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## MV Orion

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The MV Orion (previously known as MS Orion and MY Orion) is currently based in Australia and operated by Orion Expedition Cruises. The company's mottos of "a path less travelled" and "it's in our nature to explore" aptly describe its operations. OEC combines expeditionary exploring with five-star luxury and described by the Berlitz Guide to Cruising as "the latest in the quest to build the perfect expedition vessel".

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### History [edit]

Built by Cassens shipyard in Germany for the Marshall Islands registered company Explorer Maritime, with technical management by the Greek-based company Helios Shipping, the Orion was originally operated, albeit for a short time, by US-based cruise operator Travel Dynamics International (TDI). TDI had operated the vessel in the Antarctic and the Arctic and many points in between, including the Great Lakes and the Amazon River.

Orion Expedition Cruises (OEC) of Australia then entered a long term agreement to lease the vessel and it was handed over to OEC in the Tahitian port of Papeete in March 2005 for transfer to Australia. OEC quickly expanded and further developed the expedition cruise market in the region and gained international recognition.

In May 2008, OEC announced the purchase of the company by KSL Capital Partners, a Denver-based private equity company specialising in high end travel and leisure enterprises. OEC now plans to expand beyond its one-ship operation in the Oceania region through the building of new ships and/or other acquisitions.

On the evening of 20 January 2013, the ship rescued a round-the-world yachtsman, Alain Delord, from his liferaft located 487 nautical miles SSW of Hobart (S49.47.93 E144.20.47) in the Southern Ocean. He had abandoned his yacht after it lost its mast and its hull was damaged in rough weather. The ship, with 100 passengers and 80 crew on board, was on its way from Antarctica to the world heritage-listed Macquarie Island when it responded to the call for help. The captain of the Orion, Mike Taylor, undertook the 1500 km rescue in moderate to rough seas from Antarctica's Commonwealth Bay. In a race against time, the ship successfully tracked the sailor's emergency radio beacon and effected the rescue with just an hour of sunlight left.

On 5 March 2013 it was announced that Orion Expeditions had been acquired by US-based small ship operator Lindblad Expeditions, which owns five ships and charters a further five and operates cruises to a variety of destinations. CFMF holds a 60% interest in Lindblad Expeditions.

The MV Orion will be renamed the National Geographic Orion from March 2014, and join fleet-owned National Geographic Endeavour, MS National Geographic Explorer, National Geographic Islander, National Geographic Sea Bird and National Geographic Sea Lion, along with their chartered vessels Delfin II, Jahan, Lord of the Glens, Oceanic Discoverer and Sea Cloud.

## Current operations [edit]

MV Orion is based in Sydney, Australia, operating expedition style cruises to the Kimberley Region of Western Australia, Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea, the



MV Orion	in Kuri Bay, Kimberley (Western Australia)
Career	
Name:	MV Orion
Owner:	2003—2008: Explorer Maritime 2008—present: Orion Expedition Cruises
Operator:	2003—2005: Travel Dynamics International 2005—present: Orion Expedition Cruises
Port of registry:	2003—present: Majuro, Marshall Islands <sup>[1]</sup>
Builder: Maiden voyage:	Cassens-Werft, Emden, Germany <sup>[1]</sup> November 2003 <sup>[1]</sup>

### **General characteristics**

Class & type: Germanischer Lloyd 100 A5 E3

In service

expedition cruise ship

4,050 gross tons<sup>[1]</sup> Tonnage: 337 ft (103 m)[1] Length: 46 ft (14 m)<sup>[1]</sup> Beam: 12.6 ft (3.8 m)[1] Draft: 5 passenger decks[1] Decks: Germanischer Lloyd E3<sup>[1]</sup> Ice class:

Installed One MaK 8M25 diesel 2400 kW<sup>[1]</sup>

power.

Status:

One propeller<sup>[1]</sup> Propulsion:

15.5 kn (28.71 km/h) maximum speed Speed: Boats & 4 Life/tender/rescue boats, 10 Zodiac HD

landing MK5 inflatables craft carried:

Complement: 106 passengers<sup>[1]</sup>

75<sup>[1]</sup> Crew:

Notes: Orion is built according to the latest international safety regulations, and the USL code in a 1a survey including those of the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health, Canadian Arctic Shipping, St. Lawrence Seaway and to Lloyds. The hull is ice-reinforced for voyages in

the Arctic and Antarctic.

Solomon Islands, the Great Barrier Reef, Tasmania, New Zealand and Antarctica.

Operations are expanding to include more remote parts of Melanesia with a focus shifting more towards expedition experiences from the emphasis to date on luxury.

Following OEC's takeover by Lindblad Expeditions announced in March 2013, they announced that it will continue to operate cruises to Orion's destinations of Indonesia, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and the Kimberleys. But from March 2014 it will also include itineraries to more easterly and remote Pacific islands. It will be equipped with an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV), capacity for up to 24 scuba divers and ocean going kayaks, while cruises will be accompanied by a National Geographic photographer.

### Further Vessel Specifications [edit]

Hull: Ice-reinforced for voyages in the Arctic and Antarctic

Ice Class: E3 (Germanischer Lloyd) Engines: Mak; 8M25; 3,265HP

Stabilisers: Blohm & Voss, retractable fin stabilisers

Classification: Germanischer Lloyd; 100 A5 E3 Passenger Ship; MC E3 AUT

Regulations: Orion is built according to the latest international safety regulations, and the USL code in a 1a survey including those of the

U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health, Canadian Arctic Shipping, St. Lawrence Seaway and to Lloyds.

Additional Craft: 10 Zodiac Heavy Duty MK5 Inflatables, 10 Sea Kayaks, 2 Jet Boats and a Fishing Boat

### Sister Vessels [edit]

While she is essentially a unique ship, she was preceded by two slightly smaller but very similar vessels built at the Cassens Emden shipyard in Germany.

#### Sun Bay

The 88.5 m, 96 passenger Sun Bay was launched in 2001 and was originally operated by Sun Bay Cruises in the Bahamas before being transferred to Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and is currently operated by their Celebrity Cruises division as Celebrity Xpedition in the Galapagos Islands

#### Sun Bay II

The 88.5m, 96 passenger Sun Bay II was launched in 2002 and as with the Sun Bay was originally operated by Sun Bay Cruises in the Bahamas. By 2002 the Sun Bay II had been renamed Corinthian and was operated by American cruise company Travel Dynamics International. By 2004 the vessel had passed to private ownership and is now known as the Constellation.

### References [edit]

1. Aabcdefghijklm Ward, Douglas (2008). Complete Guide to Cruising & Cruise Ships. London: Berlitz. pp. 507-508. ISBN 978-981-268-564-3.

## External links [edit]

- Official website

- Cassens-Werft Shipyard homepage
- Downloadable PDF specifications for MV Orion

Categories: Expedition cruising | Cruise ships | Ships built in Emden

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