Press Pack Champagne-Ardenne

PRESS CONTACTS:

Doug Goodman Public Relations
Tel: 0208 614 1448 - info@douggoodmanpr.com

Sarah Flook - Champagne-Ardenne Tourisme
flook.crtca@gmail.com
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With a dual identity and a rich history, the Champagne-Ardenne region of France offers visitors a wealth of historical and cultural sites, unspoilt nature, many leisure activities and one of the world’s most famous wines!

In the north of the region, the Ardennes département is named after the hilly plateau that stretches through this part of France, southern Belgium and Luxembourg. Renowned for the natural beauty of its landscapes, such as the valleys of the Meuse and Semoy rivers, thick forests and rocky peaks, the Ardennes is an ideal destination for lovers of the outdoors, nature and activities such as hiking and cycling. Characterised by the wild boar which roams in the Ardennes forests, the area has many pork specialities on its local menus, such as the smooth white pudding of Rethel or the cured Ardennes ham.

The main town of the Ardennes is Charleville-Mézières, famed for its magnificent Place Ducal, the revolutionary poet Rimbaud, and its reputation as the world capital of puppet theatre.

The gateway to Champagne is the city of Reims, just 2½ hours down the motorway from Calais and 45 minutes from Paris by TGV (high speed train). Reims is the coronation city of France with a long line of kings crowned at the magnificent gothic cathedral. Many famous champagne houses have their headquarters here and the extensive champagne vineyards stretch southwards from Reims, over the ‘Montagne de Reims’ to Epernay, at the heart of the champagne industry. They continue more sporadically towards the beautiful medieval town of Troyes with another concentrated area of vineyards to the south-east of Troyes in the ‘Côte des Bar’.

The 3 départements of Champagne are named after rivers: the Marne, the Aube and the Haute-Marne (upper Marne). This is the realm of the Knights Templar and the Counts of Champagne and the heart of the Cistercian order with mystical names such as the Forest of the Orient and the famed abbey turned prison at Clairvaux. Local specialities include the creamy cow cheeses of Chaource and Langres, and the light and crunchy pink biscuits of Reims.

**A little history**

The importance of Reims in French history goes back to around 498AD, when King Clovis I converted to Christianity and was baptised by the bishop of Reims, the future St Remi. Clovis became the first Christian King of the Franks and this event marked the beginning of the link between the church and the French monarchy and of a tradition of coronations at Reims.

From the late 12th to 14th centuries, the trading fairs known as the ‘Foire de Champagne’ brought prosperity to the province of Champagne, and particularly its capital Troyes, which was under the rule of the Counts of Champagne. In the south of the region, the fortified city of Langres was ruled by the bishop and therefore attached to the kingdom of France.

During the First World War, the Marne was the scene of major conflicts and trench warfare and the city of Reims was badly destroyed. At the start of the Second World War, the Germans invaded Western Europe via the Ardennes, surprising the allies at Sedan followed by ferocious fighting at Stonne. It is appropriate that the end of the war should also take place in the region, with the signing of the capitulation taking place in secret at Reims on 7th May 1945. The reconciliation ceremony between France and Germany took place at Reims cathedral on 8th July 1962 in the presence of President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Conrad Adenauer.
CENTENARY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1914-1918)

The Marne gives its name to the two decisive battles of the Great War - a land that, still today, through its deeply scared landscape, bears witness to the ferocity of the battles which took place here from 1914 to 1918.

THE MAIN BATTLES Fought IN CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE

THE BATTLE OF THE ARDENNES, 21-23 August 1914

One of the opening battles of World War I and one of the 4 major battles of the Battles of the Frontiers; the Battle of the Ardennes is characterised by the mutually confused collision of French and German Forces in the lower Ardennes forest due to thick fog.

The German Army came through Belgium and attacked France in the Ardennes, according to a meticulously planned invasion known as the Schlieffen Plan. The Germans were well equipped with heavy artillery, Field Grey uniforms, and were superior in numbers to the French, whose red trousers only served to highlight their positions in the wooded terrain and open countryside.

The French began a disorderly retreat on 23rd August. The Germans forced their way into Thin-le-Mouther 4 days later. The Zouaves and Algerian artillery from the Moroccan division tried to stop the advance and there was a fierce battle at Fosse-à-Tau, to the south of Thin-le-mouther on 28th and 29th August, with heavy losses. The French Army was forced to withdraw and the Ardennes remained occupied by the Germans for the remainder of the war.

THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE MARNE, 6-13 September 1914

The second major clash on the Western Front (after the Battle of the Frontiers) was one of the most important single events of the war. The French counter attack to the invasion into France, pushed back the Germans and enabled the French to retake Reims.

Having taken the Ardennes, the Germans continued their advance towards Paris, arriving in Reims on 3rd September. The town put up little resistance, especially as the forts on high points around the town had recently been disarmed, and was quickly taken.

However, the Germans made a tactical error of swerving south-east away from Paris instead of attacking the capital from the north, as per the Schlieffen Plan. This exposed their right flank to the allies (six French field armies and the British Expeditionary Force) who were able to mount a powerful counter-attack on 5th September.

Boosted by the arrival of 10,000 French reserve infantry troops from Paris, 6,000 of whom were transported in 600 Parisian taxi cabs, the French were able to bombard the German advance towards the capital and retake Reims on 13th September as well as the Fort de la Pompelle.

Although the remaining forts around Reims were still in German hands, from where the Germans were able to bombard the town, including the cathedral which was badly hit on 19th September, the bulk of the German forces were obliged to abandon their plans and retreat northeast until they reached higher ground where they were able to hide by digging in and taking cover.

The First Battle of the Marne was a strategic victory for the Allied Forces, marking a decisive turn of events and stopping Germany's bid for a swift victory over France. However, the aftermath of the battle was that both sides dug in and four years of stalemate ensued.

THE WAR OF ATTRITION

Having retreated from the Marne, the German Army began to “dig in” wherever they found high ground, such as on the Chemin des Dames ridge in the Aisne and the ridges above the village of Massiges in the Ar- gonne. The Germans dug defensive trenches to protect themselves from artillery fire and automatic weapons, with the intention of securing the position and preventing any further possibility of withdrawal. This was the beginning of entrenched positions and the change from a mobile war to a static deadlock between the opposing forces which would continue for 3½ years.

Rudimentary at first, the entrenchments gradually expanded, becoming deeper, more impregnable and better organised with underground shelters (saps), firing slits, a network of barbed wire belts, mined dugouts and reinforced concrete bunkers. Second and third defence lines were created where supplies could be delivered and exhausted troops could rest. They also served as back-up defences for the Front Line.

The trenches spread along the whole length of the Western Front, a distance of approximately 450 miles, with No Man's Land in between. Sometimes the distance between the Front Line trenches on both sides was little more than a couple of metres.

THE BATTLES OF CHAMPAGNE

September 1914 to end of 1915

The French mounted an offensive to take the German positions around Massiges, Perthes and Souain. This first Champagne Offensive, which took place from December 1914 to June 1915, became known as the 'War of Attrition', with each side 'nibbling' away at the other. By the end of this period, the French troops had 'gained' 4km, but at the price of 150,000 men lost on both sides. A second offensive was launched in September 1915. After the end of 1915, fighting around Massiges became less intense, with the focus of the war moving to Verdun, although trench warfare continued here right up to the end of the War in 1918.
THE BATTLE OF THE HILLS OF CHAMPAGNE
17th April 1917

This was part of the Nivelle Offensive, a Franco-British initiative intended to break through the German defences on the Aisne within 48 hours. This coordinated attack encompassed St Quentin, Arras, the Chemin des Dames and the 'Monts de Champagne' (Hills of Champagne) between Reims and Suippes. A statue commemorating this battle can be found at the village of Prosnes.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE MARNE
15th July - 5th August 1918

The last major German offensive of the war. The Germans finally managed to break through the Western Front in the Somme ending years of trench warfare and shifting back into a mobile warfare. The ‘Friedensturm’ offensive took place to the west of Reims resulting in the capture of villages along the Marne Valley and of a bridgehead either side of Dormans. The Allied forces stationed in Champagne were mainly French, but with British, American and Italian support. By bringing the different divisions together under the unified control of General Foch, the allies were able to mount a major counter-offensive on 18th July, overwhelming the Germans and forcing them to retreat. This German defeat marked the start of the relentless Allied advance which culminated in the Armistice about 100 days later. Thus the Second Battle of the Marne can be considered as the beginning of the end of the Great War.

WAR MEMORIALS, MONUMENTS AND CEMETERIES

Emblematic monuments and numerous cemeteries are dotted along the line of the former Western Front. Many different nationalities are represented (British, Italian, Russian, Polish, American, German) and the Marne is, with great respect, the final resting place of the largest number of soldiers of all the départements of France with 164,145 military tombs.

MARNE 14-18 INTERPRETATION CENTRE

This museum is set in the heart of the Champagne Front, an area which saw fighting throughout the First World War. An important testament to the Great War, the museum is an ideal starting point for a tour of places of remembrance, Sur les Pas des Armées de Champagne (In the Footsteps of the Armies of Champagne). Visitors have access to a reception and documentation area, seven modules and a projection room.


POMPELLE FORTRESS MUSEUM

Built after the war of 1870, the Fort de la Pompelle was the last of a series of 13 fortresses built on high points around Reims to strengthen the fortifications around the town. However, by 1910, the boundaries of France had changed and army technique had advanced, so the forts were disarmed. When the Germans invaded Reims at the beginning of September 1914, the town and its hilltop forts were therefore unable to put up much resistance and so were quickly taken and the Fort de la Pompelle was occupied by troops of the 45th Brigade of Reserve Saxon Infantry.

However, the German occupation only lasted for a week since Reims and the Fort de la Pompelle were retaken by the French following their counter offensive to the First Battle of the Marne on 13th September. The fort became a bastion of the defence of Reims, neither town nor fortress falling back into German hands, in spite of their attempts. In 1916, the expeditionary Russian corps were stationed at Pompelle to strengthen the French troops in their defence of the fort and Reims.

Now converted into a museum, the fort evokes the conflict through documents of the period, objects from daily life in the trenches, weaponry and artillery pieces. It houses a collection of over 500 Imperial German Army helmets (the Charles Friese Collection) that is unique in the world. The fort is currently closed for extensive renovations and is due to reopen in the summer of 2014.

www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr

MONDEMENT MEMORIAL

This giant monolith, 35½m tall, has 22-metre deep foundations and is cast over a metal framework in concrete with pink aggregate from the Moselle. It is the National Monument to the Marne Victory, commemorating the first Battle of the Marne, in September 1914. Built between 1931 and 1938, under the supervision of architect Paul Bigot, the declaration of war in September 1939 meant that the official inauguration did not take place until 1951. At the base of the monument, a sculpted bas-relief depicts the effigies of the commanding generals of this first battle. Above, engraved in the stone, is the Order of the Day of 6 September 1914, signed by Marshal Joffre.

www.mondeament1914.asso.fr

BLANC MONT AMERICAN MONUMENT

Erected by the United States of America to commemorate the great achievements of their 70,000 soldiers and French soldiers who fought in this area during the First World War. This site, known as ‘Blanc Mont’ (White Mount) was conquered by the 2nd American Division on 3 October 1918 after savage battles. The monument was designed by the architect Arthur Loomis Harman from New York.

The structure is a single tower with an interior staircase which leads to a panoramic platform with far-reaching views over the battlefields. The insignia of the 4 divisions who took part in the battles are engraved on the walls.

www.abmc.gov
WAR MEMORIALS, MONUMENTS AND CEMETERIES

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHAPEL
Built in 1937 close to the village of Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand in the Marne, the Russian Orthodox Chapel watches over the remains of 915 Russian soldiers buried here (489 tombs and 426 in the ossuary), and keeps alive the memory of the 4,000 Russians who died fighting on French soil between 1916 and 1918.
www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr

MEMORIAL OF THE BATTLES OF DORMANS
The Memorial stands on a hillside overlooking the left bank of the Marne and the town of Dormans. When the project to build a great monument for all the fighting in the Marne was put forward, Marshal Foch chose this site as a compromise between the locations of the two battles. An association, set up by Madame de la Rochefoucauld in 1919 and headed by the cardinal of Reims and the bishop of Châlons, acquired a huge park with a château for the site and the chapel’s cornerstone was laid on 18 July 1920. The architects Marcel and Closson designed the imposing complex. A monumental staircase leads to a large forecourt with a sundial and an orientation table featuring the names of Marne Valley villages where the 1918 battle took place. The forecourt gives access to a crypt beneath a church surmounted by a tower and two pinnacles.
www.tourisme-dormans.fr

THE HAND OF MASSIGES
This area of high land, above the village of Massiges in the Argonne, takes its name from the hand-shape formed by its ridges. This was an ideal defence position for the Germans retreating from the Marne in September 1914 and so they started digging a trench system here. This became the focus of the Battles of Champagne during a period of fierce trench warfare between September 1914 and December 1915. Traces of the desperate attempts at attack and defence can be seen in the shape of the surrounding landscape. The Association of the Hand of Massiges, who own the land, have been working on the project to restore the trenches to their original condition. Their excavation work has uncovered a number of bodies (6 French and 1 German as of September 2013) and a large array of artefacts that are on display in the trenches.
maindemassiges@hotmail.fr

NAVARIN WAR MEMORIAL
Located between the villages of Souain and Sommepy-Tahure, at the heart of the Battles of Champagne, this monument commemorates the fallen soldiers of the Battles of Champagne (October 1914 and September 1915). Inaugurated on 28th September 1924 by Marshal Joffre, the monument, which is topped by a statue of three combatants in the course of an attack, overlooks a vast panorama of the former Champagne front, and much of the surrounding land still bears the scars of the fighting. In the form of a pyramid, the interior houses a chapel, on whose walls are a number of marble plaques carrying the names of soldiers who disappeared, placed there at the request of their families. The crypt contains ossuaries containing the unnamed remains of 10,000 soldiers, together with the tomb of General Gouraud, founder of the monument, who wished to be buried in the midst of those whom he had commanded from 1916 to 1918 as head of the 4th Army.

THE BRITISH CEMETERY IN MARFAUX
The British military cemetery in Marfaux nestles amidst Champagne’s hills and vineyards approximately 12½ miles (20 km) southwest of Reims, next to a German cemetery. This burial ground is the final resting place of 1,129 men who fell in the area during the summer of 1918, including 1,114 British soldiers and 15 New Zealanders. Visitors can spend a moment of quiet meditation before the graves as well as the Cross of Sacrifice, Stone of Remembrance, Chapel of the Resurrection and New Zealand memorial. The cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves commission.
www.crdp-reims.fr/memoire/lieux/16M_CA/cimetieres/britanniques/marfaux.htm

THE CAMP OF THE MOREAU VALLEY
This German third-line rest camp is located near the village of Vienne-le-Château in the Argonne Forest. Many of the camp’s facilities have been restored (shower block, sleeping quarters, store, underground tunnels, trenches) and a visit to the camp gives a very good idea of the organisation of the German Army. The restoration work is organised by a Franco-German association, and many of the volunteers are students. The camp is open to visitors on Saturday mornings.
Maison du Pays d’Argonne
maison.argonne@orange.fr
www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr
REIMS, 
Coronation City

Gateway to Champagne and just 45 minutes from Paris by high speed train (TGV), Reims is a bustling market town with an attractive and lively centre. Largely rebuilt in the 1920s and 1930s after extensive damage during the First World War, the architecture of Reims today bears many fine examples of the art deco style. The town also owes its appeal to the international acclaim of champagne, with many of the prestigious champagne houses having their headquarters here. A visit of the underground world of champagne cellars followed by a tasting is an unforgettable moment of any visit to Reims.

Historical sites
Known as the coronation city of France, 33 French kings were crowned here, from Charles III in 893AD to Charles X in 1825 (25 kings were crowned in the current cathedral).

Founded in 1211, Notre-Dame Cathedral is a gem of French Gothic architecture whose magnificent ‘Smiling Angel’ statue has become the symbol of the town. The cathedral is one of the town’s 3 historical World Heritage sites (UNESCO) along with the ancient Abbey of St Remi (including the St Remi Basilica) and the Palais du Tau, former residence of the Archbishop of Reims, which today houses the cathedral museum. See also pages 23-24

Museums of Reims

Reims Fine Arts museum houses one of the most prestigious collections in the region of paintings, sculptures, furniture and objects of art which illustrate the major artistic movements from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Entry is free on the first Sunday of the month.

