2 nights in Liguria in historic Genoa
• Enjoy a walking tour of Genoa with its magnificent 🏛 palaces, stately homes and massive medieval quarter
• Visit beautiful Santa Margherita Ligure
• Cruise to world famous Portofino and the hidden Abbey of San Fruttuoso
• Evening at leisure in the delightful seaside town of Arenzano
TUSCANY
Days 7, 8, 9 & 10
• Stay 4 nights in the typically 'Tuscan' town of Lucca
• Spend a delightful day exploring the famous 🏛 Cinque Terre
• Explore the beautiful city of 🏛 Florence
• Enjoy an expert Italian cooking demonstration followed by lunch
• See the famous 🏛 Leaning Tower of Pisa and Cathedral
• Dine out in the olive groves at a Tuscan Osteria
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 125
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
🏛 UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Ahhh... Italy

You have just got to go back! What is it that makes you fall in love with this evocative, stimulating destination? Is it the history, the art, the culture, the boastful style and elegance, or maybe just the undulating Tuscan Hills, rich red wine and the taste sensations scattered across every menu? Sadly so many travellers quickly dash through, only just scratching the surface, and subsequently realise they just have to go back.

Over time we have been repeatedly asked to create a new tour, like our incredibly successful Italian 'Grande' tour, featuring longer stays and more in depth sightseeing, but this time only focusing on the dramatic northern lands. So we did!

This totally unique tour evolved quite naturally with half the time devoted to the gorgeous necklace of Italian Lakes and the other half to the coastline of Liguria, the Cinque Terre and wonderful, sensual Tuscany. As a bonus, our last two nights stay is in a gorgeous villa in the much ignored Veneto region. From here we explore the magnificent Palladian Villas and UNESCO World Heritage Listed towns and sites. With Venice only a hop and a skip away we also end with a transfer into Venice giving you the choice of extending your stay, and giving yourself time to explore this remarkable city, or jumping on one of the excellent Mediterranean cruise ships that start their voyages from here. So if you have the urge to go back and rekindle your Italian romance, this tour is designed specifically for you!

Follow the scenic route to Locarno, on the banks of Lake Maggiore

DAY 1

Stresa welcome

Commencing in central Milan at midday we will transfer you to Stresa on wonderful Lake Maggiore, where you will stay the next four nights. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Italian Lakes hotel – Regina Palace Hotel

The 4-star Regina Palace Hotel is situated on the banks of Lake Maggiore, in the centre of Stresa and offers stunning view of the Borromean Islands. The century old hotel offers classic style interiors and is surrounded by large gardens and an open air pool. See www.reginapalace.it/en

DAY 2

Scenic train journey to Locarno and visit Ascona

This morning we drive north to Domodossola at the foot of the Italian Alps. Here we board the famous Centovalli Express train which runs through the 'Hundred Valleys' to Locarno. Relaxing in the panoramic carriages, we pass over numerous bridges and through numerous tunnels, travelling beside waterfalls, villages and vineyards. A spectacular journey! Arriving in Locarno we will make a short stop in the grand square before boarding our coach to visit nearby Ascona. Lunchtime will be at leisure in this delightful lakeside town. As a finale, we follow the scenic route home hugging the shores of Lake Maggiore all the way back to Stresa. Dinner tonight is in your hotel. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 3

Island of Isola Bella and lakeside Orta San Giulio

Boarding our private boat we visit Lake Maggiore's famous island of Isola Bella where we have included entrance and a guided tour of the palatial Borromeo villa and gardens, which dominate the island. The villa boasts Murano glass chandeliers, gobelin-covered chairs, intricate tapestries and paintings. The spectacular formal gardens rise behind the ornate villa, with patterned flower beds falling in terraces, with statues and ornamental stonework completing the Italianate style. Lunchtime is at leisure back in lakeside Stresa. Later this afternoon we visit the delightful town of Orta San Giulio beside the beautiful, and some say most romantic, of all the lakes – Lake Orta. Your evening is at leisure to discover a local trattoria for dinner. **Meals: B**

Cruise to the gardens of Isola Bella

Enjoy a day exploring the famous Cinque Terre

DAY 4

Cruise on Lake Como to Bellagio

This morning we drive to Lake Como where we follow the western shore of the lake to Caddenabbia. Here we board our private boat and enjoy a cruise on Lake Como, past a number of striking lakeside villas, to delightful Bellagio. This beautiful town is situated at the tip of the peninsula separating the lake's two southern arms, with the Alps visible across the lake to the north. It's time to relax in this delightful town which boasts peaceful villas and gardens nestled by the lakeside, elegant shops and walkways plus stylish al fresco dining at its very best. Your evening is at leisure back in the lakeside town of Stresa. Meals: B

DAY 5

Explore medieval Genoa

Bidding farewell to Lake Maggiore we drive south to the coastal region of Liguria, arriving around midday in Genoa. Once the capital of a naval empire, Genoa boasts the largest intact medieval city centre in the whole of Europe. Here we are joined by a local guide to enjoy a walking tour through the city's old heart, with its pedestrian shopping malls, beautiful churches and squares, and nearly 50 UNESCO Listed palaces and stately homes. We have included a guided visit to the opulent Royal Palace*. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Genoa hotel – Grand Hotel Savoia

The beautiful Grand Hotel Savoia, built in 1897, will take you back in time. Located close to the historic centre of Genoa the hotel contains all the features you would expect from a first class hotel plus more. See www.grandhotelsavoiagenova.it

*Genoa Royal Palace is closed on Mondays.

DAY 6

Santa Margherita Ligure, Portofino and Abbey of San Fruttuoso

We spend the morning at leisure in the beautiful harbour town of Santa Margherita Ligure with its elegant shops, boutiques and cafés that litter the port. Later we take a boat along the rugged Liguria coastline to the world famous harbour of Portofino. Delightfully set in a tiny bay, overlooked by the church and castle high above, this old port makes a perfect afternoon stop. Later, we continue around the coast to visit the Abbey of San Fruttuoso, which is only accessible by boat.

This evening your coach is going to the delightful seaside town of Arenzano. Join us if you choose! We suggest a stroll along the promenade before you discover a local restaurant for dinner. Meals: B

DAY 7

Cruise the coastline of the Cinque Terre

A delightful day is planned as we explore the famous Cinque Terre. The name means 'five lands' and comes from the five unspoilt fishing villages that cling to the cliffs, overlooking the sea. Our first stop of the day will be in the pretty port of Monterosso. From here we catch a boat and cruise along the spectacular coastline of the Cinque Terre to visit the delightful villages of Vernazza and Portovenere. Arriving in La Spezia we board our coach and travel to Tuscany. We stay the next four nights in the typically 'Tuscan' town of Lucca – a medieval walled city, filled with palaces, churches and ancient houses. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Lucca hotel – San Luca Palace*

Set in a historic building dating back to 1540, the San Luca Palace is perfectly located within the ancient city walls in the historic centre of Lucca, with just a short walk to all the major sights. Opened as a hotel in 2007, this first class hotel offers all the modernised features you would expect.
See www.sanlucapalace.com/lucca-tuscany

*7 September departure stays at Hotel Ilaria in Lucca.

continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Fancy a trip into Switzerland?

To the north of Lake Maggiore are the massive Italian and Swiss Alps. Just before the mountains get really high there is a delightful valley that cuts through them into the pretty Ticino region of Switzerland. Boarding the Centovalli Express mid-morning, we relax in a panoramic carriage, as the train follows this dramatic valley crossing 83 bridges, goes through numerous tunnels, passing waterfalls and unspoiled scenery. To cap off the day our return route by coach follows the beautiful shores of Lake Maggiore back into Italy. Delightful! See Day 2.

"If you love Italy, food and wine, this is a fantastic tour for you!"
Christine

See the UNESCO palaces of Genoa

Relax with 'My Time' to explore delightful Lucca

Ferrari and Maserati – all in one day?

Nothing quite demonstrates Italian fire and passion as does a bright red Ferrari. In Maranello we enjoy a guided visit through the amazing Ferrari Museum with its fascinating display of past and present Ferrari road and racing cars. But it is more than that, with its engaging historical displays, Formula One racing simulators and pit stops. After a light lunch and Parmesan cheese tasting we will visit the Panini family's extraordinary collection of historic Maseratis. Ferrari and Maserati – all in one day? This is Italy after all! See Day 11.

Experience an Italian pizza and pasta cooking demonstration.

DAY 8

Florence sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is dedicated to nearby 'Firenze' (Florence). A local guide will bring to life this truly beautiful city which is otherwise known as the 'Cradle of the Renaissance'. Your tour starts with a visit to the famous Accademia Gallery, home to Michelangelo's 'David' and numerous other extraordinary Italian, Florentine and Renaissance works of art. We see the Duomo and take in the magnificent statues in the Piazza della Signoria. Your afternoon is entirely free to enjoy Florence at your own pace. Espresso coffee on Piazza Santa Croce where Michelangelo is buried? A gelato whilst strolling across the Ponte Vecchio? Don't forget the excellent shopping. Meals: B

DAY 9

Cooking demonstration and lunch in Lucca

After a relaxing start we will visit a cooking school where a member of the Professional Association of Italian Chefs provides us with an Italian Pasta and Pizza cooking demonstration, showing us how pizza, focaccia and various pasta is created 'dough to go'. Next it is time to taste it, as we enjoy a leisurely lunch. Your afternoon and evening are at leisure in Lucca. Meals: B,L

DAY 10

Leaning Tower of Pisa and 'My Time' in Lucca

This morning we visit nearby Pisa with its famous Leaning Tower, Cathedral and Baptistery in the magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli. Your afternoon has been left entirely free to explore delightful Lucca. Perhaps visit the former home of Puccini, where he wrote 'Turandot'. Take a bike ride or a stroll around the entire town on top of the broad city walls. As a highlight this evening we drive into the picturesque Tuscan countryside to visit a local olive oil farmhouse estate. Before dinner is served in the Osteria, we spend time amongst the olive groves and enjoy an olive oil tasting accompanied by Tuscan wines and a selection of antipasto including local meats, cheese and bread – all specialities of this region. Meals: B,D

DAY 11

Ferraris, Maseratis & Cheese Tasting

Driving north we visit the fantastic Ferrari Museum at Maranello, near Modena. A local guide will join us and show us around this fantastic exhibition of bright red, old, new and future Ferraris and Formula One racing cars. Later we continue to the Panini Hombre cheese farm to learn how 'Parmigiano-Reggiano' (Parmesan) cheese is made, before enjoying a cheese tasting and light lunch. Here you will also visit the Panini family's private collection of historic Maseratis.

Continuing to Lake Garda, we reach the charming lakeside town of Bardolino, where we stay the next three nights. Dinner tonight will be in our hotel restaurant.
Meals: B,L,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Lake Garda Hotel - Hotel Caesius Thermae & Spa Resort, Bardolino

Situated on the shores of Lake Garda and a leisurely twenty minute lakeside stroll from Bardolino town centre, this 4-star resort & spa hotel offers spacious and comfortable air conditioned rooms.
See www.hotelcaesiusterme.com/bardolino-hotel/

DAY 12

'My Time' in Lake Garda

We have left today entirely free to enjoy glorious Lake Garda. Often regarded as the most beautiful of all the Italian Lakes, Garda is also the largest and deepest. Do as little or as much as you want. Maybe catch a ferry across the lake to explore and shop in the characterful 'picture postcard' ports of Lazise or Sirmione. Meals: B,D

DAY 13

Lakeside Salo and wine tasting at Redaelli de Zinis

This morning we visit the delightful lakeside town of Salo. Explore its historical centre which is filled with lanes and little squares with noble houses, elegant shops and the longest promenade on Lake Garda, at your own pace. Later we continue to Redaelli de Zinis in Calvagese della Riviera. This is a famous local winery and restaurant. Here we enjoy a wine tasting and sample some of the locally sourced produce before lunch. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 14

Verona and Vincenza sightseeing

Skirting the lake we will visit Romeo and Juliet's Verona. A local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, where these tragic lovers avowed a love that spanned the centuries. This afternoon we continue to beautiful Vicenza, where a local guide will join us for a walking tour to explore the medieval centre. Later we arrive at our Venetian Villa hotel, where we stay the last two nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Treviso hotel – Hotel Villa Contarini Nenzi

This is an elegant 18th century grand residence now sensitively restored into an excellent 4-star spa hotel. Located just outside of Treviso, the Contarini Nenzi contains traditional period piece furniture, and is surrounded by wonderful Italian-style parkland, with some old stables and even a delightful nineteenth century little church with frescoes. See www.hotelvillacontarininenzi.com

DAY 15

Bassano del Grappa & historic Treviso

After a leisurely start this morning, we visit delightful Bassano del Grappa located on the foothills of the Alps. You will have free time to stroll across the ornate, centuries old, covered bridge which spans the River Brenta, before exploring the wonderful arcaded streets and piazzas in the heart of town. Later we will enjoy a visit to the Poli Grappa Museum to taste some Grappa liqueur. This afternoon we enjoy a stop in the historic centre of Treviso. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner back in our historic Villa. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16

To Venice

Your tour ends today after breakfast. We have included a group transfer to drop off at Venice Marco Polo airport. We recommend you book flights that depart after 12 midday today. **Meals: B**

This tour requires a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues.

Spend a leisurely morning in Bassano del Grappa

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,600 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 15 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 27 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), lunch in Lucca, a light lunch at Panini Hombre & wine tasting and lunch at Redaelli de Zinis (L) plus 9 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Stresa, wine & olive oil tasting in a Tuscan Osteria and Grappa tasting in Bassano del Grappa
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - private boat trip on Lake Maggiore and Lake Como, panoramic train Centovalli Express, cruises Portofino and Cinque Terre
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 pp

Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

16 days from $7,499 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Milan	Ends Venice	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
3 May	18 May	$7,499	$1,049
24 May	8 June	$7,499	$1,049
1 June*	16 June	$7,599	$1,069
29 June*	14 July	$7,799	$1,089
27 July	11 August	$7,799	$1,089
17 August	1 September	$7,799	$1,089
7 September*	22 September	$7,799	$1,269
22 September	7 October	$7,799	$1,089

**These departure dates are timed to be joined with the La Grande France tour that finishes in Nice the day before. See Page 72. Make your own way to Milan from Nice, stay overnight and then join this tour.*

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Italian 'Alternativo'

Travel by cable car up to the Republic of San Marino

NEW FOR 2018

15 Splendid Days
Venice to Rome

Explore the 'alternative' Italy, the eastern side of the Apennines Mountains, with its glorious towns and unspoiled villages. See the extraordinary mosaics of Ravenna and take a cable car up to the Republic of San Marino. Wake up in a 16th century palace in the unspoiled Le Marche region, cross the incredible Gran Sasso plateau and relax in the sumptuous gardens of Villa d'Este in Tivoli!

AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 105
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits
Vicenza
Veneto
Padua
2
Venice
MIRA
Italy
Ferrara
Modena
Maranello
3
BOLOGNA
Ravenna
Emilia Romagna
San Marino
MONTEGRIDOLFO
3
Mondaino
Urbino
Passo del Furlo
Adriatic Sea
Jesi
Macerata
Assisi
Offida
Grottammare
Umbria
Le Marche
SPOLETO
2
ASCOLI PICENO
3
Gran Sasso
Santo Stefano
Abruzzo
Tivoli
Rome
1
FRASCATI
The Mediterranean
VENETO
Days 1 & 2
• Stay 2 nights in the delightful Venetian Villa Margherita, dine in your Villa restaurant
• Be guided through Palladio's historical UNESCO Vicenza – and see the incredible Basilica Palladiana
• Dine out in a local restaurant
CASTELLO DI MONTEGRIDOLFO
Days 6, 7 & 8
• Stay 3 nights in the hilltop castle complex of Hotel Palazzo Viviani
• Relax in delightful Ravenna, visit the incredible UNESCO early Christian monuments including the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia
• Ride a cable car up to the tiny country of San Marino and enjoy a special Pecorino cheese tasting and see mosaic art created in Mondaino
• Visit the incredible Ducal Palace in UNESCO Urbino and relax in Mussolini's favourite bar by the Passo del Furlo
BOLOGNA
Days 3, 4 & 5
• Spend 3 nights in the heart of Italy's culinary capital – Bologna
• Enjoy a walking tour of Padua, see Giotto's masterpiece frescoes in Capella degli Scrovegni
• Relax in the gem 'City of the Renaissance' UNESCO Ferrara
• Visit the Basilica di Santo Stefano also known as the Sette Chiese (Seven Churches)
• Near Modena, visit the fantastic Ferrari museum and a private collection of Maseratis
• Enjoy a light lunch at the Panini Hombre Parmesan Cheese farm
SPOLETO IN UMBRIA
Days 12 & 13
• Spend 2 nights relaxing in the heart of delightful Spoleto and enjoy a guided tour of UNESCO Assisi
• Cross the Gran Sasso dramatic plateau in the Apennines
• Enjoy lunch in the crumbling ruins of a deserted village in Abruzzo
ASCOLI PICENO IN LE MARCHE
Days 9, 10 & 11
• Stay 3 nights in a charming 16th century Palace in Ascoli Piceno, enjoy a full day exploring this remarkable, travertine marble, Roman and Renaissance city
• Spend time at leisure in delightful Jesi and hilltop Macerata
• Explore the 'Le Marche' region, visit the tiny 'lace town' of Offida with its antique opera theatre and the Santa Maria della Rocca. Relax over lunchtime by the Adriatic in Grottammare
• Enjoy an apéritif and dinner in the historical Café Meletti
FRASCATI
Days 14 & 15
• Stay 1 night in a Frascati villa, in the hills of Castelli Romani, relax in Frascati town
• Be guided through the wonderful UNESCO gardens of Villa D'Este in Tivoli
• Enjoy a wine tasting in the vineyards of the historic Cantine Santa Benedetta Frascati wine estate, followed by a stunning private farewell dinner with classical 'musica'

'Under Italy's Skin'

I was originally going to name this tour 'Sotto la Pelle', which is Italian for 'Under the Skin'. Instead I decided to call it the 'Alternativo,' because we really are showing the other side of Italy. A wonderful side, and one so far virtually ignored by mass tourism and bustling crowds. How is that so? Looking at a map of Italy you will see the Italian Apennines runs down the centre of the land like the ridged spine of an animal. But in the middle section, the Le Marche region, it actually looms really close to the Adriatic coast. Sometimes it's barely 10 kilometres from the sea to the rocky summits. Because of that geography there is just one major highway heading straight up the east coast. And, because there is little that is noteworthy on that highway, tourists thunder by desperately trying to reach their next 'high profile' destination. They have no time, patience or knowledge that there is a gorgeous, richly historical, beautiful world just up and over the hills. I have made absolutely sure we discover and explore this beautiful world. Let me give you just one example - the UNESCO Heritage listed city of Urbino. Urbino is home to the master artist Raphael and Donato Bramante who designed St Peter's Basilica in Rome. It is also home to one of the most powerful men in early Renaissance times – Duke Federico da Montefeltro. His wealth and influence spread right across Europe, and he built a monumental Ducal Palace to exhibit that power. The man not only had military might and tactical skill, he was also a patron of the arts and sciences - something you clearly see when you stroll through his hometown!

It is quite extraordinary that this whole region is so readily missed. Actually I am so pleased with that, because otherwise there would be nothing 'alternative' about this tour. *But I can assure you there is!*

Relax in Piazza del Popolo in Ascoli Piceno

DAY 1

Mira welcome

Your tour commences this evening in your delightful Venetian Villa hotel, in the little river side town of Mira, near Venice. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in this historic Villa. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Venetian Villa hotel – Villa Margherita in Mira

Once a grand noble residence, this elegant 17th century villa has now been sensitively restored into an excellent, meticulously maintained 4-star hotel. The traditionally styled, elegant guest rooms offer all the modern conveniences you would expect, and provide the experience of residing in an authentic Palladian style villa. Villa Margherita is surrounded by large private gardens and overlooks the Brenta River. Situated just 25 minutes from the centre of Venice, this villa is perfectly located 10 minutes walk from the town centre. See www.villa-margherita.com

DAY 2

Beautiful Vicenza and the Palladian Villas

After a leisurely start, we drive west to spend time in the beautiful city of Vicenza. Made famous as the home of the influential 16th century architect Andrea Palladio, 'Vicenza and the Palladian Villas' is UNESCO heritage listed. Our local guide will bring to life this beautiful city, and the highlight will be visiting Piazza dei Signori, with its 'Torre di Piazza' clock tower, flanked by Palladio's striking Basilica Palladiana and medieval law courts. Later you have free time to explore the heart of the town at leisure. The shopping down Corso Andrea Palladio is excellent. Mid-afternoon we return to our Venetian Villa. Tonight, we dine in a local trattoria! Meals: B,D

DAY 3

Padua and Renaissance Ferrara

We will spend this morning in the ancient university town of Padua. With our local guide, we will explore this historical city. We have included entrance to the Cappella degli Scrovegni (Scrovengi Chapel) with its magnificent Giotto frescoes. Lunchtime is at leisure in the old town. You may like to take a stroll through the nearby UNESCO Heritage listed Orto Botanico – the centuries old Botanical Gardens. In the afternoon, we will enjoy a stop to explore in the UNESCO Heritage listed 'renaissance city' of Ferrara – a true gem of a city that once attracted the greatest artists and intellects of the 15th and 16th centuries. We are now in the Emilia-Romagna region, and our home for the next three nights is in the heart of Italy's gourmet capital – Bologna. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Bologna hotel – Hotel Internazionale

First class, set in an elegant building, located in the historic centre of town, within easy walking distance to all the major sites and the best restaurants. A perfect place to stay. See www.hotelinternazionalebologna.com/en

DAY 4

Bologna guided tour and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of this great city. The highlight of your day will be visiting the Basilica di Santo Stefano, also known as Sette Chiese (Seven Churches). The rest of the day is at leisure. In the evening discover your own café or trattoria around Piazza Maggiore and Piazza Nettuno. After all, this is Italy's gourmet capital! Meals: B

"Albatross Tours stands head and shoulders above other tour companies I have travelled with. I had a fabulous time!" Linda

Enjoy a walking tour of Urbino with a local guide

DAY 5

Ferrari, Maserati and Parmesan cheese

Driving west we visit the fantastic Ferrari Museum at Maranello, near Modena. A local guide will join us and show us around this fantastic exhibition of bright red, old, new and future Ferraris and Formula One racing cars. Later, we continue to the Panini Hombre cheese farm to learn how 'Parmigiano-Reggiano' (Parmesan) cheese is made, before enjoying a cheese tasting and light lunch. Here you will also visit the Panini family's collection of historic Maseratis – the largest private collection in the world! Your evening is at leisure in Bologna. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 6

Ravenna and Castello di Montegridolfo

We enjoy the day exploring the elegant city of Ravenna. Joined by a local guide we visit the UNESCO Heritage listed, early Christian monuments. Dating back around 1450 years, the striking Basilica of San Vitale is built simply with red bricks. The interior is lavishly decorated with striking marble and Byzantine mosaics. We have also included visits to the Neonian Baptistery, Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and the 1700 year old Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Later you have free time to explore and find a relaxing lunch spot – perhaps in the attractive Piazza del Popolo which is lined with historical buildings. Mid-afternoon we continue up into the rugged Apennines, and to Montegridolfo where we stay three nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Montegridolfo hotel – Hotel Palazzo Viviani

Your hotel is set in a hilltop hamlet of this old castle. With large modern rooms, located in a modern set of buildings just below the castle, the views from the terrace across the undulating fields and woods, down to the Adriatic shore are astounding. See www.montegridolfo.com/eng

DAY 7

San Marino and Mondaino Pecorino

This morning we visit a new country – the Republic of San Marino! On approach the view is spectacular, with its walled castles and towers standing on the rim, beside huge precipices. Joined by our local guide, we catch the cable car up the mountain to San Marino. Dating back to 301 AD, San Marino is one of the smallest countries in the world, covering barely 61 square kilometres. It is also the world's oldest Republic and has earned UNESCO World Heritage status. From the terrace of Mount Titano there are stunning, sweeping 360 degree views down over the Alta Valmarecchia and Montefeltro hills, right down to the flat plains beside the Adriatic Coast. After free time to explore, shop and enjoy lunch, we then drive to the hill top town of Mondaino where we are met by a medieval character and 'regally' led into the Pecorino Fossa cheese cellars, with its 3 original, large pecorino 'wells'. After a short introduction, you will compare 4 different cheeses and locally cured salamis and meats. Forming a 'parade' through town we also stop at a small mosaic craft shop and learn about this traditional, ancient Roman art form. Dinner tonight is in a local village trattoria. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 8

Raphael's Urbino and Mussolini's Bar Furlo

First stop of the day will be in lovely UNESCO Heritage listed city of Urbino. The artist Raffaello (Raphael) was born here and we are joined by a local guide for a walking tour of the old town and through the impressive Ducal Palace. The Duke was incredibly rich and powerful, and the inlaid wood artistry in his small private study is simply unbelievable. After a relaxing lunchtime, we visit Mussolini's favourite café, Bar Furlo. This was Mussolini's favourite tea room and you will discover historic memorabilia and photos of visits. Time to relax as we have included an enjoyable afternoon coffee or aperitif. For the more active, take an easy stroll through the dramatic Passo del Furlo, now closed to cars by landslides, but kept open as a scenic walking path. Later, back in Montegridolfo, we will enjoy a dusk stroll around the castle hamlet, followed by dinner in the Osteria dell'Accademia. **Meals: B,D**

continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Mussolini's favourite stopping point

Before WWII Mussolini would take the Furlo Pass on his way to and from Rome. At one end of the pass, set in a small and pretty tree lined village, flanked by the steep walls of the gorge, is Bar del Furlo which has an incredible history. It was Mussolini and his entourage's favourite stopping point. The original tea room he would sit in has been perfectly preserved, along with the memorabilia, photos of his visit, and post war political graffiti on the walls. It is like stepping back in time. The furniture is exactly as it was, and you get an uneasy feeling sitting on the same wooden seat that 'Il Duce' would have sat on! **See Day 8.**

Be guided through the gardens of Villa D'Este

Offida, a magical timepiece

Offida – the town itself is so pretty and beautifully preserved. And for such a small town it has amazing sights. At the end of town the 13th century Church of Santa Maria della Rocca is actually 'upstairs' and, unusually, has a wooden roof. It is the entrance way through the lower level crypt that is most striking. Lines of stone vaulted archways, beautifully lit, support the whole church structure above. The 19th century town theatre is a gorgeous, magical timepiece. Called the Teatro Serpente Aureo (Theatre of the Golden Snake), it has three levels of brightly coloured box seats rising vertically above and surrounding the lower stalls. There is lots of rich velvet, and the old wooden stage actually slopes forward and down towards the stalls, for better audience visibility. Magnificent! See Day 11.

DAY 9

'Le Marche', Jesi and Macerata

Tourists have not yet discovered the glorious Le Marche region. We have! Taking the inland route, we drive through the rolling hills and vineyards of Le Marche, to stop and explore the 14th century fortified town of Jesi. Following the spine of the Apennines, our afternoon will be spent exploring the charming medieval town of Macerata with its impressive Loggia dei Mercanti – a 16th century arcaded merchants hall. We spend the next three nights in a 'Palazzo' hotel, in the wonderful historic city of Ascoli Piceno. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Ascoli Piceno hotel – Palazzo Guiderocchi

Your hotel is a magnificent converted 16th century residence, a former merchant's palace, located just 100 metres from the main Piazza del Popolo. Oozing character, your beautifully maintained rooms have that old-world charm, plus modern conveniences. See www.palazzoguiderocchi.com

DAY 10

Ascoli Piceno sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by local guide for a walking tour. Dating back well over two centuries, the massive Piazza del Popolo central square, resplendent with travertine marble, is generally recognised as one of the most beautiful squares in Italy, if not all of Europe. This compact city is bursting with colonnaded walkways, Roman antiquities, churches, palaces and remarkably 50 stone towers still exist. The highlight of your tour will be visiting the glorious Duomo. The mosaics and shimmering blue roof are stunning, as is the 900 year old crypt beneath. The rest of your day is entirely free in this gorgeous town. There is so much to see and enjoy. Meals: B

DAY 11

Lovely Offida and the Adriatic coast

Today we visit one of the little gems of Le Marche – the lovely little 'lace town' of Offida. One of the 'Borghi più belli d'Italia' – most beautiful villages in Italy, this was one of the most important lace making towns in Italy, and on a warm day you will still see ladies sitting in their doorways using bobbins to make intricate lace garments. The medieval church of Santa Maria della Rocca (church on the rock) impressively sits perched on a craggy rock outcrop. We have included entrance to the catacombs with their 13th century, time worn frescoes. There is also a lace museum and a highlight will be the visit to the quaint 19th century opera theatre. An absolute delight! Lunchtime will be enjoyed at leisure in the seaside resort town of Grottammare, on the Adriatic, before we return to Ascoli. This evening we have included a real treat as we dine at Caffè Meletti, looking down directly on the beautiful polished marble main square. This period-piece restaurant still retains the traditional, fashionable décor of over a century ago, and even brews its own aniseed liquor! Meals: B,D

DAY 12
Santo Stefano and Spoleto

We now step back in time and drive into the wild Apennines of the Abruzzo region. Crossing the Gran Sasso plateau we reach the hill top town of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, in the province of L'Aquila, where we have time to explore before enjoying a light lunch in one of the centuries old, crumbling buildings. What an experience! Next we venture into the hills of Umbria and the wonderful walled town of Spoleto where we stay the next two nights. Medieval Spoleto is easily explored on foot. There are numerous romanesque churches and cobbled stone alleyways lined with shops, bars and trattorias. Meals: B,L,D

Your Umbrian hotel – Hotel Dei Duchi

This unpretentious, family run hotel is located just outside the old city walls and is known locally for its cuisine. The dining area offers wide panoramic views of the stunning Umbrian countryside. The hotel has the dual benefit of being a 'town' hotel but at the same time giving the feeling as if you are in the middle of the countryside. Visit www.hoteldeiduchi.com/en

DAY 13
Explore Assisi and 'My Time' in Spoleto

We spend this morning in the nearby Umbrian city of Assisi. Badly damaged by earthquakes in 1997 the city, dominated by two medieval castles, undertook a remarkable programme of restoration which soon brought it back to all its glory. On arrival in Assisi we are joined by a local guide for a tour of the Basilica of St Francis with its magnificent frescoes. Afterwards there is time for you to explore Assisi at your own pace. Returning to Spoleto, the rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Perhaps take a leisurely walk along the path around the castle and across the medieval viaduct in to the Umbrian countryside. Meals: B

DAY 14
Tivoli, Frascati and 'Musica'

We enjoy a morning stop in the historic town of Tivoli. Here we are joined by a local guide to enjoy a visit of the wonderful UNESCO heritage listed gardens of Villa D'Este. Circling Rome, we reach the area known as Castelli Romani, to enjoy an afternoon visit to the town of Frascati, famous for its light white wines. This evening we visit a nearby, historic wine estate called Cantine Santa Benedetta – the perfect venue to enjoy a truly grand Frascati farewell dinner, with 'musica'. First, we relax with a Frascati tasting accompanied by a variety of antipasti on the terrace overlooking the vineyards, with the Rome skyline in the distance. Then, we enjoy dinner accompanied by music from a pianist and opera singer. An extraordinary farewell evening in the hills of Frascati! Meals: B,D

Your Frascati hotel – Grand Hotel Villa Tuscolana

Located in the hills outside of Frascati, this first class Villa hotel dates back to the 16th century. With a wonderful panoramic view of the 'Eternal City' this is such an elegant way to spend our last night of the tour. See w ww.villatuscolana.com

DAY 15
To Rome

This morning we will transfer you into the centre of Rome and to Fiumicino airport. We recommend you book flights that depart after 12 midday. Meals: B

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,500 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 14 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 26 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 lunches (L) and 10 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Dine in unique locations, scenic drives through stunning landscapes
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017.
Further discounts may apply - See page 38.

