THE PAST. THE PRESENT. THE FUTURE.

1830s
The origins of P&O Cruises can be traced back to the 1830s, when Brodie McGhie Willcox and Arthur Anderson founded the business that later became The Peninsular Steam Navigation Company.

1840
The first steamship in Willcox & Anderson's fleet was the paddle steamer WILLIAM FAWCETT.

In 1837 the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company started a regular service to Portugal and Spain and was awarded a lucrative government contract to carry mail. The service was so successful the company was invited to add routes to Alexandria in Egypt and eventually on to India. At this time "Oriental" was added to the company name, to become the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O).

1852
In 1852 P&O's OHUSAN became the first Royal Mail Steam Ship to sail from Great Britain to Sydney, Australia. The inaugural voyage of 85 days was 50 days faster than some previous vessels.

1857
Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee; P&O built four 6,000 ton 'jubilee' ships – VICTORIA, BRITANNIA, VECTIS and ARCADIA.

1842
For a new service between Suez and India, the company ordered two new ships – wooded paddle steamers each 240 feet long, with 150 berths. The first, HINDOSTAN, sailed from Southampton in September 1842.

1910
P&O continued to grow over the decades and cruising was introduced. In 1910 the company took over Blue Anchor Line. The company was also carrying immigrants from Britain to Australia and returned with China tea and Australian wool.

1920s
In the 1920s P&O continued to expand and acquired substantial holdings in Orient Line. Despite the Wall Street Crash and the Depression, the company's most successful ship of the decade, and one of the most significant in its long history, entered service in 1929 – VICTORY OF INDIA.

1930s
By the 1930s cruising had become more commonplace than in previous eras. Ships had become much larger and more comfortable, but the entertainment was still a far cry from today's cruise ships.

1929
The 20,000 ton VICTORY OF INDIA set new standards in luxury, including the first indoor pool aboard a P&O liner. The panelled Smoking Room was like a stately home at sea.

1914
In 1914, with Britain on the verge of war, P&O merged with one of its greatest rivals, British India. Later that year 100 of the merged company's ships were requisitioned to carry troops during World War I. Many were lost in the conflict – 44 in 1917 alone.

1942
During World War II dozens of merchant ships were requisitioned and converted for war duty, including many of P&O's vessels. At the start of the war the P&O fleet numbered 36 passenger and cargo ships; more than half of these were lost, including the elegant VICTORY OF INDIA, which was torpedoed and sunk in 1942.

1931
The 1930s saw the launch of the company's five new 23,000-ton "royals" liners. As the RMS TRIDENT pictured here, each of the ships had brand new livery. Previous vessels in the fleet had black hulls, but the new liners were all white, with buff coloured funnels – they were soon nicknamed the 'White Sisters'. The livery still marks out the P&O Cruises fleet to this day.

1960
In 1960 P&O bought the balance of Orient Line and P&O-Orient Lines was formed. (The name was used for only a few years.) The newly merged company offered voyages that circled the globe.

BRIGHT LINE
BOOMERANG TRIPS

1954
In the 1950s P&O rebuilt its fleet. But in the post-war era the world's transport network was changing with the dawning of the 'jet age'. People were gradually opting to fly to destinations such as Australia rather than sail. In anticipation, new ships like ARCADIA (1954) were designed as dual role vessels, able to undertake line voyages and operate as cruise ships.

1974
In 1974 the Company acquired Princes Cruises, a leading US cruise operator.

PRINCES CRUISES

1961
One of the company's best-loved ships of all time was launched in 1961 – CANBERRA was one of the most stylish and technically advanced ships in the world. With a gross tonnage of 45,000 tons she could accommodate 2,250 passengers and crew, and cruised at 27 knots. During the 1960s the ship was used for both cruising and line voyages, which included carrying thousands of British passengers to Australia. They were paid a nominal fare, which was just over £10 and were dubbed the 'ten pound poms'.

A new departure... in 1961 sailing under the British India flag, the company launched educational cruises for school children. A total of 37,000 children and 10,000 teachers enjoyed cruises each year.

