



THE HEBRIDEAN TIMES

HEBRIDEAN ISLAND CRUISES

ISSUE FORTY THREE • WINTER 2023



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Cover Image: Eilean Donan Castle

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of The Hebridean Times

Hebridean Princess has recently left her home port of Oban and sailed into the sheltered waters of the Clyde where she will spend the winter months undergoing her annual refit.

Lord of the Highlands has completed her cruise schedule and will spend her off season berthed in Inverness.

In this issue of The Hebridean Times, Captain Richard Heaton reflects on his highlights of a busy season for *Hebridean Princess*.

Lord of the Highlands head chef, Craig Hawthorn, shares with you a classic recipe which you may wish to try over the festive period, and you can learn more about him in our Meet the Team feature on page 14.

We recently released the 2024 Cruise Collection for *Lord of the Highlands*. She will be venturing into new waters next year and you can discover her enticing selection of brand-new itineraries and details of our early booking savings on pages 6 and 7 of this edition.

Archaeologist and *Hebridean Princess* guest speaker, Bruce Bennison, delves into the myriad of secrets of the ancient history of Orkney and Shetland which guests can uncover on our Prehistoric Scotland cruise in June next year. Please see pages 10-12 for a taste of this voyage into the past.

We send our warmest wishes for the festive season and hope you have a healthy and prosperous New Year. We very much look forward to welcoming you on board *Hebridean Princess* or *Lord of the Highlands* in 2024.

Louise.

Louise Pratt
Editor



Hebridean Princess, Dublin (John Noorani)



4-5

View from the Bridge

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Captain Richard Heaton



Captain Richard Heaton

It's hard to believe that this year's cruising season is nearly at an end and I can't help but wonder 'where did it all go?'. As we return to the Clyde, I look back and reflect on what has been a busy, yet enjoyable season.

Albeit at an amateur level, I have a passion for wildlife photography. This year has been particularly good for sightings of marine and bird life around the west coast, Orkney and Shetland, but I think my most memorable has to be during our wildlife cruise when I set foot for the first time in 21 years, on the Isle of Lunga. It was such an awesome experience to be amidst so much bird life, but then to be in such close proximity to puffins - remaining on the footpaths, there's no need to approach them as you run the risk of collapsing the burrows, just bide your time and they come to you!

I was fortunate this year to be on board for the three successful landings on the remote archipelago of St Kilda. It is such an awe-inspiring destination due to the history, heritage, geology and wildlife. Then, as we returned to Orkney and Shetland for the first time in four years, we were able to reconnect with the isolated island community at Fair Isle. Whilst it was good to see the rebuild of the new bird observatory progressing well, it was equally enjoyable to be introduced to somewhat of Fair Isle legend - Jimmy Stout - former skipper of the *Good Shepherd*. Tales of the *Good Shepherd's* labours were well received. During this visit the boat was high and dry on its skid and an opportunity presented itself for *Hebridean Princess* to step in and fulfil its role. With the plane from Sumburgh cancelled, Karen, a young NHS worker from Shetland, was prompted by Jimmy to ask if we were headed to Shetland? By chance, we were heading to berth at Lerwick that evening and I said it was the least we could do to give her a lift.

On our return south to Orkney, I visited Skara Brae with our guests - another first for me. Making the most of good weather for the visit to this amazing heritage site, wind and rain then led to a new visit in the shelter of the Scapa Distillery. Before leaving the Northern Isles I saw perhaps one of the most frustrating and upsetting sights I have ever seen, a grey seal - monofilament line wrapped around its neck - clearly tightening with time. Whilst in



Good Shepherd





this instance I was only able to report it to the Ranger on Papa Westray, like many of my sea kayaking friends I'll be enrolling on a Marine Mammal Medic Course run by the BDMLR - at least then we may be able to do more than just observe and clear litter from our shores.

