



# New Zealand: South Island Explorer

*With Rich Pagen and Kristin Wornson  
together with Brent Stephenson*

NEW ZEALAND | 17 DAYS | APRIL 7 – 23, 2024



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# Go with Rich and Kristin

of *Inside Expeditions*



Kristin Wornson

MARINE BIOLOGIST | ARTIST | NATURALIST

Kristin's love of beauty and wild things has taken her from skimming the surface of mudflats on a surfboard while researching nudibranch foraging behavior, to building a successful jewelry business that incorporates tiny plants and wildflowers.



Rich Pagen

ORNITHOLOGIST | MARINE BIOLOGIST | NATURALIST

Rich's career as a biologist has involved an array of fascinating wildlife fieldwork, both on land and at sea. Through it all, exploration and sharing nature with others has been his central passion.



Brent Stephenson

## Together with Brent

ORNITHOLOGIST | NEW ZEALAND NATIVE

Brent was born in New Zealand and has been a lifelong birder ever since. His love for travel, birds, and the ocean has led him to most corners of the world. Working as our local operator, Brent will be joining us for the overland portion of the itinerary.

## Adventure highlights

- Spend eight days cruising along "The Top" of New Zealand's South Island, discovering stunning landscapes, rich history, and unique wildlife.
- Enjoy stunning photo ops during a breathtaking flightseeing tour over Fiordland National Park.
- Hike through the pristine ecosystems of Stewart Island, and go on a special nighttime walk to search for kiwis, New Zealand's national bird.
- Visit remote Ulva Island, a predator-free nature sanctuary that is home to dozens of endemic species, including the kaka, weka, and little blue penguins.
- Cruise through legendary Milford and Doubtful sounds, a supremely scenic land of soaring cliffs and plunging waterfalls.

# New Zealand: South Island Explorer

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On this epic journey of New Zealand's South Island, discover winding cobalt waterways, lush native forests, unique wildlife, golden beaches, and rugged coastlines. We'll explore on foot, by sea, and even by air during an exhilarating flightseeing tour. Highlights include peaceful Stewart Island, predator-free Ulva Island, and the legendary landscapes of Fiordland National Park in the south. Then, head north for an eight-day cruise through the supremely scenic Queen Charlotte and Pelorus Sounds. This expedition includes an exploration of Abel Tasman National Park – New Zealand's smallest national park – where we hope to find New Zealand fur seals and little blue penguins.



## Itinerary

**SUNDAY, APRIL 7 2024**

### Invercargill, New Zealand

Arrive in Invercargill via Auckland. Transfer to the Kelvin Hotel with the rest of the day at leisure to relax or explore New Zealand's southernmost city. In the evening, gather with your leaders and fellow travelers for a Welcome dinner and briefing.

**MONDAY, APRIL 8**

### Invercargill / Stewart Island

After breakfast, drive to the Southland Museum. Here we will have a chance to see the tuatara, an ancient reptile endemic to New Zealand. After lunch, stroll through the native forest around Stirling Point to search for local birds and other wildlife. Continue to the ferry terminal at Bluff for a scenic trip to peaceful Stewart Island, our home base for three nights.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 9**

### Stewart Island

This morning, choose a leisurely exploration along the coast, or join a more energetic hike from the

waterfront to Acker's Point Lighthouse. After a local lunch, tour the charming town of Oban including the small, but fascinating museum. This evening, take a walk through native forest to search for wild Southern brown kiwis, New Zealand's iconic national bird.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10**

### Ulva Island & Paterson Inlet

Today, take a water taxi to Ulva Island, a predator-free bird sanctuary with a variety of lovely forest trails. This is a wonderful place to view the South Island robin, South Island saddle-back, yellowhead, and weka. We then board a catamaran to explore Paterson Inlet, a beautiful, sheltered area where we can enjoy lunch. Learn a bit about local history, and perhaps visit a nearby salmon farm. The tour continues as we explore some of the small islands located just off Stewart Island where we hope to see fur seals, albatrosses, and, with luck, yellow-eyed penguins. Return to Stewart Island for dinner and overnight.