The Saint-Remi Museum is housed in the 17th and 18th century buildings of the former Saint-Remi abbey (UNESCO listed) and displays a rich collection illustrating the history of Reims, from prehistoric times to the Renaissance. The museum is organised into four sections: the history of the abbey itself, Gallo-Roman Reims, regional architecture through the ages and local military history.

Le Vergeur is a beautiful Renaissance private house which has been transformed into a showcase for the old Reims. The collection is largely that of its last owner, Hugues Krafft (1853-1935) who brought back clothes, photos and other objects from his travels around the world. This ethnographic collection, displayed along with Krafft’s furniture, library and other personal possessions, present a window into 19th century life. Guided tours available in English. www.museelevergeur.fr

The Automobile Museum displays around 200 vehicles dating from 1908 to the present day, from rare motorbikes to prestigious vintage cars.

For more information on the museums of Reims: www.reims.fr/culture-patrimoine/musees-et-collections-permanentes.htm

Reims pass and Audio-guided tours
The Reims Pass gives you a free audio-guided visit in English from a choice of circuits, free entry to one of 6 museums, as well as discounts and/or offers in selected Champagne Houses, shops, restaurants, places of interest and bicycle hire. Priced at 9€ and valid for 3 days once collected from the tourist office, the pass can be ordered online or bought directly at the tourist office. Details are available on the tourist office’s web site.

Open-top bus tours
The tourist office organises two audio-guided tours in an open-top bus. The City Tour, costing 10€, takes one hour while the Vineyard Tour takes you into the champagne vineyard with a stop at a local producers for a visit and tasting and a photo stop at the Verzenay Mill. The 3-hour tour costs from 35€. 10% discount available when booked through the tourist office’s web site.

New for 2014 – Remembering the Great War
Available from summer 2014

Reims 14-18 Pass - gives visitors free entry to four historical museums about the Great War and also includes an audio-guided visit about the reconstruction of the town after the war.
TOWNS & HERITAGE

First World War: Destruction and reconstruction
At the end of the First World War, the town of Reims emerged deeply scarred by four years of continuous conflict; of its 14,000 houses, only 60 remained inhabitable, 80% of the town having been devastated by the war. But thanks to the rallying of the entire population, together with US aid, the town was rebuilt. Between 1920 and 1930, no less than 325 firms of architects redesigned a new town, with a wholly eclectic look and featuring many Art Deco details. Outstanding examples include the Carnegie Library, the facade of the Opéra Cinema, the church of Saint-Nicolas and the Grand Théâtre.

The Fort de la Pompelle 3 miles south of Reims, used as a defense stronghold during the conflict, houses an interesting display of WW1 artefacts, from documents and objects from life in the trenches to army vehicles, weaponry and the world's largest collection of German army helmets. The museum is currently closed for refurbishment and is due to reopen in summer 2014.

Second World War: The end of an era
The Second World War has equally left its mark on Reims since it is in a room of the 'Collège Moderne et Technique', a large school building close to the railway station, that General Eisenhower set up the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe. Its war room was to be the scene for the signing of the unconditional surrender of the German armies, on 7 May 1945 at 2.41am, bringing the Second World War to a close in Europe.

The Salle de la Rédemption (Room of Surrender) has since been classified as a Historical Monument and is today part of a moving museum dedicated to WW2. (See also page 32).

Reims Tourist Office
www.reims-tourism.com

Epernay, Capital of Champagne
Although modest in size (population of 25,000), Epernay is located in the heart of the vineyards and is known throughout the world as the Capital of Champagne. The town of Epernay lives and breathes champagne. Its most famous street, the Avenue de Champagne, is lined with many 19th-century Renaissance and Classical style mansions which are home to such prestigious champagne houses as Moët & Chandon, Perrier Jouët, Mercier and De Castellane. The Avenue is classified as one of the ‘100 Sites of Outstanding Taste in France’.

Underneath the town, a network of 110 km of cellars houses over 2 million bottles of champagne.

In the centre of the town lies the headquarters of the Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (CIVC). Established in 1941, this trade organization for champagne represents the interests of grower-producers, champagne houses and everyone within the Champagne industry. The organization is known as the ‘Champagne Bureau’ in the UK and their website is a very useful source of information: www.champagne.com.

Free champagne tastings are organized at the tourist office. The tasting bar ‘C Comme Champagne’ has a special comparative tasting of 5 or 6 different champagnes for a very modest price: www.c-comme.fr (see also page 41). Epernay also has a good choice of restaurants, hotels and some artisan chocolate makers.

GALLO-ROMAN CHALK QUARRIES
The pure white chalk under the Saint-Remi district of Reims was excavated from the 4th to the 15th centuries to use as construction material and in various textile industries. Today, about 1,000 underground quarries have been listed in this area, their cavities representing an estimated volume of 300,000 m³. Varying from depths of 7 to 70 metres and linked by passages and tunnels, this underground network became a place of refuge for soldiers during the war.

As the champagne industry developed during the 18 and 19th centuries, these vast underground caverns provided ideal storage conditions for champagne with a constant cool temperature (around 11 °C) and a high humidity throughout the year. The underground chalk quarries in Reims represent the most important element of the city’s industrial heritage and can be visited when participating in a guided tour of one of the many champagne houses situated in the south-east of Reims (eg Veuve Clicquot, Pommery, Taittinger etc).

To round off the year in style, the Christmas festival Habits de Lumières (Dressed in Lights), taking place on the second weekend in December each year, transforms the Avenue de Champagne and surrounding streets into a dancing frenzy of lights, street animations, champagne bars and fireworks. 12-14 December 2014.

VISITING EPERNAY
The tourist office, located at the bottom of the Avenue de Champagne, organizes 45-minute tours of the town by a little tourist train called ‘Mille Bulles’. Tours are available in English, Dutch and German (depending on the language requested) and run between Easter and October with 6 departures per day.

To visit the town with more freedom, an electric car (max speed: 45km/h) is also available for hire at the tourist office on presentation of a valid driving license. Rental is by the hour or by the half-day or full-day.

Epernay Pays de Champagne Tourist Office
www.ot-epernay.fr
TOWNS & HERITAGE

TROYES, City of 1000 Colours

The beauty of Troyes strikes every visitor to the town with its exquisite historical centre of beautiful half timbered houses with corbelled roofs, mullioned windows and timber and cob walls, materials commonly used in mediaeval architecture in the Champagne region.

Situated on the river Seine and the Via Agrippa trading route, Troyes dates from the Roman era, though little remains of the gallo-roman town today. The town grew in importance when the Counts of Champagne chose it as their capital at the end of the 9th century, and indeed Troyes remained the capital of the Province of Champagne up until the French Revolution in 1789.

During the late 12th and 13th the Counts of Champagne encouraged the prosperity of commercial exchanges and the tradition established of holding great trading fairs, two major annual fairs at Troyes, with Provins, Lagny and Bar-sur-Aube also holding smaller fairs. Known as the Champagne Fairs, these events became the meeting place for the whole of the Western world with the trading of Flemish, English and Spanish wools, silks, leathers, furs, spices, precious woods and gold and silver wares. The standard measurement used for weighing gold at the time became known as the ‘troy weight’, and is still used for measuring precious metals today. The St-Jean-au-Marché church is a particularly fine example with exceptional stained glass windows – another gem is the remarkable stone rood screen of the Sainte Madeline Church (See also page 24).

Troyes also became renowned for its 16th century statuary, some 60 of which can be seen in the Sainte Pantaléon Church. Another gem is the remarkable stone rood screen of the Sainte Madeline Church (See also page 24).

Troyes, where the textile industry continues to thrive is, among other things, Europe’s largest centre for factory outlet shops. The centres include McArthur Glen and Marques Avenue and brands that are well established here include Lacoste and Petit Bateau.

MUSEUMS OF TROYES

The Apothecary Museum

Originally called the Hôpital Hôtel-Dieu due to its function as a hospital, the 12th century building was rebuilt in a classical style with a grand courtyard closed off by a magnificent Louis XV gold plated gate. The 18th century Hôtel-Dieu-le-Comte housed an apothecary which has today been preserved in its original state and opened to the public as a showcase of an 18th century pharmacy, with oak panelling and numerous shelves stacked with rare pill boxes, blue and white apothecary jars and an exception collection of over 300 painted wooden medicine boxes, listed as a historical monument. Each box is decorated with an illustration of its contents, such as camel’s urine, dragon’s blood, and ‘human brain’, giving a fascinating insight into pharmaceutical practices of the time.

The Museum of Craft Tools and Work Reflection

Maison de l’Outil et de la Pensée Ouvrière

Jean Mauroy, inspector of aids and tallages for the kingdom, bequeathed his home as an orphanage in 1582 on condition that the children housed there would learn a trade. The home received the first power looms 1746 and the children started making stockings, becoming the largest producers of stockings in the city. Today, the magnificent Renaissance Hôtel de Mauroy houses a stunning collection of over 10,000 objects and tools used in traditional trades. The museum explains the use and symbolism of the creations in stone, wood, iron and glass, designed and made by highly skilled craftsmen.

www.maison-de-l-outil.com

Museum of Modern Art

Housed in the former Bishop’s palace (16th and 17th century) next to the cathedral, the museum brings together great artistic moments of French art from the late 19th century up to the 1960s, such as the Fauvist period and the School of Paris. The Museum is known for having the largest public collection of the works of Derain, de La Fresnaye and Maurice Marinot (one of the 20th century’s greatest French glass worker, born in Troyes).

TOURISM FOR DOGS

For visitors traveling with their 4-legged friends, the tourist office of Troyes has initiated a special welcome pack for dogs. Available at the tourist office this pack includes a booklet listing all the dog-friendly places, including hotels and restaurants and suggestions for walks, a booklet on dog care, a poop scoop and a bowl for water. Please note that the information is only available in French.

This initiative has been coined ‘toutourisme’ (from the French word for doggie - ‘toutou’).

Troyes Tourist Office

www.tourisme-troyes.com
HENRY V OF ENGLAND AND THE TREATY OF TROYES

The city of Troyes is an important landmark in the history of France and England, for it was here that the Treaty of Troyes was signed in 1420 following the defeat of the French at Agincourt by Henry V's considerably smaller army. Through the Treaty of Troyes, Henry V became betrothed to Charles VI's daughter, Catherine of Valois, and, along with his heirs, would succeed Charles VI as the king of France, whilst the dauphin Charles was disinherited. The wedding took place in the Church of St-Jean in the heart of the old town. However, Henry V died a few months before Charles VI, so the French crown was passed to his baby son Henry VI. Meanwhile the dauphin Charles also claimed the throne of France on his father's death, and thanks to the intervention of Joan of Arc, he was crowned Charles VII, king of France, on 17th July 1429 in Reims Cathedral.

VISITING TROYES

Troyes Pass
Comprises a booklet of a dozen vouchers that give entry to 5 different museums, free champagne and chocolate tastings, bicycle hire, a guided tour and additional reductions at a selection of the town's famous discount fashion stores. The pass, costing just €12, is available from the Troyes Tourist Office and is valid throughout 2014.

Audio-guided visits – 2 commented walking tours in English are available from the tourist office: The Cats Circuit, focuses on the St-Jean church part of town and features colourful timber-framed buildings and Renaissance stone dwellings; the Canons Circuit takes you around the oldest part of the town around the cathedral.

Smartphone applications - A free-of-charge application is available in English for visiting the places of interest in Troyes, unearthing hidden gems and learning more about the town's history and heritage. Called Click’n Visit, the application gives map locations and also includes information on restaurants, the factory shopping outlets, evening entertainment and accommodation. ‘Click’n’Visit’ can be downloaded from the AppStore (iphones) or Google Play (android) or directly from the tourist office’s web site.
Two other applications available in French only can also be downloaded free of charge, Click’n Shop (for all the shops in and around Troyes) and Troyes Tour.

VISITS FOR CHILDREN

Troyes in the Days of the Sword - audio-guided visit of the town aimed at children and young adults.
A kid'jouer - game booklet in English available from the tourist office with 33 fun questions to explore the centre of Troyes, illustrated with photos and cartoons. A gift and a certificate are offered at the end of the course. The booklet comes in two versions: 4-7 years and 8-12 years.

THEMED GUIDED VISITS – Departing from the tourist office, in English.

Rachi and the former Jewish district of Troyes
Rashi (1040 to 1105), famed as the outstanding Biblical commentator of the Middle Ages was born in Troyes in 1040. After attending Talmudic schools in the Rhineland, he founded his own Talmudic academy in Troyes at the age of 25 years. The rabbi's Biblical and Talmudic commentaries, noted for their terseness, clarity, and erudition, made him the best known medieval Jewish scholar. Raschi died in Troyes at the age of 65.

Troyes, cradle of the Knights Templar
Originating from a small village close to Troyes, Hugues de Payns (1070-1136) took part in the first crusade in 1095. He finally left for the Holy Land in 1114 where with seven other companions he founded the Order of the Poor Knights of Christ intending to protect pilgrims. On 13 January 1128, the Council of Troyes meeting in Troyes Cathedral under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux, ratified the Order of the Templars. The cult of the Order continued until the 13th century.
Châlons-en-Champagne is a peaceful and pleasant town with two attractive squares lined with cafés and half-timbered houses. Crossed with rivers and canals, the town has earned the nick-name of ‘Little Venice’. The tourist office runs 40-minute boat trips (10 €/pers.) between May and September on the rivers Mau and Nau that encircle the old town centre and pass right under the heart of the town in long, silent tunnels. Night-time boat trips are also organized in July and August. For the more adventurous, 2-man canoes can be rented from the tourist office for 10 € for a self-propelled river circuit. Châlons also boasts three parks, the Petit Jard, the Grand Jard and the Jard Anglais, ideal for walking, relaxing and picnicking (see page 48).

Strategically positioned on the river Marne and the Via Agrippa (the Roman road linking Rome to Boulogne-sur-Mer), Châlons-en-Champagne developed into an important economic crossroads of northern Europe. The town’s name was changed to Châlons-sur-Marne after the French Revolution as all references to the crown (in this case, the Counts of Champagne) were forbidden. However, the name was changed back again to Châlons-en-Champagne at the end of 1997.

Châlons-en-Champagne is the administrative capital of the Champagne-Ardenne region, and is home to the prefecture (state administration) housed in the magnificent 18th century ‘Hôtel des Intendants’, former seat of the king’s representative. The regional council (local government) is also located in Châlons, housed in the 19th century ‘Grand Séminaire’, former seminary for the training of religious orders.

Châlons is renowned for its stained-glass windows, and fine examples can be seen in the gothic Cathedral of Saint Etienne and in the Notre-Dame-en-Vaux collegiate, whose church bells (carillon) are classed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Musée des Beaux Arts et d’Archéologie contains some very interesting fine art and archaeology collections.

The town is home to the only school for contemporary circus arts in France, the National Centre for Circus Arts (Centre National des Arts du Cirque, or CNAC). Every June, Châlons organizes the Festival des Furies dedicated to circus arts, during which the town comes to life with street performances, special shows and circus arts demonstrations. (7-14 June 2014).

The town is also home to the prestigious Champagne Joseph Perrier. The cellars are created from ancient gallo-roman chalk quarries, hewn out from a hill in the centre of the town. This means that the cellars are on a single level and no stairs are necessary for access to this underground world. The tourist office organizes cellar tours in French and English (every day at 2pm during July and August, and on the first Saturday morning in the month the rest of the year).

For lovers of gourmet delights, there are two boutiques specializing in local and regional gastronomy. Passion Terroir has a large choice of regional specialties and the shop’s owner has also created two unique products: ‘les Craies Briques’, chocolates in red and white resembling the chalk and brick architecture that is typical of Champagne, and ‘le Châlonnais’, an aperitif based on ratafia which can be enjoyed on the rocks or with white wine or champagne. [www.lapassionduterroir.com](http://www.lapassionduterroir.com)

Le Cellier Champenois offers a wide range of champagne and also provides picnic lunches of regional produce, ideal for warm days in the park or by the river. [www.lecellierchampenois.com](http://www.lecellierchampenois.com)

Châlons-en-Champagne Tourist Office [www.chalons-tourisme.com](http://www.chalons-tourisme.com)

For walkers and cyclists, the towpath along the Marne canal has been turned into an attractive cycling track running for 7½ miles (12 km) from the village of Recy, to the NW of Châlons, to the village of Moncetz-Longevaux to the SE. Bikes (both traditional and electric) can be rented from the tourist office from May to October. Leaflets are also available from the tourist office showing sign-posted cycling routes for exploring the town.