On a couple of occasions this year we have been able to rewrite the phrase 'ships that pass in the night', sailing past Hebridean's other two ships - *Lord of the Glens* and *Lord of Highlands* during daylight hours whilst on the west coast! I've also been lucky this year to spend a short amount of time on the Caledonian Canal, gaining an insight into a different type of cruising and at the same time being inspired by this incredible engineering feat to complete the Great Glen Canoe Trail by sea kayak.

I'd like to finish with a few words about my Autumn Surprise cruise... it is not often that we get to land somewhere new and the opportunity arose to visit somewhere that I've been looking at for a while. All I can say is that the warmth and hospitality afforded by the owners of the Stein Inn, the informative guide at the tannery belonging to Skye Skins and the lovely little Dandelion Art Gallery close to the slipway, all made for a lovely landing for the first time at Loch Bay on the Isle of Skye.

CAPTION COMPETITION



Whilst the full force of storm Babet was felt along the east coast of Scotland, strong winds accompanied *Hebridean Princess* as she sailed on passage towards Kyle of Lochalsh on Friday 20th October. We would love to receive your most creative captions for these images of Captain Caz Palmer on the bridge.

Email your most imaginative ideas to louise.pratt@hebridean.co.uk and we will publish some favourites on our social media channels in the New Year.

LORD OF THE HIGHLANDS 2024 CRUISE COLLECTION

In 2024 *Lord of the Highlands* will spread her wings and delve further into the dramatic beauty of her home country, Scotland, a diverse nation, full of history and intrigue.

From the historic locks of Thomas Telford's remarkable feat of engineering, the Caledonian Canal, to the idyllic Inner Hebrides, the landscapes of the east coast, peppered with ancient castles, and the remoteness of the northern archipelago of Orkney.

Inspired by the success of her larger sister, *Hebridean Princess*, *Lord of the Highlands* continues the Hebridean tradition of providing the highest quality holidays afloat. A hand-picked crew take care of your every need and the convivial company of just 38 fellow guests ensures that a relaxed house party atmosphere is typical on every cruise. With only a small number of guests on board, new acquaintances soon become friends.

Real attention to detail, the sumptuous comfort of a floating country house hotel and the mesmerising scenery of the Highlands and Islands are the essential elements for a perfect cruise holiday. Our fully-inclusive tariff brings peace of mind, the freedom to enjoy fascinating shore visits at all ports of call in the company of knowledgeable guides and to savour your favourite tippie from the well-stocked bar.

Many of the 2024 itineraries have been designed with minimal repetition - so for those looking for a longer holiday our newly introduced Combination Cruises may appeal - what's even more attractive is that all of our Combination Cruises attract an extra saving of up to £500 per person on the total fare.

The diminutive size of *Lord of the Highlands* allows her to access off-the-beaten track destinations which are not accessible to larger vessels and to explore far-flung islands, hidden mainland gems and intricate inland waterways.

If you are bewitched by wildlife, inspired by history, enthralled by art and architecture or stimulated by stunning gardens, our specially themed itineraries will allow you to indulge your passion.



We very much look forward to welcoming you on board *Lord of the Highlands*

To view all the *Lord of the Highlands* 2024 itineraries, visit our website hebridean.co.uk or request a copy of our 2024 Cruise Directory.

**EARLY BOOKING SAVING
£250 PER PERSON**

Book before 8th December 2023 to receive an **EARLY BOOKING SAVING** of **£250 per person** on the fares shown in the Cruise Directory.

**EXCLUSIVE PAST GUEST LOYALTY SAVING
£250 PER PERSON**

If you have previously sailed with Hebridean Island Cruises, you will receive an additional **EXCLUSIVE LOYALTY SAVING** of **£250 per person** on the fares shown in the Cruise Directory if you book before **8th December 2023**.



COMBINATION CRUISE SAVING

Book 2 or more cruises consecutively to attract an extra saving of up to **£500 per person** on the total fare.

Look out for the special **COMBINATION CRUISE logo** against the applicable sailings.