## **THURSDAY, APRIL 11**

### **Stewart Island / Te Anau**

Rise early to catch the ferry to Bluff, then embark overland for Te Anau, making stops for photography and wildlife viewing along the way. Check in to the Lakefront Lodge, our base of explorations for the next four nights. After a chance to freshen up, board a seaplane for an exhilarating flightseeing tour over the supremely scenic landscapes of Fiordland National Park. Return to Te Anau for dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at the hotel.

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 12**

### **Doubtful Sound**

Today we'll embark on a full-day tour of Doubtful Sound. With no direct road access, the only way to reach Doubtful Sound is by cruising across the picturesque Lake Manapouri, followed by a drive over Wilmot Pass, New Zealand's most majestic road. We'll pause along the way to experience the dense Fiordland rainforest and view Doubtful Sound glistening below. Board the Patea Explorer for a cruise through this beautiful area, with many twisting fjords flanked by rugged peaks, verdant rainforest, and hidden inlets.

## **SATURDAY, APRIL 13**

### **Milford Sound**

Depart early for a cruise along Milford Sound. This classic deep-water fjord is surrounded by steep mountains and is famous for its dramatic scenery, especially Mitre Peak, which rises to 5,560 feet. Feel the cool spray of waterfalls as we cruise along the sheer rock faces, keeping an eye out for dolphins and seals. Disembark in the afternoon and enjoy a leisurely drive back to Te Anau, making plenty of stops for nature walks and some truly stunning scenic viewpoints.

## **SUNDAY, APRIL 14**

### **Te Anau / Queenstown / Blenheim**

After breakfast, depart overland for the airport in Queenstown. Board our flight for Blenheim and transfer to our hotel for check in. This evening,



savor local vintages and regional cuisine at a nearby winery.

## **MONDAY, APRIL 15**

### **Blenheim / Embark Heritage Explorer**

Transfer to the port in Picton and embark the Heritage Explorer. After a chance to freshen up and settle in to your cabin, join the captain on the bridge as we set sail for Queen Charlotte Sound. As the sun sets, enjoy your first meal in the dining room accompanied by spectacular 180-views of the scenery that surrounds you.

## **TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16 & 17**

### **Queen Charlotte Sound**

Queen Charlotte Sound was first sighted in 1642 by Abel Janszoon Tasman while seeking shelter from a storm near d'Urville Island, but it was Captain James Cook who would first set foot here during one of his five visits to Ship Cove, his New Zealand base between 1770 and 1777.

Spend two full days exploring the waterways and islands of scenic Queen Charlotte Sound with plenty of opportunities to take walks along sections of the Queen Charlotte Track and search for birdlife on the predator-free islands. A visit to Tory Channel brings the whaling history of the Perano Whalers to life. Learn about explorer history with a stop at Ship Cove, and to pay a visit to Captain Cook's memorial.

**THURSDAY & FRIDAY, APRIL 18 & 19**

## Pelorus Sound

The largest in the Marlborough Sounds, the main channel of Pelorus Sound winds south along 35 picturesque miles between steep verdant hills from Cook Strait to Havelock. Boasting 236 miles of shoreline, the numerous bays and sheltered coves of Pelorus Sound are perfect for exploration. In Ngawhakawhiti Bay, we'll get a glimpse of what this area looked like before the native forest was cleared. Explore Nydia Bay and enjoy an energetic walk along a portion of Nydia Track.

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, APRIL 20 & 21**

## d'Urville Island

Depending on weather conditions and tides, we hope to venture to the remote and seldom visited northern coast of d'Urville Island. This outermost island in the Marlborough Sounds, d'Urville Island is named after French Explorer Dumont d'Urville and features imposing sea cliffs along its west coast, a high mountainous backbone, and the fastest moving tidal flows in New Zealand, tempered by some of the country's finest scenery. Dolphins and New Zealand fur seals are frequently seen in the waters surrounding the island and it was here that Pelorus Jack, the endearing Risso's dolphin famously stole the nation's heart, by guiding ships between 1888 and 1912.

