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## 13 DAY MAGIC OF SOUTHERN FRANCE RIVER CRUISE

**Trip Code:** TWTLYL\_BYH21

**Duration:** 14

**Destination:** France

**Travel Dates:** 2022 / 2023

### DAY 1 LYON - MS Camargue (D)

You will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to the cruise ship. Passengers are welcome to board our ship at 4:00 p.m. We will start sailing towards the South of France. After comfortably settling into your cabin, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail. Dinner tonight will be followed by an evening of entertainment.

Our ship will cruise through the night.

### DAY 2 ARLES-THE CAMARGUE- MS Camargue (B,L,D)

This morning will be spent cruising. In the afternoon enjoy a panoramic guided tour of the Camargue. Sit back and admire the rivers, marshes, ponds, pink flamingos, black bulls and the famous, indigenous Camargue horses. Discover the salt and rice fields that make the area so well known. We will visit a manade (bull breeding farm) and learn about the work of a manadier as we watch a demonstration of how they work with the animals they raise. Our visit will include a cocktail on the patio. At the end of our visit, we will return to the ship in Arles.

After dinner, we depart on foot for a guided tour of Arles. Arles with its two thousand years of history has preserved an exceptional monumental heritage, making the city a veritable open-air museum and is one of the most important tourist and cultural sites in France. During the course of this guided tour you will see the Roman Amphitheatre (the "Arènes"), the Ancient Roman Theatre, Place St Trophime with its cloister and church, which are part of the Arles route, one of the three pilgrimage routes leading to Santiago de Compostela. We will continue our visit with Place du Forum and finally, the Thermae of Constantine. Enjoy some free time and then return to the boat on foot.

### DAY 3 AVIGNON - VIVIERS, THE ARDÈCHE GORGES -MS Camargue (B,L,D)

This morning we cruise towards Avignon. On arrival we set out on foot for the guided tour of the old town of Avignon. With the Pope's Palace, classed as a world heritage site by UNESCO and a testimony to the city's past when it was known as the capital of Christianity back in the Middle-Ages, Avignon offers an impressive array of monuments. Along the Passage de l'Oratoire, you will be able to admire the exteriors of the chapel, classified as a historic monument, where many events take place during the famous Avignon Festival. We will move on to

St Agricole street where you will get to see the diocesan Church, the oldest in the city. We will then stop by the Place de l'Horloge, which has always been the beating heart of Avignon. Cafés and restaurant terraces are now spread out where the Roman forum once stood. Right across, you will see the walls of the Town Hall and the theater that was built in the 19th century. We will continue to the Place du Palais. This square is roughly 800 ft long and 160 ft wide. To the East stands the Pope's Palace which faces the baroque sculptures of the Papal mint. A large golden Virgin seems to be watching the Notre Dame des Doms cathedral while the elegant Renaissance inspiration on the outside walls of the Petit Palais are showing further back. Then, discover the Pope's Palace, the most important monument in the city. It is made of two parts: the old Palais of Pope Benedict XII (1334 - 1342), and the new Palais of his successor Pope Clement VI (1342 - 1352). Our visit will take you through the staterooms where numerous ceremonies and feasts took place, the chapels, the Pope's private apartments and the terraces which offer a wonderful panorama on Avignon and the Rhône river. Return on board on foot.

This afternoon, we depart for a panoramic tour by coach to the Ardeche Gorges, an area which abounds with wonderful dramatic and unspoilt natural scenery. Enjoy the breath taking views of the mountain relief, with steep valleys, dense vegetation, the ever present granite and volcanic rocks, and much more. The Ardeche is a wild untamed river until it reaches Vallon-Pont-d'Arc. Here it bore its way through the rock, creating a huge natural archway - the "Pont de l'Arc" which is some 34 metres high. After a photo stop at an appropriate viewing point, the panoramic tour continues to the Madeleine Cave, where the coach will stop for you to visit the cave. Located in the heart of an area of pure natural beauty, and awarded 3 stars by the famous Michelin Guide, the beauty of the caves has captivated even the most experienced of travellers. The Madeleine Cave is surely one of the most amazing worlds created by underground waters millions of years ago. Return by coach to the boat and we cruise towards Viviers.