For an original discovery of Châlons, the tourist office also rents out segways by the hour, with a 10-minute training session included.
CHARLEVILLE-MÉZIÈRES,
Capital of Puppet Theatre

Located in the heart of the Ardennes, the modern-day town of Charleville-Mézières was created in 1966, when the bustling market town of Charleville, founded by Italian prince Carlo Gonzaga in 1606, and the military stronghold of Mézières were joined together. The town offers surprising architectural diversity; the Place Ducale, twin sister of the Place des Vosges in Paris, built by Clément Métezeau in 1612, is one of its gems. With buildings that conjure up the Middle Ages or the 17th century, the Renaissance or the industrial era, the town is sure to delight the curious!

Birthplace of Arthur Rimbaud, Charleville-Mézières will always have a special place for the legendary poet, who is buried here. A tour of the town in Rimbaud’s footsteps culminates in the very moving Musée Rimbaud, a museum devoted entirely to him. The exhibits form part of the town’s Rimbaud collection, one of the richest in the world (see page 35).

The museum is currently closed for refurbishment and is due to reopen in Spring 2015.

Charleville-Mézières is also the world capital of puppet theatre! The National Institute of Puppets and the National School of Puppet Arts provide training for the great puppeteers of tomorrow. Not to be missed is the great puppet clock called le Grand Marionnettiste – designed by Jacques Monestier and standing 10 metres high. On the hour, each hour, little puppets appear on the stage below the clock face to play out a scene from the famous Ardennes legend, the Four Sons of Aymon.

CHAMONTH,
City of the Counts Of Champagne

Chaumont, which dates back to feudal times benefited from a strategic location very early on. The only remains of this period are the town’s ramparts, a Jesuit Chapel and the 12th century keep where the Lord of the town and his soldiers resided. When the prosperous Counts of Champagne arrived in the 13th century, they built the Château de Chaumont which became their seat and place of residence. Today the remains of the castle house the Museum of Art and History in the basement, and the Palace of Justice.

With its green belt and nearby forests, Chaumont is in a park-like setting. A feature of the town’s architecture is the corner turrets on many of the houses, circular or square, with or without roofs and many with elaborate facades. Other points of interest are the covered market, and a 13th-century basilica built in the heart of the old medieval quarter.

Chaumont is also famed for its magnificent viaduct which was first crossed by locomotive steam-engine in 1857. Designed by the engineer Decomble and requiring 2,500 builders, the 600 metre-long viaduct has 50 arches and is one of the most remarkable stone bridges built in the 2nd half of the 19th century in Europe. Visitors can walk across and enjoy wonderful views over the Suize Valley.

Known for its glove-making industry since the middle ages, the town attracted the famous glove maker Jules Tréfousse, whose business added to the town’s prosperity in the second half of the 19th century.

Administrative capital of the Haute-Marne, Chaumont hosts each year the International Festival of Posters and Graphic Arts. (17 May-8 June 2014).

Chaumont Tourist Office www.tourisme-chaumont-champagne.com

WORLD FESTIVAL OF PUPPET THEATRE

Taking place every two years, this festival is the biggest gathering of puppeteers in the world show-casing the world’s top puppet artists from the 4 corners of the globe. 98 puppet companies coming from 25 different countries attracted 160.000 visitors in 2013.

For the 10 days of the festival the whole of Charleville-Mézières is transformed into a colourful and lively showcase with performances taking place in all kinds of venues: halls, gymnasmus, streets and courtyards. The festival embraces all forms of puppet art, from the traditional to the post-modern, from shadows to the Japanese bunraku, from the miniature creation to the giant.

www.festival-marionnette.com

Charleville-Mézières Tourist Office www.charleville-tourisme.com
There followed a period of prosperity during the 16th century, witnessed by the numerous fine civil, religious and military buildings that still stand today. The 4 artillery towers built at this time include the Tour de Navarre which today houses a heritage centre explaining the history of the town’s fortifications. This period also saw the development of the arquebuse, a long, primitive rifle that used gunpowder. From 15th July to 15th August, a free demonstration of the firing of the arquebuse in period costume takes place daily at the Tour de Navarre.

Every weekend in August, the town organizes a special event called the Estival des Hallebardiers (the long-handled axe-like ‘halberd’ being the main weapon of the people in Renaissance times) where the spectators, wearing capes and moving around the town with the actors, become part of the show.

Surrounding Langres are 4 lakes, built as reservoirs to regulate the flow of the Canal from the Marne to the Saône (Lac de la Liez, Lac de Charmes, Lac de la Mouche and Lac de la Vingeanne), offering an ideal location for relaxation, walking, swimming, boating and other water activities (see also page 42).

During the Middle Ages, the bishops of the diocese of Langres became very powerful, their rule covering also the diocese of Dijon. The Bishop of Langres was a duke and peer of France so Langres remained part of the Kingdom of France and was protected by the king. The close links to Burgundy are shown today by the coloured glazed tiles (19th century) of the roof of the St Mammès Cathedral (12th century), itself a fine example of the transition from Romanesque to early Gothic style. Langres continued to expand during the 13th and 14th centuries, and the fortifications expanded with the town to protect against invaders.

To follow in the footsteps of Diderot, a mobile application in English/Dutch/German/French is available free of charge from the AppStore and Play Store for a 2 hour walking tour of all the places in the town connected to the great philosopher.

For explanations of the town’s rich historical and cultural heritage (including the Diderot tour), audio guides are also available from the tourist office (in English/Dutch/German/French). The rental fee (4 €) also covers entry to the Art and History Museum and the Tour de Navarre.

An ideal way to see the town is by bike – both traditional and electric bicycles are available for hire at the tourist office (for 2 hours, half-day or full-day).

A 50-minute visit of the town by a little tourist train is also available in the language of your choice and departs from April to end September from the tourist office.

DIDEROT AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

One of the town’s most famous sons is Denis Diderot (1713-1784), prominent philosopher, art critic and writer during the Enlightenment. He is best known as co-founder and chief editor of and contributor to the Encyclopédie. A copy of the famous Encyclopaedia can be viewed at the Art and History Museum on request.

Born to a family of cutlers, Diderot spent his youth in Langres and kept a close tie to his home town throughout his life. He died just before the French Revolution in 1784. A new visitors centre dedicated to the life and work of the great philosopher opened in 2013.

Called the Maison des Lumières Denis Diderot (the Denis Diderot House of Enlightenment) and housed in a building from the 16th and 18th centuries, this will be the only centre of its kind in France.


VISITING LANGRES

The Langres Pass
New for 2014, a new visitors pass costing 12 € gives access to a number of sites in and around Langres. Further information is available from the tourist office.

Diderot and Langres
To follow in the footsteps of Diderot, an application in English/Dutch/German/French is available free of charge from the AppStore and Play Store for a 2 hour walking tour of all the places in the town connected to the great philosopher.

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**TOWNS & HERITAGE**

**SMALL TOWNS OF CHARACTER**

This label was created in 1977 to emphasize the authenticity and diversity of the heritage of little towns in France. A charter of quality details specific criteria concerning the heritage of the candidate town along with its facilities for visitors and cultural events. The judging panel consists of leading authorities in architecture, heritage, culture and tourism. Information about the quality charter can be found on the tourist board’s web site. [www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk](http://www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk)

Four towns and villages in Champagne-Ardenne have received the ‘Little Towns of Character’ label: Sainte-Ménehould, the most recent addition, is in the Marne while Bourmont, Châteauvillain and Vignory are all in the Haute-Marne.

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**CHATEAUVILLAIN, Petite Cité de Caractère**

A medieval gem

With fortified walls from the 12th and 14th centuries and over 20 towers, the historic town of Châteauvillain is a labyrinth of alleys and covered walkways. Tucked into a curve of the Aujon River, the town is also rich in water gardens. The nearby 272-hectare Daims Park is a favorite among walkers.

[www.chateauvillain.com](http://www.chateauvillain.com)

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**BOURMONT, Petite Cité de Caractère**

A panoramic view in a green setting

Settled on a rocky overhang over the Meuse Valley on the borders of Champagne and Lorraine, the walled village of Bourmont has exceptional views over the verdant landscapes and wooded surroundings. The terraced gardens and attractive architecture, including two churches, make walking round the village very pleasant.

[www.bourmont.fr](http://www.bourmont.fr)

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**SAINTE-MÉNEHOULD, Petite Cité de Caractère**

The Capital of Argonne

In the outer reaches of Champagne and on the edge of the Forest of Argonne, Sainte-Ménehould is renowned as the birthplace of Dom Pérignon (b. 1639) and as the town where King Louis XVI was recognised on 21 June 1791 during his flight eastwards to escape the revolutionaries. The owner of the coaching inn, Jean-Baptiste DROUET, realised the identity of his guest and pursued the royal cortège to Varennes-en-Argonne in the Meuse where Louis XVI was arrested and imprisoned. The town was destroyed by fire in 1719 and reconstruction began in 1730. Today, Sainte-Ménehould is a fine town with a harmonious, 18th century style. Buildings of particular note are the town hall and the Hôtel Viard which today houses the Art and History Museum.

[www.argonne.fr](http://www.argonne.fr)

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**VIGNORY, Petite Cité de Caractère**

An architecture marked by history

Fief of the Lords of Vignory at the beginning of the 11th century, this village is nestled between the River Marne to the east and the Forêt de l’Étoile to the west. The ruins of the vast fortress and the towering 12th century keep along with the remains of the village ramparts and the well tower bear witness to the village’s medieval past. The sculpted capitals of the columns in the Romanesque church of Saint-Etienne are of particular note.

[www.tourisme-chaumont-champagne.com](http://www.tourisme-chaumont-champagne.com)
[www.patrimoine-vignory.fr](http://www.patrimoine-vignory.fr)
WINE TOURISM

Get right to the heart of the Champagne region and its vineyards to explore the world of wine. There are many ways to combine wine with culture and pleasure, whether it be specialised courses to improve your knowledge on making and tasting champagne, classic or original champagne museums, exploring the ‘terroir’ of the vineyards - or even sipping champagne half way up a tree!

THE CHAMPAGNE APPELLATION

The grape-growing area of the Champagne appellation encompasses some 34,000 hectares, accounting for 4% of France’s total vineyard area. The vines are mainly concentrated in the Marne (67% of plantings) around the city of Reims and the town of Epernay, but also extend into the departments of the Aube (23%) and beyond into the Aisne, Haute-Marne and Seine-et-Marne. This is the production area as defined and delimited by French law (the Appellation was declared in 1936). Only wines exclusively originating and produced within that area, on premises dedicated to Champagne wines, are legally entitled to use the name Champagne.

The Champagne Appellation is spread across 319 villages (‘crus’) of which 17 traditionally rank as Grand Cru and 42 as Premier Cru. There are four main growing regions: the Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne, Côte des Blancs (in the Marne) and the Côte des Bar (in the Aube). Working side-by-side within the Champagne appellation are some 15,000 growers, 67 cooperatives and more than 299 Champagne Houses.

The growers own between them around 90% of the champagne vineyards, typically owning small plots of around two hectares of land. They usually sell a large proportion of their grape crop at harvest time. About a third of growers also make and sell their own champagne (whether as independent producers or members of a cooperative) and account for about one third of annual champagne sales.

The Champagne Houses own between them around 10% of the vineyards, and so buy in grapes to make Champagne under their own labels, handling every stage of the winemaking process from start to finish: pressing, fermentation, blending and bottle-aging. Their sales account for about two thirds of the market and the larger part of exports. Growers and Champagne Houses complement each other and share a common interest in caring for their heritage.

Sales in bottles (2012 figures):
Total: 308 837 119
France: 171 456 478 (55 %)
Export: 137 380 641 (45%)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Export sales:</th>
<th>% of export sales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Great-Britain</td>
<td>32 445 352</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. USA</td>
<td>17 689 150</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Germany</td>
<td>12 560 386</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Belgium</td>
<td>8 344 350</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Japan</td>
<td>9 062 970</td>
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<td>6. Italy</td>
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<td>7. Switzerland</td>
<td>5 355 492</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Australia</td>
<td>5 406 837</td>
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<td>9. Spain</td>
<td>3 126 079</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Sweden</td>
<td>2 317 991</td>
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Sources: Comité Champagne (CIVC) 2013
www.champagne.fr

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHAMPAGNE

The first vines were planted in Champagne during the Roman era, but it was thanks to the industrious monks of the Middle Ages that more vineyards were planted and the local wine became better known. Used for coronation ceremonies, it became known as the ‘Wine of Kings’.

At that time, the barrels containing the wine allowed the carbon dioxide gas produced during fermentation to escape, which gave a still wine. The use of closed glass bottles for storage, from around 1660, enabled the aromas of the wine to be conserved during aging. However, it also meant that the gas could no longer escape if the fermentation was not complete, and the result was a wine with bubbles.

At first the process was not understood and when the thin glass bottles exploded due to the pressure created by the ongoing fermentation, it was called ‘devil’s wine’. The Benedictine monk Dom Pérignon, who worked as cellar master at the Abbey of Hautvillers from 1668 until his death in 1715, developed techniques to improve the quality of this sparkling wine, which took the name of the region. The reputation of champagne grew, and it became known as ‘King of Wines’!

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Champagne Houses starting shipping the wine around the globe. The champagne-making process as we know it today was officially formalised at the beginning of the 20th century and it was the first wine in France to be given the guarantee of an ‘Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée’ (AOC) in 1936.
QUALITY LABEL FOR CHAMPAGNE TOURISM SITES

In order to distinguish quality wine tourism sites, a new national, quality label called ‘Vignobles & Découvertes’ (Vineyards and Discoveries) was set up in 2009 by the Ministry of Tourism and Agriculture. In 2013 around 400 champagne tourism sites were awarded the label for their commitment to the label’s quality charter. A wide range of sites and activities are included, such as cellar visits, accommodation, leisure activities, heritage sites, museums, travel agents and tourist offices.

For the full list of adherents and further information:

THE CHAMPAGNE ROUTE

The Champagne Route consists of 6 sign-posted circuits (5 in the Marne, 1 in the Aube), stretching for over 300 miles (500 km) and winding their way through the vineyard, leading you to magnificent view points and through authentic champagne villages, with their ancient monasteries, wash-houses, chateaux and churches. Whilst there are around 5,000 family producers of Champagne, about 80 of these have signed up to the Champagne Route to welcome visitors and to offer a personalised visit of their establishment. It is recommended to phone beforehand to assure the availability of the owners. The visits are usually free for individual visitors, although this does vary and sometimes depends on whether or not you purchase any champagne during your visit.

The following Champagne producers offer visits in English:

MARNE
Champagne Etienne Lefevre, Verzy
www.champagne-etienne-lefevre.com

Champagne Charlier
Montigny-sous-Chatillon
www.champagne-charlier.com

Champagne Tribaut, Hautvillers
http://champagne.g.tribaut.com

Champagne Jean Milan, Oger
www.champagne-milan.com

AUBE
Champagne Drappier, Urville
www.champagne-drappier.com

Champagne Jolly, Landreville
www.jollychamp.com

Champagne Vézien, Celles-sur-ource
http://champagne-vezien.com

Champagne Richard Cheurlin
Celles-sur-Orce
www.champagne-cheurlin.com

For more details about the Champagne Route and champagne producers open for visits along the Champagne Tourist Route, please refer to the web sites of the Aube and Marne departmental tourist boards:

Marne Tourist Board
www.tourisme-en-champagne.com

Aube Tourist Board
www.aube-champagne.com
WINE TOURISM

TASTING SEMINARS

The International Institute of the Wines of Champagne

Located in the heart of the vineyards near Epernay, the purpose of the Institute of Champagne is to organise activities to provide information and an introduction to the wines of Champagne as well as to promote the profession. Part of its functions includes a School of the Wines of Champagne which organises an introduction course to Champagne in English, open to the general public, every first Saturday of the month from April to October at 2.30pm. The session lasts 2 hours and includes a presentation of the Champagne region and guided tasting of 4 different champagnes. Day courses and personalised programmes are also available for groups.

Villa Bissinger, Ay
www.villabissinger.com

Tasting sessions at Champagne producers

The CDT Aube organises champagne courses in at a different champagne producer’s establishment on the first Saturday of each month. Most of these courses are in French, however, several are available in English. The full list of tasting sessions with dates is given on the Aube Tourist Board’s web site www.aube-champagne.com

TASTING IN CHAMPAGNE BARS

C Comme Champagne de Propriétaires

Both a specialist champagne shop and champagne bar, C Comme Champagne de Propriétaires (C is for Champagne from Producers) brings together 50 champagne producers to provide a glimpse of all the flavours that the Champagne region has to offer. 15 Champagne Houses complete the range with a choice over 400 different champagnes in all. Each week, 6 or 7 different champagnes are available by the glass.