**MONDAY, APRIL 22**

## Abel Tasman National Park

New Zealand's smallest national park, Abel Tasman National Park is a wilderness reserve with hills cloaked in regenerating native forest flanked by impressive granite formations, sandy beaches, and crystalline streams that cascade through mossy valleys. There is much to experience and enjoy here as we cruise this scenic coastline. Depending on the weather, we hope to have opportunities to kayak inside secluded inlets and shores, walk among the forest, swim, and explore the beaches.

In 2016, New Zealanders famously banded together to buy a stretch of sand now known as 'New Zealand Beach' at Awaroa Bay through a crowdfunding campaign, gifting the 2,600-foot beach to Abel Tasman National Park for all to enjoy. Learn about several sustainability initiatives that are working together to restore and revive the native plants, birds, and wildlife in the park including Project Janszoon, a privately funded trust.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 23**

## Nelson / Disembark / Homeward

This morning we arrive at the Port of Nelson. After a final breakfast and farewells, transfer to the airport for your independent homeward flight via Auckland.





blue penguin



southern brown kiwi



Stewart Island



New Zealand Fur Seal



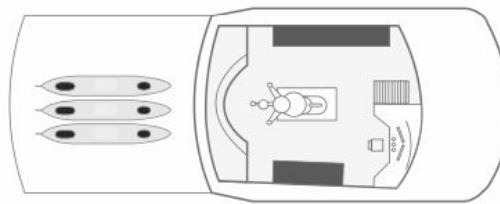
Zodiac Excursions

# Onboard Heritage Explorer

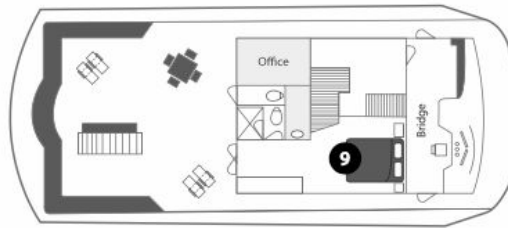
The Heritage Explorer expedition yacht features 9 guest cabins and offers comfortable spaces in an intimate setting. Built in 2004, the yacht features a contemporary wood-finished interior, well-appointed cabins across three decks, a dining room with a spectacular 180-degree views, lounge area, and bar featuring regional New Zealand wines, beers, and spirits. Guests can also enjoy the yacht's well-stocked library while relaxing onboard. Outside, enjoy plenty of covered space on the Bridge Deck, or adjourn to the Sun Deck perfect for wildlife spotting, sunrises, and sunsets. Kayaks and fishing equipment are available for use during the voyage, while two tenders allow access to remote shores.