What's new for 2024...

SCOTLAND'S SCENIC EAST COAST

Leaving her home port of Inverness, *Lord of the Highlands* will venture east along a scenic coastline of rugged cliffs, dramatic castles and stunning beaches, visiting fishing ports and vibrant cities en route to the nation's historic capital, Edinburgh.

Discover the country's rich maritime past in Fraserburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee before exploring the floating royal residence, *HMY Britannia*. Or uncover some jewels of the east coast, from clan seats to royal residences, stunning palaces and romantic castles. Visit the ancient crowning site of Scottish Kings, Scone Palace, and the contrasting castles of Crathes and Cawdor with their centuries of history and fascinating stories.

ORKNEY

Explore the far-flung islands of Orkney on a fascinating voyage to these northern outposts. Experience magical prehistoric sites and Orkney's involvement during both world wars with a vast number of relics scattered through the islands.

These islands have a rich heritage, Nordic culture, extraordinary birdlife and incredible seascapes. Enjoy a thrilling cruise full of remarkable natural and historic treasures from the comfort of *Lord of the Highlands*.

NEW INNER HEBRIDEAN ISLANDS

2024 will see *Lord of the Highlands* make a number of maiden calls to Inner Hebridean islands. She regularly calls at Skye, Mull and Eigg and her itineraries now feature the islands of Tiree, Coll, Colonsay, Islay, Raasay and Kerrera. These diverse, hidden gems offer ample opportunities for refreshing walks, gardens on Colonsay, and whisky tasting on Islay and Raasay.

NEW GUEST SPEAKERS

We are delighted to be joined by five entertaining speakers in 2024, all of whom are new to *Lord of the Highlands*. Arts Society lecturers, Nicholas Merchant and Julia Marwood will accompany our Jewels of the East Coast cruises to share their knowledge of arts and architecture. John Noorani and John Lippiett will bring Scotland's Seafaring Past to life and horticulturalist Chris Wardle brings his expertise to our Highland Gardens cruise.

Old favourites...

THE CALEDONIAN CANAL

Six itineraries include a full transit of the 62 mile long Caledonian Canal. Considered by some as one of the greatest waterways in the world, it certainly is a very beautiful one. Running from Inverness in the north east to Fort William (Corpach) in the south west, it features 29 locks, 10 swing bridges and 4 aqueducts.

Designed by Thomas Telford, the canal opened in 1822. The 37 miles of man-made sections join four immense lochs, Loch Lochy, Loch Oich, Loch Ness and Loch Dochfour.

HIGHLAND AND ISLAND WILDLIFE

Our popular Highland and Island Wildlife cruise from Kyle of Lochalsh, through the Caledonian Canal to Inverness once again features in the sailing schedule. Accompanied by wildlife guide, David Sexton, we go in search of seals, puffins, dolphins and other bird and wildlife. Cabins on this cruise are almost sold out, so reserve your place quickly to avoid disappointment!



ENCHANTING EMERALD ISLE



Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin

Known as the Emerald Isle, Ireland is characterised by its rolling green hills and lush countryside, dotted with historic cities, colourful towns, impressive stately homes and iconic castles. From rugged cliffs to rolling countryside, Ireland has something for everyone.

In Northern Ireland, you're never far from a memory in the making. Walk the 16th century walls of Derry/Londonderry – majestic structures that date back over 400 years. Walk the ramparts and you can almost hear the echoes of two brutal 17th century sieges that rocked the city.

Stand on the hills that gently arc the truly spectacular Giant's Causeway and you'll look down on thousands of basalt columns tumbling down into the Atlantic Ocean. It's an epic sight, with a whopping 40,000 or so of these hexagonal-shaped stepping stones, dating back to a volcanic age almost 60 million years ago.

Belfast is Titanic Town. This is the city where the Ship of Dreams was conceived, constructed and launched. And at the very heart of it all is Titanic Belfast, an immersive experience that's not to be missed.