In addition to champagne, other local products are also available: Ratafia (aperitif made from grape juice and local ‘marc’), Coteau Champenois (local still wines), Rosé des Ricyès, Marc and Fine de Champagne (the local spirits). The bar is open 7 days a week.
www.c-comme.fr

Au Coeur du Bouchon

This specialist champagne shop and champagne bar opened in Troyes in 2012. With a choice of champagne from over 40 champagne producers, the bar has a dedicated area for each part of the vineyard: the nearby Côte des Bar in the Aube, and the Côte des Blancs, Montagne de Reims and Vallée de la Marne in the Marne. Each week, 5 different champagnes are available by the glass. The establishment has stunning vaulted cellars which can be privatised for special functions.
www.aucoeurdubouchon.com

Perchingbar

Located in the forest behind the town of Verzy, in the Arboxygene adventure park, the unique aspect of this champagne bar is that it is situated 5½ metres above the ground, amid the treetops, providing an exceptional view over the plains of Champagne. The rustic exterior of the tree house hides a modern and stylish interior with white leather swing-seats and suspended ice-buckets. The bar is reached via 3 gently inclining suspended footbridges and is powered by solar panels. A selection of big name Champagne Houses and local producers is available, and cold meals can also be ordered in advance via the bar’s web site.
www.perchingbar.eu
**WINE TOURISM CENTRES AND MUSEUMS**

**Museum of the Wine Verzenay Lighthouse**

Located in the heart of the vineyards, about 12½ (20 km) from Reims, Verzenay Lighthouse houses the Museum of the Wine, dedicated to the vineyards of the Champagne region. Climbing the 101 steps to the top of the lighthouse allows visitors a panoramic view of one of the most prestigious hillside vineyards of the Montagne de Reims. The Museum of the Wine itself comprises 4 rooms in which to immerse yourself in the world of grape varieties. The ‘Champagne territory’ room introduces the Champagne region with a 10-min film illustrating the areas planted with vines. The ‘Champagne landscapes through the seasons’ exhibition leads to the ‘History fresco’, which explains the commercial development of champagne through the 19th and 20th centuries. The ‘Circle of seasons’ room follows, illustrates the work in the vineyard around the year and exhibits old vineyard tools. An explanation and videos of modern techniques round off this sparkling tour. Closed mondays.

[www.lepharedeverzenay.com](http://www.lepharedeverzenay.com)

**Champagne Launois Wine and Vine Museum**

The labyrinthine Launois cellars house a fascinating collection of assorted objects, ranging from the unusual to the unique: pumps, cappers, pulverisers, presses and more. All tell the story of work amidst the vines and the development of the Launois champagnes followed by a tasting.

[www.champagne-launois.fr](http://www.champagne-launois.fr)

**Hautvillers, ‘the cradle of Champagne’**

Located a few miles to the north of Epernay in the Mountain of Reims Regional Nature Park, nestled in the hills, Hautvillers is a picturesque village with charming narrow streets. A unique aspect of the village is the wrought iron signs hanging outside the houses, giving visual presentation of the background or occupation of the inhabitant or commerce. This system was widely used in Medieval times when illiteracy was high. The tradition was revived in Hautvillers in the 1950s, and the signs were produced by a local ironsmith at the Babé Forge in Cramant.

The illustrious monk Dom Pérignon entered the Abbey of Hautvillers in 1658 and, over subsequent years, took charge of the cellars and the production of wine. A talented man, passionate about his vines, he did much to improve the production of champagne, such as blending wines from different grape varieties, storage in strong glass bottles and the use of cork instead of wooden bungs. Visitors can see his tomb in the nave of the abbey church.

The village of Oger, in addition to being one of the most beautiful floral villages in the region, is also home to a unique museum. The visit begins with a presentation of weddings throughout the ages including exhibitions of objects, dresses, decoration and sumptuous matrimonial furniture. The ‘Hall of Labels’ leads into the history of the Champagne Appellation with galleries displaying a collection of vine tools and of winemaking methods of the past. The tour finishes in the vaulted cellar, where champagne tasting is available.

[www.mariage-et-champagne.fr](http://www.mariage-et-champagne.fr)

**Pré en Bulles**

This visitors’centre, the only place of its kind in France, provides a range of experiences linked closely with champagne and wine tourism. Located in the heart of the Montagne de Reims area, surrounded by notable vineyards, Pré-en-Bulles is the perfect place to discover this exceptional beverage. Discover how champagne is made through 12 animated scenes and enjoy a special show dedicated to the ‘art de vivre’ of champagne, narrated by your android host, Dom Perignon himself. Pré-en-Bulles also offers a comprehensive gift shop and 5 beautifully presented gîtes and 3 charming B&B guest rooms with a 3 keys’ rating.

[www.pre-en-bulles.com](http://www.pre-en-bulles.com)

**Champagne G.H. Mumm, Museum of champagne making tools**

A tour of the champagne cellars of this prestigious Champagne House, which provides a chance to explore all the secrets of how champagne is made, finishes with a visit of the museum. Here, old tools are on display encompassing all the trades associated with champagne-making.

[www.mumm.com](http://www.mumm.com)

**The Museum of Marriage and Champagne**

This page is about wine tourism centres and museums in the Champagne region of France. It includes a variety of locations such as Museums, Wine Tourist Offices, Visitor Centres and more. Each location has a brief description and a link to further information. The text is structured in a clear and readable manner, with each location listed separately. The information is presented in a logical order, making it easy to follow and understand. The text is written in a natural and conversational style, making it easy to read and comprehend. The page is well-organized, with each section clearly separated and easy to navigate. The page provides a comprehensive overview of the various wine tourism centres and museums in the Champagne region of France, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in learning more about this region and its wine culture.
WINE TOURISM

OENOPASS CHAMPAGNE

Launched in 2012, this pass enables visitors to visit a selection of 10 champagne sites at discounted prices, from cellar visits and tastings to cultural and heritage sites connected with champagne. The pass is available in two versions: 3 visits for the special price of €25 (instead of €40) or 5 visits for €40 (instead of €60), and is valid for one year from purchase.

The partners of the pass have been carefully selected from the finest champagne producers and other establishments along the Champagne Route.

For more details: www.oenopass.net

CHAMPAGNE TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Walking in the Vineyard

Le Sentier du Vigneron (the Winegrowers’ Footpath)

This signposted circular walk of 2.2 km starts and ends at the village hall of the hilltop village of Mutigny. Spectacular panoramic views from the village church. Along the way, information panels in French and English explain each stage of the champagne making process.

http://sentierduvigneron.com/en/

NEW FOR 2014
Le Sentier des loges de Vignes (Footpath of the winegrowers’ huts)

This new circuit of 5-6 km will be launched at the end of May 2014. Starting and ending in the village of Trépail, the walk will take you past a number of the little huts in the heart of the vineyard used as a shelter for the vineyard workers in bygone years.

www.parc-montagnedereims.fr

Cycling in the Vineyard

L’Echappée Bulles

Discover the champagne vineyard by bike in the company of one or several qualified monitors. These guided cycling tours are available in French and English and depart from Verzy or Verzenay between April and the end of October. 5 different circuits are available ranging from 2 to 4 hours with a visit of the sites of Reims, and 4 different vineyard tours including a tasting or cellar visit depending on the formula. The tour price includes the bicycle hire – electric assisted bikes are also available.

www.lechappee-bulles.com

Driving tours in the Vineyard

Eco-visit of the vineyard by electric car

To enable visitors to explore the area in more depth, the family organises eco-friendly vineyard tours and tastings in an open-topped electric car. Leaving from Epernay, the two-hour tour takes in idyllic scenery, champagne tastings and a picnic among the vines (depending on the format chosen). The tours run three times daily and include a scenic stop overlooking the Mountain of Reims Natural Park. Commentaries are available in English, German, French and Italian.

contact@ay-eco.visite.com


Miniature train ride amid the vines

A guided tour by miniature train is available amid the vineyards of the Mountain of Reims area and the village of Chamery, departing from Champagne Lallement. Throughout the ride amidst the vineyards, this guided tour shows visitors all about the work of winemakers, their expertise, the village of Chamery, as well as views across the sloping vineyards of the Mountain of Reims. After the train ride, the tour continues on foot inside the cellars to further explore champagne, with of course, a tasting!

www.caveauchampagnelallement.com

OenoVasion

OenoVasion enables visitors to explore the vineyards of the Mountain of Reims, its natural wonders and ‘terroirs’. This is an unusual, fun trip taken by a high-spec 4x4 vehicle, allowing you to find out all about the champagne vines, their relationship with the soil, the climate, the landscape and human expertise. A tasting session in the heart of a vineyard completes this fascinating and unforgettable excursion. A flight over the region by helicopter can also be arranged.

http://oenovasion.com
STILL REGIONAL WINES

Coteaux Champenois

In addition to champagne, the region also produces a limited quantity of still wine. Still wine is made throughout the delimited area for champagne and has its own quality appellation: ‘Coteaux champenois’. Light and fruity, the red wine is made from Pinot Noir and is usually served slightly chilled, and the white wine is made from Chardonnay. Two of the best known villages for the production of Coteaux Champenois are Bouzy in the Montagne de Reims and Cumières in the Marne Valley.

Rosé des Riceys

The commune of Les Riceys, south of Troyes, produces an exceptional rosé wine which also has its own quality appellation: ‘Rosé des Riceys’. Produced from Pinot Noir from within the champagne vineyard, this is one of the most strictly controlled wines in France, produced only in the very best years. The juice of the grapes is partially fermented in contact with the skins (maceration) to give the required flavour and the wine is matured for several years in vats or oak barrels before being released for sale. The final result is an extremely fine and delicate wine with an exquisite taste that lingers in the mouth. Its bouquet contains hints of red fruits, dried fruits and spices. Today, only twenty winemakers produce Rosé de Riceys. Even in good years production seldom exceeds 50,000 bottles.

www.champagne-les-riceys.com

Vin de Pays

Thanks to the efforts of enthusiasts, two small vineyards which are outside the champagne making area and which were abandoned following the phylloxera crisis at the end of the 19th century, have undergone a revival since the 1980s.

• Les Vins de Coiffy: several times a medal winner at the Concours Général Agricole de Paris and dating from Roman times, this vineyard has been enjoying a revival since 1981. Located near the border with Franche-Comté, there are now five hectares of chardonnay, four of pinot noir and two hectares of pinot gris. www.coteaux-de-coiffy.com

• The Muid Montsaugeon vineyard of 13 hectares lies between Champagne and Burgundy. Planted with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and to a lesser extent, Auxerrois and Gamay, the wines approach their illustrious neighbour in style. The winery at the village of Vaux-sous-Aubigny welcomes visitors and offers tastings and sales. www.muid-online.com

SOME MORE IDEAS

A single malt distillery in the Marne

In the heart of the Mountain of Reims, the Guillon distillery is the only single malt distillery in the Champagne region. At a location founded in 1997, these single malt producers from the Mountain of Reims have been working in the wines and spirits industry for nearly four generations, with a selection of gourmet products.

Distillerie Guillon, Louvois www.distillerie-guillon.com

Cuisine and wines based on flowers

Florence Pelletier is a well-known producer of the Haute-Marne wine, Vin de Pays de Coiffy, but she has also developed an original range of wines made from flowers. Ms. Pelletier offers classes in cooking using flower wines to create inventive and tasty dishes with fresh and unusual flavours, and guides you on how to choose the wine to best accompany your dish. To round off the event on a culinary note, Florence gives you the opportunity to try her 8 flower wines, each with bucolic names and an enchanting taste.

Florence Pelletier, Coiffy www.florence-pelletier-coiffy.com
WINE TOURISM

CHAMPAGNE EVENTS

The Festival of St Vincent

The Saint Day for St Vincent, Patron Saint of wine, is on 22nd January. Each year, on the Saturday preceding this date, a special festival is organised, bringing together both Champagne Houses and Champagne Producers, to celebrate their profession. Traditionally, each champagne village had its own brotherhood of producers, but since the 1930s, these brotherhoods have come together with the Champagne Houses and other key players in the industry to form the ‘Arch-brotherhood Saint Vincent of Champagne Producers’.

The festival follows a 3-year cycle with the first two years taking place in Epernay and the third year in another important champagne town such as Reims, Troyes, Châlons-en-Champagne or Château Thierry. The next festival will take place on 17th January 2015 and will change location for 2016.

Champagne Festival
26-27 July 2014

The village of Celles-sur-Ourse in the Côtes des Bar will be the setting for the 2013 Champagne Festival. The purchase of a champagne flute at the entrance to the village gives you entry into all the participating wineries to taste the champagnes on offer. Events are also usually planned around the champagne festival such as tutored wine tastings, gourmet lunches, exhibitions of champagne, street entertainment, and more.

Bar-sur-Aube Tourist Office
www.routeduchampagne.com

Be a grape picker for the day in some of the region’s vineyards

Winemakers organise grape picking days to give visitors a sparkling introduction to life in the vineyard. You will spend the morning picking grapes followed by a typical harvesters’ lunch. The afternoon is spent visiting the winery. Please note that the exact programme varies from vineyard to vineyard.

Marne Tourist Board
www.tourisme-en-champagne.com

Aube Tourist Board
www.aube-champagne.com

COMITE DE CHAMPAGNE
C.I.V.C. (Philippe WIBROTT
www.champagne-fr
www.epernay.fr
Major battles, acts of resistance and bravery have made Champagne-Ardenne a region profoundly marked by history. This has resulted in an immensely rich cultural and historical heritage for visitors to discover and explore. More than 150 castles, churches and memorials retrace the history of France and enable history lovers to go back to Mediaeval or Renaissance times, passing through the Age of Enlightenment.

REIMS CATHEDRAL
UNESCO World Heritage Site

Unity of style, bathed in light and rich in statuary, the 13th century cathedral of Notre Dame de Reims is a masterpiece of Gothic art. The central section of the western façade is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who gives her name to the cathedral. Among the 2,303 sculpted motifs, the open-winged angels, including the famous ‘Smiling Angel’, are the signature of the cathedral’s unique, exceptional character.

Founded in 1211, the current cathedral was built to host the coronation of the Kings of France. The nave (115 m long) and vaults (37.95 m high) witnessed the crowning of 25 monarchs between 1223 (Louis VIII) and 1825 (Charles X). Damaged by German cannons right from the outbreak of the First World War (September 1914), and bombarded by more than 300 shells during the four years of conflict, the cathedral was restored under the supervision of architect Henri Deneux, with financial support from generous donors, in particular US foundations (Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller).

Emblematic figure of France, Joan of Arc led the French troops to victory against the English armies at the beginning of the 15th century, raising the Siege of Orléans and bringing the dauphin (future Charles VII) to Reims in 1429 to be crowned king. This episode contributed to bringing the One Hundred Years War to an end.

The Art of Stained Glass

Many of the original stained glass windows have disappeared, either intentionally or through war, but from the 16th century, efforts have been made to restore these delicate treasures, particularly after the First World War. Among the medieval windows surviving today are the magnificent Gothic roses in the centre of the western façade (from 2nd half of the 13th century, dedicated to the Virgin) and in the northern transept (from 1240, showing the Creation).

The Champagne Window, in the south transept, was created by the Jacques Simon glass makers in 1954. Ordered by the Champagne Wines Corporation, the window illustrates the making of champagne, from the vineyard to the cellars, designed in style that reflects the medieval tradition. Works created by Jacques’ daughter Brigitte Simon include the wonderful Grisaille windows (in shades of gray), also in the south transept, evoking earth, fire and water (1971).

The three windows in the apse were designed by Marc CHAGALL (1887-1985) and produced by the Simon Marq workshop in 1974. A wonderful blend of modern composition and medieval tones, biblical stories from the Old and New Testaments and historic events of Reims are worked on a deep blue base with a symbolic use of colours, introducing green for the Tree of Jesse (on the left), violet for the baptism of Clovis (on the right), and red for the Passion of Christ (top centre).

The modern windows are those created by German artist Imi Knoebel to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the cathedral. Inaugurated on 25 June 2011, the Knoebel windows, are a deliberate contrast to the restrained hues in Chagall. Based on the bold use of primary colours, the windows seek to translate the iconography of medieval windows into a new, abstract language.

The Smiling Angel

The angel on the northern side of the west front of the cathedral was decapitated by falling wood during the bombing of the cathedral on 19 September 1914. The pieces of the head were collected up and carefully put back together, and the angel’s head was replaced, an event celebrated on 13 February 1926. The angel continued to smile and became known as the ‘Smiling Angel’, symbolic of the resistance of Reims.