2018 Dates & Prices

15 days only $6,789 pp twin share

Single supplement $1,549
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Mira	Ends Rome
16 May	30 May
6 June	20 June
4 July	18 July
15 August	29 August
5 September	19 September

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Italy, the Deep South & Sicily

Stay 2 nights in the breathtaking city of Matera

17 Incredible Days
Rome to Palermo

Explore the ancient villages and towns of Puglia and Matera before crossing to the glorious island of Sicily. Sleep in the ancient sassi of Matera and the delightful Trulli cottages of Alberobello. Stand on the highest active volcano in Europe, feast in mafia country and cruise to San Vito Lo Capo... 'va bene'!

ROME
Day 1
• Stay 1 night in Rome
• Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner
ALBEROBELLO, PUGLIA
Days 2, 3 & 4
• Stay 3 nights in the 'Bee Hive' Trulli cottages of Alberobello
• Dine in a delightful local restaurant
• Enjoy a walking tour of Alberobello and local wine tasting
• Explore the baroque city of Lecce with a local guide
• Relax in the 'white city' of Ostuni
1 ROME
Adriatic Sea
Italy
Polignano a Mare
Monopoli
Puglia
3 ALBEROBELLO
Ostuni
MATERA 2
Lecce
MATERA
Days 5 & 6
• Stay 2 nights in the beautifully restored 'Sassi' caves of ancient Matera – a truly remarkable experience
• Visit the coastal towns of Monopoli and Polignano a Mare, famous for its gelato
• Stand on the Murgia Timone plateau above the 'La Gavina' ravine
• View the rock wall frescoes in the church of Madonna de Idris and San Giovanni
• Enjoy an afternoon to relax and explore extraordinary Matera
Gulf of Taranto
PALERMO
Days 16 & 17
• Spend your final night in Palermo
• Visit the Palatine Chapel, in the Palace of the Normans
• Enjoy a special farewell dinner
Mediterranean Sea
Calabria
Ionian Sea
Castellammare del Golfo
San Vito lo Capo
Erice
1 PALERMO
MARSALA 3
Segesta
Porto Palo
Sciacca
4 TAORMINA
Mount Etna
2
Piazza Armerina
AGRIGENTO
Sicily
Syracuse & Ortigia Island
TAORMINA
Days 7, 8, 9 & 10
• Stay 4 nights in the stunning town of Taormina
• Cross Calabria and then catch the ferry across the Straits of Messina to Sicily
• Relax with a completely free day to explore Taormina at your own pace
• Explore the ancient Greek and Roman ruins of Syracuse
• Visit beautiful Ortigia Island, the historical heart of ancient Syracuse
• Take a dramatic cable car and 4WD bus to stand at the top of Mount Etna
• Enjoy a sumptuous lunch in 'The Godfather Country'
MARSALA
Days 13, 14 & 15
• Stay 3 nights near Marsala in a converted Baglio farmhouse
• Explore the fishing port of Sciacca
• Enjoy a lunchtime seafood feast at Vittorio's famous beachside restaurant
• Visit the ancient city of Erice and Segesta's romantic temples
• Cruise through the Zingaro marine reserve to San Vito Lo Capo
• Enjoy a Baglio wine tasting
AGRIGENTO
Days 11 & 12
• Stay 2 nights in Agrigento, with spectacular views over the Valley of the Temples which we explore with a local guide
• See the extraordinary mosaics in Villa Romana del Casale, Piazza Armerina
• Enjoy an olive oil tasting and light lunch at Mandranova Estate
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 145
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

Italy intensifies as you plunge deeper

Travel guru Rick Steves once wrote, "If you like Italy as far south as Rome, go further south. It just gets better. If Italy is getting a little overwhelming by the time you get down to Rome, think twice about going further. Italy intensifies as you plunge deeper." Rick is so right! Sicily, of course, stands out, having absorbed a myriad of influences from a long history of invaders, empire builders and exotic sea traders. Turn one corner and find a massive Greek Temple or Roman Amphitheatre. Around the next you will find a delightful baroque square or verdant vineyards springing from the volcanic ash of mighty Mount Etna.

Puglia and Matera are just as evocative. The fresh produce is amazing and endless hills of olive groves testify to Puglia's reputation as the food basket of Italy. When designing the tour I leapt at the opportunity for us to stay in the beautifully converted, white washed, beehive style 'Trulli' town houses. And then there is Matera. Italy's oldest inhabited town where the rock faces are riddled with ancient caves or 'sassi'. Mel Gibson even filmed 'The Passion of Christ' here as many reckon Matera actually looks authentically like Jerusalem would have done 2000 years ago! Ancient? It has been said, "Matera is the only place in the world where people can boast to be still living in the same houses of their ancestors of 9,000 years ago". What an experience!

"There are so many memories I will cherish. It was such a divine experience staying in the sassi caves of Matera and in a trulli cottage in Alberobello" Paul

Stay in the Trulli cottages of Alberobello

DAY 1
Rome welcome

Your tour commences this evening in the eternal city of Rome. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Rome hotel – Hotel Victoria

This 4-star hotel is centrally located close by the Villa Borghese gardens. Featuring original artworks, elegant halls and a panoramic rooftop terrace, it was built in the late 19th century. The air-conditioned guest rooms feature classic décor. Visit www.hotelvictoriaroma.com

DAY 2
To Alberobello in the Puglia region

Driving across the spine of Italy – the Apennine Mountains – we continue deep into the Puglia region to the remarkable city of Alberobello where we stay three nights. This is one of the most unusual towns you will ever see. The whole city centre is a mass of whitewashed 'bee hive' type houses called 'Trulli' which date back hundreds of years. Puglia is known as Italy's bread basket and is also justifiably famous for its olive oils, wine and local produce. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Alberobello accommodation – 'Trulli cottages' scattered around town

Shunning conventional hotel accommodation we have leapt at the chance of offering an amazing touring experience. We have selected to stay in a number of beautifully renovated Trulli set amongst the winding backstreets of this UNESCO Heritage Listed old town. Bursting with character each one offers all the amenities you would expect of a high quality, self-contained studio or town house. Each Trulli is unique and varies in size, shape and layout. No two Trulli has the same furnishings or décor. Porterage is naturally all taken care of and breakfasts are all taken together in a centrally located restaurant. Visit www.charmingtrulli.com/en

DAY 3
Alberobello sightseeing and wine tasting

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a walking tour of this remarkable 'bee hive' town. In the afternoon we will enjoy a relaxing tasting of local wines. The rest of your afternoon and evening are at leisure. Meals: B

DAY 4
Ancient Lecce and the white city of Ostuni

Driving down into the Salentine Peninsula – the 'heel of Italy' – we spend the morning exploring the city of Lecce on a walking tour with our local guide. Dating back to the early Greek empire, the city boasts numerous baroque monuments and also has a Roman amphitheatre on the central square. Later we visit 'La Città Bianca' (the 'white city') of Ostuni. Perched on a hill, with views down over the coast, we enjoy time at leisure amongst the winding streets and white washed alleys. Meals: B

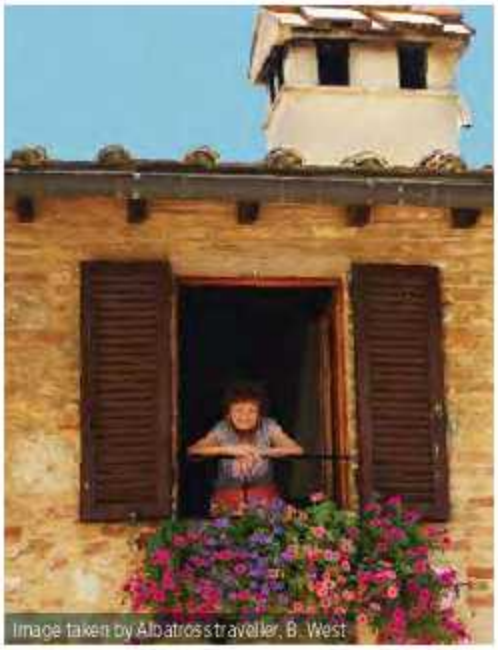


Image taken by Albatross traveller, B. West

Soak up the atmosphere in the ancient region of Puglia

DAY 5
Polignano a Mare and ancient Matera

Passing hamlets and typical Pugliese 'masserie', fortified large estate-farms we reach the port of Monopoli. Later we continue to the nearby coastal town of Polignano a Mare. Built directly on the cliffs over the sea, Polignano is famous for its gelato and ice cream parlours and makes a perfect lunch stop. Crossing to the 'ankle' of Italy we reach the extraordinary city of Matera. On arrival we visit the Murgia Timone, a huge rock plateau riddled with ancient man made stone caves or 'Sassi', to take in the views directly over the 'la Gravina' ravine to the old town. Reputed to be the oldest inhabited settlement in Italy, your view encompasses rock churches and numerous Sassi (including the cave complex hotel we will be staying in) with the more 'modern' baroque town on top of the hill. Your next two nights will be memorable! This evening we enjoy dinner in a local trattoria. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Matera 'Albergo Diffuso' – Le Grotte della Civita

A hotel experience you will never forget. Translated, 'Albergo Diffuso' means a 'Hotel Diffused'. Meaning diffused with history. Your rooms are a series of 'Sassi' or caves, dating back into pre-history, beautifully renovated and with exceptional appeal. Each are large in size and reminiscent of the 'Flintstones', but with luxury and all modern conveniences. Your breakfast is served in a converted rock church featuring classical music. It is impossible to paint the full picture of this truly unique experience. To truly understand and enjoy visit www.sextantio.it/grotte-civita

DAY 6
Matera sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will show us around this extraordinary town from the ancient rock hewn churches to the baroque city above. We have included entrance to view the rock wall frescoes in the church of Madonna de Idris and San Giovanni. Your afternoon and evening are free to relax and explore. **Meals: B**

DAY 7
Cross the Straits of Messina to Sicily

Driving across Calabria and down the toe of Italy we reach the Mediterranean, where we catch the ferry across the Straits of Messina to Sicily. Following the coast we arrive at the stunning town of Taormina where we stay the next four wonderful nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 4 NIGHTS

Your Taormina hotel – Hotel Excelsior Palace*

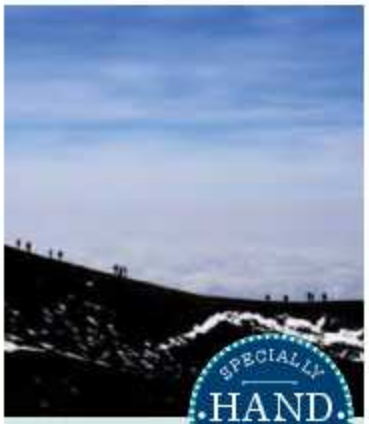
Perched on a headland and built with a Moorish style, the sweeping views along the Taormina coast from this first class hotel and gardens are spectacular. To one side is the coastline of the Ionian Sea, and on the other you are greeted with panoramic views of Mount Etna and the hillside village of Castelmola. Visit www.excelsiorpalacetaormina.it

**3 October departure stay at Ariston Hotel Taormina.*

DAY 8
'My Time' in Taormina

A totally free day to relax and explore the boutiques, handicraft shops and restaurants which make Taormina so famous. Make sure you visit the Greek Amphitheatre with its striking views and also wander through Villa Comunale, one of the most beautiful little gardens in all of Sicily. **Meals: B**

continued



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Stand on Europe's highest active volcano

Mt Etna – some stop far below thinking they are 'there'. Some take the chairlift up to the snow fields and stop. We go even higher including the guided 4WD bus tour up to where the 'internally warmed' earth melts most of the snow, vast horizons unfold and you will stand facing the steaming caldera. (and yes, it is easy and safe!) **See Day 10.**

Spend time at leisure in Polignano a Mare

Join a local guide through the Valley of the Temples

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Vittorio's, so memorable!

On Day 13 we visit the fishing port of Sciacca, on Sicily's south coast. Earlier that day restaurant owner Vittorio (known locally as the 'wild boar') will have been down at the fish market selecting seafood and fish for his beachside restaurant down the road in Porto Palo. And that's where we go for a leisurely lunch. Featured in the acclaimed BBC2 series 'Sicily Unpacked', Michelin master chef Giorgio Locatelli enthuses over Vittorio's simple cooking style – nothing fancy, but so memorable!

