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## TECHNICAL SHEET

Public presentation and inauguration in the United States of the project:  
Press Conference: The Explorers Club March 13 (5:15 PM)  
Public Presentation: The Explorers Club March 13th (6:00 PM)

**Title:** In The Footsteps of Basque Whalers in Newfoundland and Labrador

**Content:** Expedition by boat of a new cultural route in eastern Canada to explore the legacy of Basque whalers in the 16th century.

**Promoters:** Iñaki Arizmendi, 5A Incentive Planners; Cedar Bradley-Swan, Adventure Canada

**Collaborators:** The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Aranzadi Society of Sciences, UNESCO Etxea, Midpoint Produkcioak S.L., Maritime Museum of Bilbao, Basque Culinary Center, Wings Air Helicopters

## **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BASQUE WHALERS**

Cultural route celebrating the legacy of Basque whaling in Newfoundland and Labrador during the 16th century to begin operating there in 2017

Half a millennium after Basque whalers set up the first large scale industry in the new world, and two years after the selection of the Basque whaling station in Red Bay, Canada as World Heritage Site by UNESCO, the Basque-American tourism enterprise 5A Incentive Planners led by Iñaki Arizmendi is putting together a cultural route celebrating this legacy. The first expedition, slated for 2017 will mark the opening of the first cultural route celebrating the story of those intrepid sailors from so long ago.

Aboard the Ocean Endeavour, a modern ice-breaking ship with a maximum capacity of 240 passengers; expeditionary will pay homage to the bold navigators of yesteryear by embarking on this unprecedented odyssey. A grand, thematic expedition navigating the islands of eastern Canada where our ancestors sailed and hunted. This expedition will be a scientific exploration as well as a floating platform for cultural exchange.

This cultural route has at its core the epic of Basque whalers of the 16th century, who, using only the most primitive means in search of whales. In unknown, far off lands they would set up whale watching towers and big ovens where they would cook down whale blubber into the desired oil that would bring them great prosperity, and light the lamps of all of renaissance Europe. This cultural route will happen in the places where this work was carried out, but will also be a voyage in time, back to when whale oil was among the most valuable commodities on earth.

After two presentations in the Basque Country in January of this year, this presentation in New York marks the opening of this project to the public in the United States. This presentation is to be followed by others in different parts of the country and the world.

## **THE PROMOTER**

Born in Beasain, Guipuzcoa, Basque Country, Spain, Iñaki Arizmendi has living and working in the New York City area for twenty-five years. He graduated from the Escuela Superior de Hostelería y Turismo in Madrid. In 1985 a job offer took him to Mexico City and, in 1990 he left that job to start his own company in New York. He is the director and owner of different tourism and aviation ventures. At his company 5A Incentive Planners his work consists of discovering and investigating new and different destinations in the United States with the aim of facilitating them to his clients in the international market. Through 5A Incentive Planners he brings thousands of people to visit the United States annually. This project represents somewhat of a departure for him, as it is purely a cultural endeavor tied to his Basque roots. These roots, though always very present in his life, are for the first time the focal point of an important business risk for him by building a cultural route around them. He purports to feel “Pride and satisfaction in presenting In The Footsteps of Basque Whalers in Newfoundland and Labrador.” Further he says”

“This is an open project of very significant magnitude which we have been working on for some time. We have reserved a great ship with an unbeatable crew, we have some of the best and most renowned experts in the world on this topic, we are now in the process of carefully building a complete cultural program, we have established the cooperation and support of several prestigious institutions around the world and now the final piece needed to make this adventure a reality is participants for this expedition. A limited group of adventurous passengers brave enough to travel through space and time on a unique and exceptional voyage, people willing to take on the mantle of explorers and embark on a singular route which will be marked in history.”

Iñaki is also well known in Spain for his participation in various documentary television programs. These credits include “Españoles por el Mundo” on TVE1, “Callejeros Viajeros” on Cuatro TV, “Mondo Dificile” on ETB, among others.

## EXPEDITION TEAM

This expedition is a unique and exceptional experience at the confluence of adventure, history and science.

Four decades ago in Red Bay, the Canadian Robert Grenier and the Basque Manu Izaguirre developed methods of studying subaquatic archeological in those cold waters that allowed extracting and studying the remains of the Nao San Juan sunk in 1565 that have become the international standard for scientific research. This discovery, and their work, provided important evidence related to historical Basque culture and some of the earliest history of Europeans in the Americas. Both Mr. Grenier and Mr. Izaguirre will be sharing their experiences and expertise with us throughout this expedition.

