



# Exploring the Kimberley

Mick Fogg, Ponant's Expedition Manager gives an insight on one of Australia's most spectacular regions, and what it has to offer.

## After having led over 300 expeditions across Asia and the Pacific, why does the Kimberley still amaze you?

The sheer size and age of the landscape is humbling, and it is a privilege to experience such a pristine environment that has so many facets. It is home to the oldest continuous culture on earth, the only two 'horizontal falls' on the planet, the world's largest inshore reef and the largest population of migrating humpback whales on the planet. It is one of the world's last great wilderness areas, and one of Australia's greatest natural assets. Everyone should experience it at least once in their lifetime.

## How is visiting the Kimberley by sea different from visiting it by land?

The coastal environment is very different to the inland region, the spectacular archipelagos, pristine mangrove environments and deep gorges can only be accessed from the sea. There are only a few places along the coast that can be accessed from the land, and these are only accessible to the truly adventurous over difficult 4WD tracks that require a lot of preparation. Onboard one of Ponant's small luxury ships, you can experience all the coast has to offer in extreme comfort with a highly attentive crew to look after you.

## Tidal changes in the Kimberley are something that needs to be seen to fully appreciate the sheer volume of water and power of the tides. Is this true?

Absolutely! Talbot Bay and the 'Horizontal Falls' provide a great opportunity to witness the power of the tides. It's amazing to think that there are only two 'Horizontal Falls' on the planet and both are in our own backyard! David Attenborough has described these falls as one of the greatest wonders of the natural world. Ponant will take guests in Zodiacs to coincide with the peak flow at the Horizontal Falls taking you right to the mouth of the falls to feel the power of up to 1 million litres of water passing through the falls every second!



## They say the Kimberley is home to the oldest depictions of the human form on the planet...

Today we know that the most ancient of rock art styles, Gwion Gwion, is a minimum of 12,000 years old and as the dating technology improves it continues to reveal paintings of an even earlier origin. These intricate and complex depictions of the human form are generally accepted to be more than five times older than Egyptian Hieroglyphs. They were once known as 'Bradshaws' but their correct name is Gwion Gwion or Gyorn Gyorn. It is yet another fascinating aspect of our Kimberley experience.



## The Kimberley is known for its breathtaking gorges. What's your favourite?

The 19-kilometre gorge of King George with its spectacular 90-metre-high sandstone cliffs. For the more adventurous guests we offer a hike to the top of the King George Falls where they will be rewarded by an amazing view and a refreshing swim, but for me it's about the journey up the gorge – it is absolutely spectacular.

## What's an unknown fact about the Kimberley that people will discover?

July and August are the prime breeding months for humpback whales in the Kimberley. In fact, a few years ago, they counted over 36,500 humpback whales – the largest population of migrating humpback whales on the planet!



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