



Giverny & Gardens of Northern France The Loire Valley, Normandy, and Paris

With Marian St. Clair

June 7 to 17, 2013

From the majesty of chateau country to the rolling countryside and historic beaches of Normandy to the seductive allure of the Left Bank, this tour provides an

exciting exploration of the most lush and lovely regions of France.

Beginning in the Loire Valley, we'll visit scenic Chartres and its magnificent Gothic cathedral, a World Heritage Site, then continue to Tours, from where we'll sample a selection of medieval and Renaissance chateau and other sites. Relish the romance of Chenonceau arching across the Cher River, the delectable potager of Villandry, as well as the innovative designs at the International Garden Festival. Heading to Normandy, we'll marvel at magnificent Mont Saint-Michel, one of the wonders of the Western world, explore the D-Day Beaches, and delight in a carefully selected group of exceptional gardens. Bustling market towns, juxtaposed with verdant farmland, make this a region of many pleasures. We'll visit Monet's Giverny, France's most famous garden, on our way to Paris, the City of Light. A river cruise on the Seine will provide a unique perspective of Notre Dame, the soaring Tour Eiffel, and city views. A final adventure to Versailles and Marie-Antoinette's Le Hameau, completes our memorable journey.

Highlights include....

9 nights first class hotel with private bath

3 nights in Tours, 4 nights in Honfleur, 2 nights in Paris

Airport transfers if using suggested flights or meeting the group on arrival

All transportation by private coach

All entrance fees and tips for guides

Breakfast daily, 3 dinners including welcome & farewell dinners, 1 dinner in Honfleur, 1 lunch in Rouen

Touring the gardens and sights:

*In the Loire-Chateau de Chenonceau, Abbaye Royal de Fontevraud, Chaumont sur Loire
International Garden Festival, Jardin du Plessis Sasnieres, Chateau Villandry

*In Normandy- Mont St Michel, Normandy Beaches, Le Clos du Coudray, Les Jardins de
Castillon, Parc du Bois des Moutiers, Les Jardins Agapanthe, Monet's Garden at Giverny

*In Paris- Chateaux de Versailles and Le Hameau, Seine River cruise

Stops in Chartres and Rouen

Hosted by Marian St. Clair

Price per person based on 2 sharing a room \$3289.00

Single supplement \$979.00

Day by day itinerary.....

Day 1, June 7 Meet your group flight at the Greenville SC airport or enroute to Paris. Travel overnight and arrive Paris the following morning.

Day 2, June 8 This morning our coach takes us for a journey into the Loire Valley. We stop enroute at Chartres to see the magnificent Gothic cathedral and its stunning stain glass, have free time for lunch, arriving at our hotel in Tours this afternoon. D

Day 3, June 9 This morning we stay close to Tours with 2 wonderful visits. Our first is to the Abbaye Royal de Fontevraud. This beautifully restored abbey complex includes a Romanesque church with the royal tombs of Henry II, Eleanor of Aquitaine his queen, and their son Richard the Lionhearted. We also will see the lovely Renaissance cloister and a fascinating Byzantine-Romanesque kitchen.



We continue on for a visit to the Chateau de Chenonceaux and free time for lunch. Built on the River Cher in the Loire Valley, the Château de Chenonceau is a masterpiece of 16th-century Renaissance architecture. The château's many rooms are superbly decorated, with 16th-century Flemish tapestries, ornately carved marble fireplaces, coffered ceilings and an assortment of noteworthy 16th-century paintings. The château also contains a small chapel adorned with devotional art. The Château would come to be known as the *Château des Dames* or "Castle of Ladies," due to the prominent women who helped to bring it to its current glory, among them Diane de Portiers and Catherine de 'Medici. B



Day 4, June 10 Today we are off to see the Chateau de Chaumont Castle and Gardens, where the International Garden Festival has been providing a unique panorama of landscape design from all over the world since 1992. In 20 seasons, almost 500 gardens have been designed, which are prototypes of the gardens of the future. After free time for lunch we continue to visit the Jardin du Plessis Sasnieres. Set in the hollow of a small valley around a water pond, the ancient enclosed kitchen garden was transformed into a flower garden planted following color schemes of English gardens. It is the love and life's work for Rosamée Henrion who inherited the house and garden in 1960. B

Day 5, June 11 Today we are treated to a visit to the wonderful Chateau du Villandry with its magnificent formal gardens and potager. The elegance of its architecture combined with the charm of its outstanding gardens make this one of the jewels of world heritage. Ever since its construction in 1532, outstanding gardens have embellished the building. The passage of time and changing fashions meant they underwent drastic changes in appearance and even today are world renown. Later we travel to Honfleur and our stay for the next 4 nights. BD



Day 6, June 12 This morning we travel south to the Normandy Beaches, site of the WWII invasion and establishment of allied forces in France for the liberation of Western Europe. On June 6, 1944, 135,000 men and 20,000 vehicles were brought onto the shores of Normandy via five landing beaches during the night; it was the largest amphibious operation in history. We will visit several sites including the US Military Cemetery near Omaha Beach and some of the monuments and museums of this most revered “Portal of Freedom.”