The SIMON MARQ glass workshop

Master glassmakers Atelier SIMON MARQ was founded in Reims in 1640 and specialises in making and restoring stained glass for civil and religious buildings. Founded in Reims in 1640 by Pierre SIMON, twelve generations of glassmakers have passed their expertise down from father to son. Jacques SIMON continued the family tradition at the beginning of the 20th century and built the workshop that still exists today in 1926. Jacques Simon did much to save and restore the stained glass heritage of Champagne-Ardenne.

In 1957, he was joined by his daughter, Brigitte, and her husband Charles Marq, who began to bring historic civil and religious heritage together with stained glass by the greatest contemporary painters such as Marc Chagall and Imi Knoebel. The legacy is continued today by Benoît and Stéphanie Marq, makes atelier SIMON MARQ one of the oldest companies in France.

www.ateliersimonmarq.com
SAINT-REMI ABBEY
UNESCO World Heritage Site

The relics of Saint Remi, Bishop of Reims who baptized Clovis I, King of the Franks and the first Catholic king of Gaul, around 498 AD, are enshrined at the basilica dedicated to the saint and which was founded in the 9th century. The oldest parts of the basilica are the Romanesque nave and transepts, while the façade of the south transept is the most recent. The choir and apse date back to the 12th and 13th centuries.

The baptism of Clovis starting the tradition of coronations at Reims. The basilica played a major role in these ceremonies as it was here that the ‘Holy Ampulla’ was kept that contained the Chrism, or holy oil, for anointing the newly crowned king. The reliquary made for the ampulla is on display at the Palais du Tau.

The saintly renown of the bishop soon attracted a large number of pilgrims and a Benedictine monastery formed around the church. The monastery buildings today, which house the St-Remi Museum date mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries, with some medieval parts still intact, such as the 12th century chapter room, with 40 Roman capitals adorning the pillars.

(See also page 8).

Reims Tourist Office
www.reims-tourisme.com

L’EPINE BASILICA
UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Epine Basilica, which looms over Champagne’s great agricultural plains as big as a cathedral, is a major pilgrimage site. Standing on a slight elevation, it can be made out for miles around.

The basilica replaced a humble chapel dedicated to Mary that occupied the site around 1200. The oldest document refers to a bequest of silver for the early chapel by Henri de Courtisols in 1230. The present basilica was probably built after a shepherd found a miraculous statue of the Virgin in a burning thorn bush around 1400 (épine is French for ‘thorn’).

The very pure style copies 13th century Gothic throughout the church except for the first two pillars in the nave. The main material is white and blond stone from Savonnières-en-Perthois (Meuse) 40 miles (65km) away. The secondary material is local Champagne chalk, which is used in the arches and vaults.

Epine Town Hall
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 26 66 96 99

TROYES: TOWN OF TEN CHURCHES

A group of nine churches and one cathedral stand in or near the town centre of Troyes. Founded in 1208, the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul is the most important historical monument of the town. Meanwhile, the Sainte-Madeleine Church is famed for its impressive stone jube, chiseled into lace by Jean Gualde at the beginning of the 16th century. The legend goes that he wished to be buried beneath it. The Aube département has the richest collection of stained glass in France with 9,000 m² of windows dating from the 13th to the 19th centuries if put edge to edge. Troyes has been nick-named ‘Holy Town of Stained Glass’ by experts, and its most famed artists founded the ‘Troyes School’ in the 15th century. Troyes also became renowned for its 16th century statuary, some 60 of which can be seen in the Saint Pantaléon Church.

Troyes Tourist Office
www.tourisme-troyes.com
HISTORY & CULTURE - CHURCHES AND ABBEYS

THE FORTIFIED CHURCHES OF THIÉRACHE TRAIL

There is a long history of fortifications in Champagne-Adenne. From the Gauls to the building of the Maginot Line and the region’s fortified castles, the people of the region have defended themselves from mercenary armies throughout the ages by fortifying their homes, farms and churches.

The ‘Fortified Churches of the Thiérache Trail’ invites visitors to discover fortifications that are still visible and accessible to all. From Charleville-Mézières to the border with the département of the Aisne, this way-marked trail forms a 100-mile loop set between the forests of Signy-le-Petit and Signy-l’Abbaye and crossing a patchwork landscape of hills and fields.

Ardennes Tourist Board
www.ardennes.com

THE HALF-TIMBERED CHURCH TRAIL

Unique in France, this group of 10 churches and a chapel are of timber-frame construction which, although commonly used in civil architecture, is much rarer in religious architecture. The churches are located in the humid crescent of the Champagne region, between the Lac du Der and the lakes of the Forest of Orient. Here, the subsoil is of clay, stone is rare and forests of oak and elder were plentiful.

The half-timbered churches date from the 15th to the 18th centuries. A driving trail from village to village to visit these churches is set out in detail in a 12-page brochure with maps, which can be downloaded from: www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk .

Lac du Der Tourist Office
www.lacduder.com

ASFELD CHURCH

The church of Saint Didier, built at the end of the 17th century, is one of the most unusual churches in France. In 1680, Jean-Jacques de Mesmes - the Count of Avaux, a councillor of State and the president of the Parliament of Paris – asked Despert, a mason, to tear down the old church and build a new one “based on the model and drawing of Mr Fleury” and to follow the orders given “by Master Fleury and by the friar François Romain, who will supervise the said works’ masonry construction”.

Asfeld church, which is unique in France, was built from 1681 to 1685. It is in the Baroque style and features a rotunda and vestibule-porch-tower, which together form an unusual shape that has been compared to that of a mirror or a viola. The five-sided shape and entablature of the rotunda, whose concave spaces crown the convex spaces of the apse chapels, is a brilliant piece of architecture. The roof is unique in the way the vault’s spring points are treated inside.

Eglise de St Didier, Asfeld
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 24 72 93 18
ST BERNARD (1090-1153) AND THE CISTERCIAN ORDER

Clairevaux is one of the four original daughter abbeys of Cîteaux Abbey. The latter was founded in 1098 by a group of Benedictine monks who were disillusioned with the growing luxuries of the Benedictine way of life and wanted to go back to a closer observance of the Rule of Saint Benedict which advocated a simple life work and austerity.

In 1113, a young charismatic nobleman called Bernard de Fontaine joined the abbey at the age of 23 and soon became one of its most influential monks. The abbey flourished, attracting a large number of Cîteaux followers, and needed to expand. The abbot, Étienne Harding, sent off groups of 12 monks to establish daughter houses, and thus, the Cistercian Order was created (from the Latin name for Cîteaux, ‘Cistercium’). Two of the daughter houses were located in Burgundy - La Ferté (1113) and Pontigny (1114) - and a third, Morimond, was established in neighboring Champagne in 1115.

Bernard himself was also sent off to Champagne in 1115 with 11 companions to found a fourth daughter house in a clearing in forested land given to the monastery, located about 40 miles to the east of Troyes. This area was called ‘Clara Vallis’ (clear valley) in Latin, giving its name to the new Abbey of Clairevaux.

Bernard was elected abbot of this new abbey, the beginnings of which were difficult because the discipline imposed was extremely harsh. In 1128, he approved the Order of the Templars at a council in Troyes cathedral. Saint Bernard founded 72 monasteries spread throughout Europe: 35 in France, 14 in Spain, 10 in England and Ireland, 6 in Flanders, 4 in Italy, 4 in Denmark, 2 in Sweden and 1 in Hungary. In 1151, two years before his death, there were 500 Cistercian abbeys in total and the Abbey of Clairevaux had 700 monks.

CLAIRVAUX ABBEY

Founded in 1115 by Saint Bernard de Clairevaux, the original buildings were of wood but were replaced by stone constructions in 1135 which became the typical 12th century model for a Cistercian abbey. Due to the charisma and influence of Bernard, Clairevaux Abbey developed a considerable economic power and became the religious capital of the Western world, receiving kings and lords, bishops and popes and leading in political affairs. The abbey was instrumental in the expansion of the Cistercian Order, creating 169 of its own daughter abbeys in 12 countries throughout Europe by the time of St Bernard’s death in 1153. Based around a strict communal rule, the charter of charity, these included the Abbey of Fontenay in Burgundy and the Abbey of Aubervie, to the south west of Langres (see opposite page).

The Scriptorium

One of the main tasks of the monks was to copy out religious works in Greek and Latin and by the time of the revolution, the abbey’s scriptorium contained over 40,000 works. 1,327 of these manuscripts are today housed in the Mediathèque (Media Centre) of Troyes and constitute one of the biggest collections of medieval literature in France.

The 18th century abbey

Clairevaux continued to expand after St Bernard’s death and was at the height of its power and fame in the 18th century. By this time, there were fewer monks, but they were considerably richer than their predecessors and so they demolished the simple and rather uncomfortable 12th century buildings to rebuild in the more imposing, ‘classical’ style of the time. The only 12th century buildings that were left untouched by the 18th century monks were the abbey-church, which held the relics of St Bernard, and the lay brothers’ building which housed a cellar on the ground floor and a granary upstairs.

The Clairvaux Prison

However, the French Revolution was to change everything and the abbey was seized and sold as a national property to some industrialists. The sheer size of the property attracted the attention of Napoleon’s Minister of Interior who was searching for suitable places to convert into detention and correction centres for sentenced criminals. It was hoped that the abbey setting would represent progress compared with previous barbaric punishments, permitting social rehabilitation through work.

So one of the Cistercian order’s most beautiful abbeys underwent alterations to convert the former monastery into a prison for men, women and children. An additional floor was added to the main cloister to house further collective cells and bars were put in at the windows. In order to pay for this work, the 12th century abbey-church was demolished and the stones were sold off one by one. The first inmates arrived in 1814.

Throughout the 19th century, more and more prisoners were detained in communal cells with at one point up to 2,700 detainees living in very cramped conditions (1,650 men in the Cloister, 499 women in the lay brothers’ building and 550 children). Overcrowding meant that the Abbey of Aubervie near Langres was also turned into a prison to house the female prisoners from 1858.

Then, between 1898 and 1901, the infamous ‘chicken coops’ were installed at Clairvaux. These metal individual cells of just 4 square metres were used to house the most dangerous criminals. The prison operated throughout most of the 20th century, up until 1971, when new buildings were built in the grounds of the former abbey-church and abbey orchard, as a modern high-security prison for male detainees.
Clairvaux today
In 2002, the Minister of Culture took possession of the old prison buildings, notably the imposing 18th century main cloister, which has now been incorporated into the visit of the abbey site. Of the 12th century abbey created by St Bernard de Clairvaux, the only vestige is the magnificent lay brothers’ building, which remains intact.

Visits for individuals are by guided tour in French only, but a pamphlet is provided with explications in English. Open 1 March to 31 October every day; 1 November to mid December and throughout February, Wednesday to Sunday only; closed from mid December to end January.
http://abbayedeclairvaux.com

The 20th century abbey
The use of the abbey as a prison/detention centre came to an end in 1924 when it was sold to a group of Benedictine monks who inhabited the abbey until 1960. During the Second World War, the abbey was occupied by the Germans, but then liberated by the local Resistance movement. The monks sold the abbey to a Belgian chemical company (Solvay) in 1960, which used the property as a ‘colonia de vacances’, or holiday centre for the employees’ children.

Contemporary Art Centre
The abbey was finally bought in 2004 by the Volot family who were in search of a suitable venue to create a cultural centre for contemporary art. The Volots have done much restoration work on the abbey itself, and opened their contemporary art centre in 2006. Each year, the family organises a seasonal exhibition of expressionist and unusual art in the western wing.

In 2014, the exhibition will present ‘Outsider art’ (art brut), whose creators are outside the mainstream «art world,» expressing such concepts as extreme mental states, unconventional ideas, or elaborate fantasy worlds. Works of about 20 contemporary artists (from 1970 to the present day) will be exhibited by the curator M. Laurent DANCHIN, contributor to the ‘Raw Vision’ international magazine and well known in this field. The exhibition will run from 8 June to 28 September 2014.
www.abbaye-auberive.com

AUBERIVE ABBEY
In 1135, twelve monks from Clairvaux founded this Cistercian abbey on the banks of the Aube as the 24th sister house of Clairvaux Abbey. It’s isolated location with a water supply and forests was ideal, and the monastery was laid out in the typical Cistercian style (an abbey church facing east, an east wing for the monks, a west wing for the lay brothers and a north wing for commoners).

The monastery, which was particularly prosperous in the 13th century, was sacked and pillaged by mercenaries and soldiers during the wars that followed (the Hundred Years’ War, the 16th century wars of religion and the 17th century Thirty Years’ War), but by the 18th century, the abbey had re-established its possessions and economic power.

The 18th century abbey
The 18th century monks decided to demolish and rebuilt the old 12th century abbey in the style of the day, although the original abbatial was left untouched and its use transformed into a chapel. A new abbey-church was built along the north-south axis, closing the cloister, and the west wing was transformed into guest quarters for important visitors with a classical façade in the style of a château.

The Revolution and the prison
However, the French Revolution at the end of the century (1789) brought about the closure of the abbey and the buildings were sold as a national property. It was bought by Carollion de Vandeul, a wealthy industrialist and son-in-law of philosopher Denis Diderot (see page 33), who set up a cotton mill. Since this did not thrive, he used the property as a holiday home.

After the death of his parents, Vandeul’s son sold the abbey to a local forge which dismantled the 18th century church and used the stones to build a blast furnace 6 km away at La Tuilière.

1856 was the start of a new period for Auberive, which was bought back by the State and transformed into a female prison in order to ease overcrowding at the Clairvaux penitentiary. The most famous inmate was Louise Michel who played an active role in the revolution against Napoleon III and spent 20 months at Auberive before being deported to New Caledonia.

In 1894, the use of the prison was changed to a detention centre for boys from 7 to 18 years.
HISTORY & CULTURE - CASTLES & FORTIFICATIONS

Major battles, acts of resistance and bravery have made Champagne-Ardenne a region profoundly marked by history. This has resulted in an immensely rich cultural and historical heritage for visitors to discover and explore. More than 150 castles, churches and memorials retrace the history of France and enable history lovers to go back to Mediaeval or Renaissance times, passing through the Age of Enlightenment.

**FORTRESS OF SEDAN**

Classified Town of Art and History for the legacy of its long military past and the beauty of its landscapes, Sedan developed around its fortified castle, which is probably the largest feudal fortress in Europe, covering 35,000m².

The castle was founded in 1424 by Evrard de La Marck around the site of an 11th century Carolingian church. The powerful La Marck family, rich landowners from the Rhineland, were vassals of the king of France and the ruling Seigneurs (lords) of Sedan. In their role of defending and protecting the kingdom, and given the castle’s strategic position on the frontier of Eastern France, the De Marcks continually expanded and fortified the castle.

In 1560, the incumbent seigneur, Henri-Robert de la Marck, who had converted to Calvinism a few years earlier, declared Sedan as an independent protestant principality and he became the first Prince of Sedan.

Henri-Robert’s daughter Charlotte was the last heir of the De Marcks. In 1591, at the age of 16, the young girl was married by the protestant king Henri IV to his close friend Henri de la Tour de l’Auvrergne, 20 years her senior. The title of Prince of Sedan therefore came into the Tour de l’Auvrergne family, who continued the fortification and modernisation of the castle.

Charlotte died in childbirth 3 years later, soHenri de la Tour d’Auvrergne remarried. His son Frédéric attempted a coup against King Louis XIII which failed, and so, to save his head, the last Prince of Sedan handed the principality back to the King of France. The castle was by now so meticulously fortified that it had become an impressive stronghold that had proved impregnable and was given over for use by the French army.

During WW1, the castle was occupied by the Germans and used as a prison camp for French soldiers, some of whom were tortured and executed there. The castle again served as a prison camp during WW2. In 1962, the community of Sedan bought the castle from the state for the symbolic price of one French Franc and opened it up to the public.

**A visit of the fortress** takes visitors back to the 15th and 16th centuries and recounts the lives of the Princes of Sedan and their soldiers and servants. The visit is animated with detailed reconstructions of scenes from everyday life. There are two circuits possible for visiting the castle: **Mille ans d’histoire** (the full tour) and the shorter **Sedan, une Principauté**, which concentrates on the interior and the castle museum. Both circuits can be complimented with an audio-guide available in English and Dutch.

[www.hotelfp-sedan.com](http://www.hotelfp-sedan.com)

**STAY THE NIGHT IN THE CASTLE**

Visitors can also sleep in the castle as a wing of the fortress has been transformed into a comfortable 3-star hotel under the label les Hôtels France Patrimoine, offering 54 castle-style rooms, a gastronomic restaurant and conference facilities.

