

FOLLOW MINERVA'S UPGRADE ONLINE

Minerva's multi-million pound upgrade will commence on 23 November 2011 until 29 February 2012. Throughout this time you can follow an online blog charting the progress of her upgrade and any new developments regarding her launch in March 2012. For now, Captain Giovanni's overview of the upgrade plans is available to view. Visit www.swanhellenic.com/newminerva.

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• THE SWAN HELLENIC journal

ISSUE 9 | AUTUMN 2011

Minerva's exciting
new chapter...

The story begins
here.



To book or request a brochure call:

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Minerva was the first ship custom built for Swan Hellenic and incorporated many of the features that had been popular on previous vessels as well as suggestions received from you, our discerning passengers. Her major refurbishment this winter builds on this and accommodates your requests for more balcony suites, more internal and external deck space and a larger internet facility among many other features. Equally important is the upgrade of *Minerva's* technical capability which will not only increase your comfort but also improve the ship's environmental performance.

It is fitting that our long and distinguished heritage is recorded on board in the public room names of the Wheeler Bar and the new forward observation lounge which will be known as the Orpheus Lounge. It is also rather appropriate that, by renaming the main dining room the Swan Restaurant, we will, on a daily basis, be celebrating the drive, enthusiasm and warm hospitality of our founders, WF & RK Swan.

During the winter months the Swan Hellenic team will, as ever, be working hard to ensure that your 2012 cruises will be as stimulating as in the past, assisted in no small measure by our renowned Guest Speakers whose talks broaden and deepen each cruise experience.

We all look forward to seeing *Minerva* emerge from her extensive upgrade in early March 2012. Whether it will be your first cruise on board, or you will be returning for another cruise with us, you can be sure that the welcome will be as warm and the country house ambience as inviting as it has always been in the past.

Sincerely yours

Jeffrey Sterling

Lord Sterling, Chairman



The changes ahead

by Captain John Moulds



It has been my great pleasure to have served on *Minerva* since 1999, when she was just three years old. Twelve years have passed since then and, although we have had updates and technical improvements in that period, no large scale renovation has ever been contemplated and proud *Minerva* has changed very little. Now, I am delighted to say, the time has come for a full and comprehensive review and an upgrade, which in my view, is quite breathtaking in its scope.

As with all mechanical parts which age we have had our challenges to overcome in recent years but I am confident the forthcoming upgrade will address all of these. We are installing a new propulsion system, which should improve the comfort of the ship, reduce noise levels and even give us a little more speed. At the same time, a deeper skeg will not only reduce the famous 'Minerva movement', but also allow us to fit a stern thruster, where it should be, at the stern of the ship! The original Russian bow thruster will also be replaced. All of the above will enable us to contemplate berthing and un-berthing in smaller ports of interest.

In the past we have had to use our lifeboats as tenders at anchor ports. These have served us well enough, but were designed solely as lifeboats and not as ships' tenders. Our new boats will greatly improve boating operations: they seat 117 as opposed to 70, and will make embarkation and disembarkation easier too, with full sized door openings and comfortable seating all on one level.

Shaded areas on the outside decks have always been popular with passengers, and by extending the existing Promenade Deck half way over the pool, and adding a permanent sunshade to this area, we will increase a sheltered aft deck seating area around the pool. This will create additional flexibility, with more opportunities for al-fresco dining and evenings by the pool.

One of the comments I have heard over the years – particularly during periods of inclement weather – is that passengers would like more public areas and venues. By increasing the size of the Shackleton Bar, creating the new forward observation lounge and bar – to be named the Orpheus Lounge – and by improving the outside deck space, we will have effectively extended all of the inside and outside public areas on board. The enlarged Shackleton Bar, with picture windows on both sides of the ship, will create a large, light, public space on board. By relocating the Beauty Salon, Launderette and the Gym to A Deck aft we will be slightly reducing the number of cabins on board.