1982
Within three days of the invasion of the Falkland Islands CANBERRA was requisitioned for war duty. During the following 48-hours the liner was converted in Southampton to troop-carrier and strengthened to carry helicopters. Within a few days the ship was bound for the South Atlantic with troops.

The Great White Whale', as CANBERRA was nicknamed by the troops from the Falklands war, arrived back in her homeport of Southampton in July 1982. Crowds totalling 30,000 turned out to welcome the ship. The liner continued to be very popular until finally being withdrawn from service in 1997.

1983
Jeffrey Sterling, later Lord Sterling of Plaistow, GCVO, CBE, took over from Lord Inchcape as chairman of P&O, and steered the company into a position of strength. His contribution to the continuing success of P&O Cruises saw him granted the honorary position of Life President in April 2003.

2000–2003
In 2000 the cruise business was re-merged to become 'P&O Princess Cruises Ltd'. Three years later this became part of the Carnival Group, along with Cunard, Seabourn, Ocean Village and Costa – the largest cruise operator in the world. The corporation's Chairman and CEO is Micky Arison, whose late father, Ted Arison, founded Carnival Cruise Line in 1972.

2010
AZURA enters the fleet after being named by Godmother Dianey Buswell.

2014
Today's fleet of seven cruise ships is a world away from the steamships of 1837, but P&O Cruises underlying vision remains the same – to provide passengers with a "home away from home" experience when travelling by sea. It's a thread that runs throughout our history... part of the heritage of P&O Cruises.

The Grand Event
All seven ships in the fleet meet in Southampton to celebrate 175 years of heritage. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Patron of P&O Cruises, will be the first sail through the Solent, before they depart on their special commemorative cruises.

February 2014
BRITANNIA hits the water for the first time at her float out.

Spring 2015
BRITANNIA sails into her home port of Southampton for the first time, and embarks on her maiden cruise following her naming celebrations.

September 2015
P&O Cruises announces the name of its latest ship, BRITANNIA, which is described as 'modern classic'.

P&O CRUISES

SHIPS FOR ALL AGES & ATTITUDE

Adonia
30,277 tons, 710 passengers and 373 crew

EXCLUSIVELY FOR ADULTS smaller ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Pacific Restaurant • Marco Pierre White's Ocean Grill • Sorrento • The Conservatory buffet restaurant • Lido Café • Room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa with thalassotherapy pool • Salon • Gymnasium • 1 pool & 2 whirlpool spas
Golf net • Library • Photo gallery • Card room • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
The Curzon lounge

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Raffles Bar • The Curzon bar • The Crow's Nest lounge & bar • Anderson's bar • Deck bar

Arcadia
83,781 tons, 2,016 passengers and 866 crew

EXCLUSIVELY FOR ADULTS mid-sized ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Two Set Meridian Restaurant • Neptune Grill • Marco Pierre White's Ocean Grill
NEW Atul Kochhar's Café • The Belvedere buffet restaurant • Caffè Vivo • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa with hydropool & thermal suite • Salon • Gymnasium • 2 pools, 1 with skydome & 5 whirlpool spas • Sports Court • Golf nets • Library • Photo & art galleries • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
3 Star Fabulium theatre • The Screening Room boutique cinema • Monte Carlo Casino
The Globe

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
The Crow's Nest lounge & bar • The Piano Bar • The Rising Sun pub • Intermezzo bar
Spinnaker Bar • The Exit Bar • The Globe • 2 deck bars

Aurora
76,152 tons, 1,874 passengers and 850 crew

FAMILY FRIENDLY mid-sized ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Alexandra & Medina Restaurants • Marco Pierre White's Café Bordeaux bistro • Pennant Grill al fresco restaurant • The Orangery buffet restaurant • Sidewalk café • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa • Salon • Gymnasium • 3 pools, 1 with skydome & 4 whirlpool spas • Sports court • Golf nets • Library • Cybercafé • Photo gallery • Vanderbilt's card room • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
The Curzon theatre • The Playhouse cinema • Monte Carlo casino
Carmen's show lounge & bar

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Raffles Bar • The Crow's Nest lounge & bar • Anderson's Bar • Champion's pub • Charlie's Masquerade nightclub • 4 deck bars