Enjoy 'My Time' in Taormina

DAY 9

Ancient ruins of Syracuse and Ortigia Island

Driving past Catania we reach the city of Syracuse, where we are joined by a local guide. First stop will be at the temples and massive amphitheatre in the 2500 year old Greek and Roman ruins. We will also visit the overgrown quarries and test the amazing acoustics in the famous 'Ear of Dionysus' cavern. Later we cross onto Ortigia Island, the heart of ancient Syracuse, to wander through the delightful backstreets to the breathtaking architecture of the main square, Piazza del Duomo. Enjoy time to find a quiet café or trattoria for a leisurely lunch. **Meals: B**

DAY 10

Mt Etna adventure followed by a leisurely lunch

What an adventure today! First we drive up the slopes of Mount Etna to Sapienza Refuge, lying at the south of the crater at an elevation of 1910 metres. Here we board a cable car up to a restaurant and museum at 2500 metres where we meet our local guide who will drive us in a large 4WD bus up to the (usually snow covered) viewing crater area at 2920 metres. You will now be standing on the highest active volcano in Europe with views across to the steaming caldera on one side and the Sicilian coastline far below. All around you will see craters, caldera and petrified lava flow. Following this magnificent experience we descend to the village of Forza d'Agro, just north of Taormina. This area was the setting for some scenes from the film 'The Godfather', and is the perfect location for another leisurely, typically 'Italian style' lunch. The rest of the day and evening is free back in beautiful Taormina. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 11

Piazza Armerina and Agrigento

Cutting through the heart of Sicily we reach Piazza Armerina where a local guide will take us through the opulent Villa Romana del Casale, UNESCO Heritage Listed and one of the great sites of Sicily, this massive 1700 year old Villa was covered by a mud slide in the 12th century which beautifully preserved its breathtaking mosaics. Later we arrive in Agrigento on the south coast, where we stay two nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Agrigento hotel – Colleverde Park Hotel

Offering spectacular views directly over the Valley of the Temples and the Mediterranean Sea, the Colleverde Park Hotel is located near the city centre of Agrigento. This elegant hotel is set amongst beautiful gardens and offers classic style hotel rooms. See www.colleverdehotel.it/en

DAY 12

Valley of the Temples and lunch at Mandranova

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the famous UNESCO Heritage Listed Valley of the Temples. Originally the ancient city of Akragas, and built out of sandstone tufa, the golden amber hue of the giant complex of ruins and temples blend perfectly with the natural surroundings. This afternoon we will drive east to the farm of Mandranova, to enjoy an olive oil tasting and light lunch. **Meals: B,L,D**

DAY 13

Sciacca and lunch at the famous Vittorio's restaurant

First stop this morning will be in the fishing port of Sciacca. Encircled by 16th century walls, the fascinating old town is where Arab, Norman and Greek cultures co-existed. We then follow the coast to the beach at Porto Palo where we enjoy a delicious seafood lunch at Vittorio's restaurant (specially mentioned in the acclaimed BBC2 series 'Sicily Unpacked'). Later we continue to our hotel inland from Marsala where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,L,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your 'Baglio' hotel – Baglio Oneto

Set on a hill amongst vineyards, with views across to the Egadi Islands, this was originally a feudal dwelling and later a notable farmhouse estate built in the late 18th century. The hotel section has been designed to maintain the architectural integrity of the ancient Baglio. The 'La Calandra Restaurant' serves excellent local food accompanied by local wines. Visit www.bagliooneto.it/en

DAY 14

Erice and Temple ruins at Segesta

This morning we visit the city of Erice. Standing on top of Mount Erice, 750 metres above sea level and overlooking the port of Trapani, the views out to San Vito Lo Capo and the Aegadian Islands are fantastic. Here you will still find the remains of the ancient Phoenician fortifications and in the old city there are still two castles. Pepoli Castle which dates from Saracen times and the Venus Castle built by the Normans. Time to relax and wander through the quaint old alleys and cobble paved streets of the old town, and find a trattoria in a peaceful courtyard to enjoy lunch. In the afternoon en route back to our Baglio we will also make a stop at the Temple ruins at Segesta. This evening before dinner we will enjoy a wine tasting. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 15

Zingaro marine nature reserve cruise

After enjoying free time for your morning coffee at the authentic fishing port of Castellammare del Golfo, we board a boat to enjoy a scenic cruise through the Zingaro marine nature reserve, past Scopello and the faraglioni' rocks to San Vito Lo Capo. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 16

Palermo sightseeing and 'Farewell to Sicily' dinner

Arriving in Palermo this morning we are joined by a local guide for a panoramic tour to explore the palaces and squares of this most Sicilian of cities! Entrance is included to visit the Palatine Chapel, in the Palace of the Normans, which is adorned in extraordinary 12th century mosaics. You will also have time to shop, or sit and enjoy a leisurely lunch. Later we arrive at our superb hotel. Tonight we will enjoy our 'Farewell to Sicily' dinner. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Palermo hotel – Grand Hotel Villa Igiea

Offering panoramic views across the Bay of Palermo, the 5-star Grand Hotel Villa Igiea allows you to immerse yourself in Palermo's rich cultural heritage and absorb in the beauty of Sicily's coastline. With rooms that feature all the modern conveniences and an authentic dining room and seaside terrace this is the perfect way to end your tour! See www.villa-igiea.com

DAY 17

Palermo

Your tour ends today after breakfast. **Meals: B**

This tour requires a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues.

See the stunning Sicilian coastline

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,700 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 16 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 29 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), 2 typically 'Italian style' lunches in 'Godfather Country' and Vittorio's at Porto Palo, light lunch & olive oil tasting at Mandranova Olive Oil farm (L), plus 10 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Rome, wine tastings in Alberobello and in a Sicilian Baglio
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - cable car and 4WD bus Mount Etna, Zingaro cruise
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2, 3 and 4 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350pp

Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply – See page 28

2018 Dates & Prices

17 days only $7,999 pp twin share

Single supplement $1,789
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Rome	Ends Palermo	Starts Rome	Ends Palermo
28 April	14 May	31 August	16 September
17 May	2 June	15 September	1 October
1 June	17 June	3 October	19 October
18 July	3 August		

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation.
Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

‘Magnifico’ Spain & Portugal

Enjoy time to explore the old quarter of Seville

18 Inspiring Days
Madrid to Madrid

Such emotion... The passion of the flamenco, the click of heels and clack of castanets, the seductive gardens of Granada's Alhambra, the heart stopping chasm at Ronda, your private cruise on the Alto Douro and waking up in a Pousada in Lisbon... Magnifico!

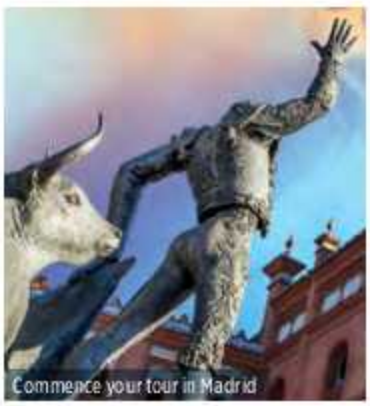
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 152
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits
PORTO
Days 10, 11 & 12
• Stay 3 nights in the heart of Porto on the River Douro
• Walk the cobblestone streets of medieval Obidos
• Enjoy lunchtime in the fishing village of Nazaré
• Take a funicular up to Sitia for breathtaking views of the coastline
• Enjoy a port tasting and tapas lunch
• Visit Braga's Bom Jesus Sanctuary
• Discover the birth place of Portugal – Guimarães
• Taste Vinho Verde at Aveleda Wine Estate
SALAMANCA
Days 13 & 14
• Stay 2 nights in beautiful Salamanca
• Relax on a lunch cruise on the Alto Douro
• Explore the striking monuments and Plaza Mayor in Salamanca
SEGOVIA
Days 15 & 16
• Stay 2 nights in the centre of Segovia
• See the city walls of Avila
• Explore El Valle de los Caidos (The Valley of the Fallen)
• Enjoy lunchtime in the leafy squares of El Escorial
• Visit the massive palace monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial
• See Segovia's dramatic Alcázar and relax beside the massive stone aqueduct
Braga
Guimarães
PORTO 3
Régua
SALAMANCA 2
El Valle de los Caidos
2 SEGOVIA
Alto Douro
El Escorial
1 MADRID
Sitia
Nazaré
Portugal
TOLEDO 1
MADRID
Day 1
• Stay 1 night in Madrid
• Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner
Obidos
TOLEDO
Days 17 & 18
• Spend your final night in a hilltop hotel in Toledo
• Explore the monuments, churches and palaces of Toledo
• Enjoy a special farewell dinner with dramatic city views
Sintra
3 LISBON
Spain
Évora
Córdoba
SEVILLE 3
2 GRANADA
Andalusia
Ronda
Cadiz
Mediterranean Sea
LISBON
Days 7, 8 & 9
• Stay 3 nights in a grand historical Pousada hotel in Lisbon
• Discover the rich history of Évora on a walking tour
• Visit the Jeronimos Monastery
• See the Monument to the Discoveries and Belem Tower
• Enjoy coffee and Portuguese Pastel de Nata
• Explore dramatic, mountain top Palace de Pena in Sintra
• Experience a traditional Portuguese Fado dinner show
SEVILLE
Days 4, 5 & 6
• Stay 3 nights in Seville's vibrant Santa Cruz neighbourhood
• Walk over the famous chasm at Ronda
• Enjoy a guided tour of beautiful Seville and its enormous Cathedral
• Dine at a Spanish Flamenco dinner show
• Visit the Atlantic port of Cadiz
• Put on your dancing shoes in a special Flamenco dance class
GRANADA
Days 2 & 3
• Stay 2 nights in Granada in the Alhambra Palace Hotel
• Visit Córdoba's Mesquita Cathedral
• Explore the Alhambra Palace and the verdant Gardens of the Generalife
• Relax with free time in Granada's old town

'Magnifico' won the title

I wanted to call this tour Paradors, Pousadas and Palaces because of the stunning selection of 'antique' hotels we stay in, but 'Magnifico' won the title. When designing it, it just struck me that we had a fantastic opportunity to create a dramatically different tour staying in some of the most extraordinary 'timepiece' hotels in Europe.

We could quite easily have gone for modern, steel, concrete and glass, first class hotels and kept the price down but that would be so boring, so dull, so ordinary and would not have been even remotely sensitive to these gorgeous, evocative destinations. Spain and Portugal – home and heart to two empires that stretched across the globe spanning centuries of conquistadores, galleons, castles and monasteries, port and sherry, Fado and Flamenco, the strum of the Spanish guitar, the click of heels and the clack of castanets. We had to do it justice.

Where we stay adds so much depth and flavour. Distinctly Spanish and Portuguese. The name 'Magnifico' won because the longer, two and three night stays in our selection of hotels set the scene wonderfully for our unique activities and inclusions – such as Portuguese pastries and coffee in Lisbon's Belem district and chartering our own lunchtime cruise boat to sail on the Alto Douro. It is the complete touring experience which makes it absolutely 'Magnifico'.



Commence your tour in Madrid

Join a local guide through Alhambra Palace and the Gardens of Generalife

DAY 1

Madrid welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Spain's cosmopolitan capital city, Madrid. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Madrid hotel – Melia Madrid Princesa Hotel

This modern hotel, with views of the Royal Palace, is located in western Madrid, eight minutes' walk from Plaza España. The hotel offers stylish rooms with contemporary décor. Visit www.melia.com/en/hotels/spain/madrid/melia-madrid-princesa

DAY 2

Cordoba's Mesquita and Granada

Travelling by AVE express train we enter Andalusia and reach Córdoba late morning. Here we are joined by a local guide who will show us the major sights and take us through the famous 8th century, UNESCO World Heritage Listed Mesquita – the Cathedral and former Great Mosque of Córdoba. Later we join our touring coach and drive through to the famous city of Granada where we stay two nights. Dinner tonight is in your wonderful hotel.

Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Granada hotel – Alhambra Palace Hotel

Inspired by the beauty of Alhambra, the Alhambra Palace Hotel offers spectacular views across Granada and features Moorish inspired décor. Located just outside Alhambra Palace's ancient walls, it is just a short walk to many attractions including the UNESCO World Heritage site of Albayzin. Visit www.h-alhambrapalace.es

DAY 3

Alhambra Palace and 'My Time' in Granada

This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the incredible Alhambra and Generalife Gardens. With origins dating back to the 9th century and named for its reddish walls, this fortress complex looms high over the city. In the 13th and 14th century the Moorish Emirates built the famous Nasrid Palaces surrounded by lavish gardens and courtyards. Moorish poets once described the Alhambra as "a pearl set in emeralds". This is one of the great sights of the world. This afternoon will be free in Granada's old town which boasts a mixture of original Arab and Christian architecture, the Cathedral and Royal Chapel. Meals: B

DAY 4

Stunning Ronda and Seville

Cutting through the mountains we reach Ronda. Retaining much of its historic charm, it is famous for being divided by the deep El Tajo gorge which carries the Rio Guadalevin through its centre. The 18th century Puente Nuevo 'new' bridge, which spans the 100m chasm below, has stunning views out over the Serranía de Ronda Mountains. Take time to walk over the bridge and explore the old quarter looking for a characterful taberna to enjoy a leisurely lunch. Later we continue to Seville where we stay the next three nights.

Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Seville hotel – Hotel Fernando III

Located in Seville's Santa Cruz neighbourhood, this elegant, Andalusian-style hotel is six minutes' walk from the Gothic Seville Cathedral. The air-conditioned rooms feature a contemporary design and offer the ideal combination of comfort and functionality. Visit www.hotelfernandoiii.es

Walk over the famous chasm of Ronda

DAY 5
Seville sightseeing and 'My Time'

Welcome to the home of Carmen, Don Juan and Figaro. This morning we are joined by a local guide who will take us through the enormous cathedral and bring to life this wonderful capital of Andalusia. Your afternoon is at leisure. The Santa Cruz quarter is famous for its narrow streets, flowered balconies and hidden patios. Nearby are the Giralda Tower and the royal palace, the Alcazars of Seville. This evening we have included a special evening out to enjoy dinner and a traditional Flamenco show. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 6
Atlantic port of Cadiz, Seville and Flamenco lesson

A leisurely start today as we enjoy an excursion to the Atlantic port of Cadiz. Situated on a peninsula, the seafront is lined with centuries-old houses and behind this you will find the grand cathedral surrounded by a historic centre of honeycombed narrow streets. Returning to Seville, the rest of your afternoon is free. How would you like to learn how to dance the Flamenco? For those of you who are interested we have included a special treat as we visit a Flamenco Dancing School to try our hand at this flamboyant folk dance. Don't wish to dance? Then come along and just sit and enjoy the spectacle, as it is so much fun! Your evening is free and the old town near the flamenco school is bursting with tapas bars, lively cafés and restaurants, perfect for 'tapas hopping'. **Meals: B**

DAY 7
Évora sightseeing and historic Lisbon

Driving into Portugal we stop at the UNESCO World Heritage Listed town of Évora where a local guide joins us for a walking tour to discover the town's rich history which spans 2000 years. The compact centre of town is easily explored on foot and boasts a Roman temple, Moorish buildings, Christian monasteries and convents. Later we continue to the capital city of Lisbon where we stay the next three nights. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Lisbon hotel – Pousada de Lisboa Praça do Comercio*

This beautifully restored hotel, a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, boasts a prime location in Terreiro do Paço – Praça do Comércio, a historic part of the city of Lisbon, and offers rooms which are elegantly decorated in a classic style and equipped with all modern conveniences.
Visit www.pousadas.pt/en/hotel/pousada-lisboa

**18 September departure stays 3 nights at Hotel Pestana Cidadela in nearby Cascais*

DAY 8
Lisbon sightseeing and 'My Time'

Today is spent exploring Lisbon. We meet our local guide for a tour to see the major sights of this wonderful, historical city – from the Belem Tower, to the fairytale palaces and the Discoveries Monument, built on the north bank of the Tagus River. The highlight will be a guided tour through the Jeronimos Monastery. Later we will stop to enjoy coffee and Portuguese Pastel de Nata (small, soft custard pies – served hot). Your afternoon is at leisure amongst Lisbon's grand sights, paved avenues, shops, cafés and colourful trams. **Meals: B**

DAY 9
Palace de Pena and old town of Sintra

Today we visit the Palace de Pena and explore the old town of Sintra. Dating back 500 years the Palace de Pena was originally a peaceful monastery until destroyed by an earthquake. Due to its fantastic hill top location Ferdinand II rebuilt it to be the luxurious summer palace of the royal family. With stupendous views – on a clear day you can easily see Lisbon – the palace is one of the greatest expressions of 19th century architectural romanticism in the world. We have included a guided visit through this UNESCO World Heritage site which is also classified as one of the 'Seven Wonders of Portugal'. Later, we will enjoy lunchtime in the delightful town of Sintra. Its noble villas and palaces prompted Lord Byron to say the town was "perhaps in every respect the most delightful in Europe".

The remainder of your afternoon is at leisure in Lisbon. This evening we have included a special treat! We visit the Alcantra quarter to enjoy dinner and a traditional Portuguese Fado show*. **Meals: B,D**

**18 September departure has afternoon at leisure in Cascais & enjoy dinner and a traditional Portugese Fado Show in Cascais*

continued

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

An absolutely 'Magnifico' experience

No visit to Portugal would be complete without sampling a glass of smooth white Vinho Verde in an age old, historical wine estate. Visiting the 350 year old Quinta da Aveleda winery is like stepping into a different world. Behind its large entrance gate, you will find the villa and 160 hectares of manicured vines. The winery is surrounded by magnificent gardens and century-old trees.
Your hosts, the Guedes family, keep ancestral traditions alive, creating award winning Vinho Verde wine. An absolutely 'Magnifico' experience. See Day 12.