The new Orpheus Lounge will introduce an extra dimension to *Minerva*. The Darwin Lounge, the main room for Guest Speakers' talks, comes into its own for concerts and after dinner talks. Now, with a choice of two rooms, we can make each well suited to its purpose. We can improve seating arrangements in the Darwin Lounge for Guest Speakers' talks and also provide an alternative evening venue on the top deck. In the daytime, the Orpheus Lounge with its expansive panoramic views, will undoubtedly be just as popular and will be beautifully light and airy – a perfect alternative to the Library for a quiet afternoon read.

The 32 cabins which will be enlarged and have new balconies fitted will be built out over the

existing Promenade Deck, enhancing passenger space on board. We have not lost the Promenade Deck though. We have simply moved it up one deck. You will still be able to 'do a circuit' or walk a mile (still 8 times around!), and still be able to see over the ship's side (something that is increasingly rare on the new generation of cruise ships). The forward lift has been extended up to the new Promenade Deck and to the Orpheus Lounge as well, allowing for ease of movement around the ship.

We are replacing every single en suite bathroom/shower room on the ship, and cabin and public lighting will be brighter and greener. A completely new, greener, sewage system will be installed, as well as a new ship's laundry and galley. The air conditioning system will be extended into the new public interior areas and receive a major overhaul.

Due to its complexity, this work will take a few weeks to complete, but I sincerely hope you will agree it will be worth the wait. I have no doubt that when we return to service in March 2012, we will be able to supply you with all that you loved about *Minerva*, as well as some of the features that appealed on *Minerva II*.

I hope you can tell how excited I am about the future of the ship I have come to know as 'home'. I look forward to showing you around when you board *Minerva* in the year ahead.

From Orpheus to Minerva

by Hugh Leslie, Cruise Director



I first joined Swan Hellenic's *Orpheus* in early April 1993. She was then a lady of advancing years and nearing the end of her career with the company. They say that a ship's personality develops over the years of her life as every person who crosses the gangway leaves a little bit of their own personality behind in contribution. Whatever the reason, *Orpheus* had personality plus and was much loved by passengers and crew alike.

The accommodation and facilities on board were comfortable but simple (some might say 'basic') and the service friendly if occasionally slightly chaotic from her cheerful Greek crew. Her programme was by that time confined to the waters of the Mediterranean and Black Seas with forays at the end of the year through the Suez Canal to Upper Egypt and Jordan. Her itineraries regularly included visits to Syria,

Libya and Algeria – in the early 90's countries rarely, if ever, featured by other cruise companies. She was also, as far as I am aware, the first cruise vessel to transit the Guadalquivir River up to Seville. She was certainly the first to enter Beirut after the end of the civil war in Lebanon and also the ship to officially 'open' the port of Sevastopol in the Crimea which, during Soviet times, was the home of the Black Sea Fleet, top secret, and therefore 'closed' to foreigners. So despite her years she was something of a trail blazer – where *Orpheus* went, others would follow, usually several years behind. But the vessel's name is preserved in our history book and her name will be remembered as we name our new observation lounge after her.

... then along came Minerva

I first saw *Minerva* in the builder's yard in Genoa in December 1995. Even then, without her stern or top decks completed, she seemed to have 'something' about her. And so it was to prove. Very quickly after her maiden voyage in April 1996 she developed a large and loyal following, winning several prestigious travel awards along the way.

She expanded the Swan Hellenic summer programme; venturing northwards to Norway and into the Baltic and her annual circumnavigation of the British Isles became something of an event. More importantly she established the company's winter programme being in the vanguard of cruise ships visiting unusual ports such as Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, Porbandar and Mangalore in India, and onwards to Rangoon, the remoter islands of Indonesia and the magic of Vietnam.

This programme also enabled her to offer pre and post cruise extensions in the Far East and yellow labels could soon be seen fluttering on the Great Wall of China, at the temples of Angkor Wat and around the Taj Mahal. So, again, a trail blazer with others playing catch up.

Six years on, the decision under P&O ownership was made to move to a larger ship and *Minerva II* entered the story.

My first sight of *Minerva II* was in March 2003 in Marseille as she was being readied for her first cruise with Swan Hellenic. After *Minerva* she appeared huge – anyone who has seen the picture of the two ships berthed bow to bow in Valletta Harbour would have to agree.