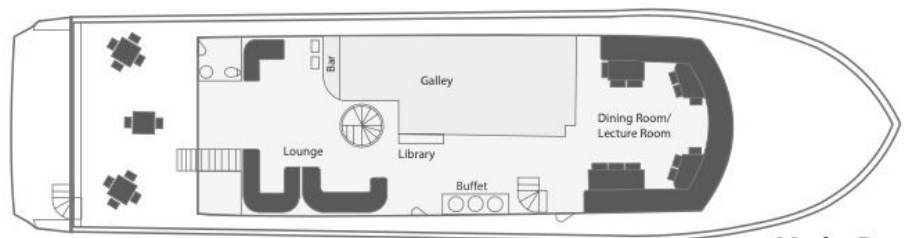
# Heritage Explorer Deck Plan



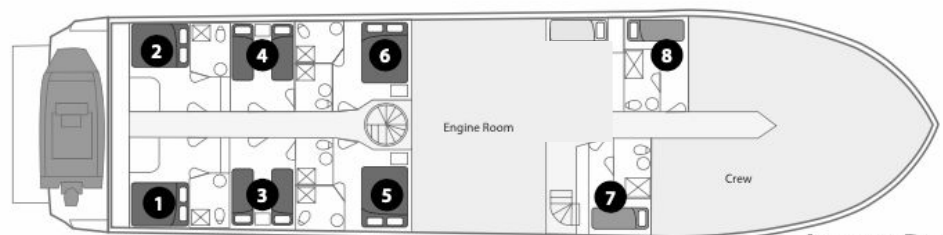
Sun Deck



Bridge Deck



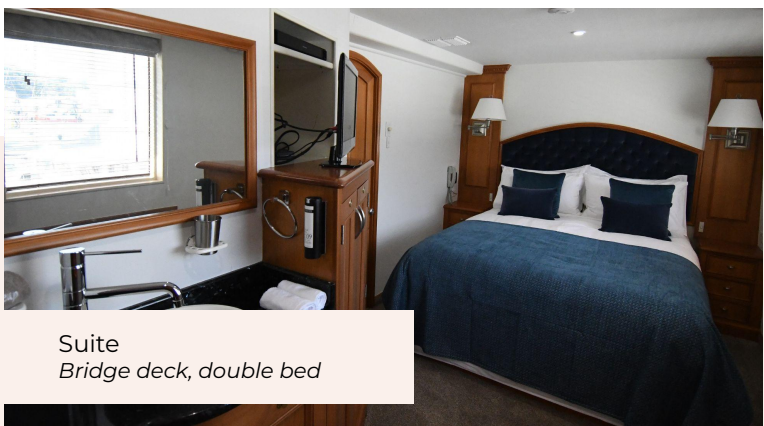
Main Deck



Lower Deck

## Guest Cabins

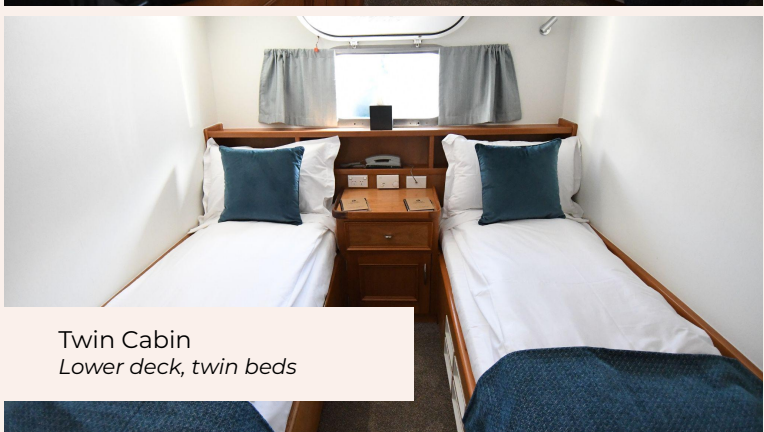
- 1. Double
- 2. Double
- 3. Twin
- 4. Twin
- 5. Double
- 6. Double
- 7. Single
- 8. Single
- 9. Suite