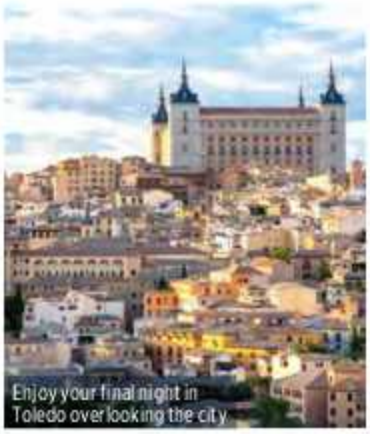
Spend 3 nights in the stunning city of Lisbon

Spend an afternoon exploring Porto during your 3 night stay

SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Cruise the River Douro

The River Douro stretches from Spain's Duruelo de la Sierra across to Porto in the West. But it is only the Alto Douro or 'High' Douro region that is UNESCO Heritage Listed – a 2000 year old wine-producing region with age old terraced vineyards, quintas (winery complexes) and villages. This is where we enjoy a unique 3 hour tapas lunch cruise. We could board a large, impersonal tourist boat but instead we choose to charter our own private 'Barco Rabelo' to complete an amazing touring experience. Absolutely Albatross! See Day 13.



Enjoy your final night in Toledo overlooking the city

DAY 10

Obidos, Nazaré and Porto

Travelling north we enjoy a morning stop in medieval Obidos. Known as one of Europe's most romantic medieval villages, you will find picturesque cobblestone streets lined with colourful houses adorned with geraniums and bougainvillea and whitewashed churches – all of which is encircled by the walls of a 12th century castle. Lunchtime will be spent in the traditional fishing village of Nazaré. Here we have also included a funicular ride up to the overhanging village of Sitia, to take in the breathtaking views of the coastline. We continue to Porto where we stay three nights. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Porto hotel – Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel

Located in the heart of Porto, the Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel has been classified World Heritage by UNESCO. The hotel's amazing location allows easy access to the River Duoro with the Torre dos Clérigos Bell Tower and the Porto Cathedral less than a 10-minute stroll away.
Visit www.pestana.com/en/pestana-porto-hotel

DAY 11

Porto sightseeing and 'My Time'

After a city tour with a local guide, we cross the River Douro to Cais de Gaia. The city's stunning skyline is enhanced by the picturesque boats and the soaring Dom Luis Bridge. Here we visit one of the port wine warehouses to sample this famous brew and enjoy tapas lunch with a view over Porto.

The rest of the day is completely free. Visit the Avenida dos Aliados – a sloping boulevard lined with grand buildings, and the medieval streets and dark alleyways of the Ribeira which meander down to the riverfront square ("Praça da Ribeira"), the most picturesque spot in the city. Here you will find traditional boats moored by the quayside, overlooked by colourful trader's houses. Meals: B,L

DAY 12

Bom Jesus Sanctuary, Guimarães and Wine Tasting

First stop on our full day excursion is at Braga where we take a funicular train up to the famous Bom Jesus Sanctuary. Built in 1784, this twin towered neoclassical church sits on top of a hill, above an enormous baroque staircase lined with chapels. Lunchtime will be spent amongst the medieval streets and historic monuments in the birth place of Portugal – Guimarães. Later in the afternoon we sample Vinho Verde at the Aveleda Wine Estate with its magnificent gardens. Meals: B

DAY 13

Scenic lunch cruise on River Douro

Crossing the country we join the River Douro at Régua where we board a vessel to cruise up the most scenic stretch of the Alto Douro River to Pinhao. Exclusively chartered for our use, your cruise includes a port aperitif and tapas lunch with wine and tea or coffee. Relax as we cruise past vineyards and riverside wine estates. Later we continue into Spain and arrive in Salamanca where we stay two nights. Meals: B,L,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Salamanca hotel – Hospes Palacio de San Esteban

This stylish hotel is set in a renovated convent and superbly located in the heart of Salamanca, five minutes' walk from the Plaza Mayor, one of Spain's most beautiful squares.
Visit http://www.hospes.com/en/salamanca-palacio_esteban/default.html

DAY 14

Salamanca sightseeing and 'My Time'

Salamanca has a largely pedestrian centre and the city brims with striking monuments and buildings such as the ancient university and cathedral, many of which are constructed out of golden stone. After a fascinating walking tour with a local guide, enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Make sure you relax in a café on Plaza Mayor, one of the finest squares in Spain. Meals: B

DAY 15

El Valle de los Caidos and El Escorial

Passing the walled city of Avila we spend the morning in El Valle de los Caidos (The Valley of the Fallen). Set in the woodlands of the Sierra de Guadarrama hills, the enormous Basílica de la Santa Cruz is remarkable as it is actually underground – hewn out of the centre granite ridge which is topped by the tallest memorial cross in the world. We spend lunchtime amongst the leafy squares of El Escorial before visiting the massive palace monastery complex of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Later we continue to a hidden gem of a city – Segovia. Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Segovia hotel – Hotel Real Segovia

This recently renovated 4-star hotel is located in the centre of Segovia between the Cathedral and Aqueduct. The hotel features classic and elegant décor. Visit www.hotelrealsegovia.com

DAY 16

Segovia sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning we have included a guided walking tour to discover this amazing city. Dating back to Celtic times, the beautifully preserved hill top town revolves around the huge main square which is flanked by the massive cathedral, heritage buildings, picturesque restaurants and al fresco cafés. In one direction a winding street will lead you to the impressive Alcázar – the fortified stone palace that juts out on a rocky crag, surrounded by sheer cliffs. Down another street you will find the astonishing Roman Aqueduct that cuts high across the base of town. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore this splendid town. Meals: B

DAY 17

Toledo sightseeing and 'My Time'

Arriving into Toledo mid-morning, we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a city walking tour. Toledo has a wealth of monuments. Christians, Arabs and Jews lived together here for centuries hence it is sometimes called the "city of the three cultures". Here you will find a city crammed with churches, palaces, fortresses, mosques and synagogues. Highlight of your day will be a visit to Catedral Primada Santa Maria de Toledo, which many consider to be Spain's finest cathedral. The shopping is excellent and the rest of your day is free. This evening we enjoy a farewell dinner in your historic hotel. Meals: B,D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Toledo hotel – Parador Toledo

Located on a hilltop position on Cerro del Emperador (the Emperor's Hill), there are stunning 180° views from the hotel's dining room, terraces and pool, across the old Arab fortress and the whole cathedral city of Toledo.
Visit www.parador.es/en/paradores/parador-de-toledo

DAY 18

To Madrid

After breakfast we will transfer you to Madrid where your tour ends late morning. Drop off points will be the city centre followed by the airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Madrid after 2pm. Meals: B

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,800 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- AVE train Madrid to Córdoba
- 17 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 29 Meals – including breakfast daily (B), tapas lunch in Porto and tapas lunch cruise on the River Douro (L), 10 dinners including a Flamenco Dinner show and Fado Dinner show (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Welcome drink in Madrid and Aveleda Vinho Verde wine tasting
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - Flamenco dance class Seville, port warehouse visit and tasting, River Douro lunch cruise
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'Me Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017.
Further discounts may apply – see page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

18 days from $8,499 pp twin share

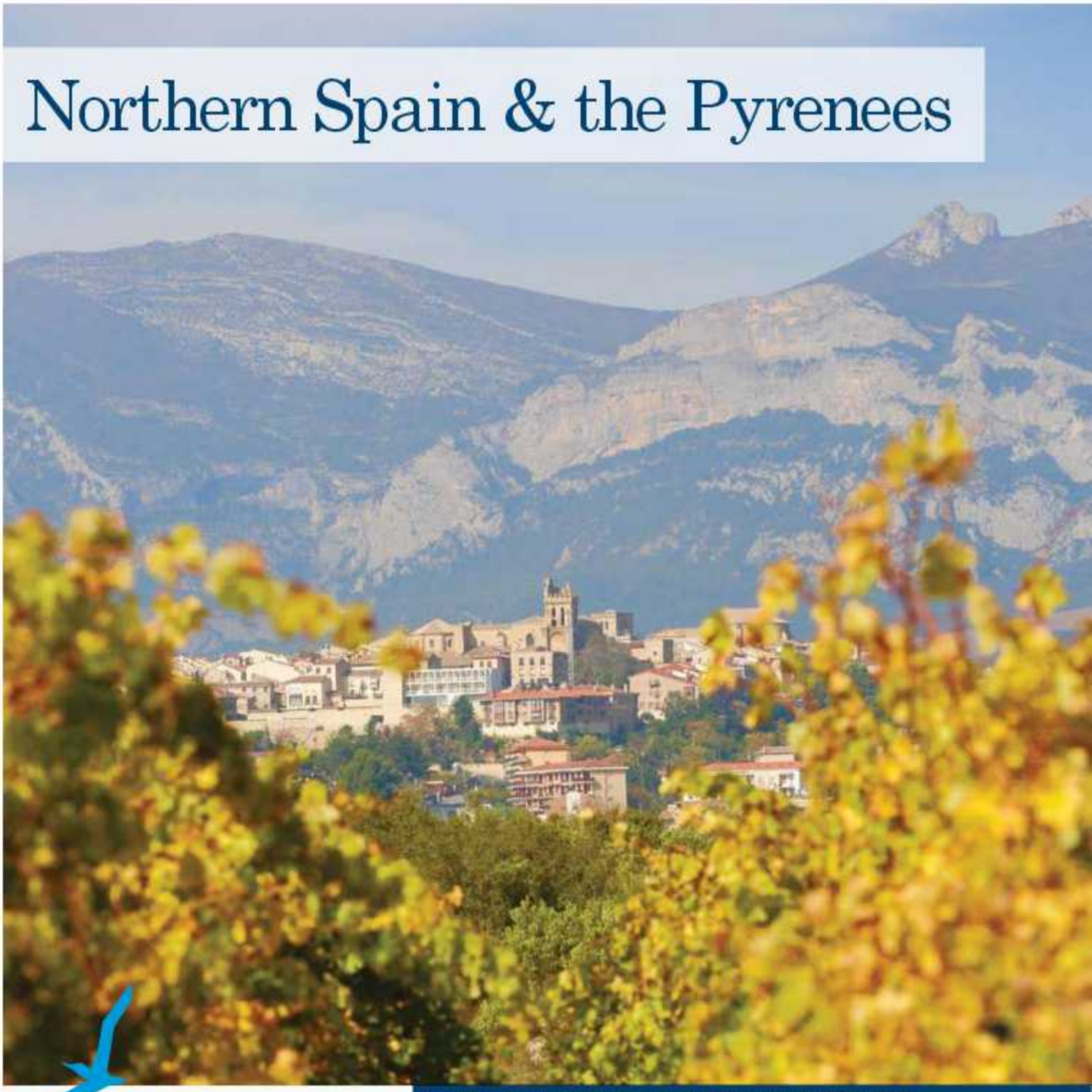
Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Madrid	Ends Madrid	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
24 April	11 May	$8,899	$2,439
8 May	25 May	$8,899	$2,439
22 May	8 June	$8,899	$2,439
5 June	22 June	$8,899	$2,439
19 June	6 July	$8,899	$2,439
21 August	7 September	$8,699	$2,389
4 September	21 September	$8,899	$2,439
11 September	28 September	$8,899	$2,439
18 September	5 October	$8,499	$2,299
25 September	12 October	$8,899	$2,439

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Northern Spain & the Pyrenees



Visit the fortified hilltop town of Laguardia in Rioja Alavesa

17 Sensational Days
Madrid to Barcelona

From the rich, rolling vineyards of the Rioja region, follow Spain's Costa Verde to elegant San Sebastian. Explore the mighty French Pyrenees and stay in the walled city of Carcassonne. Ride high in mountain cable cars, relax by the Canal du Midi and sip wine and dine as the lucky locals do!

SANTANDER
Days 5, 6 & 7
• Stay 3 nights in Santander on the Atlantic Coast
• Visit the old medieval heart of Vitoria in the Basque Country
• Follow part of the 'Pilgrims Way' to San Vicente de la Barquera
• Drive through the wild La Hermida Gorge to Potes and enjoy a traditional 'Fabada' mountain lunch
• Take the spectacular cable car ride up to the summit of the Picos de Europa
• Enjoy time to explore the exciting city centre of Santander
• View the Altamira Paleolithic cave paintings
• Visit beautiful Santillana de Mar with its noble palaces & romanesque church
SAN SEBASTIÁN
Days 8, 9 & 10
• Stay 3 nights in Spain's culinary capital of San Sebastián
• Visit scenic Castro Urdiales harbour on the Costa Verde
• Explore Bilbao and enjoy lunchtime in the grand old quarter
• See the world famous Guggenheim Museum
• Enjoy the view of San Sebastián from Monte Igueldo
• Discover the famous tapas bars in San Sebastián
• Visit Saint Jean de Luz and the dramatic French coastal resort of Biarritz
CARCASSONNE
Days 13, 14 & 15
• Stay 3 nights in the heart of historical Carcassonne
• Visit the medieval time capsule of Mirepoix
• Enjoy a visit to the Abbey of St Hilaire in Limoux
• Sip bubbly where it was actually first invented
• Explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne
• See the ancient Cathar citadel of Minerve
• Relax in Le Somail by the beautiful Canal du Midi
France
Atlantic Ocean
Bay of Biscay
Aquitaine
Biarritz
Saint Jean de Luz
Pau
Languedoc Roussillon
CARCASSONNE
Minerve
Canal du Midi
SANTANDER
Santillana de Mar
San Vicente de la Barquera
Costa Verde
Castro Urdiales
Potes
Picos de Europa
Bilbao
SAN SEBASTIÁN
TARBES
Mirepoix
Lourdes
Pic du Midi
St Hilaire
Gulf of Lions
Cantabria
Vitoria
Navarre
Pamplona
Haro
Laguardia
Logroño
Burgos
RIOJA REGION
The Pyrenees
Andorra
Figueres
BARCELONA
Castilla-León
Spain
Mediterranean Sea
MADRID
RIOJA REGION
Days 2, 3 & 4
• Stay 3 nights in an 800 year old Parador hotel in the charming town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada
• Visit 'El Cid's' cathedral in Burgos
• Explore the old city of Logroño
• Travel along the wonderful Rioja Alavesa wine road
• See the walled medieval city of Laguardia and beautiful Haro
• Relax in the famous 'bull running' city of Pamplona
• Enjoy a tasting at the fabulous Marques de Riscal winery
MADRID
Day 1
• Stay 1 night in Madrid
• Meet and get to know your Tour Manager and fellow travellers over dinner
TARBES
Days 11 & 12
• Stay 2 nights in Tarbes in a first class hotel in the heart of town
• Stroll along the boulevard in Pau or ride the funicular to the Château
• Visit the pilgrimage city of Lourdes
• Drive along part of the 'Tour de France' route over the Col du Tourmalet – the highest mountain pass in the French Pyrenees
• Catch the cable car up to the extraordinary observatory on top of the Pic du Midi to take in the massive views along the breadth of the Pyrenees
BARCELONA
Days 16 & 17
• Spend your final night in the very heart of Barcelona
• Visit Figueres, once home to Salvador Dali
• See Gaudi's astonishing Segrada Familia Cathedral on a panoramic drive around Barcelona
• Enjoy a splendid Spanish farewell dinner
AVERAGE KMS PER DAY | 142
Tour commences
Overnight stays
Included excursions
UNESCO World Heritage Listed visits

A peek at two peaks!!