Latonia Hartery PhD. will be there to help us understand the historical contact shared by several cultures including the Basque in the area.



Robert Grenier



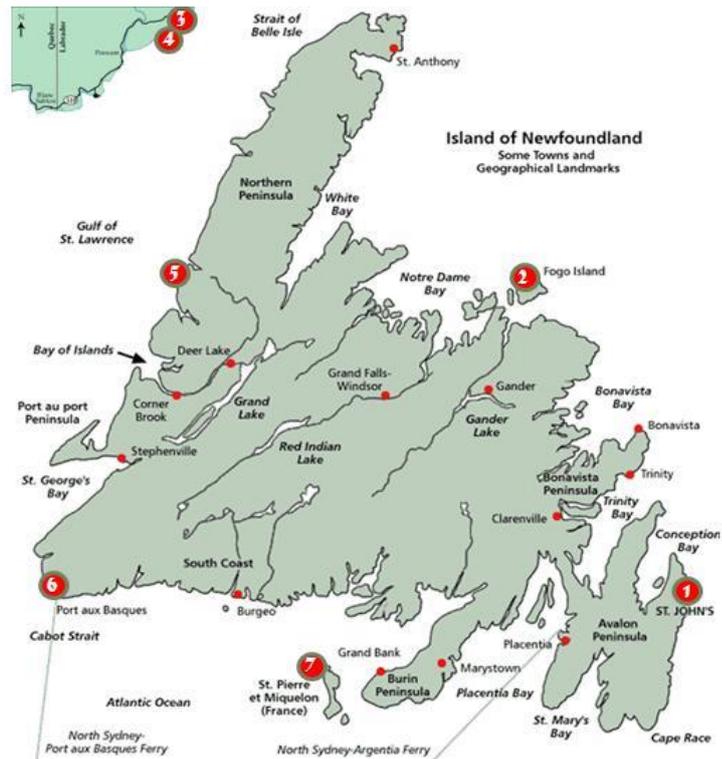
Manu Izaguirre



Dr. Latonia Hartery

## THE PROGRAM

1	St. John's
2	Fogo Island
3	Chateau Bay (On The Labrador Peninsula)
4	Red Bay (On The Labrador Peninsula)
5	Gros Morne National Park
6	Port aux Basques
7	St. Pierre & Miquelon
1	St. John's



### **JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> - ST. JOHN'S**

Our journey begins in St. John's, one of the oldest cities in North America, also the capital and largest city of the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. While the origins of this city and its name are ambiguous, a common belief among Basques there purports that it was founded and named by Guipuzcoan fishermen from Pasajes, San Juan. There will be a pick up and accommodations from the airport to the pier where our ship the Ocean Endeavour awaits. Once aboard there will be a distribution of cabins and registration followed by a cocktail and welcome reception on behalf of the captain and members of the crew. After our ship has set sail there will be a celebratory dinner in the main dining room with a presentation from the team of guides, historians and anthropologists that will accompany us in our journey. The night will end with live music and dance in the main bar as our ship makes its way towards Fogo Island.

### **JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> - FOGO ISLAND**

The largest of the offshore islands of Newfoundland and Labrador, Fogo Island measures 25 km long by 14 km wide and probably received its name from Portuguese explorers. The island and especially the area where the

community of Tilting is located has been in use by fishermen since the 1500s which is reflected in its having been named Registered Heritage District and National Historic Site of Canada. We will disembark here at mid-morning and visit the island returning to ship at mid-afternoon. In the evening, while engaging in our choice from amongst the diverse activities aboard and enjoying a traditional Basque dinner we will cross the Strait of Belle Isle towards Chateaux Bay on the Labrador Peninsula

### **JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup> - CHATEAU BAY**

Chateau Bay is an old fishing port on the Labrador peninsula mentioned by Martin de Hoyarcabal, a French Basque mariner and author of the first detailed navigational pilot of Newfoundland. In the morning we will disembark on Zodiacs for a guided visit and a tour of the excavation sites and other zones of interest. This port has been identified by archaeological finds as where two large ships sank in the 16th Century, probably the "Maria" and the "Magdalena" both ships from the Basque Country. At midday returning to the ship, we will continue our journey towards Red Bay where we will arrive at mid-afternoon. We will disembark there to make an official visit to the Red Bay National Historic Site of Canada and we will attend a reception held by the local authorities. Once back on board the ship there will be a traditional dinner served and here we will invite the local authorities and representatives from Red Bay to join us.