Dublin's winning charm is world famous. The dark waters of the River Liffey swirling beneath the Halfpenny Bridge transport you to a different age: the literary Dublin of Yeats, Shaw, Swift and Wilde. Explore its cobblestone streets, museums and green spaces; from St. Stephen's Green, down bustling O'Connell Street, to the ancient,

dramatic and intriguing, twin cathedrals. Dublin is a uniquely welcoming place.

A cruise to Ireland brings you to some of the world's most charming and colourful towns. In Cork, pastel-colored homes line the waterfront, and nearby Kinsale's downtown area is home to streets with brightly coloured shops in purple, green and virtually every other hue imaginable selling books, art, crafts and local trinkets. Or make your way to Ireland's oldest city, Waterford, to see where the famous Waterford Crystals originated.

Cobh (pronounced Cove), a pretty seaside town with the second largest harbour in the world, is chocolate box perfection. Dwarfed by a 19th century Catholic cathedral, colourful houses dot the seafront, against a backdrop of sloping streets and rolling hills. Cobh was also the last port of call of the *HMS Titanic* and its spine-tingling history permeates through the town, most notably in the shape of a fantastic museum.

Add fabulously beautiful landscapes – from the sheer splendour of the rugged coastal cliffs to the remote and wild beauty of Rathlin Island and you'll understand why an Ireland cruise is an adventure; it may be small, but Ireland's personality packs a big punch.

As the Irish proverb goes, "May the road rise up to meet you", (good luck on your travels). Join us on a luxury cruise to Ireland where music, folklore, magic and mystery await.

Cruise with *Hebridean Princess* next summer and discover the delights of the The Emerald Isle on one of these enchanting voyages:

VOYAGE TO THE EMERALD ISLE

Oban to Dublin - 8 nights

23rd to 31st July 2024

Links between Scotland and Ireland are many and varied, reaching back into the mists of time. Two supremely rich Celtic and Gaelic cultures add history and romance against the stirring scenery of a cruise on board *Hebridean Princess* through the Irish Sea to the Emerald Isle.



Prices from £6,670 per person
based on 2 people sharing an inside twin/double cabin

EMERALD ISLE EXPLORER

Dublin to Dublin - 8 nights

31st July to 8th August 2024

Truly the Emerald Isle, lush green by nature of its mild and moist climate, Eire is a jewel, wrapped in history and legend, blessed with inspirational landscapes and wildlife. Cruise south to Cork, along stunningly beautiful coastlines, to discover the magic and mystery of this ancient isle from the sea.



Prices from £6,780 per person
based on 2 people sharing an outside twin/double cabin

FOOTLOOSE IN THE EMERALD ISLE

Dublin to Dublin - 8 nights

8th to 16th August 2024

We are delighted to welcome walkers and strollers alike on this walking cruise through Eire in the stimulating company of our experienced walking guides. Revel in the lush, soulful landscapes of the beautiful Emerald Isle and take in its timeless, spiritual beauty.



Prices from £6,780 per person
based on 2 people sharing an inside twin/double cabin

TREASURES OF THE CELTIC COASTS

Dublin to Oban - 10 nights

16th to 26th August 2024

Hebridean Princess heads back to home waters, carrying with her hypnotic images of the ruggedly beautiful Irish coast, backed by a lush hinterland of breathtaking mountains and glens. Drawn by an irresistible lure, we sail to the jewel of the Irish Sea, the Isle of Man, en route to Oban.



Prices from £7,890 per person
based on 2 people sharing an inside twin/double cabin

A VOYAGE INTO THE PAST - Prehistoric Scotland

Bruce Bennison



Spectacular scenery and outstanding geology combine with a rich archaeological heritage to make Scotland's landscape unique in the British Isles.

There can be few places in Britain that are as renowned an area of wild and spectacular

landscapes as are the Northern Isles of Scotland. Many people assume that these wind-swept and rugged islands must be devoid of any significant remains of the past, isolated from the tide of events that have shaped the rest of Britain. Yet they have a rich legacy of monuments, buildings, and landscapes, settled by people over the last 6,000 years.

Some of the largest Neolithic stone ceremonial monuments in Britain and numerous Bronze Age burial sites are scattered across this landscape. The uniquely Scottish brochs of the Iron Age from the first millennium BC stand testimony to the sophisticated building techniques of that time.

The spread of Christianity in the 5th and 6th centuries AD came from Ireland, along the stepping stones of the Hebridean islands and is recorded in a chain of early religious sites, marked today by the turf covered stones of the old monks' cells, beehive huts and slit-windowed chapels. By contrast, the Norse, who colonised the Northern Isles and Western Seaboard in the 9th to 13th

centuries AD, are harder to find though their legacy remains strong in the language of place names and their culture which endures today in ancient customs throughout the isles.

IT'S A MATTER OF TIME

The Scottish landscape is justly famed for its spectacular scenery of mountains, lochs, islands, wild rocky places and sandy beaches. Much of what we see today was formed by fire and ice. Huge volcanoes dating back millions of years created much of the scenery to the west. Evidence of this violence can be seen in the mountains of Arran, Skye and Mull as well as distinctive features such as Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh and the basalt columns so familiar to us from Fingal's Cave on Staffa in the Inner Hebrides. After the fire came the ice and, in many parts of Scotland, the Ice Age glaciers and their meltwater rivers significantly eroded and reshaped the landscape. In the north and west they scraped the landscape bare, deepened the glens and formed the lochs and the corries high in the mountains. It was a process that ebbed and flowed as temperatures rose and fell and it took hundreds of thousands of years to complete.

Around 11,500 years ago the ice melted for the final time and the weight was literally lifted off the surface below and the land began to rise out of the ocean. This resulted in distinctive features such as raised beaches now lying high above the sea-level today, often with sea cut caves visible in the cliffs above. It was into this newly minted landscape that the first nomadic hunter gatherers came 8,000 years ago to explore and survive in a period we now call the Mesolithic.



It was into this hard nomadic existence that a new society was then to intrude around 6,000 years ago. This was heralded by the arrival of the first farmers, bringing with them the knowledge and experience of managing the landscape for the first time, growing crops and breeding livestock. It was to become a period known as the Neolithic and it was a society based on the use and exploitation of stone in many forms as the basis of its technology. For the first time settlements could stay in one place all year round, building up food surpluses in good years and surviving on that food during harsh winters. In good times they were able to use their labours to build huge monuments both in earth and stone to celebrate their continued existence and pay homage to the forces which determined whether they survived or not.

HOUSES FOR THE LIVING

In Scotland and in particular Orkney, we can turn to such sites as Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar to see the evidence for how these people lived and celebrated their lives.

Long before Stonehenge or even the Egyptian pyramids were built, Skara Brae was a thriving Neolithic village. It is remarkable because of its age and even more so for the quality of its preservation. Its structures survive in impressive condition – as does, incredibly, the stone furniture in the houses. Nowhere else in Western Europe can we see such rich evidence of how our remote ancestors actually lived.

The villagers were farmers, hunters and fishermen who were able to produce beautiful and complex items using basic tools. No weapons have been found and the village was not in a readily defended location, both of which perhaps suggest a relatively peaceful life. All of the houses

show the same characteristics; well-built of flat stone slabs, set into large mounds of midden and linked by covered passageways.

No one knows why village life seems to have ended around 2,500 BC. Some argue that a huge sandstorm covered the houses, others believe it was a more gradual process.

HOUSES FOR THE DEAD

Inevitably death was also to play a large part in these new farming societies; their response was to build monuments for their dead which show an emphasis on communal internment. One excellent example of this is Quoyness Chambered Cairn, located on the Elsness peninsula, on the island of Sanday in Orkney. It was in use from about 3,000 to 2,500 BC.

It is a fine example of a Neolithic chambered tomb. A 9m long entrance passage leads to a central rectangular chamber, which is open to six irregular-shaped cells round the walls. A circular stone-lined cist was also discovered in the floor of the central chamber. Excavations in the 1800s at Quoyness found human skulls and bones in four of the six cells. Partial remains of at least 10 adults and four or five children were found in the central cist along with animal bones, fragments of pottery and stone tools - including one hammerhead shaped stone object - all strikingly similar to objects found at Skara Brae.

The cairn's layout also links it to the houses at Neolithic settlements. The design of tombs like Quoyness closely resembles that of the houses at Skara Brae. Tombs' entrance passages were longer and lower, and they were entombed in cairns of stones, but the parallels between these resting places and domestic houses are uncanny. It is likely that this reflects Neolithic beliefs around life and death.

continued overleaf



CELEBRATION AND CEREMONY

The Ring of Brodgar is the third largest stone circle and henge monument in Britain. Covering an area of nearly 8,500 square metres, it is only marginally smaller than the outer ring of stones at Avebury and the Greater Ring at Stanton Drew in England. The interior of the Ring of Brodgar has never been fully excavated, or scientifically dated, so the monument's actual age remains uncertain. In the absence of scientific dates, our best guess is that the main ring was constructed between 2,600 and 2,400 BC. The surrounding burial mounds and stone setting date from between 2,500 and 1,500 BC. It was one of the first places to be protected as a site of historical significance in the British Isles in 1882.

The Ring of Brodgar may have been involved in ceremonies celebrating the relationship between living and past communities, though there's scant evidence for the activities of Neolithic people at the site. Invaders from Scandinavia reached Orkney by the 9th century AD, bringing a complex theology that they imposed on the pre-existing Orcadian monuments. At the very least, several of the stones at Brodgar contain runic carvings that were left by Nordic peoples. These include the inscribed name 'Bjorn' and a small cross as well as an anvil.

THE METALWORKERS ARRIVE

The Bronze Age began approximately 4,500 years ago, with the first evidence of copper tools, and ended around 2,800 years ago. This first working of copper reflects a new migration of people from mainland Europe. The newcomers were to eventually displace the Neolithic culture, and a society whose technology was based on stone working was replaced with one versed in the new and mystical science of smelting rock to form malleable tools, jewellery and weapons.



Ring of Brodgar, Orkney

The Iron Age began approximately 2,800 years ago and ended around 1,600 years ago in Scotland. The surviving remains from that period signify a different emphasis in society, burials are rarely found but settlement evidence is much stronger. Many Iron Age people lived in round houses constructed of timber or stone, some with outer defences. These buildings show different styles but are all basically formed around the idea of a roundhouse. They can be called duns, wheelhouses and brochs in Scotland and they continue a tradition of roundhouse design beginning from the Bronze Age.

Some of the best examples of the Iron Age architecture can be found in Shetland, in particular at Jarlshof (which has a history spanning nearly 4,000 years) and the Broch of Mousa.

ONE OF THE WONDERS OF PREHISTORIC EUROPE

The isle of Mousa lies to east of mainland Shetland, 15 miles to the south of Lerwick the capital of the islands. Two references in 12th century Norse sagas refer to it as Moseyaborg, which translates as the fort of the mossy island. Almost divided in two by inlets, East and West Hams, the island is 1.5 miles long and almost 1 mile in maximum width. Uninhabited since the 19th century, today it is an RSPB Nature Reserve with important breeding colonies of seals and seabirds including the diminutive storm petrel.