[www.tourisme-sedan.fr](http://www.tourisme-sedan.fr)

**THE MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL OF SEDAN**

17-18 May 2014

In May, the Fortress of Sedan relives its Medieval past with this colourful festival which includes cavalry tournaments and crossbow demonstrations, jousting, medieval street performers, flag-throwing, musicians and troubadours, feasts and markets, processions of medieval soldiers and traditional craftsmen, bird of prey shows, torch lit visits of the castle and much more. Created in 1996, the festival is organized with the help of 400 volunteers and attracts 40,000 visitors each year.

[www.chateau-fort-sedan.fr](http://www.chateau-fort-sedan.fr)
CHÂTEAU OF BLIGNY

In 1773, the Marquis of Dampierre bought a country estate in the village of Bligny in order to hunt wolves. The estate included the foundations of a feudal castle, which had been demolished 3 years earlier. The Marquis had the castle rebuilt, using the magnificent front door of the original castle.

The hillsides around the castle, which were part of the estate, were particularly suited to vines and the wine (mostly still wine at the time) produced from them provided for his personal consumption. The château’s water supply came from the source of the river Landion, located under the castle’s cellars.

In the early 19th century, the castle passed on to the Baron de Cachard (the Marquis’ son having been killed in battle) who bought further vineyards around the village to create a wine producing estate that extended to 44 hectares (110 acres) by 1930. The Baron also extended the château adding the tower and wing.

After WW2, the property was divided up and sold in lots. The Lorin family bought the castle and 20 hectares (50 acres) of the vineyards in several lots in 1952, replanting them in 1954. After considerable investment in both the renovation of the chateau and champagne production equipment, the property opened to the public in 1999 as a Champagne Château.

The visit includes the dining and reception salons on the ground floor and an impressive collection of 1,000 fine-crystal champagne flutes on the first floor landing. The château is still occasionally used by the family today, so the bedrooms are private. The visit finishes in the château’s majestic cellars which house an interesting collection of tools and machinery used at the turn of the 19th century to work the champagne vineyards. A film presents both the vineyards and the techniques used in the production of champagne, whose quality you may judge for yourself with a free tasting at the end of your visit.

Champagne Château de Bligny is one of only two champagne labels designated château and the only one open to the public for castle visits (from April to October).

The other château label is Champagne Château de Boursault, to the west of Epernay. www.champagnechateaudebligny.com

CHÂTEAU DE LA MOTTE TILLY

Between Troyes and Provins, and just 6 km from Nogent-sur-Seine, this splendid castle was built in 1754 on the ruins of a former feudal castle. Commissioned by the Terray brothers, of whom the most famous, the Abbot Joseph Marie Terry, became the financial controller to King Louis XV, the castle was initially intended as a summer residence. It is a fine example of classic 18th century architecture, notably in its perfectly balanced proportions.

When the castle passed to Count Rohan-Chabot in 1910, he undertook a massive renovation programme, including a total redesign of the park which today features beautiful English-style gardens and a central water feature. The renovation programme was continued by the count’s daughter, the Marquise de Maillé, who inherited the castle in 1964. The Marquise went to great lengths to decorate and furnish the interior in a perfect 18th century style, along with her daughter. However, tragedy was to strike since the daughter died of cancer at the age of 51. Having no other heir, the Marquise bequeathed the property on her death in 1972 to the ‘Centre des monuments Nationaux’, requesting that the interior should be left unchanged and the castle opened to the general public for visits.

http://la-motte-tilly.monuments-nationaux.fr/

CHÂTEAU OF CIREY-SUR-BLAISE

Enraptured by the beautiful Émilie du Châtelet, the philosopher Voltaire quickly succumbed to the charms of the yet unfinished manor. Together, they planned, transformed and improved the castle. Voltaire had a new wing built and created a monumental door whose carvings evoke the Arts, the Sciences and nautical life.

Voltaire spent 15 years at Cirey, writing without let-up (works including La mort de César, Alsire, Zaïre, Mahomet and Mérope). His comedies and tragedies were acted out by his friends on the stage of the little theatre he set up under the eaves, still beautifully preserved today. From this haven of fine art, Voltaire kept in touch with the whole of Europe through his countless letters.

In 1749, the sudden death of the Marquise du Châtelet separated Voltaire forever from his earthly paradise. A visit to the chateau is a chance to immerse oneself in the everyday life of these two key figures from the Age of the Enlightenment. Open from May to September. (See also page 33).

www.visitvoltaire.com

www.champagnechateaudebligny.com
FORTIFICATIONS OF LANGRES

The fortified walls of Langres are the longest in Europe, stretching for 5 miles (8 km) in total. These include 2.2 miles (3.5 km) of ramparts surrounding the old town which are beautifully preserved and which link 7 gateways and 12 towers. From the circular walkway around the ramparts, visitors can enjoy panoramic views over the surroundings.

The remaining fortifications comprise the star-shaped citadel, built just to the south of Langres in the mid 19th century, and the wall linking the citadel to the town.

The history of the fortifications of Langres dates back to the 4th century when, during the troubled times of the Lower Empire, the inhabitants dismantled the Roman monuments to construct the first fortification to the north of the town. Langres became the seat of an important bishopric with far-reaching powers and the town was enlarged during the 14th and 15th centuries with new quarters to the south. The fortifications were expanding accordingly to protect the town. By the end of this period, Langres had become a fortified royal town on the edge of the Kingdom of France, facing Burgundy, Franche-Comté and Lorraine.

The history of the town's fortifications, which show architectural styles from the 4th to the 19th centuries, is explained in the heritage centre, housed in the Tour de Navarre, one of 4 towers added to the ramparts in the 16th century. (See also page 14).

Langres Tourist Office
www.tourisme-langres.com

FORTIFICATIONS OF ROCROY

Built in 1555, the stronghold of Rocroi in the Ardennes was the second fortified town in the region to be equipped with a bastioned wall. This five-fronted pentagon was created to stand up against the powerful fortress of Charlemont further north in the town of Givet, at that time under Spanish domination. The fortifications at Rocroi were further strengthened over the centuries, including the improvements to the star ramparts by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707), military engineer of King Louis XIV. Having become totally unsuited to 19th century military methods, the fortress was dismantled in 1889 but nearly all its ramparts were preserved.

Rocroi Tourist Office
www.otrocroi.com
THE GERMAN INVASION OF WESTERN EUROPE VIA THE ARDENNES – MAY 1940

British and French commanders believed that the Germans would initially attack through central Belgium, and so their armies took up positions along the Franco-Belgian boarder to the north of Sedan. To the south of Sedan, France was protected by the Maginot line, the most northerly fort being located at Villy-la-Ferté.

However, the three German armoured divisions of General Guderian went through the Ardennes Forest in southeastern Belgian to attack France at Sedan itself. The allies were taken by surprise and Sedan fell without much resistance during the Battle of Sedan from 12-14 May 1940. Makeshift bridges were built across the Meuse allowing the tanks to move north. The French soldiers regrouped at Rethel, thinking that the German army would immediately push on towards Paris, but the Germans had mapped out a strategy.

The main idea was to surprise the bulk of the allied troops positioned along the French-Belgian boarder by heading up behind them, towards the English Channel, in order to cut them off. This would then enable the Germans to more easily take Paris since the defending forces would be weakened. However, thanks to Britain’s miraculous evacuation of British troops from the beaches of Dunkirk through Vice Admiral Ramsay’s ‘Operation Dynamo’, the British army was able to withdraw and reconsolidate for the counter-attack four years later.

At the same time, diverting attention from what was happening in the north, other German divisions headed south from Sedan and were met at village of Stonne by the French where fierce fighting took place for 10 days (15-25 May). The village, which changed hands many times during the battles, was completely destroyed and there were heavy losses on both sides.

The third tactic of the German’s strategy was to attack the fort of Villy-la-Ferté, the most northerly fort along the Maginot line. This would give the impression that the German’s goal was to move south, whereas their main objective was to weaken the allied troops in the north before heading to Paris. Both Stonne and Villy-la-Ferté fell to enemy hands.

VILLY-LA-FERTE FORT

The area of La Ferté-sur-Chiers was incorporated into the Maginot Line fortification system just before the Second World War broke out. It was the last work west of the fortified sector of Montmédy, standing atop a hill called ‘La Croix de Villy’ between the villages of Villy and La Ferté. Built between 1935 and 1939, it is made up of two combat blocs, one of which still has an anti-tank cannon.

The site of bitter fighting on 18-19 May 1940, the fort was defended by 104 soldiers, all of whom lost their life through asphyxiation. The Villy-la-Ferté Fort was the only one along the Maginot Line to be defeated. Today, the complex remains much as it was at the time, and the tour finishes at the small museum dedicated to the fort’s soldiers, who are commemorated at a nearby monument and lie buried in the Villy National Cemetery.

www.ouvragelaferte.fr
MUSEUM OF THE GERMAN SURRENDER

In February 1945, General Eisenhower set up the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe at Reims, in a large school building close to the railway station. Its war room was to be the scene for the signing of the unconditional surrender of the German armies, on 7 May 1945 at 2.41am, bringing the Second World War to a close in Europe. The news was announced in the Allied capitals the following day, 8 May, at 3 pm. However, at the request of Stalin, a second ceremony was held in the Soviet zone of Berlin, on 9 May.

Preserved as it was then, the war room has a unique, highly-charged atmosphere. The projection of archive footage, period objects, mannequins and scale models, show how this is indeed a place steeped in history.

Musée de la Reddition du 7 mai 1945
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 26 35 36 90

CHARLES DE GAULLE MEMORIAL

During his time as Lieutenant Colonel before the outbreak of war, Charles de Gaulle bought a country house called La Boisserie in Colombey-les-deux-églises, a tranquil location conveniently located between Paris and the Eastern garrisons. De Gaulle became very attached to the village and so it is appropriate that it is here that in October 2008, 50 years after the historic reconciliation meeting between General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel inaugurated a new interpretation centre dedicated to the life and work of Charles de Gaulle.

This centre offers a wonderful insight into the different facets of De Gaulle, as a young soldier, a father, a writer and a leader. It also presents a whole chapter of history from the involvement of De Gaulle during the First World War to the General’s death in 1970, including the influences, movements and struggles of the Second World War, the Resistance, the Liberation, the political turmoil and controversy of the post war period, the creation of the Fifth Republic and the departure of President De Gaulle from public life. The visit finishes with a moving film of De Gaulle’s funeral.

The use of space, sound and light guides the visitor through a series of different modules, narrow and dark for the clandestine Resistance efforts, open and bright at the moment of Liberation, animated by the latest scenographical techniques. Information panels in French, English and German, and the option of audio-phones, complete an enriching experience which captures the spirit of this historic era.

The ground floor of the complex houses a temporary exhibition. There are 4 different exhibitions for 2014:

- **Lets resist!** (Résister!), 1 March to 13 April
  Exhibition about the resistance and the ‘Compagnons de la Liberation’, an association of over 1000 members created by Charles de Gaulle in recognition of the resistance of France (Winston Churchill was amongst those who received a medal).

- **Presidential Cars** (‘Voitures de l’Elysée’), mid April to 31 August
  Display of Presidential cars and escort vehicles, in partnership with Citron and the Elysée Palace.

- **Sound and Light Show**, 19 June to 31 August
  A wonderful sound and light show displayed on the Cross of Lorraine after nightfall.

- **Marianne and the symbols of France**, 01 September to 31 December
  Marianne et les symbols de la République.

The glass lift that takes you up to the permanent exhibition floor, continues up through the roof of the centre, bringing you out on the top of the hill, at the foot of the great Cross of Lorraine. Funded by national subscription and support from over 60 foreign countries, the double cross, symbol for Free France adapted by Charles De Gaulle, was inaugurated in 1972 in remembrance and honour of the General and all the men and women who fought for freedom. Standing 44 m tall on the highest hilltop in the district of Colombey, it can be seen from many miles away. (See also page 36)

[www.memorial-charlesdegaulle.fr](http://www.memorial-charlesdegaulle.fr)
18th century – Age of the Enlightenment

DENIS DIDEROT (1713-1784)

One of the town’s most famous sons is Denis Diderot (1713-1784), prominent philosopher, art critic and writer during the Enlightenment. He is best known as co-founder and chief editor of and contributor to the Encyclopédie. A copy of the famous Encyclopédie can be viewed at the Art and History Museum on request.

Born in Langres to a family of cutlers, Diderot spent his youth in his home town before setting off for Paris at the age of 15 to study philosophy. However, he abandoned plans to become a clergyman or to study law in order to become a writer, which caused his father to disown him. Diderot started leading a rather bohemian life in Paris, meeting influential writers and philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

In his youth Diderot had followed the ideas of Voltaire, who in turn was influenced by Newton and his theories on optics and gravity, but gradually moved away from this line of thought towards materialism and atheism. Diderot questioned everything and refused to accept the preordained order of the church. In his writing, Diderot challenged conventions regarding the structure and content of novels, as shown in his work Jacques le Fataliste et son Maître.

Diderot’s father was further angered by his son’s marriage to a poor Roman Catholic girl, which mine own was meant, a friend a mistress, but half of myself, a soul for passion for love, life and studying, Emilie Du Châtelet made the scientific works that she considered the most important accessible to as many people as possible. Together with Voltaire, they undertook the translation of Newton’s theories from Latin to French.

However, while the scandal grew, so too did the number of subscribers, reaching 4,000, and Diderot continued to toil away in spite of all the controversy, eventually finishing the project in secret. He often spent the day researching his theories and the night writing up the entries, constantly under the threat of police raids. It was not until 1772 that the subscribers eventually received the final volumes of the Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (35 volumes in total). The whole project had taken 20 years of hard work.

Diderot never made much money, in spite of his devotion to his work, and so he saw no option but to sell his vast personal book collection when the time came to provide a dowry for his daughter. However, Catherine II of Russia heard of the writer’s financial troubles and bought the collection, keeping all the books in Paris and taking Diderot on as librarian. On his death in 1784, the collection was sent Catherine II, who had it deposited at the National Library of Russia.

A new visitors’ centre dedicated to the life and work of the great philosopher opened in 2013. Called the Maison des Lumières Denis Diderot (the Denis Diderot House of Enlightenment) and housed in a building from the 16th and 18th centuries, this is the only centre of its kind in France.

The castle also houses the little theatre which Voltaire had constructed in the attic. It is the only theatre commissioned by Voltaire still remaining today, and is also the oldest theatre in a private castle to survive in such a good condition. Voltaire mourned the loss of Emilie for many years after her death in 1749. As he wrote to d’Argental: “I have lost not a mistress, but half of myself, a soul for which mine own was meant, a friend of twenty-years’ standing whom I saw born”. (See also page 29).

VOLTAIRE (1694-1778)

In 1734, Voltaire was threatened with imprisonment in the Bastille following the publication of his ‘Lettres Philosophiques’ (or ‘Lettres Anglaises’), in which he praised the English nation and heavily satirised the French way of life. His friend, the Marquise Du Châtelet, gave him refuge at her home at Cirey, close to the still independent Duchy of Lorraine.

A highly intelligent woman with a passion for love, life and studying, Emilie Du Châtelet made the scientific works that she considered the most important accessible to as many people as possible. Together with Voltaire, they undertook the translation of Newton’s theories from Latin to French.

The source of inspiration for Diderot’s Encyclopédie was Chambers’s Cyclopaedia, or An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, published in London in 1728. Work began in 1744 to translate the Cyclopaedia into French. Having studied English and already translated works of reference, Diderot took over this task. With his questioning mind, he expanded on the ideas and content to produce a much more comprehensive edition which covered not just the arts and sciences, but “each and every branch of human knowledge” with “the power to change men’s common way of thinking”. The first volume was published in 1751.

However, the work, although very advanced for the time, was unorthodox in its scope, especially regarding the entries on religion and natural law. With its promotion of religious tolerance and freedom of thought, both the church and the aristocracy saw the growing work as a threat and Diderot came under scrutiny and eventually also under persecution. In 1759 the work was formally suppressed; many influential partners, contributors and sponsors left the project and Diderot’s friends deserted him.

However, the scandal grew, so too did the number of subscribers, reaching 4,000, and Diderot continued to toil away in spite of all the controversy, eventually finishing the project in secret. He often spent the day researching his theories and the night writing up the entries, constantly under the threat of police raids. It was not until 1772 that the subscribers eventually received the final volumes of the Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (35 volumes in total). The whole project had taken 20 years of hard work.
However, this effective weakening of forces enabled Napoleon to win several victories between 10th and 14th February against the Prussians in Champaubert, Montmirail, Château-Thierry and Vaucamps. He then defeated the Bohemian army at Montereau on 18th February and entered Troyes on the 24th.

Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria signed the Chaumont Pact on 1st March to continue their alliance against Napoleon. Bonaparte took Reims on 13th March but the Coalition finally took victory over the emperor on 20th March at Arcis-sur-Aube. The Allies then marched on to Paris which surrendered on 30th March. Napoleon abdicated in Fontainebleau on 6th April 1814 and was exiled to the Island of Elba off the Italian coast.

Less than a year later, he escaped Elba and returned to power, but was defeated by the British and Prussian armies (led by the Duke of Wellington and von Blücher) at the Battle of Waterloo in present-day Belgium on 18th June 1815. This enabled the Coalition forces to enter France and restore Louis XVIII to the French throne. Napoleon surrendered and was exiled to the Island of Saint-Helena where he died in 1821.

A brochure on all the sites connected with Napoleon in Champagne and a leaflet listing the various commemoration events taking place throughout 2014, both available in English, can be downloaded from the tourist board’s web site. The biggest event will be the re-enactment of the Battle of Montmirail.

**NAPOLEON MUSEUM**

Located at the site of the former military school, the Napoleon Museum is dedicated to the young Bonaparte’s life at the school and the battles of the French Campaign fought in the area. The museum will be closed for refurbishment in June 2014 and is due to reopen in Summer 2015.

www.ville-brienne-le-chateau.fr

**www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk**

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**19th century**

**NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (1769-1821)**

Born in Corsica in 1769, the young Napoleon went to military school at Brienne-le-Château in the Aube at the age of 10 and spent 5 years there perfecting his military strategy skills. The school has today been transformed into a museum dedicated to its famous student.

Bonaparte rose to prominence as a gifted military leader during the latter stages of the French Revolution and the ensuing First French Republic, leading successful campaigns in the wars of the First and Second Coalitions against European allies, who had joined forces against the rise of French power.

Napoleon sought to spread the ideals of the French Revolution across Europe whilst also keeping certain aspects of the deposed regime. He was declared Emperor of the French in 1804 and during the first decade of the 19th century, led a series of conflicts to secure France as a dominant power in Continental Europe.

Austria and Russia joined forces with Britain in the War of the Third Coalition in 1805. In spite of Nelson’s victory over the combined French and Spanish Navy at the Battle of Trafalgar, off the south-west coast of Spain, on 21st October 1805, Napoleon defeated Austria and Russia at Austerlitz, thus ending the Third Coalition. Napoleon commissioned the Arc de Triomphe in Paris to commemorate this French victory.

However, with the ongoing skirmishes of the Peninsular War in Spain and a disastrous attempt to invade Russia in 1812, Napoleon’s army suffered great losses and never fully recovered. In 1813, the Sixth Coalition (Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden and the German States) defeated his forces at Leipzig (the largest battle of the Napoleonic Wars) and Napoleon and his reduced army was forced to retreat back into France. On 21st December 1813, the Bohemian and Prussian armies were able to cross the Rhine and head for Paris.

With no significant resources at his disposal, Napoleon could do no more than harass the more powerful enemy. However, after fighting at Brienne-le-Château on 29th January 1814 and in la Rothière on 1st February (both in the Aube), the Allies decided to split up, with the Prussian army heading through the Marne and Petit-Morin valleys while the Bohemian army continued down the Aube and Seine Valleys.
Paul Verlaine Museum, Juniville
www.musee-verlaine.fr

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891)

Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud was born at Charleville and spent his childhood in this small market town. His father was an army captain and often absent, so Arthur, his brother and 2 sisters, were brought up by their strict mother alone. The children were to be marked by their father’s absence.

The young Rimbaud shone at school and won prizes for his studies. When he was 15, the family moved into an apartment on the first floor of a house overlooking the Meuse (the road today called the ‘Quai Rimbaud’), and the 6 years Rimbaud spent here (1869 to 1875) correspond to his period of poetic creativity. This house is today opened to the public (see La Maison des Ailleurs).

The family atmosphere was strict and oppressive and Rimbaud was inspired by revolutionary ideas and freedom. He became a hot-headed and rebellious adolescent and his poems rejected all forms of convention. From the age of 16, Rimbaud started running away from home to discover the capital and beyond. When revolution broke out in Paris in March 1871, Rimbaud claimed himself an anarchist and began a period where he seemed to go completely off the rails.

He went back to Paris, where his poem Bateau-ivre (the drunk boat), and the support of Paul Verlaine, opened up his way into Parisian circles. Verlaine was smitten by the youth and genius of Rimbaud to the point of leaving his wife to follow this ‘angel in exile’ and the two began a tempestuous relationship, with separations, reconciliations and fights, running away together to Brussels and London. Verlaine later said that he found the ‘beauty of the devil’ in Rimbaud - the literary genius displayed provocative and arrogant behaviour and became known as l’Enfant Terrible (the terrible child).

In 1873, after a violent dispute with Verlaine that landed the latter in prison, Arthur was feeling desperate. It was during this period that he wrote one of the greatest French poetic works, Une saison en Enfer (A season in Hell). The work was not well received in literary circles and the following collection, ‘Illuminations’ fared no better. Paul Verlaine, now out of prison, refused to give any further financial support to his former lover. So Rimbaud finally decided to turn his back on literature and to follow new horizons. He was just 20 years old.

Rimbaud spent the rest of his life on the move, unable to settle down. He travelled around Europe, picking up different kinds of work as he went, even directing workers in a mine in Cyprus. Yet in the letters he sent back to his family, he showed a deep boredom and a longing to ‘find something to do’. His character did not improve; he became taciturn, withdrawn and unsociable. In 1880 Rimbaud moved to Africa, where he was to stay until his death, working for different commercial companies. A violently painful knee necessitated a trip to Marseilles for an operation, but this led to the onset of gangrene from which Rimbaud never recovered in spite of a leg amputation. Rimbaud died on 10th November 1891 at the age of 37 years.

He is buried in the Charleville-Mézières cemetery, in a simple white marble tomb. Today the ‘rebel poet’ is remembered for his revolutionary vision and a daring new poetical expression, able to convey the lyrical movements of the soul.

La Maison des Ailleurs
Just opposite the museum, on the Quai Rimbaud, is the house where Mme Rimbaud and her 4 children lived in a first floor apartment for the 6 years from 1869 to 1875 (Rimbaud from 15 yrs to 21 yrs). This period corresponds to the period of Rimbaud’s poetic creativity. The atmosphere created in the house today is designed to stimulate the imagination of the visitor, with projections of sound and light evoking Rimbaud’s poetic effervescence, inner turmoil and constant roaming. Each room is themed around a different town to which Rimbaud travelled. Both surprising and disconcerting, this homage to the poet cannot fail to leave an impression.

http://rimbaud.jimdo.com/la_maison_des_ailleurs.php

The Rimbaud Museum
Housed in a 17th century water mill on the river Meuse, this museum retraces the life and poetic work of the artist with one of the richest collections in the world. Displays include artifacts that Rimbaud had with him during his travels to Africa and original documents and works, including the sonnet Voyelles (Vowels). Reproductions of a number of Rimbaud’s manuscripts show the creative intensity of the young poet. The museum is currently closed for extensive refurbishment and is due to reopen in the summer of 2015.

**HISTORY & CULTURE - FAMOUS PEOPLE**

**19th to 20th centuries**

**PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR (1841-1919)**

Pierre Auguste Renoir met Aline Charigot while working in Paris. 18 years his junior, the young lady represented his ideal in female beauty with her rosy cheeks and round curves. Aline soon became his model and later his wife and features in many of his paintings, such as the well-known boating luncheon party, ‘Déjeuner des Canotiers’.

Aline came from the village of Essoyes, in the heart of the Champagne vineyards and Renoir was immediately drawn to the simplicity of village life and the peace and beauty of the landscapes. The couple returned to Essoyes every summer to unwind and relax. In 1896, Renoir bought a house there and later had a studio built at the bottom of the garden where he could paint in peace and quiet, having three young sons and plenty of visitors in the house. Renoir found both the inspiration and models he needed for his work in Essoyes, with Aline’s cousin, Gabrielle Renard, becoming both his favourite model and the nanny of his second son Jean.

After a very productive artistic life, Renoir suffered badly from rheumatoid arthritis in his old age. However, he continued to paint until the very end, even though the deformities in his hands required him to adapt his painting techniques. He moved to Cagnes-sur-Mer (near Nice) for the benefits of the climate, and passed away in this Mediterranean resort in 1919, 4 years after the death of his wife. However, it was their wish to be buried in Essoyes, and they were finally laid to rest in the village cemetery, joined later by their 3 children: Pierre (who became an actor), Jean (filmmaker) and Claude (ceramics potter).

Visitors to Essoyes can discover more about the painter and his family at L’Espace Renoir cultural centre, through a film (available in English) and a series of exhibitions and displays. From the centre, a sign-posted walk through the village takes you past the studios of modern-day artists to the former studio of the great master himself. Access is via a flower garden inspired by Renoir’s paintings.

The studio features his wheelchair, symbol of the artist’s courage and devotion to painting in the face of crippling arthritis towards the end of his life. Also presented are some of the major periods of Renoir’s creativity, his paintings of Essoyes and a short original video of the artist himself at work. Just a few minutes’ walk from the studio is the village cemetery where Auguste and Aline Renoir are laid to rest, along with their 3 children.


**CHARLES DE GAULLE (1891-1970)**

In 1934, Lieutenant Colonel de Gaulle bought a country house with a large, secluded garden in Colombey-les-deux-Eglises. Conveniently located between Paris and the Eastern garrisons, the house also offered a place of tranquillity for his family, especially his younger daughter Anne, who suffered from Down’s syndrome. The house’s name comes from its original use as a place to brew beer, ‘la Boisserie’ (Brewery).

During the war, the family joined de Gaulle in London and la Boisserie was used to house refugees and later as a staging post for passing German troops. The place fell into disrepair and was badly damaged by fire. Being very attached to la Boisserie, the de Gaulles set about renovating the property after the war, the General adding a corner tower to house his private office.

In September 1958, Général de Gaulle invited Chancelier Konrad Adenauer to the Boisserie for a historic reconciliation meeting between France and Germany. This meeting took place in private and Adenauer was the only head of state to be invited to de Gaulle’s country home. The official reconciliation took place at the Cathedral of Reims on 8th July 1962.

It was at the Boisserie, in the drawing room adjacent to his office, that Charles de Gaulle suffered from a sudden and fatal aneurismal rupture on November 9th 1970. He was aged 79.

Mme de Gaulle continued to live in the house until 1978 when she moved into a retirement home having been diagnosed with cancer. The house passed on their son, Admiral Philippe de Gaulle, who decided to open the house to the public in 1980.

The three reception rooms and office have been left much as they were when Mme De Gaulle left and the house has become a place of remembrance. The De Gaulle family still come to stay at La Boisserie from time to time, so the kitchen and bedrooms are private.

General and Mme De Gaulle are buried in the local churchyard of Colombey-les-deux-églises, along with their daughter Anne, who died at the age of 20. (See also page 32).

La Boisserie, Colombey-les-deux-Eglises www.colombey-les-deux-eglesises.com
ACTIVITIES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - ON THE GROUND

On the ground, in the air or on the water, Champagne-Ardenne offers a wide variety of activities and outdoor pursuits for visitors all year round. From cycling to tree climbing, from golfing to jet-skiing, there is something to please everyone, whether your aim is to relax, to be active or to try your hand at something new.

WALKING

With 3,125 miles (5,000 km) of sign-posted footpaths (circular walks and long-distance routes), there is ample scope for walkers, serious hikers or those wanting to explore the different landscapes of the region: great forests, deep valleys, open plains, hills, vineyards, lakes and rivers. Hiking sheets for 20 circular walks, varying between 3.1 and 15 miles (5 and 24 km) can be downloaded from the tourist board’s web site: www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/walks/itineraries/top-itineraries.aspx

The walks are grouped by theme:

- Vineyard walks
- Waterside walks
- Nature walks
- Legend walks
- Historical walks

Each hiking sheet gives a map and a description of the route along with practical information and points of interest along the way. A GPS trace can also be downloaded from the web site for walkers with a handheld GPS navigator.

WALKING IN RENOIR COUNTRY

The countryside around the village of Essoyes was much loved by impressionist artist Auguste Renoir, who drew inspiration from the landscapes and light in this corner of Champagne. Following in the artist’s footsteps, four sign-posted trails from 3 to 14 km (1.9 – 8.8 miles) leave from the centre of the village, taking you past landmark places, such as the model Aline Charigot’s birth house, or to viewpoints painted by Renoir (inspiring works such as Chemin montant dans les hautes herbes and Les Laveuses).

To explore the beauty of the countryside in this area in more depth, 191 km of sign-posted footpaths link Essoyes to 16 other communes in the neighbourhood, enabling visitors to create their own walking itinerary. Maps and leaflets can be picked up from the tourist information point at the ‘Espace Renoir’ www.renoir-essoyes.fr - www.essoyes.fr

LONG DISTANCE HIKING

With 9 Grande Randonnée (GR) long distance national footpaths and 8 Grande Randonnée de Pays long distance regional footpaths running through the region, Champagne-Ardenne offers hikers a host of different possibilities. These include some famous national and international paths, such as the GR7, which connects the Ballon d’Alsace to Andorra and crosses the south of Haute-Marne, or the GR2, which runs along the Seine River from its source to Le Havre via the south of Aube and Paris.

Two of these long distance footpaths follow ancient Pilgrim routes: the GR654 (The Way of St James – Chemin de St-Jacques de Compostelle) and the GR145 (Via Francigena – medieval pilgrimage route between Canterbury and Rome).

Please refer to the tourist board’s web site for further information: www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/walks/travellers/for-keen-travellers.aspx

GEOCACHING

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor, treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants enter the GPS coordinates (latitude and longitude) of a specific ‘cache’ (hidden container) and then follow the compass and/or map instructions of the GPS navigator to attempt to find the cache hidden at that location. In the container are little treasures, generally of no real commercial value, and a logbook. The finder takes one of the treasures, replaces it with one he has brought with him, and logs his comments in the book. The experience is then shared online with other geocaching fans.

To participate in geocaching is simple, just register on the geocaching web site (free of charge) www.geocaching.com and then chose the area (country, town, post-code) you are interested in for a list of the caches in that vicinity. A sheet with the coordinates, a description of the site and additional cryptic clues can then be downloaded or printed off. You can read the comments of other geocachers who have logged their experience on the site, and add your own comments after you have found your treasure – obviously without giving the game away as to the exact location of the cache!

Geocaching is an unusual and enjoyable way to explore areas and places that you would not normally access, and an original way of discovering such heritage gems as the half-timbered churches, WW1 sites or sites connected to Napoleon. In Champagne-Ardenne, there are many caches hidden particularly in the area of Langres, in the town of Troyes, along the walking routes and along the Champagne Route (see page 17).
ACTIVITIES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - ON THE GROUND

CYCLING

With 280 miles (450 km) of dedicated cycling tracks, cyclists will enjoy discovering the region in peace and tranquility. These cycling tracks are mostly built along towpaths alongside the many canals and rivers of the region, or along disused railway tracks. The tourist board proposes four different types of cycling itineraries:

- Short cycle rides for families or groups of friends on sign-posted cycle tracks and dedicated greenways.
- Longer circuits, taking up to a day, using both cycle tracks and roads (chosen for having minimum traffic where possible) in order to explore further afield.
- Long distance cycle routes for crossing the whole region, linking to other regions of France and other countries.
- Dedicated areas for ‘off road’ mountain biking (approved by the French Federation of cycling Tourism - FFCT).

Further information can be found in the biking section of the tourist board’s web site at:

www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/walks/excursions/cycling/by-bike.aspx

Electric Bikes

Bikes with a battery-driven power assistance are becoming a more and more popular way to take the hard slog out of cycling. Electric bikes can be rented from a number of outlets who are part of the ‘Champagne à Vélo’ network. For more information, see http://www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com/balades/velo-electrique.aspx

MOTORBIKE TRIPS

For motorbike enthusiasts, a selection of trips has been created by experienced bikers that will lead you along the roads of the Champagne and Ardennes regions. These roads have been chosen for their scenery and for the tourist sites and places of interest along the way.

For each trip, a 4-page fact sheet in English is available which includes road book directions, distances, a map and sightseeing information. There are also useful tips on where to eat and stay. GPS directions can also be downloaded for the trips.