### **JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup> - RED BAY**

A complete day visiting Red Bay and exploring the historic sites. Red Bay was in its day the largest port, the capital of whaling in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the first large scale industrial site in the Americas. It was known then as the Basque whaling station. At its peak in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century there would be approximately 1,000 mariners and nine or ten galleons fishing and hunting whales there every season. It was here in 1977 that a shipwreck was identified as the galleon San Juan, built in Pasajes, Guipuzcoa and sunk in Red Bay in the fall of 1565. In 2013 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will visit Saddle Island where the San Juan lies underwater, check out the watchtowers that were used to spot whales off the coast, the remains of the large ovens used to boil whale blubber down into precious oil and other vestiges, ending the visit with a ceremony in the Basque graveyard

commemorating those who never returned from their whaling adventure. In the evening after returning to the ship, while enjoying dinner, our ship will mark a course towards the west coast of Newfoundland, to Gros Morne National Park.

### **JUNE 19TH - GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK**

At 9 in the morning our ship will arrive at Gros Morne National Park. Found on the west coast of Newfoundland. It is the second largest national park in Atlantic Canada measuring 1805 squared km. In 1987 it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its exceptional landscapes and geological composition which exhibits the concept of plate tectonics and continental drift. The Park boasts breathtaking scenery that includes fjords, alpine and glacial valleys, waterfalls, pristine lakes and spectacular cliffs. Helicopter rides will be offered as an optional activity to display a bird's eye view of the rocky coasts and protected bays used by the whalers in their fishing. In the late afternoon we will return to ship, enjoy a traditional dinner followed by dancing and live music while our ship continues its journey towards Port Aux Basques.

### **JUNE 20TH - PORT AUX BASQUES**

At around midday our ship will pull into port at the southwestern most point of Newfoundland, at the foot of Cabot Strait, Port Aux Basques. We will disembark to explore the tiny fishing villages and virgin landscapes there. Port Aux Basques is situated at the primary entrance point for ships coming from the Atlantic into the Saint Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. Its name comes from its use by 16th century Basque Whalers as a place to gather fresh water and supplies either before continuing to the main whaling areas off southern Labrador or before crossing the Atlantic back to the Basque Country. In the afternoon we will board the ship again in order to take part in cultural and thematic activities before departing in the evening towards the French Island of St. Pierre.

### **JUNE 21ST - ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON**

In the morning, we arrive on the island of St. Pierre, the commercial and administrative capital as well as the most populous of the 11 islands that form the archipelago of St. Pierre and Miquelon. This archipelago has the distinction of being the only remaining vestige of the French empire still in possession of the French state. In the 16th century it was an important fishing port frequented

by Portuguese, Breton and Basque fishermen who bestowed on it its name. Today the island still boasts a Basque presence that includes a Basque center and an Ikurriña on the upper left corner of its flag. Every year it hosts a Basque festival that includes demonstrations of harrijasotzaile, aizkolaris and pelota. After a guided tour, we will participate in a reception with local authorities and island Basques to celebrate the last night of our journey.

### **JUNE 22ND - ST. JOHN'S**

Our exploration will arrive at its final destination at around mid-morning. Once disembarked though, there exists the possibility of celebrating the local St. John's festival which is an important holiday both here and in the Basque Country.

### **THE SHIP**

## The Ocean Endeavour



#### Details

Type of Vessel:	Passenger Cruise Ship
Year Built:	1982
Refurbished:	2001/2004/2010/2014
Length:	137.10m (450 ft)
Breadth:	21,00 m (69 ft)
Decks:	9

## **NOTE ON BASQUE WHALING**

The enterprising character of the Basques has manifested itself in different ways at different times throughout history. With a marked disposition for innovation, creativity, expansion and an openness to the world, they -though a minoritarian culture- made the Basque Country into one of the most prosperous areas in Europe. Since the Middle Ages Basques have demonstrated their enterprising spirit in ironworks, mechanical engineering, and international commerce.