Minerva II was a lovely ship but lacked the intimacy of her smaller forerunner. She was, however, able to expand the Swan horizons, particularly during her winter programmes and the blue funnel with the white Swan was soon to be seen in ports as diverse as Cape Town, New York, San Francisco and Rio de Janeiro with her passengers being able to undertake land extensions to the Game Reserves of East Africa, Chilean Patagonia, the Galapagos Islands and even the Grand Canyon.

Despite enjoying considerable success with the company, Carnival UK had plans for *Minerva II* and she sailed away in April 2007 leaving Swans out of the water, but not for long thanks to a number of people who had their own plans ahead.

In April 2007 Carnival UK sold the brand to Lord Sterling and in July 2007 Swan Hellenic joined the All Leisure Group, who themselves had entered into an agreement to charter the former vessel *Minerva* – the jigsaw was nearly complete.

In spring 2008 we saw the return of *Minerva* and her funnel again carried the Swan Hellenic logo. She was obviously unhappy that we had not operated her for the previous five years and played up a little during the first few months back. However, being the lady she is, she quickly settled and once again has a loyal following. She is no longer the new ship we first knew in 1996 but rather, in shipping terms, a middle aged ship which is now going to undertake a major makeover.

The plans which I have now reviewed will preserve all the elements which I know passengers enjoy but we are fortunate that, due to this investment, the ship will benefit from improved facilities which will be enjoyed by us all.

I look forward to sailing with you when the ship returns to Swan Hellenic in March 2012.



Culture and increasing comfort: Swan Hellenic 1985-2012

by Professor Lord Harries of Pentregarth

When I first sailed with Swans there were vivid descriptions of high culture and boarding school discomfort on an earlier ship, the *Ankara*. Perhaps there are still a few who remember sailing on her? By contrast *Orpheus* seemed comfort indeed. But what we really loved was her Greekness – even though she had originally been built to withstand the Irish Sea on the Holyhead/Belfast run – the Greek food, the Greek crew and above all the Greek captain. He would sometimes navigate by the stars, and crucially, could tell through his feet on the deck when the next wave would come and when therefore it would be safe to turn the ship round and return to harbour in a storm without capsizing. What we liked less were the tiny port holes and the fierce thump of the waves against the side at night. There were no stabilisers, so sliding crockery was a feature of meals, and I can

remember having to take one service of Holy Communion at 6.00 one morning, after a late night, when the ship rolled 45 degrees each way. So the advent of *Minerva* was sheer luxury, and we found a new love.

Minerva II was even more luxurious, especially having so many cabins with balconies but, for some of us, something had been lost. *Minerva* had seemed just the right size – big enough to find some private space aboard, but small enough to begin to recognise nearly all passengers. *Minerva II* lost that intimacy.

So, we were hugely relieved when Swan Hellenic not only started up again after a lacuna of a year, but saw the return of our old friend. Now the upgrade means we can have the luxury of *Minerva II* with the intimacy of *Minerva*.



Image of Orpheus supplied by kind permission of Richard Harries

That's my ideal and I am very much looking forward to my first cruise on the upgraded ship.

Professor Lord Harries of Pentregarth will be travelling on 'A Mediterranean World' (24 October – 7 November 2012).

The story of Minerva



Early 1994 – Swan Hellenic, then under the ownership of P&O, decides to look for a replacement of their popular, but elderly vessel, *Orpheus*.

1994 – An agreement is signed between P&O, V-Ships and Mariotti shipyard of Genoa for the building of a suitable replacement. An existing hull is found in the Ukraine, originally intended as a Russian spy vessel in 1989, but on which work had been suspended after the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc.

December 1994 – V-Ships acquires the ice-classified hull and five days later delivers it to Genoa, where Mariotti takes care of its completion as a passenger ship.

April 1996 – The vessel, to be named *Minerva* is delivered, with the design having taken into account preferences expressed by Swan Hellenic passengers, for instance replicating *Orpheus*' encircling open promenade deck, a huge library and, of course, a lecture theatre.

June 1996 – *Minerva* is launched with Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester performing the naming ceremony in London's Docklands.



