MADAGASCAR TO MAURITIUS
Islands of the Indian Ocean aboard Hebridean Sky
December 5–20, 2023
Dear Commonwealth Club Member,

We are pleased to offer you an extraordinary cruise for those who love the natural world and all its wonders. The star is Madagascar, a thousand-mile island boasting an impressive variety of spectacular landscapes from pristine coral reefs and coastal mangroves to virgin rain forests and native baobab trees. Geographically isolated for millions of years, nearly all of Madagascar’s intriguing animals and plants are found nowhere else on Earth, including nearly 100 varieties of lemurs.

To maximize the time in Madagascar, this expedition begins with a private charter flight from Johannesburg, South Africa to Toliara, Madagascar, avoiding the two-day crossing of the rough Mozambique Channel by ship. In the company of expert study leader David Meyers, spend eleven days exploring Madagascar’s marine reserves and national parks traveling in comfort aboard the all-suite Hebridean Sky. Then, leaving the wonders of Madagascar behind, arrive at Réunion Island, a paradisiacal French outpost, to explore its white-sand beaches, spectacular dormant volcanoes, and vibrant Creole character. Disembark on the island of Mauritius, the perfect ending to our voyage, taking in this island’s cultural riches and geologic wonders before flying back to the U.S.

This unique journey to Madagascar and its neighboring islands is sure to generate interest. We will be sharing this voyage with travelers from the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Yale Alumni Academy. We know they will be excellent travel companions.

For more information or to reserve your space, please call our office at (415) 597-6720, or e-mail travel@commonwealthclub.org.

Sincerely,

Kristina Nemeth
Travel Director
STUDY LEADER

David Meyers is an environmental finance expert and entrepreneur with more than 25 years of experience in sustainability, business strategy and management, environmental economics, international conservation and development, environmental impact assessment, training, and education and research in ecology and evolution. In Madagascar, he helped the country plan and execute a doubling of the area under conservation. He holds a Doctorate in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy from Duke University and an MBA from the Yale School of Management. He spent much of his time in the 80s and 90s conducting research on lemurs in Madagascar as well as working for nature conservation. He is the co-author of the first two editions of the Field Guide to the Lemurs.

HIGHLIGHTS

♦ Explore Madagascar in depth from the convenience and comfort of the all-suite expedition ship Hebridean Sky, avoiding the delays and difficulties experienced when trying to explore the country overland, and reach intimate sites larger cruise ships cannot.

♦ See lemurs up close in their natural habitat, including the red ruffed lemur and the aye-aye, and learn about the conservation efforts to save these incredible animals.

♦ Cruise into dramatic Antsiranana, set on a stunning natural harbor with a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants.

♦ Visit the Durrell Breeding Program to learn about the efforts being made to protect the ploughshare tortoise, one of the most threatened breeds in the world.

♦ Snorkel in the warm and pristine waters around Nosy Tanikely, a tiny, uninhabited island surrounded by sandy beaches and a shallow coral reef teeming with fish and turtles.

♦ Take in the beauty of Masoala National Park, one of the most diverse virgin rain forests in Madagascar, hosting half of all flora and fauna found on the island.
ITINERARY

Tuesday–Wednesday, December 5–6
U.S / Johannesburg, South Africa
Fly overnight to Johannesburg, where we meet your fellow travelers at a welcome reception this evening.

INTERCONTINENTAL JOHANNESBURG (R)