One of the moments when that enterprising spirit shone perhaps the brightest was that of the near legendary but very real *arrantzale* (Basque for fisherman) of the 16th century. From their small territories they realized extreme voyages across the Atlantic in search of fortune and success.

Since at least the end of the 8th century there exists evidence of the practice of whaling in the Bay of Biscay. Aboard small boats and equipped with harpoons tied to ropes, the *arrantzaletas* hunted whales in the waters off various ports in Gipuzkoa and Vizcaya. They didn't limit themselves to their own coasts for long. Slowly they began installing whaling stations all along the coast of the Bay of Biscay creating a large scale industry in the process that included the elaboration of derivative products and extensive commercialization across Europe. The official heraldic seals of several coastal Basque towns reflect the importance of whaling to the community. The seals of Hondarribia (1297), Bermeo (1297) and Biarritz (1351) constitute the oldest set of representations of whaling in Europe. They expanded their activity throughout the northern Atlantic eventually reaching what today we call eastern Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador. At the apex of their activity, thirty galleons with over 2000 men sailed there annually on voyages that could last up to eight or nine months. Records indicate that around 400 whales were killed each year in eastern Canada producing approximately 20,000 barrels of oil. At the end of the season some ships would direct themselves from Canada directly to Bristol, Southampton, London, Amberes, Rouen, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, or Lisbon, but the majority of ships would return to Basque ports to unload and sell their merchandise.

The blubber extracted from the whale was converted into oil that was used for illumination and in the manufacture of soaps, textiles and medicine. The baleen or whalebone was also used in the manufacture of products.

In the 16th century the production and commercialization of whale oil throughout the European market is dominated by Basques.

The principal protagonists of the whale and cod fisheries in Newfoundland, Labrador and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence were ship-owners, ship builders, merchants, harpooners and sailors from the Basque provinces. This was one of the most dangerous and riskiest industries in the world. The approximation to the whale in the act of harpooning meant exposing oneself to the possibility that the crew or the embarkation would be overturned or smashed by its large horizontal tail thrashing after the whale had been struck. There are also stories of boats having been pulled away too far, too fast by the ensnared whale so that the galleon was never able to find them or their crew again. In addition to those dangers and the dangers posed by accidents and foundering during a transatlantic expedition there were the further dangers brought upon by the difficult climate that had to be faced in the winter. A very real danger was that of being trapped by ice before returning to Europe. Some crews found themselves forced to spend the winter in Newfoundland without being prepared for it. The winter of 1576 was especially tragic bringing with it the death of over 300 whalers.

The archival investigations by Selma Huxley in the 1970s led to the discovery that the center of Basque whaling in the 16th century was around what is today called the Strait of Belle Isle, a place that abounded in Right and Bowhead whales as it was part of their migratory route. Concretely she identified twelve whaling stations mainly situated on the southern coast of Labrador. Buttes (Today Red Bay) and Chateo (Today Chateau Bay) were revealed as enclaves of major importance. In 1977 she found material, documentary vestiges of Basque whaling stations in portuary zones of the region that also alluded to the existence of various shipwrecked galleons.

Red Bay is the principal archeological site related to the Basque presence in the area of eastern Canada. The excavation of the remains of a sunken galleon brought to light an understanding of 16th century shipbuilding.

This galleon was the San Juan, the excavation of which was of such great importance that it set an international benchmark in the discipline of underwater archaeology, would be named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2013 and its image is used today as the logo of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Department of UNESCO. Found with the galleon were several other important material elements: remains of various Basque whaling txalupas (A Basque word that in English would become shallop, though a slightly different type of boat.), navigation implements, Barrels, etc. Along with the subaquatic finds a great many vestiges were discovered on land that provide testimony of the intensive whaling activity that took place there: Human remains (A cemetery containing 142 bodies.) remains of try-works, remains of workshops for building barrels and docks, tools, weapons, ceramic and glass, textile, etc.

It was seamen from Labourd, Vizcaya and Gipuzkoa who were the first to hunt, process and commercially exploit derivative products from whales on a large scale. The practice of hunting whales was one of the seafaring activities that brought international recognition to the Basques. Until the beginning of the 17th century were renowned throughout the western world as the maximum specialists in their activity and their fame was maintained at least into the Age of Enlightenment through the works such as the Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d'Alembert or the celebrated treaty on fishing by Duhamel du Monceau, even when references to them were limited to "French-Basque" or "Spanish-Basque" fishermen.