Why do we include 2 cable car rides on this trip? Because the days are so different. You see, it is not just about the dramatic views from the top of each, it is about the journey, the mountain experience – it is about the whole day itself. Take the Picos de Europa ride. First stop is in San Vicente de la Barquera, by the sea, with the dramatic Picos mountains rearing up behind. This builds anticipation for our journey through the dramatic gorges and villages, deep into the wild Picos National Park. Here we also enjoy a 'Fabada' mountain lunch (included, of course, after all this is Albatross). So the cable car itself is not the destination, but an excuse for a great day out. And in the Pic Du Midi, in the French Pyrenees? Much higher, much bigger views, and a huge observatory at the top like something out of a James Bond movie. And the journey? We follow a part of the famous Tour de France bicycle route over the Tourmalet Pass, an experience enhanced by the struggling cyclists we pass up hill. Albatross always include those extra days to really experience additional, unusual, sensational sights. There's more to travel than simply ticking highlight cities off a list. There's also the experiences. Whether travelling from peak to peak, or visiting the diff top citadel of Minerve or the cafés by the canal du Midi, we do these extra things because they simply can't be missed!

"Albatross you've done it again! From the wonderful countryside we travelled through to the small villages so full of character it was a gastronomic holiday unsurpassed wow such delights!" Lloyd

Relax with 'My Time' in Pamplona

DAY 1

Madrid welcome

Your tour commences this evening in Spain's cosmopolitan capital city, Madrid. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. Meals: D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Madrid hotel – Melia Madrid Princesa Hotel

This ultra modern hotel is located in western Madrid, a short walk from Plaza España. The hotel offers stylish rooms with contemporary décor. Visit www.melia.com/en/hotels/spain/madrid/melia-madrid-princesa

DAY 2

Burgos El Cid and the Rioja Region

Travelling north, we soon reach Burgos, the historical capital of the Castile and León region, which was one of the four ancient kingdoms of Spain. This stunning medieval city is a masterpiece of Spanish Gothic architecture. We have included a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Listed cathedral, where you will find the tomb of the famous, 11th century warrior, El Cid. Later we enter the famous Rioja region of Spain where we stay three nights in the charming town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Set on the banks of the River Oja, this town sits astride the Pilgrims Route to Santiago de Compostela – the Way of St James. The network of medieval streets within the old city walls are declared as a National Historic Site. The rich soil of the Rioja has also enabled the town to become famous for its gastronomy and local wines. Meals: B,D

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Rioja hotel – Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada

As defined by the Paradores Hotel organisation, a 'Parador' is a "kind of luxury hotel, usually located in a converted historical building such as a monastery or castle". Our first class hotel for these three nights, the Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada, will not disappoint. Dating back to the 12th century and sitting in the heart of the old town, this former hospital building was built to house pilgrims on the Way of St James. It now boasts stone gothic archways and magnificent lounges and grand hallways. See www.parador.es/en/paradores/parador-de-santo-domingo-de-la-calzada

DAY 3

Ancient Pamplona and Logroño

Today we visit the ancient town of Pamplona, in the Navarre Province. Whilst Pamplona is famous for its annual 'Sanfermines festival of the bulls', it actually has a rich and proud history dating back 2000 years. After time exploring the traditional historical centre, make sure you relax in a restaurant or café and sample the local Navarre cuisine with food drawn from the surrounding, fertile, Arga plain.

This afternoon we will visit the city of Logroño, the capital of La Rioja. Steeped in history, and mentioned in the 1000 year old Pilgrim's guide book – the 'Codex Calixtinus', Logroño became an important trading and commercial capital for the whole region. Your evening is at leisure in Santo Domingo de la Calzada. Meals: B

DAY 4

Haro, Laguardia and Marques de Riscal vineyard

This morning we visit Haro, one of Rioja's most famous wine producing towns with its beautiful square and wonderful baroque church. After a scenic drive through the famous Rioja wine region, lunchtime is at leisure in the fortified hill top town of Laguardia in Rioja Alavesa, a walled medieval town with spectacular views across the Sierra de Cantabria. This afternoon we will make a special stop at the flamboyant Marques de Riscal vineyard. On approach the winery is a sensational sight with a design looking more like a giant chocolate box covered with huge wild colourful ribbons. Here we enjoy a vineyard tour and tasting. Meals: B,D

DAY 5

Elegant Vitoria and coastal Santander

First stop of the day will be in Vitoria, the capital city of the Basque Country. An elegant city of parks, gardens and a beautiful main square, this is also the site of the battle in which the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon in the Peninsular War. In the afternoon we reach Santander, capital of the Cantabria region, on the Atlantic Coast. Famous for its wide sandy El Sardinero beach and glamorous hotels, we stay here the next three nights. Meals: B,D

Take in the views of the Pic du Midi from a cable car

Your Santander hotel – Hotel Hoyuela

STAY 3 NIGHTS

This elegantly designed 4-star hotel is conveniently located nearby the beach, and within walking distance of the Magdalena Palace and all the other notable sights. Hotel Hoyuela offers unbeatable service and facilities. The guest rooms are comfortable and well-equipped. Visit www.hotelhoyuela.es/en

DAY 6

San Vicente de la Barquera and Picos de Europa

There is nothing like a day in the mountains! Heading west we enjoy a relaxing morning stop in the old fishing port of San Vicente de la Barquera with its colourful boats and impressive 16th century stone bridge which crosses the estuary with 28 arches.

Later we drive through the dramatic La Hermida Gorge and venture into the Picos de Europa, northern Spain's highest mountains. In the small mountain town of Potes, we enjoy a typical Picos lunch of 'Fabada' – the local mountain stew with beans and sausages, and a glass of Orujo schnapps. At Fuente De we will enjoy a spectacular cable car ride which will take you high up into the jagged mountains, offering terrific views across this remote national park. **Meals: B,L**

DAY 7

Santander 'My Time', Altamira Caves and Santillana de Mar

This morning is at leisure to go shopping and explore the exciting city centre. Maybe take a walk to the Magdalena Palace on the headland with its lush green gardens and sweeping views across the beach and estuary. In the afternoon we will take a drive along the coast to visit the Altamira Caves museum with its stunning 'neocave' (replica), on the site of the original UNESCO World Heritage Listed cave system. A local guide will join us to explain how the actual original cave structure and paintings of bison, wild horses deer and other animals have all been accurately reproduced, using the original painting techniques and materials. A unique and fascinating visit! Later we will enjoy a relaxing stop nearby in one of Spain's most beautiful towns – Santillana de Mar – with its private noble palaces and romanesque church. The town is also famous for its local handicraft and local produce. Your evening is at leisure. **Meals: B**

DAY 8

Castro Urdiales, Bilbao and San Sebastián

Following the Costa Verde or 'Green Coast' we enjoy a morning stop at Castro Urdiales with its colourful fishing fleet and Knights Templar castle. Later we continue to Bilbao, one of Spain's largest cities, to enjoy lunchtime in the charming Casco Viejo – the old quarter. Here you have the chance to see the world famous Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, with its extraordinary swirling, groundbreaking design. Leaving Bilbao behind, we will cross the lush green hills of the Basque country to reach the chic coastal city of San Sebastián, one of Spain's most elegant cities. We will spend three nights here. **Meals: B,D**

Your San Sebastián hotel – Mercure Monte Igueldo*

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Set on Mount Igueldo overlooking the Bay of La Concha, this modern 4-star hotel is connected to the city by a fully functional 100-year-old funicular railway. The air conditioned guest rooms are spacious and functional. Enjoy panoramic ocean views from the hotel's restaurant which specialises in Basque cuisine. Visit www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-1987-mercure-san-sebastian-monte-igueldo/index.shtml

**27 June, 18 July & 15 August departures stay at Astoria 7 Hotel.*

DAY 9

San Sebastián sightseeing and 'My Time'

This morning an expert local guide will join us to bring San Sebastián to life. We begin up at the famous Monte Igueldo to take in the amazing views across the horse shoe bay, and the city ringed by mountains. Following that our guide will take us on a guided walk through the narrow streets and old port, before introducing us to the city's famous tapas bars. San Sebastián is noted as the gourmet capital of Europe so it is a perfect time to really focus on enjoying some Pintxo, the local name for tapas, washed down by a glass of local white wine called Txakoli. The rest of the day is free to explore and shop in this lively, cosmopolitan city. **Meals: B**

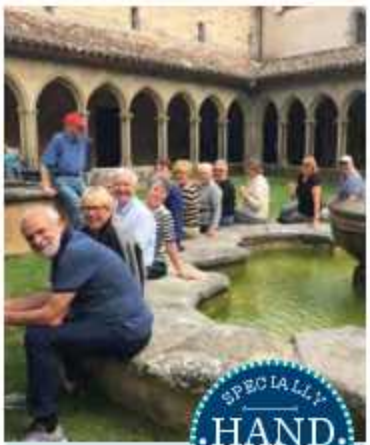
continued

Altamira Caves, so close, so real

The UNESCO World Heritage Listed Altamira Caves date back up to 35,000 years, and are said to be the highest quality cave art found anywhere in all of Europe. So perfect, that when discovered, archaeologists doubted they were actually genuine. To preserve the astonishing cave art depicting bison, horses, wolves, and more, the caves have been sealed but we can still see and admire them in the amazing replica cave built beside the cave entrance, as part of a fascinating museum. So close, so real, our local guide will breathe life into the ancient story. See Day 7.

Visit quintessential Spanish towns

Enjoy 3 nights in the coastal city of San Sebastian



SPECIALLY HAND SELECTED FOR YOU

Sip bubbly where it was first invented

Everyone thinks 'bubbly' was invented in the Champagne region. Not so! A full 100 years beforehand, the monks of St Hilaire Abbey created this celebratory brew, and they did it so well too! Known as 'Blanquette de Limoux', it tastes terrific. Maybe that is because the abbey and cloisters where it is made is a 600 year old jewel of Romanesque architecture, or maybe because sipping it, where bubbly was first invented, adds dreaminess and nostalgia to the flavour. Or maybe because it is just so good! See Day 13.

DAY 10

Seaside Saint Jean De Luz and Biarritz

Crossing the border into France, we pass through the small town of Ciboure, birth place of the famous composer Ravel. Our first stop of the day will be in the delightful seaside town of Saint Jean De Luz where Louis 14th, the 'Sun King', married Maria Theresa of Spain in the 17th century.

Later we will continue to the elegant seaside resort of Biarritz, on the Bay of Biscay. Patronised by European royalty since the 1800s Biarritz is still a very chic and thriving beach resort, with a big surfing influence. Biarritz, with its distinctly French feel, is the perfect place for an afternoon stroll along the seaside promenade. Tonight we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 11

City of Pau, Lourdes and Tarbes

Crossing into Aquitaine in France we reach the city of Pau. Time to take a stroll along the Boulevard des Pyrenees or visit the Château de Pau, birthplace of France's King Henry IV. On a clear day the views of the Pyrenees are excellent. In the afternoon we will also make a stop in the pilgrimage city of Lourdes where in 1858 a vision of the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared before Bernadette Soubirous in the Grotto of Massabielle. Later we reach Tarbes where we will stay the next two nights.
Meals: B,D

STAY 2 NIGHTS

Your Tarbes hotel – Le Rex
In a fantastic location right in the heart of town, 'Le Rex' is a superb first class, modern designer hotel. See www.lerexhotel.com

DAY 12

Hautes-Pyrenees and Pic du Midi cable car

Today we drive into the heart of the Hautes-Pyrenees and classic Tour de France country. At 2115 metres high, the Col du Tourmalet is the highest paved mountain pass in the French Pyrenees, and one of the most famous climbs on the Tour de France bicycle route. As we climb up higher and higher we see bike signs showing the distance to the top, and the gradient over the next kilometre! Often passing struggling cyclists we will make a stop at the large statue of the famous rider Octave Lapize, gasping for air as he struggles to make the climb.
In La Mongie we will board a large cable car which will take us up to the summit of the Pic Du Midi de Bigorre. At 2877 metres or nearly 10,000 feet the views are stupendous. Because of the reliable, clear, blue skies they built a massive white observatory up here, and it is like a scene from a science fiction movie. Here there is also an observatory museum, restaurants and deckchairs to sit in and relax and enjoy the panoramic views – one way down onto the broad French plains and the other along the massive Pyrenees into Spain. Memorable! **Meals: B**

DAY 13

Mirepoix and Abbey of St Hilaire in Limoux

A leisurely start today as we head across the vine covered hills to enjoy lunchtime in the perfectly preserved time capsule of Mirepoix. Without doubt this is one of the most beautiful medieval town squares in Europe, with its colourfully painted, half-timbered houses that date back to between the 13th and 15th centuries. Sitting atop centuries old wooden rafters carved at the ends with monsters, animals and gargoyles, these rows of shuttered houses provide shady covered walkways for cafés and shops. We are now in the 'Pays Cathare', or Cathar country, in the lovely Languedoc Roussillon region. Just south of Carcassonne near Limoux we will make a special visit to the Abbey of St Hilaire, a jewel of Romanesque architecture. Originally dating back possibly 1300 years, the more recently added Abbey church and 14th century cloisters are a delight. The Benedictine monks of the Abbey are also credited with inventing the sparkling wine known as Blanquette de Limoux, a full century before their counterparts created 'bubbly' in Champagne!
Our stay for the next three nights is right in the very heart of the massive, UNESCO World Heritage Listed, walled city of Carcassonne. **Meals: B,D**

STAY 3 NIGHTS

Your Carcassonne hotel – The Best Western le Donjon*
This 4-star, authentic, medieval hotel is spread within three medieval buildings they call the Donjon, the Ramparts and the Count Roger. It is wonderfully located within the ramparts, amongst the winding cobbled streets of the old town, close to the Count's Castle. A perfect place to immerse yourself in this magical fortress town. See www.hotel-donjon.com

**23 May departure stays at Mercure Carcassone Port de la Cite Hotel.*

Enjoy lunchtime in the town of Mirepoix

DAY 14
Carcassonne sightseeing and 'My Time'

Dating back to Roman times, the existing 13th century fortress city of Carcassonne is an extraordinary timepiece. This morning we are joined by a local guide as we explore the ramparts and old town of Carcassonne. The medieval castle, with its gigantic double walled fortifications and 53 watchtowers, is the 2nd most visited site in France outside of Paris. We have also included entrance into the château of the Counts of Carcassonne. The rest of the day is completely free to wander amongst the cafés, shops and boutiques within this exceptional town. Meals: B

DAY 15
Minerve, Le Somail and Canal du Midi

A leisurely start as we crisscross the Canal du Midi and then head into the Languedoc hills, to the dramatic gorge and perched, stone village of Minerve. In 1210, during the Cathar Crusade, Simon de Montfort destroyed this village stronghold and burned alive 140 'heretics'. Today Minerve boasts a small, sleepy, 12th century church surrounded by cobbled streets and narrow alleys, craft shops and restaurants. Perched by the ravine, the town is delightful and the scenery dramatic. Make sure you walk down to the Cassiere River and through the cavernous tunnel which drills right under and through the hillside. Later we descend through the vineyards of the Minervois region to stop and explore the picturesque hamlet of Le Somail, sitting astride the Canal du Midi. Take time to relax in a canal side café and enjoy an aperitif, and cross the humped back bridge to the massive antique library on the far tow path. Delightful! Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant. Meals: B,D

DAY 16
Figueres and Barcelona

Heading into Spain we reach the Girona province where we will enjoy a morning stop in Figueres. Time to stroll amongst the shops of the tree lined La Rambla, the city's shaded central avenue, and stop in one of the café filled squares. Make sure you visit the Placa Gala, with its Dali statutes and the Salvador Dali museum housed in the old municipal theatre. In the afternoon we reach the vibrant, cosmopolitan city of Barcelona. On arrival we will enjoy a panoramic drive past many of its famous sights, including Gaudi's incredible Segrada Familia Basilica. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner. Meals: B,D

STAY 1 NIGHT

Your Barcelona hotel – Crowne Plaza Barcelona Fira Center*

This 4-star hotel is situated in the heart of Montjuic, one of the most cultural areas of the city. The air conditioned, spacious guest rooms offer modern décor and facilities. Visit www.crowneplazabarcelona.com/en/

*23 May departure stays at H10 Universitat Barcelona

DAY 17
Barcelona

Your tour ends today after breakfast. Meals: B

"There were moments of our free time as we strolled along the beaches that it felt more like a holiday than a tour." Michele

Outstanding Value Inclusions

Over $1,700 value of extras already included

- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 16 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel porterage (1 bag per person)
- 27 meals – including breakfast daily (B), 'Fabada' mountain lunch in Potes (L) and 10 dinners (D)
- Tea, coffee and a complimentary beverage with all included dinners
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences - cable car rides Picos de Europa and Pic du Midi
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips to your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels
- Albatross Travel App and 'On Tour' Travel Map
- Albatross Memories Photobook

NO additional 'on tour' costs!