2003 – *Minerva II* – a new, bigger and faster ship with a larger number of balconies is introduced, allowing cruising to even more distant destinations, such as New Orleans, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. An Orpheus Room, offering panoramic views, the renowned library and large public areas are particularly popular with passengers.



April 2007 – Carnival UK makes alternative plans for *Minerva II* and she sails away, leaving Swans out of the water. The brand is then sold to Lord Sterling.

July 2007 – Swan Hellenic joins the All Leisure Group. Plans are put in place to reunite Swan Hellenic with their former vessel *Minerva*.

2008 – *Minerva* is welcomed back by passengers who preferred the intimacy of the smaller vessel.

2010/11 – *Minerva* sails for a successful winter season to the warm waters of India and the Far East.

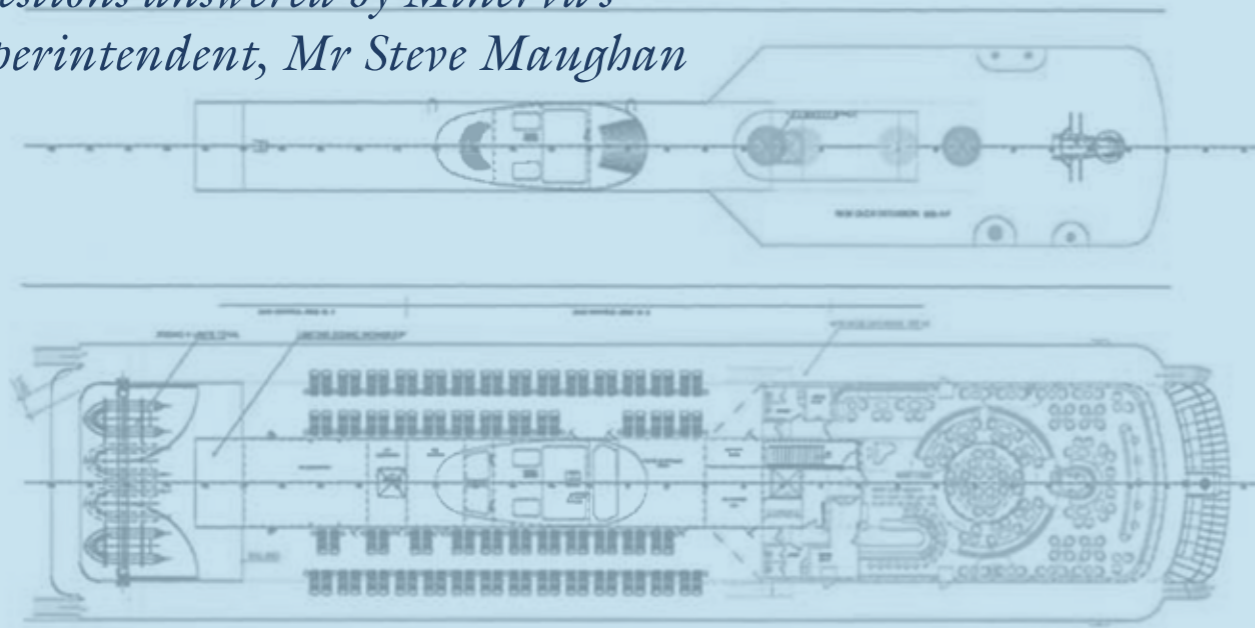
November 2011 – *Minerva* will undergo an extensive upgrade, combining the very best of *Orpheus*, *Minerva II* and two decades of feedback received from loyal passengers.

March 2012 – The 'all new' *Minerva* will return to embark on an exciting new chapter in her distinguished history as a leading discovery cruise ship.



A Technical Overview

– key questions answered by Minerva's Ship Superintendent, Mr Steve Maughan



L-R Colin Stone, Steve Maughan, Lord Sterling, Tony Dyson, Captain Giovanni Biasutti and Rob Bryant discuss plans for Minerva

Steve Maughan explains the technical developments that *Minerva* will undergo as part of her multi-million pound upgrade.

Q: Where is *Minerva* going to be undergoing the work for the multi-million pound upgrade?

A: *Minerva* will be dry docked in a partially covered German yard, Peters Schiffbau, near Kiel where the covered facilities will protect the vessel and assist the skilled workforce. It is important to keep air pressure positive as the extremely cold weather throughout the winter period can cause burst pipes, by circulating warm air, such problems can be prevented.

