Come explore the enchanting Marquesas Islands on what is often referred to as the trip of a lifetime. For 30 years our ships have been bringing avid adventurers on one of the most fascinating voyages anywhere on the planet. This ship, the crown jewel in our pursuit of the ultimate passenger-freighter, will take you to remote areas as we resupply these tiny communities so far from civilization. The unspoiled beauty, the warmth of its people and their culture give a glimpse into the ancient majesty of these islands.

For two full weeks, on this all inclusive (meals and scheduled excursions) cruise, our modern and comfortable vessel will be your home as you discover the magic that attracted Paul Gauguin, Robert Louis Stevenson, Thor Heyerdahl and Jacques Brel. Our warm and gracious staff and crew, many of whom have been with us for many years, will welcome you and delight in introducing you to their centuries-old customs. They join with our knowledgeable, multilingual lecturers and guides in answering your questions as you explore these captivating islands.

Accommodating just 254 passengers, the Aranui 5 continues the relaxed, friendly tradition started by her sister ships. Meet new friends at the bars and lounge or relax on the deck or by the pool as the islands seem to float by. If you seek privacy or romance, retreat to your balcony in a suite or deluxe stateroom. Watch the infinite colors of the sunset play in the sky and sea as another day draws to a close in the South Pacific. After a three-course dinner, let the lively Aranui Band introduce you to Polynesian rhythms and teach you to swivel your hips to the infectious beat of the Tamure or the Tahitian Waltz.

Cover painting: Erhardt Lux
Te Henua Enana
THE LAND OF MEN
Today, SOME OF THE PROUD DESCENDANTS OF THESE GREAT NAVIGATORS ARE MEMBERS OF OUR POLYNESIAN CREW. They will introduce you to their homeland in a manner and with a perspective only they can offer. As the Aranui, which translates to the “Great Highway”, takes you on a 2500 mile adventure through some of the most remote islands in the world, you will gain access to villages no other ships visit.

For nearly four decades, the primary purpose of the Aranui has been a lifeline to the Islanders, bringing supplies to their many villages and valleys. In these remote islands, our arrival is always met with great enthusiasm as Aranui provides an essential link to the outside world. Eagerly awaited provisions — from sugar to a new sewing machine, sandals for the children to a new pick-up truck — create a holiday atmosphere. Copra, citrus fruit, fish and barrels of Noni are loaded while in port, destined for Papeete.

Watching the Aranui’s muscular crew perform their tasks like a tightly choreographed ballet is part of the charm of the voyage. As they assist you from ship to shore aboard our whaleboats and tenders, you will become well acquainted with these lively and talented sailors.

Shared adventures create an immediate bond with our multinational passengers. Whether onboard over drinks or dinner, or onshore admiring the arts and crafts, new friendships are formed, many that last a lifetime.

An ancient legend TELLS OF THE CREATION OF THE MARQUESAS.

The god Oatea, who had no house, was chided by his wife Atanua to build one. Though he did not possess the know-how, with the help of his magical powers, he forged ahead. One evening, at nightfall, he stood up and called out an incantation. “Long roots, short roots, work roots, large roots, small roots, build up this house.” Having done this, he chose the setting for his new home.

First he erected two pillars and named them Ua Pou. By laying a ridge piece on top of the pillars and tying it with a rope made of coconut fibers, Hiva Oa was created. He then attached the beams and the rafters to the posts and ridge and called it Nuku Hiva. Using the nine part technique employed in making coconut palm frond coverings, he assembled the roof and gave it the name Fatu Hiva. Oatea continued his work into the night, digging a hole to complete his task. As dawn was approaching, Atanua called out: “there is a shining light.” “This is Tahuata”, he replied. “The morning birds are singing”, she continued. “This is Mohotani”, he added. Oatea did not stop until the hole was finished, which he filled up with all of the waste and named it Ua Huka. The sun had now risen. “Here! Here! Here shines bright the Land of Men”, Atanua cried out. “This is Eiao”, he declared. In the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean lies the ancestral home of the Marquesan people, known as, “The Land of Men”. 
It is estimated that the first inhabitants to settle the Marquesas, migrated from the western Pacific around 125 B.C. Gradually moving from the coast inland, tribes formed, living in separate valleys, where they developed tools and the land.