Thursday, December 7
Johannesburg / Toliara, Madagascar
This morning board a charter flight to Toliara on the southwest coast of Madagascar. After arriving explore the Antsokay Arboretum and learn about its fantastic collection of endemic plants. Board the Hebridean Sky this afternoon and enjoy the captain's welcome reception this evening before dinner.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Friday, December 8
Toliara
Today visit the curious spiny forest region, a unique ecosystem that exists only in the southern part of Madagascar, and view the spectacular baobab trees at Reniala Private Reserve. The reserve is a paradise for birds and home to the grey mouse lemur, radiated tortoise and warty chameleon.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Saturday, December 9
Morondava
After breakfast, depart to see the Avenue of Baobabs, an extraordinary stand of the iconic massive trees, followed by free time at the market in Morondava. Or, visit the Kirindy Reserve, home to the greatest density and diversity of primates on Earth, as well as dozens of amphibian species. Look for the narrow-striped mongoose, the cat-like fossa, and seven lemur species, including the smallest known primate, the pygmy mouse lemur.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Sunday, December 10
At Sea
During a day at sea, enjoy the on-board lecture program as the Hebridean Sky cruises along the island's west coast.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Monday, December 11
Mahajanga
Drive to Ankarafantsika National Park, a vast reserve boasting a remarkable range of flora and fauna, for guided walks in search of wildlife. One of Madagascar's finest parks for birdwatching, it's home to 129 identified species, including the Van Dam's vanga. Learn about the medicinal plants and flowers that the locals used for centuries, try to glimpse tiny mouse lemurs and visit the breeding program established by the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust in 1986 to protect the critically endangered ploughshare tortoise.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Tuesday, December 12
Nosy Tanikely Marine Reserve
After a morning of cruising and on-board lectures, arrive at Nosy Tanikely's marine reserve for an afternoon of snorkeling. Recognized for its outstanding marine biodiversity, the reserve offers some of the best snorkeling in the area, with a spectacular coral reef teeming with colorful fish and other sea creatures.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Wednesday, December 13
Nosy Hara National Park
Nosy Hara means “mountainous island” in Malagasy and it's considered one of the last true paradises of Madagascar. The island offers a stunning bay, sandy beaches and the unique, sharply eroded limestone spikes known as Tsingy formations. Hike the low circular path on the island, or choose the steeper path to a sweeping viewpoint. Then relax on a beautiful beach in the afternoon.

HEBRIDEAN SKY (B,L,D)

Thursday, December 14
Antsiranana
Cruise around Madagascar’s northernmost point and into Antsiranana's glorious natural harbor for a guided tour of the town. Later climb aboard a four-wheel-drive vehicle to drive to Amber...
Mountain National Park for tropical rain forest walks. During our walks, see lush flora and waterfalls, look for the common crowned lemur, spot volcanic lakes and perhaps count more than 40 varieties of butterfly.

**Friday, December 15**

**Nosy Mangabe**

After a morning of cruising and lectures, spend the afternoon exploring Nosy Mangabe, a small island reserve of virgin rain forest and home to an unusual nocturnal lemur called the aye-aye. Take Zodics ashore for nature walks and look for black-and-white ruffed lemurs, colorful paradise flycatchers and many other types of wildlife.

**Saturday, December 16**

**Masoala National Park**

Explore this national park’s coastal rain forest, dense marshes and stands of mangrove. Search for a variety of colorful chameleons, geckos and, of course, lemurs, including the red-ruffed lemur native to this area. Stop at Ambodiforaha village to meet with the locals and shop in the market there.

**Sunday, December 17**

**At Sea**

The educational program continues during a final full day at sea en route to Réunion, a rain forest-studded island outpost hundreds of miles into the Indian Ocean.

**Monday, December 18**

**Réunion, France**

Visit the island of Réunion’s central highlands, a spectacular rugged landscape of active, dormant, extinct, and collapsed volcanoes. See picturesque villages that dot the verdant landscape and learn about vanilla production at a small family-run plantation. Enjoy the captain’s farewell reception this evening on board our ship before crossing to the neighboring island of Mauritius.

**Tuesday, December 19**

**Port Louis, Mauritius / Disembark / Depart**

After breakfast, disembark and discover the unique history of Port Louis and the island of Mauritius at the Citadel of Fort Louis and Aapravasi Ghat, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the immigration depot where the modern indentured labor diaspora began. Explore Chamarel, an eye-catching region of tropical flora, hidden waterfalls, and undulating sand dunes displaying an array of colors. Then visit the Bois Cheri tea plantation for a refreshing cup of tea before departing for the airport for flights home.

**Wednesday, December 20**

**Arrive U.S.**

**Pre-trip Extension: Safari at Sabi Sands Reserve**

December 1–6

Experience the “big five” and more at South Africa’s Kruger National Park.

**Post-trip Extension: Mauritius**

December 19–22

Further explore the lush landscape of Mauritius and learn about its long colonial history.

Further details and pricing will be sent to confirmed participants.
PROGRAM RATES (PER PERSON)

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*Note: A/B/C/D/E/F/G/H refer to different categories of suites on the Hebridean Sky.*

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

We consider this to be a moderately strenuous program, at times physically demanding and busy, with considerable walking at some destinations. Daily activities can involve up to two miles of walking, unaided, over varied terrain (e.g., uneven beaches, steep and sandy trails, dirt streets and paths in small villages). You will need to climb into and out of Zodiacs for most excursions. Please note that some locations involve wet landings. All participants should be comfortable swimming unassisted in open water. No prior snorkeling experience is necessary. Participants must be physically fit, active and in good health. As of publication, SARS-COV-2 (COVID 19) vaccinations are required for all participants as well as tour staff and shipboard crew. Up-to-date COVID-related protocols and procedures will be communicated in pre-trip documents.