Suite  
Bridge deck, double bed



Double Cabin  
Lower Deck, double bed



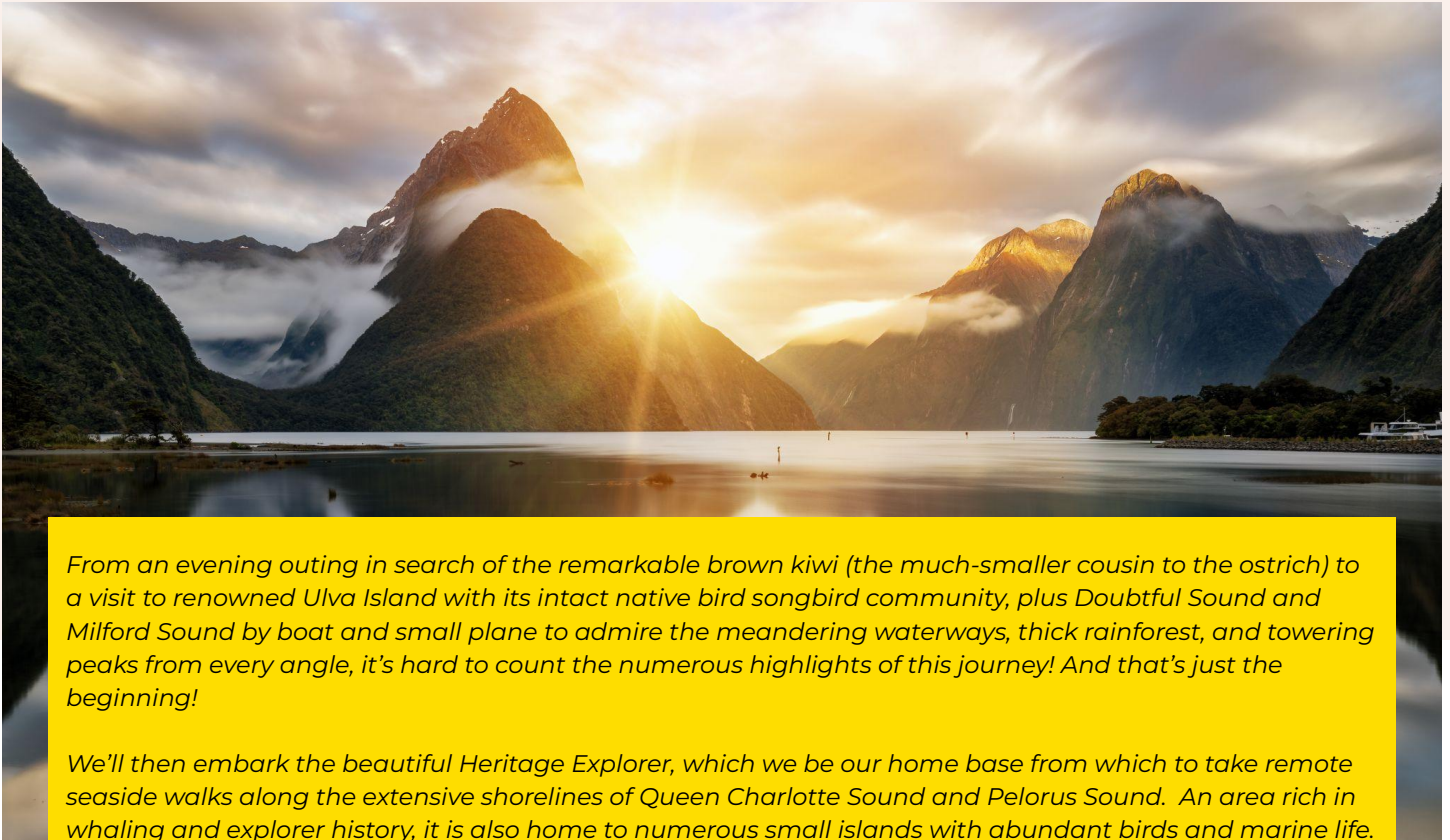
Twin Cabin  
Lower deck, twin beds



Dedicated Single Cabin  
Lower deck



# Why we love this trip



*From an evening outing in search of the remarkable brown kiwi (the much-smaller cousin to the ostrich) to a visit to renowned Ulva Island with its intact native bird songbird community, plus Doubtful Sound and Milford Sound by boat and small plane to admire the meandering waterways, thick rainforest, and towering peaks from every angle, it's hard to count the numerous highlights of this journey! And that's just the beginning!*

*We'll then embark the beautiful Heritage Explorer, which we be our home base from which to take remote seaside walks along the extensive shorelines of Queen Charlotte Sound and Pelorus Sound. An area rich in whaling and explorer history, it is also home to numerous small islands with abundant birds and marine life. Join us on this truly epic expeditionary itinerary!*

-Rich Pagen

## PRICE

### Suite

\$17,990 per person

### Double/Twin Cabin

\$14,990 per person

### Dedicated Single

\$18,990 per person

Deposit: \$2,500 per person

## INCLUSIONS

- 8 nights hotel accommodations
- 8 nights on board the *Heritage Explorer*
- All meals
- Non-alcoholic beverages with lunch and dinner, plus beer and house wine with meals while onboard *Heritage Explorer*.
- All excursions, transportation, and local guides
- Park fees, taxes, and permits
- Gratuities
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Internal air between Queenstown and Blenheim

**Group size: 16 travelers**



## BOOK NOW

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