The Albatross difference

- Tours specially designed to suit you
- Leisurely 2 and 3 night stays
- Small group sizes – from just 10 to 28
- Genuinely inclusive, NO extra 'on tour' costs
- Stay in authentic, character style hotels
- Easier days with 'My Time' guaranteed!

EARLY BIRDS SAVE $350 PP
Must book and deposit before 31 October 2017. Further discounts may apply - See page 28.

2018 Dates & Prices

17 days from $6,799 pp twin share

Land only prices in Australian dollars

Starts Madrid	Ends Barcelona	Per Person Twin Share	Single Supplement
23 May	8 June	$6,799	$1,579
6 June	22 June	$6,799	$1,579
27 June	13 July	$6,999	$1,639
18 July	3 August	$6,999	$1,639
15 August	31 August	$6,999	$1,639
29 August	14 September	$6,799	$1,579
5 September	21 September	$6,799	$1,579
12 September	28 September	$6,799	$1,579

Book our tours with confidence!

If you book and deposit on any of our tours, as long as there are just 10 or more people travelling on our designated group departure, we guarantee it will travel.

Pre and post tour accommodation

We can assist you with your pre and post tour accommodation. Please contact our European travel experts to discuss your requirements.

Frequently asked questions

Albatross travellers in Matera, Italy

What is the average Albatross group size?

Just 22 like-minded people. This is much smaller than the standard tour group size you will find elsewhere. An average group is made up of about 8 or 9 couples and 4 or 5 single travellers. Some groups may be as small as 10 travellers and we cap all tours at only 28 guests. We believe travelling in smaller groups ensures a more pleasurable touring experience and allows us to select more private hotels and attractions. Another bit of good news is that our smaller group sizes gives you so much more room on the coach!

Note: On our Christmas, New Year & Winter Wonderland Tours and ANZAC Tours our group sizes are larger – an average of 32, capped at 40 guests.

How much money do I need to budget for optional meals and excursions?

Nothing! Unlike most other tour companies we simply don't sell extra 'optional' tours once you arrive. All the excursions, activities and meals we outline are already included. Most dinners, even special regional restaurant dining, are already included. To help matters we also include a glass of wine, beer or soft drink with dinner and later, tea or coffee.

How much should I budget for tips on tour?

Nothing! We have already taken care of that for you. At Albatross Tours we understand that knowing when to tip, who to tip, and how much to tip can make you uncomfortable. That's why we have included all tips whilst you are 'on tour' including the end of tour tips for your Tour Manager and Driver. That makes life easier!

Why do you stay longer at each stopover?

Because it is a much better way of touring! Longer stays allows you to experience more in each town, city or region. Another bonus is you are not constantly moving hotels. How delightful to unpack for a number of nights and really experience where you are staying, explore the local area and develop a real feel for the region. Stay longer – see more!

Is my tour guaranteed to depart?

Some of our departures are automatically guaranteed to run! You will be happy to know that we undertake to run any tour even on as little as 10 passengers (and that is a lot less than most other companies). Plus we are very happy to tell you how many guests we have booked on any tour, giving you peace of mind when you book.

Will I have free time while touring?

Yes, absolutely! We refer to this as 'My Time'. And since we do not sell ANY optional excursions your free time remains free! We believe the perfect touring holiday includes a balanced mix of included activities as well as free time to enjoy your surroundings. Let's face it, part of the joy of a destination is to relax and enjoy a leisurely lunch or wander through the streets and experience the local culture.

What time do I need to get up each morning?

Later! It is rare we start a day before 8.30 a.m. Our longer stays mean you are not constantly checking in and out of hotels all the time and packing and unpacking your bags is not a repetitive chore. The pace is so much more relaxed and most mornings you have time for that second cup of coffee over a relaxing breakfast.

What are your hotels like?

First class, or even better! What is more, to enhance your touring experience we purposely select unique and authentic accommodation. We actually try to avoid modern, sterile functional hotels as staying in them can be a dull experience. Instead, it is their style, elegance, location, amazing historical or local character that are important to us, and if they are more personal and family run, then all the better. We see all the rooms being different as adding to the experience and a bonus. Some unique accommodation we use, like Leeds Castle in England, and the beautiful 'Sassi' caves in Matera, Italy, are beyond classification!

Note: In Couiza, the 500 year old château we stay in can't be classified 4-star because the walls are too thick to install a lift! You'll love it!

What standard and size of coaches do you use?

We use first class, full size touring coaches with 40-45 seats. Which means on an average group size of 22 passengers everyone gets a window seat and a spare seat! WiFi is available on most coaches and there is an on-board toilet for emergencies.

Note: Occasionally we may also use day charter coaches for sightseeing and in rare cases when touring groups numbers are below 15 we may use a smaller coach, without a toilet.

What is the food like?

Just like you, we like good food! The daily breakfast is usually an extensive buffet selection. You will also be very happy to know that most dinners are also included. Not just those in your hotel but also special ones in authentic local taverns, restaurants, bistros and beautiful wine estates. Sometimes leisurely, feature lunches are also included. We purposefully leave a few evenings free for you to discover your own local restaurant or bistro.

Who will I be travelling with?

Our unique touring style and better itineraries attract a wide variety of travellers, from early empty nesters to baby boomers. Perhaps more importantly, it is about the type of people we carry.. usually Australians and New Zealanders. People who want to see more, experience more and who want a more authentic European holiday experience.

How much luggage can I bring?

Hotel porterage is included for one large suitcase per person. Since we carry smaller groups there is usually extra space to stow more bags and any further luggage. Please liaise with your Tour Manager and Driver regarding porterage for additional luggage. Club Albatross members, are entitled to additional porterage. Visit www.albatrosstours.com for details.

How much walking is involved on your tours?

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. On some occasions coach drop off points are 10 minutes or so walk away from an old town centre. If you are joining us on one of our walking tours, we recommend comfortable shoes and that you are able to walk at a moderate pace.

Can you cater for special dietary needs?

Yes, of course. When booking your tour please ensure your special dietary needs are advised. Once you arrive and begin your tour please reconfirm your dietary needs with your Tour Manager. Please note, whilst every effort is made to ensure your dietary needs are properly catered for we cannot guarantee absolute satisfaction every time.

Do you offer pre & post tour accommodation?

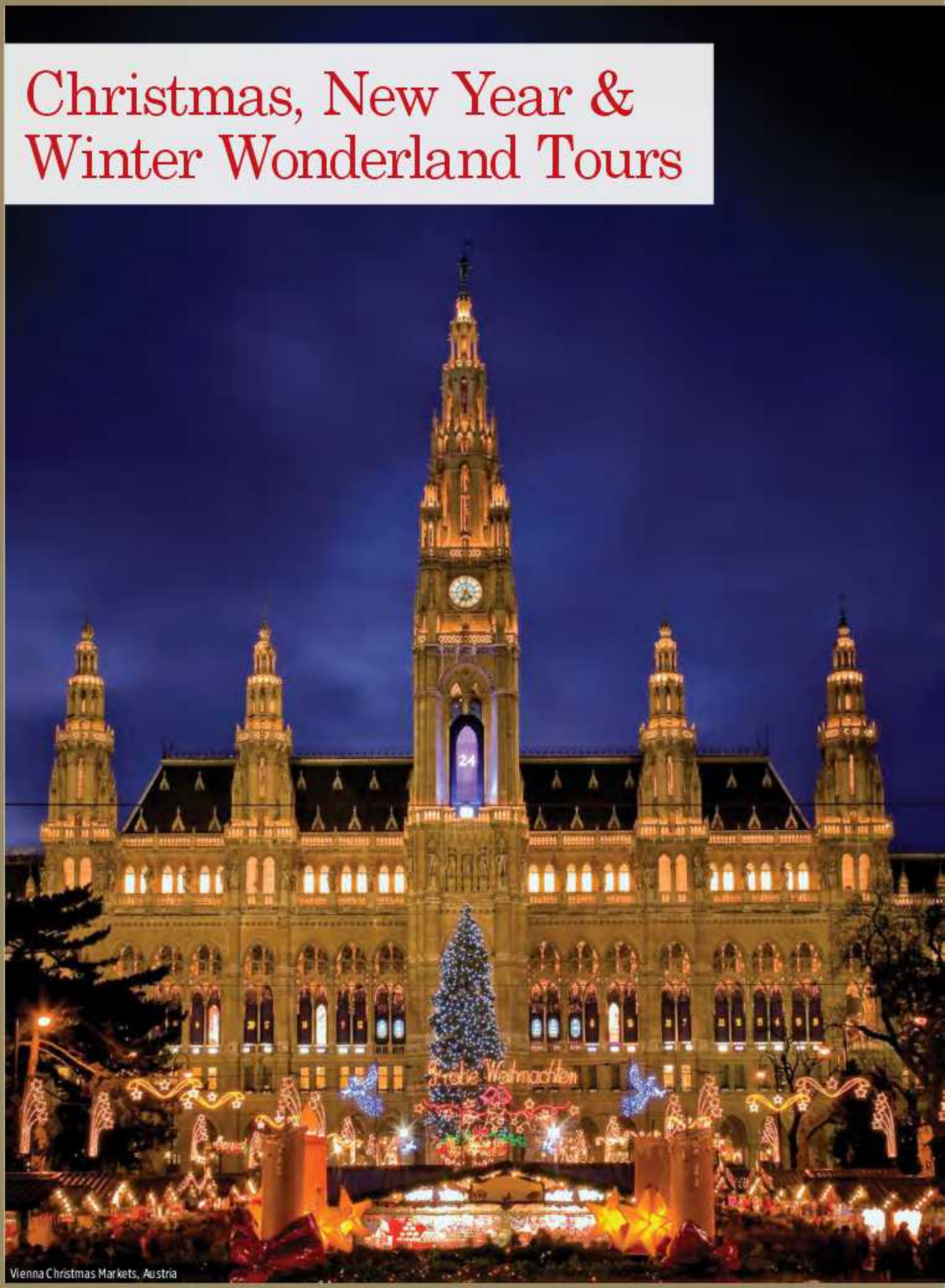
Yes. We offer pre and post tour accommodation for most tours. If you would like to enjoy an extra night or two before or after your tour at the same hotel, we will happily book this on your behalf.

Travel documents – when and how will I receive them?

Approximately 4 weeks prior to the tour departure, assuming full payment and booking forms have been received. If you are departing our fair shores earlier, please ensure you, or your Travel Agent, have advised our Reservations team and we can of course get them to you earlier.

For more frequently asked questions visit **www.albatrosstours.com**

Christmas, New Year & Winter Wonderland Tours



Vienna Christmas Markets, Austria

The Original and the Best!

In 1995, we launched our first European Christmas tour. Now over 20 years later, we offer the widest range of European festive tours designed specially for Australians and New Zealanders. With departures from early December until late January, we have something for everyone!

Explore stunning Christmas Markets, take incredible cable car rides up the Alps, stay in a 900 year old Italian castle or visit the fairy-tale castles of Germany. There are so many experiences to be had including romantic horse and carriage rides and enjoying mulled wine and ginger biscuits.

Albatross tours are genuinely inclusive and are packed with so many experiences. In Switzerland, you will travel on the famous Glacier Express train, in Austria you will hurtle down the Olympic bob sled run and in France you will gasp at the astounding views across Mont Blanc as you soar 4,000 metres to the peak of the mighty Aiguille du Midi.

There is a magical European winter wonderland out there waiting for you, filled with exciting 'bucket list' experiences, amazing adventures, and bursting with heart-warming festivities – and with Albatross you will get to experience the best!

For your copy of our Festive & Winter Wonderland Tours brochure please call us on 1300 135 015 (Australia) or 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or visit www.albatrosstours.com

Albatross travellers enjoying the snow near the Matterhorn
Image taken by Albatross traveller D. Stewart

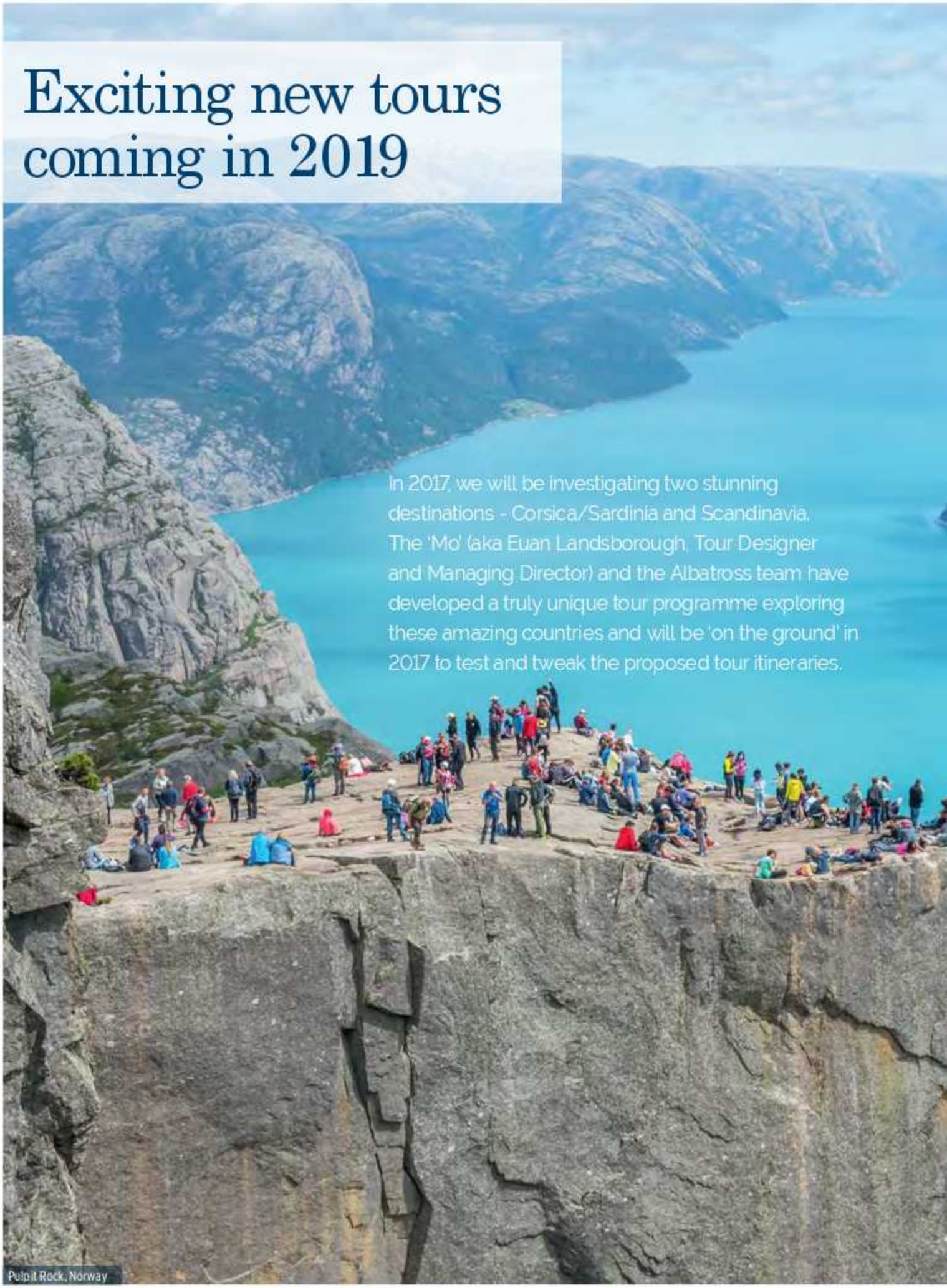
The fairytale Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany

Enjoy snow bound carriage rides

Explore the many Christmas markets

Exciting new tours coming in 2019

In 2017, we will be investigating two stunning destinations - Corsica/Sardinia and Scandinavia. The 'Mo' (aka Euan Landsborough, Tour Designer and Managing Director) and the Albatross team have developed a truly unique tour programme exploring these amazing countries and will be 'on the ground' in 2017 to test and tweak the proposed tour itineraries.