Azura
115,055 tons, 3,100 passengers and 1,250 crew

FAMILY FRIENDLY larger ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Oriental, Peninsular and Meridian Restaurants • Atul Kochhar's Sindhu • Olly Smith's The Glass House • Seventeen classic fine dining restaurant • Verona and Venezia buffet restaurants • Trattoria Italian restaurant in Verona (evening only) • Poolside pizzeria, grill and ice cream • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
The Retreat al fresco spa terrace • Oasis Spa with pool and thermal suite • Salon • Gymnasium 4 pools & 6 whirlpool spas • Sports court • Golf nets • Library
Photo and art galleries • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
The Playhouse theatre • SeaScreen open air cinema • Casino • Malabar • Manhattan show lounge • 3 deck atrium with dance floor

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Olly Smith's The Glass House wine bar • Planet Bar with 20m plasma video wall • Blue bar
Brodie's pub • Manhattan • 4 deck bars

Britannia
141,000 tons, 3,600 passengers and 1,400 crew

FAMILY FRIENDLY larger ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Peninsular, Oriental & Meridian • Atul Kochhar's Sindhu • The Glass House The Horizon buffet restaurant • Market Café featuring Eric Lanlard • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa • Salon • Gymnasium • 4 pools & 2 whirlpool spas • Sports court
Library • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
Headliners Theatre • The Limelight Club • The Crystal Room • The Live Lounge
The Studio

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Java • The Crow's Nest • Brodie's • The Atrium • The Blue Bar

Oceana
77,499 tons, 2,016 passengers and 890 crew

FAMILY FRIENDLY mid-sized ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Adriatic & Ligurian Restaurants • Café Jardin (serving a Marco Pierre White Italian inspired menu in the morning) • Horizon Café al fresco restaurant • The Piazza buffet restaurant
Sundaes ice cream bar • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa • Salon • Gymnasium • 2 pools & 5 whirlpool spas • Sports court • Library
Photo and art galleries • Card room • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
Footlights theatre • Monte Carlo casino • Starlights show lounge

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Tiffany's lounge • Winners' sports bar • Magnums • Yacht & Compass pub
Explorers Bar • Lit Club nightclub • 3 deck bars

Oriana
69,840 tons, 1,880 passengers and 760 crew

EXCLUSIVELY FOR ADULTS mid-sized ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Peninsular & Oriental Restaurants • Marco Pierre White's Ocean Grill • Sorrento Italian restaurant • Al Fresco Mediterranean restaurant • The Conservatory buffet restaurant
Tiffany Court • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
Oasis Spa • Salon • Gymnasium • 3 pools & 4 whirlpool spas • Sports court • Golf nets
Deck tennis • Library • Cybercafé • Photo gallery • Cutchton's card room • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
Theatre Royal • Chaplin's cinema • Monte Carlo casino • Pacific show lounge & bar

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
The Crow's Nest lounge & bar • Anderson's bar • Lord's Tavern pub & sports bar • Harlequins nightclub • 3 deck bars

Ventura
116,017 tons, 3,078 passengers and 1,205 crew

FAMILY FRIENDLY larger ship

PLACES TO DINE:
Bay Tree, Saffron and Cinnamon Restaurants • Marco Pierre White's The White Room
Atul Kochhar's East • Olly Smith's The Glass House • Waterside and Beach House buffet restaurants • Tazzine • Frankie's grill, pizzeria and ice cream • 24hr room service

PLACES TO UNWIND:
The Retreat al fresco spa terrace • Oasis Spa with endless pool & thermal suite • Salon
Gymnasium • 4 pools, 1 with skydome & 6 whirlpool spas • Sports court • Golf nets
Library • Photo and art galleries • Shops

PLACES TO BE ENTERTAINED:
Arena Princess • Casino • Havana show lounge • The Tamarind Club
3 deck atrium with dance floor

PLACES TO SOCIALISE:
Olly Smith's The Glass House wine bar • Metropolis bar with 20m plasma video wall
Red Bar • The Exchange pub & sports bar • Havana • 4 deck bars

P&O CRUISES