**GROUP SIZE**

This program can accommodate 92 participants, including travelers from the Commonwealth Club of California, the World Affairs Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Yale Alumni Academy.
REUNION COASTLINE

GENERAL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

PROGRAM RATES DO NOT INCLUDE U.S. local and international airfare - Passport/visa expenses - Medical expenses, immunizations, and COVID-19 testing if required at the time of travel - Travel and trip cancellation insurance - Private transfers or airport transfers outside of group arrival and departure dates - Excursions that deviate from the scheduled tour options - Airline baggage charges - Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted - Laundry or dry cleaning - Telephone, fax, internet, and email charges - Room service - Other items of a personal nature

TRAVEL INSURANCE
Travel insurance for trip cancellation and interruption, medical problems, baggage loss and delay, etc., is highly recommended. Trip cancellation policies that apply to this expedition are included in this brochure. Information about travel insurance will be sent to confirmed participants.

A NOTE ABOUT RATES
Tour rates are based upon current fuel prices, taxes, tariffs, and a minimum number of participants. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change. If there are significant changes, details and costs will be advised prior to departure.

ELIGIBILITY
We require membership to the Commonwealth Club to travel with us. People who live outside of the Bay Area may purchase a worldwide membership. To learn about membership types and purchase a membership, call 415-597-6720 or visit commonwealthclub.org/membership.

TERMS & CONDITIONS
Complete Terms and Conditions including a Statement of Responsibility will be made available at time of registration, or in advance upon request. A signed "Terms & Conditions, Release from Liability, Assumption of Risk and Binding Arbitration Clause" is required from each applicant prior to participation on the tour.

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENTS
A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to reserve space on this program. If you have questions, or to register using a credit card (preferred method), please call (415) 597-6720 or email travel@commonwealthclub.org.

Final payment deadline is August 7, 2023. For those who register on or after August 7, 2023, full payment is due upon registration. Final payment must be made by check or bank transfer.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS
Upon payment of the $1,000 per person deposit, all reservations are subject to the cancellation provisions set forth below and by which the passenger agrees to be bound. Cancellations shall not be in effect until they are received in writing and confirmed by The Commonwealth Club. Deposits are refundable (less a $250 per person admin fee) if written notice of cancellation is received within 30 days of booking. After that, deposits are 100% nonrefundable. After final payment deadline of August 7, 2023, all payments are 100% nonrefundable, regardless of booking date. Trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.

NOTE: Neither The Commonwealth Club nor Criterion Travel, the tour operator, accepts liability for any airline cancellation penalties incurred with the purchase of non-refundable tickets.

ITINERARY CHANGES
The itinerary presented for this tour is subject to modification and change by The Commonwealth Club and Criterion Travel. Every reasonable effort will be made to operate the program as planned; however, should unforeseen world events and conditions require the itinerary to be altered, The Commonwealth Club and the tour operator reserve the right to do so for the safety and best interest of the group. Any extra expenses incurred in this situation are the responsibility of the participant.

To reserve space, please call (415) 597-6720 (preferred method) or complete the reservation form and mail it with your check or credit card information to: The Commonwealth Club, 110 The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94105. You may also email the form to us or request a call back to complete your reservation: travel@commonwealthclub.org.

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NAME #1
NAME #2

BIRTHDATE
BIRTHDATE

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP / POSTAL CODE

HOME PHONE
MOBILE PHONE

E-MAIL(s)

MEMBERSHIP
We require membership in the Commonwealth Club to travel with us. Please check one of the following options:

☐ I am a current member of the Commonwealth Club
☐ Please renew my membership with the credit card information provided here:

☐ I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership

PAYMENT

☐ Please charge the deposit to my credit card (circle one):
VISA           MC
AMEX           Discover

NAME ON CREDIT CARD
SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD
CARD #
EXP. DATE
SECURITY CODE

SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD
DATE

☐ Enclosed is my check for $_______ ($1,000 per person, payable to Criterion Travel) to reserve _____ place(s) on Madagascar to Mauritius

SINGLE TRAVELERS
If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

☐ I prefer to have single accommodations.
☐ I plan to share accommodations with:

☐ I’d like to know about roommates
I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of August 7, 2023, I will pay the single rate.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Cabin category preference:

1st Choice _______ 2nd Choice,_____
Bed Preference (not guaranteed):  ☐ One bed  ☐ Two beds

I/We have read the Terms & Conditions section of this brochure and understand with them as stated herein:

SIGNATURE
DATE

SIGNATURE
DATE