Les Braves – A monument on Omaha Beach to the Americans who liberated France, commissioned by the French government to celebrate the 60th anniversary in 2004.

Later we continue to visit Les Jardins de Castillon, just outside of Bayeux. A series of theme gardens will let you stroll through rooms of exuberant mixed borders, aquatic plants, scented herbs, sculpted conifers of the Far East and a diverse collection of cranesbill geraniums. Three vast terraces punctuated by yew topiary and beechwood hedges offer a unique ambiance: a collection of ornamental grasses, a blue garden and an ensemble of daylilies and hostas. An arboretum and boxtree labyrinth complement the theme gardens. B



Day 7, June 13 Today we enjoy a full day at one of history’s most interesting and stunning sights and one at the top of many people’s bucket list—Mont Saint-Michel. A rocky tidal island, it is located just over half a mile off the coast and accessible only at low tide. The population is currently at 44. The island has held strategic fortifications since ancient times and since the 8th c. has been the seat of a monastery. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and more than 3,000,000 people visit it each year. After a guided tour of the Abbey, you will have free time to explore and enjoy the island this afternoon. B

Day 8, June 14 This morning we have 2 small gardens to enjoy. First we visit lovely Le Clos du Coudray. Definitely a plantsman's garden, this small organic garden with adjoining nursery was developed by the Le Bret family since 1973. The garden is divided into distinct rooms—a potager, rock garden, exotic garden and rose garden with pergola. Afterwards we continue to nearby Les Jardins Agapanthe, one of France’s “secret gardens.” Situated in the center of the village of Grigneuseville, it is the creation of the landscape architect Alexandre Thomas. In the course of a



few years, starting with a flat and empty terrain, Thomas has created a garden of different levels to create the illusion of space. There are many salient features: the scented walk, the sunken garden with its lavenders, the Mediterranean garden. Various structures set off the plants, shrubs and topiaries. We then travel to the lovely city of Rouen for lunch together and free time to visit the historic quarter and the cathedral of Notre Dame, famous as the subject of many of Monet's paintings. Later this afternoon we visit Parc du Bois des Moutiers, on the Atlantic coast near Dieppe. The house and gardens are a first-class work of the famous English partnership of architect Edwin Lutyens and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll. A large park overlooking the sea and formal gardens surrounding a manor house make up the estate. It is listed as an historical monument and a Remarkable Garden of France. Gertrude Jekyll mixed colors and scents together in order to design a unique atmosphere in each of the seven enclosed gardens. The layout of the gardens relates closely to the rooms within the house. Reflecting the Theosophist philosophy of owners Guillaume Mallet and his wife, "it was understood that the architecture and gardens should work together towards the harmonious development of the spirit." BL

Day 9, June 15 This morning we depart early as we travel towards Paris. We stop at Giverny to visit "Monet's Garden" with free time for lunch. There are two parts in Monet's garden: a flower garden called Clos Normand in front of the house and a Japanese inspired water garden on the across the road. Monet and his family settled in Giverny in 1883. In Clos Normand Monet made a garden full of perspectives, symmetries and colors. Ten years later Monet bought the piece of land next to his property, crossed by a small brook, the Ru, a tributary of the Seine River. Monet had the first pond dug much to the dismay of his neighbors. Later it would be enlarged to its present day size. The water garden is full of asymmetries and curves inspired by the Japanese gardens that Monet knew from the prints he collected avidly. Afterwards we continue to Paris where we enjoy a "Bateaux Parisiens" cruise on the Seine before checking into our hotel. B



Day 10, June 16 Today we travel to nearby Versailles for a tour of the Chateau and free time in the gardens. The court of Versailles was the center of political power in France from 1682, when Louis XIV moved from Paris, until the royal family was forced to return to the capital in October 1789 after the beginning of the French Revolution. Marie-Antoinette, seeking to flee the Court of Versailles, ordered the construction of her hamlet, Le Hameau in 1783. There, she found the charms of country life, surrounded by her lady's companions. It became a veritable farm, whose products supplied the kitchens of the Palace. After returning to the hotel you have free time to enjoy

the city before a farewell dinner this evening. BD

Day 11, June 17 This morning we transfer to the airport for the flight home. B

If you would like to extend your stay in Paris, arrangements can be made for additional hotel nights and any sightseeing you may like.