There are many historical remains on Mousa for the curious to explore, but it is the famous broch which literally stands proud as testimony to the life and traditions of the Iron Age in Shetland. Brochs are the only building type unique to Scotland and Mousa is thought to have been constructed in about 300 BC, it stands 13m tall, a totem of Scottish prehistory. The broch is a drystone-built tower of circular plan, with an external diameter at ground level of 15.3 metres and a circular internal space 6.1 metres across, the broch stands to 13.2 metres tall. This appears to be close to its original height, making Mousa the tallest of Scotland's brochs by a good margin.

On the Prehistoric Scotland cruise we will be cruising to the northernmost islands of Britain. We will be travelling through 6,000 years of history and on the way, we will visit the sites of ancient burials, huge ceremonial monuments and some of the oldest houses in northern Europe; as well as more recent places reflecting the turbulent history of the Second World War - all of these places are special and many are unique to these islands - why not join us on this special voyage of discovery?

PREHISTORIC SCOTLAND

Inverness to Inverness

Thursday 6th to Saturday 15th June 2024

9 nights including 2 Gala Dinners

Prices start from £7,570 per person

based on 2 people sharing an inside twin/double cabin

NEWS IN BRIEF



In the New Year we will be attending two of the UK's biggest cruise and travel shows.

Come along and meet our experienced team and have your questions answered face to face – we'd love to see you...

MANCHESTER CENTRAL - 11th to 14th January 2024

OLYMPIA LONDON - 1st to 4th February 2024

Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show, in association with The Times and The Sunday Times, is the UK's largest and longest-running travel event.

Showcasing the limitless diversity of sights, cultures, landscapes, wildlife, people and experiences that the world has to offer, the 200 travel brands featuring at Destinations will have your wanderlust go into overdrive.

It's a unique opportunity to tap into the in-depth knowledge of the hundreds of experts present to tailor-make and book your ideal getaway.

Information on how to obtain **FREE TICKETS** to the show will be available on our website in the New Year

SILVER TRAVEL AWARDS 2023

WINNER

We're thrilled to announce that at the recent prestigious Silver Travel Advisor Awards, Hebridean Island Cruises won the award for Best Specialist Cruise Line. The awards recognise and reward travel companies who go the extra mile for mature travellers. Thank you to everyone for voting for us and making this possible.



In a glittering ceremony, hosted by television presenter and journalist Penny Smith, 19 worthy winners were presented with their awards in categories across cruise, tours, activity and adventure and specialist operators. Our trophy was collected by Chairman, Roger Allard.

MEET THE TEAM

Craig Hawthorn, Head Chef, on board *Lord of the Highlands*



I grew up in a village called Houston just outside of Glasgow where I went to school and got my first job, washing dishes in a local restaurant, before going on to serve an apprenticeship at Brian Maule, a French fine dining restaurant in Glasgow. Following my apprenticeship, I spent some time taking part in internships at restaurants around the world including South Africa, Paris, London and New York, before returning to Glasgow as sous chef, and eventually Head Chef, of Crabshakk and Crabshakk Botanics.

I have recently completed my first season working on board the vessel, but it could not be more different from working in a land based restaurant. The only similarities are that I get to prepare meals using Scotland's abundant larder.

Our typical day in the galley starts with early morning phone calls with suppliers and letting them know where we are, as we are a moving target as opposed to a permanent restaurant. This is the greatest challenge, keeping plenty of food on board for guests and crew.

Once we have our supplies, the day's work truly begins. Myself or my sous chef Liam will tackle the meat and fish butchery jobs, whilst the other will start on the day's breads and pastries for service, alongside making the flavoured butters we present at every lunch and dinner.

Once set up for the day, we have time for a quick coffee before another meal service creeps up on us. Our day is finally done around 10.30pm once the orders are all phoned in for the following few days.

The challenge of working on a constantly moving vessel and the logistics and obstacles it brings is one of my favourite parts about working on board.



We are lucky enough to visit some amazing places during our cruises; my favourite port of call is probably Tobermory, where we procure amazing smoked salmon and smoked mussels from Tobermory Fish delivered right to the ship, straight from the smokehouse. I also love the Knoydart peninsula and Inverie; it is so peaceful and we don't have phone or internet signal so the crew mess becomes a slightly more social area when we are berthed there.