#### **DAY 4                      VIVIERS - TAIN L'HERMITAGE, THE VERCORS -MS Camargue (B,L,D)**

This morning will be spent cruising. In the afternoon, we depart by coach from La Voulte towards Die. Carved out in limestone, the Vercors Regional Nature Park extends over 186,000 hectares between the Isère Valley to the North and the Diois to the South. Water has shaped deep gorges in the cliffs, majestic cirques, caves, and chasms among the most famous in Europe. Wooded plateaux and valleys shaped by agriculture are home to a remarkable fauna and flora.

We will stop at the cellars of Die Jaillance to discover a true love story between men and the vines and enjoy a wine tasting session. Afterwards, we will continue by coach for a panoramic view of the Rousset Pass located in the heart of the Vercors and reaching an altitude of over 1400 meters. The belvedere culminates at a height of 1245 meters and from this point of view the scenery is outstanding: arid escarpments and a road with hairpin bends down the hill, which accentuates the overall impression of depth. We'll move on towards Vassieux-en-Vercors, La Chapelle-en-Vercors and Pont-en-Royans where you'll get to see the suspended houses, whose daring architecture dates as far back as the perched village itself, built in the 15th century. Last, we will drive through Romans-sur-Isère well known for its shoe industry before returning by coach to Tain l'Hermitage to board our ship.

We will return on board in Tain-l'Hermitage. Tonight, is our gala evening and dinner. We will cruise towards Lyon.

#### **DAY 5                      LYON (B)**

After breakfast, check out of your cabin by 9am. You will be transferred to your hotel in Lyon.

The rest of the day is free at your own leisure.

## **DAY 6 LYON- BORDEAUX – PAUILLAC- MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,D)**

After breakfast check out and you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Bordeaux. On arrival in Bordeaux you will be met at the airport and transferred to the cruise ship.

You are welcome to board our ship at 6 p.m. After comfortably settling into your cabins, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail and enjoy our first evening together. Our ship will begin to cruise to Pauillac. We will begin on the Garonne River, before entering the Gironde River where we will pass the islands of Cazeau and Patiras before reaching Pauillac.

## **DAY 7 PAUILLAC - THE MEDOC - GIRONDE ESTUARY – ROYAN -MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we depart by coach from Pauillac to discover the Médoc, prestigious wine-growing region. A corner of the world that produces the most prestigious red wines on the planet, tightly wedged between an ocean and an estuary. A mild, humid microclimate which has been favourable to the development of the vines. We will go through most of the Médoc appellations (Saint Julien, Margaux, Haut-Médoc). On the famous Châteaux Route, we will stop to taste the famous wines of the region. On the way you will see major domains such as Châteaux Laffitte-Rothschild, Latour and Mouton Rothschild. Return to the boat at the end of the afternoon.

We will cruise the Gironde until we reach the estuary. Then we will pass by the marshes, steep cliffs of Meschers-sur-Gironde, troglodyte homes, and fishing cabins before arriving in Royan during the afternoon.

On arrival we depart for a panoramic tour of Royan, a seaside city and an official French "Ville d'Art et d'Histoire." Villas from the Belle Epoque and the charming "retro" homes from the 1950s line the waterfront. In the Foncillon District, we will have a look at the fascinating church and learn about its conception. After our excursion, we will return on board the ship.

Join us for an evening of dinner and dancing.

## **DAY 8 ROYAN - ROCHEFORT - LA ROCHELLE – ROYAN- MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we leave by coach for Rochefort. Rochefort was originally chosen by Jean-Baptiste Colbert as a refuge, defense, and supply post for the French navy back in the mid-1660s. Its arsenal remained a naval base and dockyard until as late as 1926. The historical downtown area boasts lovely private mansions and beautiful homes where the legendary sailors and explorers lived. We will visit the Corderie Royale, a historical rope-making factory. Built between 1666 and 1669, it was the first industrial building in France, and the factory provided ropes for the French Navy and its ships for over three centuries. We will tour the main building and

learn about the techniques used to produce the ropes used on the large sailing ships. Afterwards, we will head to La Rochelle. We will stop for lunch in a local restaurant. The over 1,000-year-old city of La Rochelle is the capital of the Charente Maritime. It is tucked along the Bay of Biscay and contains some of the most beautiful natural and architectural heritage in the area. During a guided tour of the old town and port, you will learn about the Grosse-Horloge gate, Renaissance arcades, lovely half-timbered homes, finely sculpted facades of the private mansions, and the cathedral. Enjoy some free time before returning to the ship. At the end of our afternoon, we will return to Royan.