REGISTRATION

General Instructions:

1. Please type or print legibly.
2. Read the Terms and Conditions and the Payment Schedule and Refund Policy before signing.
3. Make checks payable to Marian St. Clair. Detach the bottom section and mail it to Marian St. Clair, 357 Riverside Drive, Greenville, SC 29605, with your deposit of \$500 and a copy of your passport picture page. Keep a copy of all information for your records.

Detailed Instructions:

1. Name. Please show your name exactly as it appears on your passport and attach a copy of your passport picture page to the registration. Having your passport copy helps in the event of lost or stolen documents.
2. Address and Phone Numbers. Please provide contact information that enables us to reach you at any time, even when you are away from your primary residence.
3. Dietary and Health Information. It is imperative we know if special meals or assistance will be required. The tour is paced for comfort, but a certain amount of walking is involved. Participants should have sufficient stamina and mobility to keep pace with the group.
4. Emergency Contact. Please provide contact information that enables us to reach this person at any time.
5. Flight Information. If you are arranging your own flights to join the tour, it is essential that we have your exact flight information, including dates of travel, airline(s), flight numbers, departure and arrival airports and times. Note: To be eligible for transfers with the group, you must time your flights to arrive and depart in conjunction with the host party.
6. Rooming Requirements. We book non-smoking rooms (where available) unless otherwise requested. If you are sharing a room, please indicate with whom. If you would like to share a room but do not have a roommate, we can try to match you but cannot guarantee this will be possible. If no match is available, the single supplement will apply. A twin room has two separate single beds; a double room has one large bed.

Terms and Conditions:

1. Tour space is limited and registrations are accepted strictly on a first come, first serve basis.
2. Registration and payment constitute acceptance of the terms and conditions described herein.
3. Registration and payment constitute the release of Marian St. Clair and Joyce Moore, and any person from whom liability may be imputed to Marian St. Clair and/or Joyce More, from all claims resulting from natural disasters, war, strikes, incidents of politically-motivated violence, sickness or quarantine, government restrictions or regulations, the use of any vehicle, and/or from any act or omission by any bus or car rental agency, airline, taxi or tour service, hotel, restaurant, or other firm, agency, company, or individual.

4. Registration and payment is certification that the applicant is mentally and physically capable of full participation in the tour.
5. The host reserves the right to substitute hotels, airlines, activities or excursions in response to changes in availability, or local events or weather conditions, provided they do not adversely affect the overall quality of the tour. Substitutions do not constitute grounds for withdrawal with full refund.
6. The host also reserves the right, without penalty, to withdraw the tour, to decline to accept any person as a participant in the tour, and to require a person to withdraw from the tour at any time when such action is determined to be in the best interests of the health, safety or general welfare of the tour group or the individual.

Payment Schedule and Refund Policy:

1. A deposit of \$500 per person must accompany the completed Registration Form. A first payment of an additional \$1000 is due no later than February 1st. The final payment (balance owed) is due no later than April 15th.
2. The host reserves the right to make final costs adjustments in the following circumstances: the value of the dollar falls more than 10% against the currency of the countries to be visited, or the tour group size is less than the anticipated 20 participants.
3. Refunds for the deposit or payments are not available unless the spot is filled at the discretion of the host from a waiting list. If refunds are offered, they will be subject to a cancellation penalty.
4. All cancellation requests should be made in writing, by mail or email.
5. There is no provision for refunds for any activities missed due to the participant's absence once the tour has begun.
6. In addition to insurance and airfare, the following items and services are not included in the tour price: transportation to and from the participant's home to their chosen departure airport, passport fees, excess baggage charges, items of a personal nature.
7. Cancellation and medical insurance for traveling abroad is recommended and offered. Please advise if you would like information and pricing.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR GIVERNY & GARDENS OF NORTHERN FRANCE

Full name as it appears on your passport:

Street Address:

City/State/Zip Code:

Home Phone/Cell Phone

Email:

Passport Number (attach copy of passport picture page):

Date of Birth:

Dietary and Health Information/Allergies:

Emergency Contact:

Street Address:

City/State/Zip Code:

Home Phone/Cell Phone:

Do you want to book flights with the host group? Yes/No

Do you cancellation and health insurance? Yes/No

Will you be sharing a room? Yes/No

Name of roommate:

Room preference: Twin/Double

I have read and agree to the attached Terms & Conditions and Payment Schedule and Refund Policy.

Signature/Date: