



# ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION *of* SMITH COLLEGE

## ***Cruising the Canary Islands: Madeira, Gibraltar, The Algarve***

***April 23 to May 1, 2008***

### **DETAILED ITINERARY**

(subject to amendment)

#### **U.S.**

*Wednesday, April 23*

Depart for Las Palmas, Canary Islands

#### **Las Palmas, Gran Canaria**

*Thursday, April 24*

Arrive in Las Palmas, an attractive city founded by Spanish conquistadors in 1478. Meet your Travel Directors, transfer to the pier and embark *M.S. Le Diamant*.

#### **Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Tenerife**

*Friday, April 25*

The ancient Guanche people, the original inhabitants of the Canary Archipelago, gave the name Tenerife- "White Mountain"- to this dramatically scenic island, dominated by the soaring, 12, 195-foot-high pinnacle of Pico del Teide. Begin your day with a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site of La Laguna, a beautiful university town established in 1496; the houses of the old quarter date from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and have preserved their wooden balconies and ornate doorways crowned with family crests.

This afternoon, explore Tenerife's natural treasures. Drive through the cool, verdant forests of La Esperanza to Parque Nacional del Teide, a starkly beautiful wilderness of mineral-tinted rock, ancient lava flows and distinctive vegetation found nowhere else. Gaze across the sand and lava rock floor of the vast caldera of Las Cañadas to the snowy summit of Pico del Teide,

Spain's loftiest mountain, and enjoy a panoramic view of the Roques de Garcia, 500-foot-high rocks shaped by the erosive forces of wind and water. This evening, join your traveling companions for the captain's welcome reception.

### **Santa Cruz de La Palma, La Palma**

*Saturday, April 26*

Known as *La Isla Bonita*, "the Pretty Isle," for its lushly forested mountain slopes set against a backdrop of bright blue skies and the azure waters of the Atlantic Ocean, La Palma holds an abundance of cultural and natural attractions. This morning, drive through the old quarter of Santa Cruz, once the third-largest port in the Spanish Empire, to the pilgrimage center of Las Nieves to visit the shrine of *La Virgen de las Nieves* (Madonna of the Snow), the island's patron saint. This mid-17<sup>th</sup>-century church represents a unique fusion of Baroque and *Mudéjar* (Spanish-Moorish) architecture; on its gilt altar stands a medieval Flemish statue of the Madonna atop a base of pure silver.

The scenic overlook of Mirador la Concepción offers sweeping vistas of Santa Cruz, while the Mirador la Cumbrecita provides a window on La Palma's geologic past, with dramatic views of the Caldera de Taburiente, a wide chasm sheltering a profusion of trees and shrubs, many of them unique to the island. Return to the ship for a late lunch and spend the remainder of the day at sea.

### **Funchal, Madeira**

*Sunday, April 27*

First settled by the Portuguese in 1418, enchanting Madeira's striking scenery, floral variety and year-round equable climate have made it a subtropical Eden. Dock this morning in Funchal, the island's capital, which has the feeling of an open-air museum with its wealth of 15<sup>th</sup>-through 18<sup>th</sup>-century architecture. Visit the bustling market, where vendors of fresh produce, flowers and seafood engage in lively banter with their customers. Stop at an embroidery factory to view examples of intricately worked pieces. Drive to the picturesque hillside village of Monte and board a two-seater toboggan for a downslope ride through narrow, winding streets to Funchal. Mounted on wooden runner, the toboggans are steered by brakemen in traditional attire. This afternoon, head west along Madeira's rugged southern coast past Camara de Lobos, a fishing village once portrayed on canvas by Sir Winston Churchill. From Cabo Girãth, the world's second-highest sea cliff, and the overlook of Eira do Serrado, pause for sweeping vistas of the island, including a view of Curral das Freiras (Refuge of the Nuns), where sisters from the Convent of Santa Clara sought refuge from pirates in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Before reboarding the ship, stop at the Old Blandy Wine Lodge to taste Madeira's legendary namesake wine, prized by connoisseurs around the world.

## **Cruising the Atlantic Ocean**

*Monday, April 28*

Spend a relaxing day aboard *M.S. Le Diamant*.

## **Portimão, Portugal/ Alte & Silves**

*Tuesday, April 29*

Arrive this afternoon in Portimão in the historic province of Algarve on Portugal's charming southern coast. Settled in ancient times by the Phoenicians and Romans, it was later ruled by the Moors, and its Moorish heritage survives to the present in its distinctive architecture, its brightly painted *azulegos* (ceramic tiles) and its savory regional cuisine. During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, intrepid Portuguese mariners set out from the Algarve on voyages of discovery and founded a seaborne empire that circles the globe.

Drive to the hilltop village of Alte, which commands a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. Stroll narrow lanes past whitewashed houses with latticed chimneys and see the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and the spring-fed *Fonte Santa* (Holy Fountain), charmingly adorned with *azulejos*. Continue to the nearby town of Silves. Established by the Romans as a fortified outpost, it reached its zenith under the Moors, who name it Xelb and chose it as the capital of the Algarve. Medieval travelers praised its beauty, and the city flourished as a center of art, poetry and learning. Walk along the ramparts of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Moorish castle, constructed of locally quarried red sandstone, and visit the cathedral, a unique fusion of Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque architecture.

## **Gibraltar, United Kingdom**

*Wednesday, April 30*

Following a leisurely morning at sea, dock early this afternoon in Gibraltar, one of Britain's oldest crown colonies. During World War II, this strategic outpost played a crucial role in Operation Torch, the Allied campaign to liberate North Africa.

Enjoy a scenic view from Europa Point and walk past the stalactites and stalagmites of St. Michael's Cave, a vast natural cavern. Drive to "the Top of the Rock," the 1,400-foot-high limestone promontory guarding the strait that separates Europe and Africa, for a panoramic vista, and observe the amusing antics of Gibraltar's Barbary Apes, the only colony of wild monkeys in Europe. Conclude your tour with a visit to the great Siege Tunnels, excavated by British army engineers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to provide for the defense of the colony.

Join your traveling companions this evening for the captain's farewell reception.

## **Málaga, Spain/ U.S.**

*Thursday, May 1*

Disembark in Málaga and board your return flight to the U.S.