Join us for dinner and an evening of entertainment.

**DAY 9                      ROYAN - SAINTES - MESCHERS-SUR-GIRONDE – LIBOURNE- MS**  
**Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

This morning, we depart for a guided tour of Saintes. Saintes has accumulated almost two thousand years of history, marked by its rich heritage and its Gallo-Roman and medieval ruins. We will visit the Roman theatre, one of the oldest from the era, which is still the best preserved on the Atlantic Coast and highlights the importance that Saintes held at the time. The theatre can hold up to 15,000 attendees and was used as a showplace for battles between gladiators and wild animals for almost three centuries. We will then continue to the Saint-Eutrope Basilica. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site along the Way of St. James, it is one of the most important monuments in the city and its crypt has been described as fascinating and impressive on online tourist reviews describing its startling contrasts between the Roman and Gothic style architecture and as a must-see visit for anyone in Saintes. After our excursion, we will return on board the ship.

This afternoon we visit a typical French seaside village with tons of charm which is officially listed as one the most beautiful villages in the country. Talmont-sur-Gironde is lined with cobblestone streets that take you to the white tower on the coastline, up to its beautiful Romanesque church, and over to the quaint port. The lovely, small houses dotting the streets are full of boutiques selling wares by local craftspeople. In Meschers-sur-Gironde, we will tour the cave dwellings suspended in the cliffs which harbor treasures from centuries long ago.

After we return on board, we will begin to cruise to our next stop, spending the rest of our day cruising up the Dordogne to Libourne.

**DAY 10                      LIBOURNE – BORDEAUX- MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we depart for a guided tour of Saint-Émilion's underground monuments, discovering the rich history of this medieval city, including its enigmatic monolithic church. We will then head to a vineyard where we will learn how the famous local wine is produced. We will enjoy a tasting of local products at the end of our tour.

We will return to the ship in Libourne. We will then spend the afternoon cruising to Bordeaux. On arrival in Bordeaux we depart for a panoramic night tour of the city, where you'll be able to discover the main monuments, followed by a tour on foot of the old quarter of Bordeaux. We will discover the impressive areas such as the Place des Quinconces and the Grand Théâtre, as well as the intimate side streets tucked around the Place Saint Pierre.

After our excursion, we will return on board the ship.

**DAY 11                      BORDEAUX – CADILLAC- MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

Today we cruise along the Garonne, with exceptional views of Bordeaux from the water as we make our way to Cadillac. We stop to visit the magnificent and prestigious Château de Roquetaillade. This castle has been the backdrop for several French films including Brotherhood of the Wolf (Le Pacte des Loups) and Fanfan la Tulipe. Explore the towers and keeps in this medieval château and take time to learn about the architecture, interiors, and ambiance of French life almost 500 years ago. We then head to a wine cellar in the Sauternais to enjoy a tasting of the famous Sauternes wine. Afterwards, we'll return to Cadillac for a guided tour of the city. Located on the right bank of the Garonne River, the city was founded in 1280 and still retains its original structure. We will explore the port, its ramparts, and the main square and stroll the streets to admire the old homes and 15th-century church.

We will spend the afternoon cruising to Bordeaux, and we'll arrive during the evening. Tonight, is our festive gala evening.

## **DAY 12                      BORDEAUX - MS Cyrano de Bergerac (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we depart by coach for the guided tour of Bordeaux. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Bordeaux has been awarded the precious label in the "cultural site" category. Half of the city, from the boulevards to the banks of the Garonne has been recognised for the quality of its architectural heritage. This panoramic tour of the city, will take in all the main monuments, followed by a walking tour of old Bordeaux. From the wide avenues of the neo-classical Les Quinconces quarter and the Grand Théâtre to the narrow lanes of the Saint Pierre quarter, this tour will uncover the diversity of Bordeaux's heritage.

We will have lunch on board. Enjoy some free time on your own in the city this afternoon.

Join us for dinner and an evening of entertainment.

## **DAY 13                      BORDEAUX (B)**

Enjoy breakfast on board this morning before checking out of your cabin at 9:00 a.m. You will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight. End of our services.

## **DAY**

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