In 1595, Alvaro de Mendana, sailing from Peru in search of the Solomon Islands, discovered the islands of Tahuata and Hiva Oa, naming them “Marquesas de Mendoza” in honor of the wife of his patron, who had financed his expedition. After a skirmish involving some of his men, who used Marquesans for target practice, Mendana continued on. For nearly two centuries, the Marquesas remained isolated until Captain James Cook stopped during his second voyage on the Resolution in 1774, followed by the American Captain Ingraham and the Frenchman Etienne Marchand in 1791. In 1838, Frenchman Abel Auber Dupetit-Thours arrived in Tahuata on his ship, the Venus. After befriending a chieftain, lotete, he was able to leave two missionaries. Sent four years later by King Louis-Philippe, he was welcomed by lotete and on May 1st, 1842, claimed possession of the Marquesas. That same year, Armand-Joseph Bruat became the first governor of the Marquesas Islands.

**“NO, WE ARE NOT Tahitian.”**

While there is a cultural unity between the Pacific Islands, the isolation of the groups dictated a different evolution. The volcanic structure, rough coast and deep valleys of the Marquesas created a tribal society, with each valley sheltering distinct tribes. Society was divided between aristocrats, priests, artisans, an adolescent group and laborers. The Marquesan language, which includes different dialects, and while related to other areas of the Pacific, is unique, even from the other islands of French Polynesia. Constant conflict between the tribes was inevitable, creating a nation of formidable warriors.

The Marquesan polytheistic religion attributed a god to each thing. The gods’ anger was formidable, but could be assuaged by human sacrifices and offerings. The associated cannibalism for revenge or to acquire strength was practiced until 1867. Hospitality, however, was unlimited and emissaries moved from one tribe to another and were considered tapu (taboo) during those visits. Of importance then, and still today, is politeness and the failure to greet or acknowledge another person, a serious insult.

**Vestiges OF THE PAST**

The Marquesas Islands are especially rich in archeological sites. The initial dig by Robert Suggs in the 1950s in Nuku Hiva, produced Lapita pottery carbon dated to 125 B.C. This confirmed the origin of the first migration coming from Eastern Indonesia- Western Melanesia. Important later period sites in varying stages of excavation and restoration can be found on each island: large stone complexes consisting of a tohua, or ceremonial plaza with stadium-like platforms for spectators and massive paepae, or house platforms interspersed. At the seaward end, a platform made of sacred red tuff stones and part of the me’a’e, or open air temple, were used for the display of human sacrifices. Most notable are Te I’i Pona in Hiva Oa, home to 11 tikis including the giant Taka’i and Maka’i Tau’a Pepe, the “Butterfly Princess”; the small but beautiful ceremonial plaza of Kauinihe, the temple of Te I’i Poka whose huge stone temple platform is crowned by a giant Banyan tree, and the Pa’eke, a me’a’e with nearby petroglyphs in Nuku Hiva.
Arts & Crafts

Marquesans have been accomplished crafts men and women since earliest time, often with one island best known for a special material or technique. There are master carvers on each island, many with a long family tradition. Large carvings in volcanic stone and red tuft are most often seen at their workshops (home). In the artisanal centers, wood and smaller stone carvings of Tikis, turtles, lizards and sea creatures abound. Stone *penu* (pounders) and beautiful oval or round rosewood umete (bowls) are plentiful. Jewelry made in carved wood, stone, shell and bone is as varied as the artisan’s imagination. On the island of Ua Huka, look for the unique black and white carved coconuts. Exquisite bone and pink helmet shell carving are the speciality of Tahuatu with amazingly intricate designs.

Tapa was originally used for clothing and ceremonial use. In modern day, Fatu Hiva produces some of the finest examples. The umuhei (kumuhei), a small bundle of herbs and flowers and another island specialty, is used by the women to perfume their hair.

Did you know “tattoo” IS A MARQUESAN WORD?

The modern word tattoo originates in early Polynesian history. Practiced throughout all the Island groups, it is more developed in the Marquesas Islands. The designs represent gods, mythology and all of nature. In tradition, tattooing began shortly after birth and continued both to mark rites of passage and for decoration. Men were generally more heavily covered, with women tattooed on the hands, arms, lower body and behind the ear. A man’s position and wealth could be read from his tattoos. Banned by the French from 1858 until 1985, it is flourishing and influencing the art worldwide. The traditional bird and fish bone and mother of pearl needles tapped by a mallet are rarely seen now and the many fine Marquesan artists use modern equipment. Tattoo are worn today with great pride.

The Call of the Wild

For the last two centuries, the allure of the Marquesas Islands has enticed numerous westerners to her shores. From writers and artists to explorers and adventurers, these islands have provided refuge and solace.

Herman Melville, of *Moby Dick* fame, spent several months among the Taipi people in Nuku Hiva, after jumping ship in 1842, which he recounted in his novel *Typee*. On his dream trip through the South Seas, Robert Louis Stevenson, stopped for two months in Nuku Hiva and Hiva Oa, which was his inspiration for *In the South Seas* and *The Wreck*, set in the Marquesas. Thor Heyerdahl, a Norwegian explorer, who had spent a year on Fatu Hiva in the 1930s, theorized that the Marquesan people had migrated from South America, which he attempted to prove on his well-documented *Kon-Tiki* expedition. Belgian singer Jacques Brel, terminally ill, retreated to Hiva Oa, searching for a peaceful place where no one knew who he was. Of course, the most famous foreigner was Paul Gauguin. Settling in Hiva Oa, he created some of his greatest masterpieces at his infamous House of Pleasure. He died in 1903, and is buried in the nearby cemetery with his statue Oviri, “Wild One”.

THE CALL OF THE WILD
Nuku Hiva

This island is the administrative center of the Marquesas. The village of Taiohae stretches along the beach of a magnificent amphitheater created by the successive eruptions of three concentric volcanoes and dominated by towering cliffs streaked with waterfalls. All of the government services and residence, hospital, bank and schools are close by. A lovely handcraft center is located on the beach road.

Your adventure in Nuku Hiva will include a tour of the Cathedral Notre Dame, famed for its stonework and wood sculptures. In Hatiheu, you will visit the archeological site known as Kamuihei, and a small museum of petroglyphs. In the valley of Taipivai, an area dotted with stone tikis, you will discover the me'a'e, sacred ritual sites, the paepae, immense stone platforms on which the Taipi built their houses and huge boulders carved with enigmatic petroglyphs. A traditional "Umu", a Marquesan specialty, where food is cooked in an underground oven, will be served for lunch.

Below: Paepae in Nuku Hiva;
Bottom left: Polynesian Night in Ua Huka;
Center: Petroglyph in Nuku Hiva;
Bottom right: Horseback in Ua Huka.

Ua Huka

This island, where the Marquesas’ first airstrip was built in 1972, is largely arid and home to many wild horses, goats and pigs. It is also the least inhabited in the Marquesas and is a refuge for two endemic birds: the pati'ot'o and the pihiti, only found here. In the early morning, the Aranui will execute a point-to-point 180-degree turn in the narrow mouth of Vaipae'e's Invisible Bay. With only feet to spare on either side, it is a skillful operation by the captain and the crew not to be missed.

After visiting a small museum with exquisite replicas of Marquesan artifacts located in the gardens at city hall, you will travel by 4-WD to the village of Hane. Along the way, you will stop to explore the arboretum and botanical garden, and the fishing village of Hokatu. Following lunch, you will have time to visit local wood-carvers’ studios. Look for the unusual carved black and white coconuts.
Legend refers to Ua Pou as the “pillars of the archipelago” and it is often called “The Cathedral Island”. These names become clear as the ship docks at Hakahau Bay surrounded by 12 basalt summits soaring as high as 3,745 feet. Every island has its own special ambience and Ua Pou’s is one of mystery and magic. You are sure to see familiar looking faces as many of our crew members are from here.

For the energetic early risers, you can hike up the hill to the Cross for breathtaking views of the valleys and village below. The artisans’ center is an easy walk and the offerings include works featuring the unique flower stone and a variety of carvings and children’s apparel. Before enjoying a Marquesan lunch, take in an excellent dance performance, including the Bird Dance, traditional to Ua Pou.

Right: Ua Pou; Center: Fruits from Botanical Garden in Ua Huka; Far right: Bird Dance in Ua Pou; Below: Hane Bay in Ua Huka.
Atuona, this island’s principal village and the second largest in the Marquesas, was once the capital of this archipelago. Adjacent to the town, a tohua, a huge set of ceremonial platforms, has been perfectly restored, showing the places where chieftains and priests sat, and a narrow ditch which held prisoners for sacrifices.

A morning drive by 4-WD takes you to Puamau to visit the most important local archeological site for tikis, ancient, human-like religious sculptures, at Mea’e Iipona. Our guides will show you through these mysterious ruins and share stories of these haunting statues and an ancient civilization. In Atuona, sweeping views of the harbor highlight a walk up the hill to the cemetery where Paul Gauguin and Jacques Brel are buried. Explore the Gauguin Museum, a replica of his “House of Pleasure”, and the Brel Museum, which showcases his plane JoJo, which was often used for medical emergencies.

Left: The Bay of Virgins in Fatu Hiva; Bottom left: Bone and wood carvings from Tahuata; Bottom right: Mea’ e Iipona in Hiva Oa.
Fatu Hiva

The most lush and remote in the archipelago, Fatu Hiva is also a center of Marquesan crafts. In the village of Omoa, women will demonstrate the making of tapa by hammering mulberry, banyan or breadfruit bark on a log. It will be dried and then painted with ancient traditional designs. Another demonstration will show the making of the kumuhei, an herbal bundle unique to this island used by the local women to perfume their hair. The adjacent craft center offers tapa, carvings, hand-dyed pareos and some of the finest monoi coconut oil.

Following the visit of the village, athletic passengers may choose to hike from Omoa to Hanavave, a 10 mile trek offering spectacular views of towering cliffs and waterfalls. Lunch will be served at the summit. Non-hikers will sail on the Aranui to Hanavave on the Bay of Virgins, considered one of the most beautiful bays in the world. Go ashore for a dance performance and to welcome the hikers.

Tahuata

Though the smallest of the inhabited Marquesan islands, it is historically one of the richest. Tahuata has experienced it all—as the first island in the archipelago to be discovered by Spanish explorers, who opened fire on a crowd of curious islanders, killing about 200, in 1595 to the arrival of missionaries in 1797 to the first French settlement in the Marquesas in 1842. The local men, and many of the women here carve exquisite tikis, sea creatures, bracelets, necklaces and more from horse and cow bone, fossilized bone, tusks and pink helmet shell.

The impressive church, built by the Vatican, and decorated with beautiful carvings and a stained glass window featuring the Marquesan cross, is well worth the visit. After lunch aboard, enjoy a lazy afternoon on a beautiful white sand beach or taking a refreshing dip in the Pacific Ocean.

Right: Gauguin’s grave in Hiva Oa;
Bottom right: Church in Tahuata;
Below: Kokuu Beach in Tahuata.
Fakarava

Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for the preservation of rare species and the second largest atoll in French Polynesia, Fakarava has remained virtually untouched. From its stunning lagoon and glistening white sand beaches to its rich ecosystem, it is home to unique birds, plants and marine life.

You will have time to discover the small village of Rotoava, the church, built of coral and the local arts and crafts. Bicycle rentals are available if you wish to venture to the old lighthouse at the airport or enjoy a day of relaxation, sun and sand, swimming and snorkeling among colorful tropical fish.

Rangiroa

The largest atoll in French Polynesia, Rangiroa or “huge sky” is the most visited of the Tuamotu.

The endless lagoon attracts divers to snorkel, scuba or shoot the pass surrounded by fish of every size, color and shape. Rangiroa is famous for its majestic Manta rays. It is also home to stunning pearls in all shades and the local artisans are known for their fine shell jewelry.

While in Rangiroa, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the magnificent lagoon, swimming, snorkeling or diving, or visit one of the finest pearl farms in the Tuamotu to learn about these rare gems and see how they are grown.
Bora Bora

Best known of the Society Islands, Bora Bora showcases a stunning lagoon in myriad shades of blues and greens and the striking Mt. Otemanu, which inspired James Michener and everyone who visits the island. Surrounded by motus (small islets), the ring of white beaches fringed by coconut trees is enchanting. An advanced base during World War II, a tour of the island visits the gun emplacements.

In this picture perfect island paradise, you will enjoy a day at the beach on a private motu while the crew prepares another delicious picnic lunch featuring Tahitian specialties. In the afternoon, you will have time at your leisure. You may also choose from a variety of optional excursions at an additional cost, such as a circle island tour by boat or bus, helicopter ride, a 4-WD off-road tour or one of the most popular, shark and ray feeding.
Optional Activities

Due to its remoteness and isolation in the South Pacific, the Marquesas offers an abundance of marine life. Whether by line or trolling, fishing has always been an integral part of life for the islanders and our crew. As such, Aranui 5 has added the Mokai Nui 2, a four-person fishing boat, which offers outings with a seasoned crew on each island in the Marquesas. Tuna, marlin and mahi mahi are some of the types of fish that can be found here. Experience the thrill of catching your dinner, which our chef will turn into a delicious dish for you and your friends.

In Rangiroa, regarded as one of the best diving spots in the world, and in Bora Bora, scuba diving for all levels is available. Inquire at the reception for reservations. An additional charge applies and make sure to bring your certification.

In Bora Bora, several optional activities are offered at an additional cost. These include a circle island tour by Le Truck, a lagoon tour by motorized canoe or by helicopter. The most popular, not for the faint of heart, is a swim with sharks and rays. You may sign up for the various activities on Day 11 in the Conference Room.
French Polynesia

Map not to scale.