Q: Can you tell us about *Minerva*'s technical upgrade?

A: Whilst the most substantial upgrade will be to passenger cabins and public areas, the technical aspect of the ship will also receive a significant investment. Although this will remain behind the scenes, it will dramatically improve ecology, fuel efficiency, manoeuvrability and reliability.

Q: What is the most significant technical area to be addressed?

A: In short, a combination of the newly designed propellers and a new stern thruster.

Q: Tell us about the propellers?

A: *Minerva* will be fitted with an integrated propeller rudder system designed by Rolls Royce, which maximises propulsive efficiency. *Minerva*'s most efficient cruising speed will then be slightly increased. This new system, where the main engines are integrated into the control of the propellers, will lead to lower fuel consumption and emissions, better manoeuvrability and low level noise from the propellers themselves.

Q: And the new stern thruster?

A: At the aft end, *Minerva* will be fitted with a carbon fibre bladed stern thruster featuring a state of the art design. With an electric synchronous ring motor and a propeller combined in one powerful unit, there is no need for any gearing, making for easier maintenance. Reduced power requirements for manoeuvres will mean lower fuel consumption, while the extremely small width of this very narrow thruster will improve thrust. Other benefits include improved manoeuvrability – particularly when entering smaller ports – reduced weight and noise levels. This thruster fits into a new design skeg and will be situated in the most effective part of the hull.

Q: What else?

A: *Minerva*'s entire hull will also be water blasted, whereby old paint will be removed by high pressure water and taken down to bare metal. She will then be painted with a new type of paint, Jotun Seaquantum, the world's most advanced antifouling technology. With good resistance against mechanical damage, this paint also has a unique self smoothing effect over time which reduces hull friction, subsequently improving the vessel's movement through the water and making the vessel more fuel efficient.

Q: How will you improve the environmental efficiencies?

A: *Minerva* will also be fitted with a new, smaller sewage plant, which meets both current and anticipated regulations and improves environmental efficiencies. All on board pipe work will also be renewed, including fresh water pipe work.

Q: Will there be any changes to the air conditioning?

A: With the construction of the new Orpheus Lounge, the air conditioning requirement will increase considerably. A new chiller unit will be fitted within the engine spaces. This unit has been sized to have enough capacity to feed one of the currently

fitted units should they fail. Greater efficiency and capacity will allow flexibility for the operation.

Q: How will the laundry services be improved?

A: The ship's main laundry will be completely rebuilt with new machines, dryers and ironing equipment. We will have to cut open a large hole in the hull of *Minerva* to install these facilities. The new washing machines will use less water and power and therefore be more efficient. The passenger launderette will be relocated to the Aegean Deck and will be larger than the existing facility, taking the current two washers and two dryers up to four of each.

Q: What about the galley?

A: The galley is also being upgraded, with new ovens and ranges installed. A local UK company is supplying and fitting all of the new equipment for both the laundry and galley.

Q: Is the swimming pool changing?

A: The swimming pool will remain in the same place but will be retiled with the showers upgraded.

Q: Tell me about the new tenders.

A: *Minerva* will be fitted with two new tenders, one port and one starboard. These can carry up to 117 people as tenders, and 150 as lifeboats. They can reach speeds of up to 10 knots, have an impressive array of optional equipment and offer easy access for the convenience of our passengers. This will make an enormous amount of difference enabling *Minerva* to visit further smaller destinations.

Q: Will the crew areas improve?

A: As part of the upgrade programme, our crew will also gain benefits from improvements to crew areas, including some refurbishment of their facilities.

Q: Finally, how much involvement will our long-serving ship's company have in the work undertaken for *Minerva*'s upgrade?

A: I will be spending all of the winter in Germany with the Captains and the deck and engine crew, working hard with both local workforces and British companies to make possible the many changes which will complement the ship that so many of you enjoy.

Looking ahead – what do these changes mean?



An All New *Minerva* by Paul Carter, Cruise Director

My first introduction to *Minerva* was as she was nearing completion in the Mariotti shipyard in Genoa, courtesy of a day trip on P&O's corporate jet in early 1996. At the time, it was difficult to envisage just how she was going to look when she was fully fitted and kitted out as she really was a 'work-in-progress' at the time. However, she 'felt' right. The size was right; the layout was right and, of course, she was ours.

we are sure they will greatly enhance the overall cruise experience for our passengers for many years to come. The provision of an additional 32 balcony cabins on Sun Deck will certainly cater for those who have missed their balconies from the days of *Minerva II* and the increased size of these 'new cabins' will also be most welcome. Particularly exciting is the creation of the forward 'observation' Orpheus Lounge on the new Promenade Deck, the lack of which has often been lamented. To be able to sit in comfort, in all weathers, with picture windows looking forward and to the sides is a pleasure on a cruise ship and I am delighted that *Minerva* will now be able to offer this experience to our passengers and, of course, it will also enable us to use the lounge for evening entertainment as an alternative to the Darwin Lounge and/or the Shackleton Bar.

The new promenade, wrapped around the Orpheus Lounge and ship's funnel, plus the extended aft' end of Sun Deck will cater to all passengers who value their fresh air and exercise with ample provision for sun or shade as desired, and an

awning across the Pool will increase the possibilities for al-fresco dining on board. I particularly like the plans for the Shackleton Bar turning it into a horse shoe shaped space, which will be achieved by moving the Salon Centre down to Aegean Deck aft' together with a new gym and passenger launderette. I can see the bar becoming ever more popular as a result.

In addition to these significant structural changes and enhancements, all cabins will benefit from new en-suite facilities and I am sure that other 'touches' will be apparent when passengers return. There are some major works being undertaken in the technical areas as well, and the genuine feeling on board is that they will all combine to greatly improve an already popular ship.

We are excited for the future of our ship and hope that you will be too.

Introducing 32 new balcony cabins

One of the most significant areas of improvement for passengers will be extending 32 cabins, now with balconies – a feature that was particularly popular with passengers who sailed on *Minerva II*. Taking *Minerva's* balcony cabins up to a total of 44, these will now represent 23% of passenger accommodation.

The new balcony cabins will be built out over the former Promenade Deck. The new Promenade Deck at the top of the ship will be widened to the ship's side, to allow for the construction of a new wrap-around deck and the Orpheus Lounge and Bar, both offering panoramic views.

The Balcony Suites on *Minerva* will now total 31.62 square metres – 16.62 square metres more than the original cabin size and 11.62 square metres larger than the standard balcony cabins of *Minerva II* – a change that has already been welcomed by passengers who are looking forward to the increased space. The Deluxe Balcony Suites will be increased by 8.16 square metres.

All balcony cabins on the port side will be upgraded with new en suite bathrooms, whilst all balcony cabins on the starboard side will have new en suite shower rooms.

Cabin	No. of Cabins	Cabin Sq Metres	Balcony Sq Metres	Total Sq Metres
Owner's Suite	2	27.20	7.40	34.60
Deluxe Balcony Suite	12	25.84	5.44	31.28
Superior Balcony Suite	10	23.12	7.40	30.52
Balcony Suite	20	23.30	8.32	31.62
Outside Cabins	100	13.00	None	13.00



Captain Giovanni Biasutti shares his thoughts about *Minerva's* upgrade

"This upgrade for our Minerva will mark a new chapter in the history of Swan Hellenic, and bring Minerva to the standards which are required in these competitive times.

From the technical side, the aim is to resume our cruises with a ship that is more manoeuvrable, more fuel efficient and therefore more environmentally friendly.

I am very pleased about these upgrades as they will allow us to run our little Minerva for the next years around our favourite destinations whilst reducing the impact on the beautiful seas and places that we will visit."

For a more in-depth read of Captain Giovanni's thoughts about *Minerva's* upgrade, read his first blog at www.swanhellenic.com/newminerva where you can follow all the latest news about the exciting new developments.

