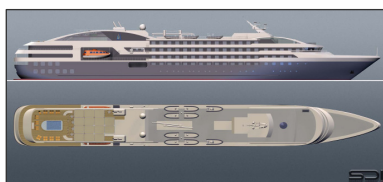


Ponant Cruises:

Ponant Cruises announces the names of its two new ships:

L'Austral and Le Boreal

After Le Ponant, Le Levant and Le Diamant, Ponant Cruises has again taken inspiration from points of the compass to name its two newest jewels of the sea ... names that hint at their future cruising destinations.



After *Le Levant*, *Le Ponant* and *Le Diamant*... as of 2010 the fleet will also include *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral*. To choose the name of its two new cruise ships, Ponant Cruises opted for a semantic approach. "In French *Le Levant* evokes the East and *Le Ponant* the West, so with *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral* we will cover the entire globe from North to South," commented Eric Lustman, Executive Vice President of Ponant Cruises. "These names were selected by a group from within our company, and seemed a logical extension of Ponant Cruises' current fleet, both for their names and their deployments." *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral* will take to the seas in May and August 2010 respectively. *Le Boreal* will sail off South America and the Antarctic continent as well as in the White Sea, towards

Spitsbergen, Greenland and the Canadian Arctic, while *L'Austral* is scheduled to call in South East Asia, Japan, India and the Mediterranean. "Some of these destinations are already served by our other vessels," explained Eric Lustman, "but we will be increasing the number of cruises we offer in these regions to meet increased demands, and exploring new ones such as the Canadian Arctic, the White Sea, Brazil, South East Asia and Japan."

The arrival of *L'Austral* and *Le Boreal* will also allow Ponant Cruises to attract a more international clientele. This is one of the main advantages of operating the ships," predicts Eric Lustman. "We have been observing increased demand, both in the charter and individual passenger markets for luxury cruises on 'more intimate' ships such as *Le Diamant*, which has 113 cabins and suites. *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral*, each with 132 cabins, are the ideal size to meet this demand," pointed out Eric Lustman. "Our ambition is to become a key player in the international cruise business, particularly in the niche market for small-capacity ships, where we aim to be up amongst the industry leaders."

Ordered from the Italian *Fincantieri* shipyard, *Le Boreal* and *L'Austral* will each have 132 cabins, 95% with balconies, and will be able to accommodate up to 264 passengers who will be looked after by 139 crew members.

Designed like 'private yachts', the architecture firms Stirling Design International (SDI) and Jean-Philippe Nuel, have been entrusted with the exterior and interior design respectively. Both vessels measure 140-metres long and 18-metres wide with the same streamlined silhouettes and will be fitted with large arched windows fore and aft to further enhance their style. Capable of sailing at a speed of 16 knots, *L'Austral* and *Le Boreal* will be fitted with dynamic positioning systems to avoid anchoring in protected marine areas.

For the interiors, a contemporary warm spirit will be featured, using superior materials and traditional nautical craftsmanship. A fully equipped auditorium and observation lounge will also be installed on board.

Like the current three ships, *L'Austral* and *Le Boreal* will offer the unique atmosphere associated with Ponant Cruises: A subtle blend of relaxation, sophistication and intimacy, with the French touch ... Two new luxury ships catering to today's tastes.

Technical characteristics

- 10,700 GRT • 142.10 m long (470 feet)
- 18 m wide (60 feet)
- 4.7 m draught (16 feet)
- Up to 132 cabins and suites
- Up to 264 passengers
- 139 crew members

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Founded in 1988, the *Ponant Cruises* is the leading French-flag cruise line, with its current fleet of three ships: *Le Ponant*, *Le Levant* and *Le Diamant*. A subsidiary of CMA-CGM, the world's third largest container shipping company, since 2004, Ponant Cruises offers luxury cruises around the world and is reputed for its unusual destinations and itineraries, its tailored and themed cruises, its up market, sophisticated services with their French touch, its ships on a human scale, and its commitment to respecting the environment. For further information: www.ponant.com