Lord of the Highlands, Tobermory, Mull

My recipe is for a salted caramel whisky tart a tasty little dessert from our lunch offering which would be a great addition to a Christmas lunch or dinner

Serves 12

Caramel filling:

375g caster sugar

125g Demerara sugar

150g unsalted butter

200ml double cream

A pinch of sea salt

50ml of good Scotch whisky

(I like to use Talisker from Skye, one of my favourite destinations and I love the smokey flavours)

For the filling put both sugars into a heavy bottomed saucepan and put on a medium to low heat until the sugars begin to brown and caramelize.

Once it has reached a golden brown caramel colour, you will need to add the whisky (be careful as it may begin to steam and spit slightly).

The caramel will begin to harden so you will need to lower the heat and whisk gradually until the mix begins to loosen up slightly. Once the mix has loosened, add in the cream and bring back up to the heat until the solid caramel has turned back into a liquid.

The tart filling will now resemble a toffee sauce. Whisk in the butter and pour the caramel into a metal or other heatproof bowl to cool down and allow to thicken. At this stage, add the sea salt which just adds a little hint of savoury to the filling. If you can find it, Smoked Maldon sea salt works really well in this recipe and balances the whisky very nicely.

Once the filling has cooled slightly it can be poured into a tart case. This can be bought from a supermarket and saves the hassle of rolling and blind baking the pastry.

The tart can then be chilled for a few hours to set and served to guests garnished with some seasonal berries and a bit of a whipped cream - a decadent dessert perfect for a winter's night!



SALTED CARAMEL WHISKY TART



EMERALD ISLE ANAGRAM COMPETITION

THE ANAGRAMS BELOW RELATE TO PORTS OF CALL WHICH ARE INCLUDED ON OUR CRUISES TO IRELAND NEXT SUMMER (See pages 8 & 9 for details)

Two lucky winners will be randomly chosen from all the correct entries each receiving a voucher to the value of £500 per person to be redeemed against any of the 4 Irish cruises shown on page 9 of this issue.

(The voucher applies to new bookings only and no cash alternative is available)

1	RECTANGLE SLAM	Ancestral home of the Earl of Antrim.
2	CABINS AFT TITLE	This monument of maritime heritage is located on the site of the former Haarland & Wolff shipyard.
3	SHABBY EYE ROUGE	Georgian home of the Montgomery family overlooking Strangford Lough.
4	AGENCY USA WAITS	A UNESCO World Heritage Site situated on the Antrim coast.
5	RECTORY DRAFTS LAW	World-renowned glass makers, originally founded by George and William Penrose in 1783.
6	CHECKLISTS DART APART	Holy site named after Ireland's patron saint.
7	JOSTLE NOW SNATCH	Wexford estate and 19th-century, neo-Gothic mansion.
8	SHRIEKED DULY OUR	Tudor revival mansion, home of the Brabazon family since 1618.
9	HINTS DRAIN ALL	This 6 mile long island is home to Ireland's largest seabird colony.
10	BETTERING COACH HERE	Home of the Queenstown Story of Irish emigration.

To enter, please email the answers to each of the 10 anagrams, together with your name and address to louise.pratt@hebridean.co.uk by Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

*Please note email addresses may be used for marketing purposes.
If you would prefer not to receive email communications from Hebridean Island Cruises, please state this in your entry.*

CROSSWORD COMPETITION in ISSUE 42

Our thanks to all who entered the Crossword Competition in the last issue, we received an unprecedented number of entries! When completed, the 12 highlighted squares spelt out **KYLES OF BUTE**.

The four lucky winners, selected at random from all the correct entries, were Barbara North, Susan Inglis, Colin Sewell-Rutter and Kay Rimmer who have all received a goody bag filled with bespoke Emma Ball *Hebridean Princess* products.



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