

Splendours of the Western Mediterranean - with Renaud Capuçon

From **16/09/2022**
to **23/09/2022**

Ship: **LE LYRIAL**

From **Valletta**
to **Athens**



In partnership with **RADIO CLASSIQUE** with the exceptional presence on board of **Renaud Capuçon** and **Alain Duault**.

From the **Maltese archipelago** to the **Greek** coast via Sicily, **PONANT** invites you to experience exceptional moments discovering fascinating sites.

Le Lyrial will leave Valletta, the capital of Malta and former stronghold of the Knights of the Order of Malta, for an **8-day cruise** on seas that are brimming with history.

After calling at beautiful **Catania** whose Late Baroque style monuments spread to the foot of Mount Etna, we will set sail for Taormina.

In **Taormina**, the streets will lead you to the impressive **ancient theatre**, where the quality of the acoustics is exceptional. And as a constant backdrop: the majestic Mount Etna!

Le Lyrial will then cross the Ionian Sea towards **Katakolon**, its first Greek point of call. From the port, you will be able to head to **Olympia**, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, whose ruins testify to its former grandeur. On the following day, from **Itea**, another exceptional site awaits: **Delphi**.

Your ship will then sail along the astonishing **Corinth Canal**, a famous sea channel dug out by men in the 19th century, and arrive in Nafplion. From Nafplion you will be able to visit two ancient jewels: the Epidaurus Theatre and Mycenae, the royal city of House of Atreus.

The cruise will then enable you to discover **Hydra**, a small island of old-worldly charm where motorised traffic is banned.

Your cruise will end in Athens, the mythical city dominated by the Acropolis and its monuments that form **the most extraordinary architectural and artistic collection** bequeathed by Ancient Greece to the rest of the world.



The information in this document is valid as of 28/11/2021

Splendours of the Western Mediterranean - with Renaud Capuçon

YOUR STOPOVERS :

VALLETTA

Embarkation 16/09/2022 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 16/09/2022 at 18:00

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is **UNESCO World Heritage** listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. **Saint-John's cathedral** and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the **Barrakka Gardens** will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

CATANIA, SICILY

Arrival 17/09/2022 midday

Departure 17/09/2022 early evening

Sicily's second city **Catania** is dominated by the majestic silhouette of **Mount Etna**. Nourishing and devastating at the same time, this giant crowned with smoke rings brought about the destruction of the city at the end of the 17th century. Catania was then rebuilt in the late Baroque style, and the many monuments of this epoch have earned its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The baroque churches of the harmonious **Via dei Crociferi** perfectly illustrate the riches of this architectural heritage. During your stop, be sure to visit **Saint Agatha Cathedral** with its apses made of lava stones, and its square decorated with a fountain of the Elephant, the animal which allegedly has the power to calm the fury of Mount Etna ...

TAORMINA, SICILY

Arrival 18/09/2022 early morning

Departure 18/09/2022 midday

Located on Sicily's eastern coast, in the province of Messina, the seaside town of Taormina is Sicily's Saint-Tropez, boasting heritage sites, secluded beaches and luxury shopping. You can visit its medieval centre, suspended 300 metres above sea level, where terraces offer a spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea. Another vestige from its past are the ruins of the **Greco-Roman theatre**. This extremely well-preserved site attracts visitors who are fascinated by the natural beauty of the area which overlooks a **turquoise bay**.

KATAKOLON

Arrival 19/09/2022 early afternoon
Departure 19/09/2022 early evening

This picturesque village stretches along the Ionian sea in the west of the Peloponnese. Its main harbour offers a vast panorama of the coastline's wooded hillsides. Dazzling white, the **church of Saint-Nicolas** houses a selection of sumptuous icons. You can also pay a visit to the **archaeological site of Olympus** on the slopes of Mount Kronos.

ITEA

Arrival 20/09/2022 early morning
Departure 20/09/2022 midday

Tucked away in the Gulf of Corinth, this **little port** is situated in continental Greece, north-west of Athens. Take an easy stroll along the old cobblestone quays, while gazing at the summits encircling the **Bay of Itea**. We wouldn't be surprised if you are tempted by a visit to the **Delphi Sanctuary**. The sanctuary is located on a plateau on the slope of Mount Parnassus, just ten kilometres from Itea. A listed UNESCO World Heritage site, this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience whose ancient ruins are surrounded by steep mountains.

CROSSING THE CORINTH CANAL

Arrival 20/09/2022
Departure 20/09/2022

The Corinth Canal cuts through the Isthmus of Corinth, turning the Peloponnese into an island as it separates the region from the Greek mainland. Inaugurated in 1893, the canal is a little over six kilometres long and enables merchant vessels and passenger to avoid a long 400-km detour around the peninsula. The two sides of the canal reach a height of approximately fifty metres. From the exterior decks, don't miss this unique opportunity to watch the ship as it navigates along the narrow strip of water encased between tall, ochre cliffs. What an experience!

NAFLION

Arrival 21/09/2022 early morning
Departure 21/09/2022 evening

The engaging town of Nafplion is staggered up green hillsides of the Argolic Gulf, to the east of the Peloponnese. Do not be surprised by its extremely varied cultural heritage. Some of the must-see visits are the ancient agora on the plateau of Akronafplia, Italianate arcades in **Syntagma square** as well as the baroque fortress of **Palamidi** on a hillside of the same name. At the top of the hill, views of the gulf and the surrounding mountains are simply awesome. If you want to chill out by the water's edge, walk along the **Arvanitia promenade** to a beautiful creek in the shade of cedars and cypresses.

HYDRA

Arrival 22/09/2022 late morning
Departure 22/09/2022 late afternoon

This unusual gem belonging to the Saronic islands is located to the east of the Peloponnese. There are no cars here.

Named after the island, the harbour town is layered up the slopes of a mountainous bay. You may be surprised to see beautiful **stone mansions**. These are traditional here, as are the multi-coloured *caiques* along the quays. Further along the shore, you will discover the Historical Archives Museum. Collections from Athens National History Museum are exhibited in the elegant **villa Koundouriotis**.

ATHENS

Arrival 23/09/2022 early morning

Disembarkation 23/09/2022 at 07:00

The Greek capital city is located on the edge of the Saronic gulf, in the east of the country. It bears a plural name in reference to the first villages that surround the **Acropolis**. You will be enchanted by the rocky plateau presided by its monuments listed as UNESCO World Heritage. In the city below, you can visit some of the liveliest districts in Athens: **Plaka**, with its maze of colourful streets, and where, in the evenings the drifting aroma of moussaka and garlic prawns will tickle your taste buds. The **National Archaeological museum** and the Cycladic Art Museum are also some of the city's key attractions and allow visitors to discover Athens' cultural past.