Sail aboard the 'all new' *Minerva* in Spring 2012

Be the first to sail aboard the newly upgraded *Minerva* when she returns in March 2012 to embark on six fascinating spring cruises. As ever, Swan Hellenic will be taking you to both renowned sites, as well as the lesser-known hidden gems which truly uncover each place of interest. Showcasing the splendid natural beauty, spectacular architecture and enthralling history of each destination visited, these six spring cruises are filled with an array of highlights – and below are just a few of the many exceptional destinations *Minerva* will be sailing to in spring 2012.



Guimaraes – From Oporto visit the historic town of Guimaraes, 2012 European Capital of Culture.



Cadiz & Jerez – Discover one of Europe's oldest cities on a city walk through Cadiz, drive to Jerez and sample its famous fortified wine and visit the Moorish Alcazar and garden.

Madeira – Take a memorable hike along the levadas in the garden island of Madeira.



Timanfaya National Park – Visit the Timanfaya national park in Lanzarote, celebrated for the famous volcanic scenery of the Fire Mountains.



Pompeii – Call at Naples from where you can explore the ruins of Pompeii lying in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius.



Acropolis – A number of treasures await in classical Athens, the oldest city in Europe, including the iconic, imposing Acropolis and the nearby extraordinary New Acropolis Museum.



El Djem – Call at Sousse, gateway to El Djem, one of the best preserved Roman amphitheatres.



Medina of Tetouan – From Tangier visit the Medina of Tetouan located on the steep steps of the Jebel Dersa, which from the 8th century onwards served as the main point of contact between Morocco and Al Andalus in Spain.



Seville Cathedral, Spain

Ancient Kerch – Explore the little known port of ancient Kerch with a visit to the Church of St John the Baptist, one of the earliest Byzantine churches in Eastern Europe.



Byzantine Istanbul – In Byzantine Istanbul, discover the Iznik tiles of the Blue Mosque and the impressive domes of the 6th century Aghia Sofia.

For more information about our Spring 2012 programme, please see the enclosed flyer or visit www.swanhellenic.com

Explore new destinations and uncover hidden gems on our six spring cruises

ISLANDS OF THE SUN

2 MARCH – 16 MARCH 2012

Sail south to the mild climate of the volcanic archipelago of the Canary Islands, calling en route at the fine cities of Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Casablanca. Spend four full days exploring the varied and contrasting landscapes and towns of Lanzarote, Tenerife, La Gomera and La Palma, luxuriating in the warm climate of these islands, before concluding your cruise in the garden island of Madeira.

VINTAGE IBERIA AND ITALY

16 MARCH – 29 MARCH 2012

From the garden isle of Madeira, sail north east to Cadiz and enjoy a river transit to Seville. Discover the architectural links between Morocco and Moorish Andalusia manifest in the superb Alhambra Palace and Seville's Cathedral Tower. Explore the Balearic island of Majorca and conclude your cruise in Italy, visiting iconic cities such as Lucca and Pisa.

POSTCARD FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN

29 MARCH – 11 APRIL 2012

Experience the fusion of Mediterranean cultures, art and architecture and trace the history of empires and peoples as you sail from one great city to the next. Visit the iconic cities of Rome, Naples, Valletta, Athens and Istanbul as well as exploring the delights of Sorrento, the medina of Sousse and the Norman stronghold of Palermo.

BLACK SEA PANORAMA

11 APRIL – 25 APRIL 2012

Sail into the Black Sea and explore the cities and sights of the Crimea, Romania and Bulgaria. Discover layers of successive waves of civilisations and the legacy of Tsarist and Soviet rule. Combine this with some of the best classical sites found on the shores of the Aegean Sea for a memorable spring cruise.

A CLASSIC SPRING

25 APRIL – 8 MAY 2012

From Athens, birthplace of civilisation, *Minerva* transits the narrow Corinth Canal before cruising the Ionian Sea calling at small Greek ports, walled cities of the Adriatic, and the island of Sicily. A delightful springtime cruise, with the anticipation of seeing wild flowers along the way.

A MEDITERRANEAN MASTERPIECE

8 MAY – 22 MAY 2012

An enticing blend of Mediterranean islands, the French Riviera, Andalusian coast, the Algarve and Green Spain create an idyllic early summer cruise, highlighting cities of history, art and architecture, gardens and breathtaking scenery.