Pulpit Rock, Norway

NEW FOR 2019

Corsica and Sardinia

The 'Mo' and the Albatross team have been asked by many of our travellers when we will be creating a tour to explore Corsica and Sardinia – the 'Albatross Way'. The itinerary design is well underway with Euan, and his wife Julie-Anne, tweaking the proposed tour itinerary during their visit to this region in 2017.

This tour will be approximately 13 days in duration with time spent in Sardinia (Italy) and Corsica (France).

2019 Departures: 4 departures from May to September

Scandinavia

Scandinavia is becoming a popular holiday destination and many Albatross travellers would love a specially designed Scandinavian tour.

After extensive research we have devised a truly unique and in-depth tour of this incredible region – a wonderful tour done the 'Albatross Way'!

We have developed an innovative plan to visit so many incredible, world class sights that are so often ignored or skipped over by others. In 2017, Euan and Julie-Anne will be test driving the tour itinerary and adding a few personal touches and tweaks, to ensure Albatross offers a tour itinerary which far surpasses any other Scandinavian tours available!

2019 Departures: 4 departures from May to September

To register your early interest in our 2019 tours please call us on 1300 135 015 (Australia) or 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or email info@albatrosstours.com.au We will keep you informed as tours are developed and released.

Oberammergau Passion Play 2020

Enjoy Premium Category 1 "best in house" seating at the Passion Play

The Passion Play

The Passion Play origins date back to 1633, when the community of Oberammergau found itself under threat from the Bubonic plague. The town pledged that if God were to spare them death, they would perform a play each decade to celebrate the life and death of Jesus Christ. Thankfully the vow appeared to work, and as a result the locals were true to their promise – the very first play was performed during Pentecost in 1634, where a stage was erected in the local cemetery. Nowadays the performances take place on a much larger scale, with over 2000 of the village's residents working together to ensure the spectacle honours the vow of their ancestors. Such is the dedication of the residents, all male actors performing in the plays take part in a "Hair Decree" – from Ash Wednesday in 2019, all men are requested to let the hair on their heads and face grow to ensure they have an authentic look in time for 2020!

NEW FOR 2020

Albatross Tours will be offering an exciting range of European touring packages featuring the 2020 Oberammergau Passion Play. Following our outstanding success handling the 2010 Passion Play season, we will once again be offering a wide choice of unique European escorted touring programmes with regular departures throughout the 'Passion Play' months between May and October.

Enjoy the Bavarian scenery

See the traditional painted houses of Oberammergau

Without exception, we will be including two nights' first class accommodation and **Premium Seating Category 1 'best in house' seating for all the Passion Play performances.**

Tours will range from 6 to 21 days in length and group sizes will be smaller and more intimate – between only 10 and 28 travellers!

Touring will of course be first class, and our itineraries will have that special Albatross touch - a more leisurely pace, longer stays and so much more sightseeing. As usual, they will be genuinely more inclusive having been designed specifically for like-minded Australian and New Zealand travellers.

Pre-register NOW

Oberammergau is a 'one in ten year' event. There will be significant worldwide demand and spaces will be limited, which is why we urge you to register now. Registration is free and without obligation. Registration enables you to receive pre-release information, well before actual tour programmes and schedule dates are formally released. You can register for information, individual spaces and of course we are specialists in handling small and medium sized group allocations.

To pre-register now for our 2020 Oberammergau tour programme please call 1300 135 015 (Australia) or 0800 446 232 (New Zealand) or email info@albatrosstours.com.au

Connect with us

Join us at one of our information sessions to discover more about our European tours, or connect with us on our website or via our social media channels.

Information Sessions & Functions

Find out firsthand what makes travelling with Albatross such a different experience. Come along and find out more about our European tours and speak to past Albatross travellers about why they enjoy travelling with Albatross Tours.

Find out more at
www.albatrosstours.com/travel-shows

Website

Visit our website for the latest information on our tours including availability, tour reviews, videos and informative blog articles which can assist you in planning your European holiday.

Visit
www.albatrosstours.com

Newsletter

Have you signed up for our email newsletter? Receive the latest news from Albatross Tours, special offers and travel tips from the experts right to your inbox! Contact us or visit our website to sign up.

Email us at
info@albatrosstours.com.au

Facebook & Instagram

Be inspired by stunning holiday imagery, videos and stories from 'The Mo' and our travellers on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Find us at
www.facebook.com/albatrosstours
www.instagram.com/albatrosstours

YouTube

We have over 60 videos featured on our YouTube channel, including videos dedicated to each tour featured in this brochure.

Visit
www.youtube.com/thealbatrosstours

Prefer to speak to someone?

We love to receive your calls. Our European tour experts are available business hours Monday to Friday to assist your enquiries. After hours please email info@albatrosstours.com.au and we will call you the following business day.

From Australia	1300 135 015
From New Zealand	0800 446 232
Worldwide	+61 7 3221 5353

Tour booking conditions

Please read all conditions carefully

PAYMENT CONDITIONS

- All prices are in $AUD and are for cash/cheque payments. Credit card payments attract a service fee.
- Deposits represent a booking fee and are non-refundable and non-transferable. Date changes will attract amendment fees.
- A non refundable deposit of $500 AUD per person, per tour, is required within 7 days to secure your booking.
- Full payment is required 60 days prior to travel.

BOOKING FORM

A completed and signed booking form, confirming your fitness for travel and full passport details (with at least 6 months validity from the date of return to Australia), must be returned to Albatross Tours with the non-refundable deposit payment, within 7 days of confirmation of your booking. Failure to submit your Booking Form at the time of paying the non-refundable deposit, will result in your reservation/s being subject to cancellation. One completed Booking Form per person is required.

CANCELLATION POLICY – ALL TOURS

All cancellations must be received in writing.

- If cancelled more than 60 days prior to travel a cancellation fee of the deposit applies.
- If cancelled after the final payment due date but prior to 45 days before travel a cancellation fee of 50% applies.
- If cancelled 45 days or less prior to travel, a cancellation fee of 100% applies.

FORCE MAJEURE

If the tour cannot proceed due to flood, earthquake, war or civil strife, acts of terrorism, hurricane, cyclone, industrial disturbance, strike, fire, lock out, epidemic, pandemic, failure or delays of scheduled transportation facilities, or other Acts of God, or any law, order, decree, rule or regulation of any government authority, or for any reason whether of a similar or dissimilar nature beyond the control of Albatross Tours, this agreement shall terminate and there shall be no claim for damages by either party against the other.

INSURANCE

It is a condition of travel that a comprehensive travel insurance policy adequately covers each passenger whilst on tour. Travel insurance can cover you for financial losses caused by a wide range of events that can affect your trip, whether they occur before, during or after your trip. These might include travel modification, cancellation or interruption, medical expenses, baggage damage or theft and more. We strongly advise travel insurance be issued at the time of booking. Please check the details within your policy's product disclosure statement to ensure you are aware of all conditions and omissions and that the product is right for you.

GUARANTEED GROUP DEPARTURES

All tour departure dates offered by Albatross Tours in this brochure are based on group touring programmes. The term 'group tour' is defined as having a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 28 passengers travelling. Once Albatross Tours, confirms 10 deposited passengers travelling, it guarantees that the group tour will depart. In the event of only 9 passengers or less booking and travelling on that specific departure we are unable to operate that departure as a group tour and that departure will be withdrawn. In rare instances such as this Albatross Tours guarantee to advise all parties concerned of the withdrawal of the tour at least 90 days prior to its scheduled departure date.

PRICES

Prices are guaranteed against currency surcharges. All tours have been costed on the basis of a minimum number of 15 passengers travelling. In the event of a reduction in the numbers of passengers travelling on any specific group tour departure below 15 passengers or in the unlikely instance of price increases from suppliers, or tax increases, Albatross Tours reserves the right to pass on these increases in costs with or without warning to its passengers. Wherever possible, price increases will be absorbed by Albatross Tours.

TRANSPORTATION

When group sizes are considered too small to use a full sized touring coach we reserve the right to use a smaller coach. Smaller coaches and any vehicle sused for local transfers and occasional day excursions may not have toilet facilities on board. Individual country and EEC laws regarding coach transportation will be abided by at all times.

TWIN & TRIPLE SHARE ROOMS

Please note: Throughout much of central Europe traditional hotels sometimes offer 'French Twins' which are 2 separate beds and mattresses attached together and sharing a single headboard. Triple rooms are on request. If available, triple rooms may be a twin/double room with a 3rd bed added. The room may consist of 1 double or 2 single beds and the third bed may be a rollaway or sofa bed, which may not be suitable for an adult.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS & TWIN SHARE MATCH

Individual passengers can request us to match them in a twin share room with another individual of the same gender. Should a match not be found the single supplement will not be charged, if a twin room is available.

Please Note: should you be 'matched' with another person we cannot be held responsible if the choice is not to your satisfaction. You must consider there will always be a certain risk of incompatibility.

Smoking: any twin match must understand that the room must be treated as a non smoking room.

Also: Single rooms in European hotels are sometimes smaller than twin rooms. The Single Supplements represent a fee passed on to us by the hotels.

PORTERAGE

Hotel porterage for one suitcase per person is included at each stay during your group touring programme. It is not included on the first or last days of your tour when arriving or departing your hotel independently.

MINIMUM MOBILITY REQUIREMENTS - THE NEED TO WALK

A number of tours in this brochure visit a variety of medieval hilltop towns which may have some steep, uneven cobbled stone streets or castles, and attractions with steep staircases and no lifts. Additionally some larger cities only provide coach passenger drop off points 15 minutes or so walk from the old town centres. Please note: this need to walk from coach drop off points in some European towns and cities is common to ALL Tour Operators. A reasonable amount of walking will be involved, and our tours do require a certain level of fitness and mobility. These tours are not suitable for people with walking difficulties or limitations. If unsure please call our office for further clarification.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is the responsibility of the passenger to have a valid passport and all visas, permits and certificates required for the selected tour. Your Travel Agent will be able to advise you. If the passenger's valid passport details are not advised by the final payment due date, then a $25 per person service fee will apply.

UNSUITABILITY

If the operators consider any passenger as an unsuitable person for any tour it may in its absolute discretion cancel that passenger's booking or decline to carry that passenger further, if at all.

UNUSED SERVICES

No refund is given for any partially or wholly unused services/ tour inclusions. No overseas supplier or associate is authorised to promise refund on behalf of Albatross Tours.

ITINERARY VARIATIONS

All possible effort will be made to adhere to the published touring itinerary. Occasionally circumstances beyond our control will force changes, amendments or modifications to the itinerary and its inclusions. Albatross Tours cannot be held responsible for any omissions or modifications to the itinerary or the inclusions made as a consequence to these changes.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

In the unlikely instance of a hotel change becoming necessary the alternative property will be of a comparable or higher standard and there shall be no refund in this connection. Non smoking rooms are requested however, they cannot be guaranteed as not all European hotels offer dedicated non-smoking rooms.

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUESTS

Please note requests for special dietary requirements cannot be guaranteed at all European hotels and restaurants.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE

Unless otherwise indicated we have not included flights, visas, airport taxes, port taxes, security charges, airport transfers, items of a personal nature, laundry, additional beverages and consumables.

COMPLAINTS

a) In the unlikely event of a complaint, the client is obliged to make Albatross Tours and the local supplier aware of such problems immediately. Albatross Tours offers a 24 hour emergency paging system for this purpose.

b) In the unlikely event of dissatisfaction with your hotel room, please advise the Hotel and/or Tour Manager immediately so they may rectify the situation if possible.

c) Albatross Tours will only consider claims made against it in those circumstances where a complaint has been made pursuant to sub paragraph (a) above and where the claim has been received by it within 30 days from the end of the services provided by it, otherwise, the client will have no right to make any claim against it.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Albatross Tours act only as a booking agent making reservations with the companies or associates offering the services contained in this brochure. Whilst acting in good faith, Albatross Tours disclaim all liability, howsoever arising for loss or injury to person or property whether by negligence or otherwise on the part of the operator or accommodation managers / owners or their employees. Albatross Tours have made every effort to ensure the quality of accommodation and the accuracy of the brochure, but shall not be liable for any dissatisfaction the passenger may have with the accommodation and touring or any injury, damage or loss caused by the change or withdrawal of any price, detail or other item or service. In addition Albatross Tours shall not be held responsible for any loss of quality of goods or services supplied or any changes in an itinerary beyond our control made by third parties. This agreement shall be governed and controlled in accordance with the law s of Queensland, Australia.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Albatross Tours respects your privacy and will only use your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy and in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. You can obtain full details of how we collect, hold, use, manage and disclose your personal information from our Privacy Policy, a copy of which may be obtained by calling us on (61) 7 3221 5353 or by visiting our website at www.albatrosstours.com/privacy-policy.

Albatross Tours | ATAS No. A11341 | ABN 45 010 565 143
Level 3, 303 Adelaide Street,
Brisbane, Queensland 4000, Australia.
Telephone (61) 7 3221 5353
Fax (61) 7 3221 5486
Email info@albatrosstours.com.au

We are the European Tour Experts

- Our head office is located in Brisbane, Australia – we're locals who understand the needs of Australian and New Zealand travellers
- Established in 1995, we have over 20 years' experience
- We've been nominated for the past 5 years as 'Best Niche Wholesaler' in the National Travel Industry Awards
- We're part of the UK Albatross Group who operate over 5,000 tour groups annually
- To help you in Europe our operations team are based in Kent, UK providing local support in local time.

ALBATROSS Tours

Come share our love of Europe

ATAS A11341 CATO TO1107

For Expert Advice & Reservations

From Australia call 1300 135 015

From New Zealand call 0800 446 232

International +61 7 3221 5353

Website albatrosstours.com

Email info@albatrosstours.com.au

Connect with us

facebook.com/albatrosstours

instagram.com/albatrosstours

Youtube.com/thealbatrosstours

Level 3, 303 Adelaide Street, Brisbane,
Qld 4000 Australia
Tel: 07 3221 5353 Fax: 07 3221 5486
ABN 45 010 565 143

Have you seen our fabulous European Christmas Brochure? Call us or go online to order your copy.