There are 7 motorbike routes available:

- The ‘Montagne de Reims’ and ‘Chemin desDames’ (106 miles/171 km): starting from Reims
- Between the River Marne and the vines (126 miles/202 km): starting from Château-Thierry
- The Great Lakes (108 miles/173.5 km): starting from Troyes
- Along the Burgundy Canal (277 miles/444 km): departing from Nogent-sur-Seine
- The Great Loop of the Ardennes (250 miles/401 km): starting from Charleville-Mézières
- Around the Argonne (177.5 miles/284 km): starting from Saint-Ménehould
- The Aube and Haute-Marne (262.5 miles/420 km): starting from Langres

For further information on the circuits, accommodation for bikers and garages and motorbike concessions in the region, go to:

www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/land-activities/motorbike_trips.aspx

ACCOMMODATION FOR BIKERS

In 2013, the tourist board created a new quality control accommodation label for bikers called Accueil Motards. Establishments signing up for the label have to adhere to a number of benefits and services for their guests in order to facilitate travelling in the region by motorbike.

www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/walks/balades/bybike/approved-services-providers.aspx

CYCLING ACCOMMODATION AND BIKE HIRE

The regional and departmental tourist boards have set up a quality charter with hotels, guest houses and camp sites in the region to identify places of accommodation that specifically cater for cyclists. Providers who have signed up to the scheme agree to abide by its criteria to manage and improve facilities for cyclists, such as providing a place to clean bikes and having a covered storage area. Some establishments can also provide a packed lunch or a luggage transfer to the next hotel. Places where bicycles can be rented are also listed under the charter. Further information about the charter and a full list of the current members can be found on the tourist board’s web site:

http://www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/walks/balades/bybike/approved-services-providers.aspx
ACTIVITIES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - ON THE GROUND

GOLF

Located near the lakes of the Forest of Orient, in the heart of the Ardennes forests or not far from the champagne vineyard, the region’s golf courses combine the pleasures of golf with an art de vivre that brings a sparkle to any tournament. Champagne-Ardennen has 10 golf courses currently open, two of which are 9-hole and one of which is a ‘Swin’Golf’. An 11th golf course, close to the Champagne-Ardennen TGV station at Bezannes, is under construction and due to open the first section of its greenways in 2013 www.ngf-golf.com

All the golf courses and their characteristics can be found at:
www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/land-activities/golf.aspx

They include:

**GOLF DE REIMS CHAMPAGNE**
This international-class golf course is ideal for professionals and amateurs alike and is open all year round. Privately owned, the facilities include 25 practice runs, of which 5 are covered, and a secure car park.
Château des Dames de France, Gueux (near Reims)
www.golfde-reims.com

**GOLF DE TROYES LA CORDELIERE**
Backed onto forest and classed among the most beautiful golf courses in France, the château (today the club house) and land of this golf course formerly belonged to the Counts Chandon de Briailles. The 18-hole golf course is gently undulating and contains small areas of water and ancient trees.
Chaource (near Troyes)
www.golfdetroyes.fr

**GOLF DE LA FORET D’ORIENT**
10 miles from Troyes, this 18-hole golf course is close to the lakes of this protected Nature Park. Surrounded by trees and with areas of water acting as obstacles, this golf course is accessible to all levels of player. The hotel offers 77 spacious rooms and has a spa centre, ideal for relaxing after your game.
Rouilly Sacey
www.domaine-foret-orient.com

**GOLF DE SEPT FONTAINES**
This beautifully landscaped 18-hole golf course is located in the grounds of a 12th century abbey, rebuilt in the 17th century as a château, which today offers hotel accommodation and boasts a gastronomic restaurant.
Fagnon (near Charleville-Mézières)
www.abbayeseptfontaines.fr

Golf Pass

Participating clubs: For the special price of 105 €, the Golf Pass covers 3 green fees at any of the 8 participating clubs, all of which sell the pass. The duration of the pass is one year from purchase.
www.golf-en-champagne.com

Participating clubs:
Forêt d’Orient golf club
Rouilly Sacey (Aube)
www.golf-foretdorient.com

Château des Dames de France, Gueux (near Reims)
www.golf-de-reims.com

Golf de la Cordelière, Chaource (Aube)
www.par72.net

Champagne golf club
Villers Aigrun Aiguzy (Aisne)
www.golfdemenneville.com

Menneville golf club
Menneville (Aisne)
www.golfdecombles.fr

The Ermitage golf club
Golf de l’Ermitage, Vendeuvre sur Barse (Aube)
www.golfdelemitage.com

The Anglure indoor golf club
Golf à la Carte, Anglure (Marne)
www.golfbralacante.fr

Champagne golf club
Villers Aigrun Aiguzy (Aisne)
www.golf-de-champagne.com

Menneville golf club
Menneville (Aisne)
www.golfdecombles.fr

The Ardennes by 2CV

To bring back the nostalgia of 1960s France, Rétroscapade rents out Citroën 2 CV (Deux Chevaux), the French motoring icon that symbolised low-cost, reliable motoring for over four decades. Ideal for exploring the roads of the Thiérache region, the Rocroi plateau or the Meuse and Semoy valleys, these convertibles are available by the day, weekend or week, as you wish and for as long as you wish.
www.retroscapade.com
ACTIVITIES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - IN THE AIR

ADVENTURE PARKS IN THE TREES

Open-air activity in the heart of the forest, involving tree to tree assault courses at varying heights from the ground, securely attached with a harness (known as Accrobanches), originally developed in the 1990s. This has become more and more popular in Champagne-Ardenne during the past decade. Requiring agility, balance and a good head for heights, and ranging from low level courses for children to black-level courses at over 25m from the ground, with tarzan swings, tight-rope, monkey bridges, suspended nets, knotted climbing ropes, zip-wires and other ‘surprises’, these adventure parks all follow a similar format.

A list of the parks in Champagne-Ardenne can be found at: www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/air-activities/adventure-trails.aspx

Some of the adventure parks offer an originality in addition to the tree courses. These include:

CHAMPAGNE BAR IN THE TREES

Arboxygène, Verzy
Located in the forest behind the town of Verzy, this adventure park sports a unique champagne bar called the Perchingbar. Situated 5½m above the ground amid the treetops, the terrace of the bar provides an exceptional view over the plains of Champagne. The rustic exterior of the tree house hides a modern and stylish interior with white leather swing-seats and suspended ice-buckets. The bar is reached via 3 gently inclining suspended footbridges and is powered by solar panels.

A selection of big name Champagne Houses and local producers is available, and cold meals can also be ordered in advance via the bar’s web site.

www.perchingbar.eu

NEW FOR 2014

Grimpobranches, Witry-les-Reims
Just 10 minutes from Reims, this Grimpobranches park (one of 3 in the region) will open up 2 tree houses in April 2014, at 4 and 5 metres high, offering a rustic but cosy comfort in the heart of the forest. Up to 4 persons per cabin.

www.grimpobranches.com/witry-les-reims-51

A RUSH OF ADRENALINE

Terraltitude
Located in the north of the Ardennes, this adventure park, which is open from April to November, offers three special activities:

• Fantasticâble: The park’s flagship activity is a giant zip wire. Strapped beneath a pulley, you launch high into mid air from a platform 110 metres up, for an incredible glide over the valley of the Meuse, travelling the 1,200 metres speeds that peak at over 80mph. Not for the faint-hearted!

• Bungy-jumping: The park also offers the only fixed-point bungy-jump in the north of France. From a platform 20m up, the daring dive head first into the void below for a thrill that will send your adrenalin rocketing.

• Sensations Course: To try out your skill in balance with no reassuring safety harness, this course is a series of high-level suspended walkways, swings and slides between the trees. However, a safety net will ensure that you come to no harm! Open to all, this activity is ideal for families.

www.terraltitude.com

Argonne Aventure
Located at Sainte-Ménéhould in the Argonne forest, in the east of the Marne département, this adventure park also proposes a special mountain bike track.

www.argonne-aventure.fr

HOT AIR BALLOONING

The scenery around Reims opens up below passengers during a balloon flight of about an hour. As far as the eye can see, row after row of vines mix with the colours of the season, the rugged terrain and the peace of the skies. A 30 km trip around Reims and the Mountain of Reims.

Air Magic
www.airmagic.fr

CLIMBING

Tackle the Roc la Tour pinnacle which overlooks the Meuse Valley, enjoy hill climbing in the Haute-Marne or, for something different, try your hand at abseiling down a purpose built wall in an indoor climbing centre. Whether you get a thrill from heights, or you simply need to get to the top, Champagne-Ardenne has rock climbing sites which should meet all your needs. They include:

Roc la Tour, Monthermé (08) Height: 20m
Roche aux Corpias, Monthermé (08) Height: 30m
Site des Falloises, Vertus (51) Height: 25m
Côna Cliff, Bourmont (52) Height: 15m
Cohons Cliff (52) Height: 25m
Roche Bernard Cliff, Viéville (52) Height: 15m

For a list of the climbing sites in the region, go to: www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/land-activities/rock-climbing.aspx

NEW FOR 2014

Le Chêne Perché, Signy L’Abbaye
This park offers four tree houses - two located at 8m and 13m for up to 4 people (min age: 6 years), a third at 16m is for up to 2 people (min age: 14 years) and a large tree house on 3 levels starting from 3m, accessed by a staircase, accommodating up to 8 people with no minimum age. All tree houses have an outdoor terrace, and a dry WC (sawdust). A shower block is located in the park’s reception building.

www.lecheneperche.com

SLEEPING IN TREE HOUSES

Terraltitude
Located in the north of the Ardennes, this adventure park, which is open from April to November, offers three special activities:

• Fantasticâble: The park’s flagship activity is a giant zip wire. Strapped beneath a pulley, you launch high into mid air from a platform 110 metres up, for an incredible glide over the valley of the Meuse, travelling the 1,200 metres speeds that peak at over 80mph. Not for the faint-hearted!

• Bungy-jumping: The park also offers the only fixed-point bungy-jump in the north of France. From a platform 20m up, the daring dive head first into the void below for a thrill that will send your adrenalin rocketing.

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www.terraltitude.com
ACTIVITES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - ON THE WATER

ACTIVITIES ON LAKES

Champagne-Ardennes has over 25,000 acres of lakes, creating a haven for lovers of water and aquatic sports and activities. Kitesurfing, water- and jet-skiing, canoeing, sailing, fishing, swimming – the choice is wide, whether you are looking for an adrenaline rush or just to relax. If you don’t have your own equipment, a variety of boating and surfing equipment can be hired from the lakes’ leisure bases. The following is an overview on what activities can be practiced where.

LAC DU DER

This is the largest man-made lake in Europe, spanning 11,800 acres (4,800 ha) and with nearly 50 miles (77 km) of banks. Completed in 1974 after 10 years of work, the Der was created to control the flow of water in the Marne and Seine rivers. The reservoir continues to function with the water levels fluctuating between very low during the late autumn and winter, attracting migrating birds and other wild life (see also p. 29) and high during the late Spring and Summer months, attracting holiday makers, day trippers and enthusiasts of water, with different areas of the lake reserved for different types of activities. Three marinas and 6 beaches have also been created around the water’s edge. For those who prefer dry land, there is a path all round the lake for cycling, walking or rollerblading, and over 300 miles of sign-posted tracks in the area.

Non motorized boats can be hired at the lake’s leisure base at Giffaumont. For motorized sports, you must be accompanied by a monitor unless you bring your own equipment. Surface area: 4,800 hectares (11,800 acres).

www.lacdueder.com

THE 3 LAKES OF THE FOREST OF ORIENT

Nestling in the heart of the Forêt d’Orient, these three lakes were also created as reservoirs to control the flow of the Seine, and also the River Aube. The largest of the lakes, Orient, was created in 1966, and the other two lakes, Temple and Amance, in 1990. Together the lakes offer over 12,000 acres of water to enjoy aquatic sports, bird-watching, walking and cycling in an ideal environment for outdoor recreational activities.

www.pnr-foret-orient.fr

- LAC D’ORIENT
  All non motorized water activities (swimming, sailing, rowing, pedal- and electric boats, windsurfing etc). Surface area: 2,500 hectares (6,177 acres)

- LAC DU TEMPLE
  Reserved for nature and fishing only. Surface area: 2,000 hectares (4,942 acres)

- LAC D’AMANCE
  Reserved for motorised watersports (water-skiing, jet-skiing, motorboating etc - accompanied by a monitor unless you bring your own equipment) Surface area: 500 hectares (1,235 acres)

NEW FOR 2014

Chèques Avantages
A booklet of 30 special offers covering the Lac Du Der and surrounding areas will be offered to visitors staying at hotels and guest houses participating in the scheme. Further details available from the Lac du Der Tourist Office.

Casino
A casino at the Lac du Der is currently under construction and is due to open in December 2014.
THE 4 LAKES OF THE LANGRES REGION

Created at the turn of the 19th century to control the flow of water in the Canal from Champagne to Burgundy (also known as the Canal from the Marne to the Saône), these smaller lakes offer a secluded environment for enjoying the water.

www.tourisme-langres.com

LAC DU LIEZ

LAC DE LA VINGEANNE

LAC DES CHARMES

LAC DE LA MOUCHE

LAC DES VIEILLES FORGES
Bordered by forests and fields with the Ardennes hills not far away, this lake started out as a much smaller lake along the river known as the ‘Faux’. From the 16th century, various ironworks (or forges) were established along the banks of the Faux, and then a dam was added in 1927 which enabled the enlargement of the lake. In 1949, the dam was extended, and the lake reached its current level, a vast reservoir of more than 150 hectares (370 acres) of water and 7½ acres of banks. The lake controls the flow of water to the 2 basins that supply the Saint-Nicolas hydro-electrical plant. Non motorized boats can be hired at the lake’s leisure base. Free access for swimming and fishing. Surface area: 150 hectares (370 acres); completed in 1949. www.cg08.fr

LAC DE BAIRON
The small pond, which was once owned by the monks at the Mont-Dieu Abbey, has grown into a lake of some 120 hectares (300 acres) consisting of two parts separated by a dike. The 40 hectares (100 acres) of the natural lake is a nature reserve, a paradise for birds and anglers alike. On the other hand, the 80 hectares (200 acres) of the reservoir are devoted to non-motorised water sports. Equipment can be rented from the Leisure base on the shore of the lake. Non motorized boats can be hired at the lake’s leisure base. Free access for swimming and fishing. Surface area: 120 hectares (300 acres). www.cg08.fr

For more detailed information about the different water activities in the region, go to: www.champagne-ardeche-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/water-activities/watersports.aspx
ACTIVITES & OUTDOOR PURSUITS - ON THE WATER

FISHING

With its many lakes, waterways and rivers (including the Semoz, Meuse, Seine and Marne), Champagne-Ardennes is an angler’s paradise. Carp, pikeperch and pike are the most common species in the region's fish stock. These three large specimens attract anglers from across Europe to the lakes of the Pays de Langres. Favoured by carnivorous-fish enthusiasts, what sets the Lac du Der and the lakes of the Forêt d'Orient and Langres region apart is the fact that they have zones where night-fishing for carp is permitted. Close to Chaumont (Haute-Marne), the Aube, Seine and Rognon rivers are ideal for fly-fishing and trout-fishing. The sites are managed by various associations which offer courses for young people and issue permits for varying durations.

Langres Tourist Office
www.tourisme-langres.com

PNR de la Forêt d'Orient Visitors’ Centre
www.pnr-foret-orient.fr

Lac du Der Tourist Office
www.lacduder.com

FISHING EXCURSIONS

Qualified fishing guide, M. Emmanuel Favin, organizing fishing lessons along the Haute-Seine, Aube and Ource rivers both for beginners and for amateurs wanting to perfect their technique (up to groups of 3). He also organizes nature excursions by boat to observe the local flora and fauna.

Emmanuel Favin, Trainel

CHAMBRES D’HOTES WITH FISHING FACILITIES

LE moulin DE SAuvAGE
(2 rooms and 1 suite)
St-Juste-Sauvage
www.le-moulin-de-sauvage.com

L’îLE DES quATRE SAiSONS - Bologne
www.france-voyage.com/chambres-hotes/chambre-maison-bologne-35394.htm

CRUIISING AND BOAT TRIPS

Champagne-Ardennes is irrigated by 375 miles (600 km) of navigable waterways, including sections of the Meuse, Marne and Seine, and various canals (Canal of the Ardennes, Canal from the Marne to the Saône, Canal from the Aisne to the Marne, Canal to the Marne and Canal from the Marne to the Rhin). This network is open to navigation by cruisers, unlicensed houseboats, motorboats and small barges. This offers a different perspective of the region, and the chance to discover scenery that is often otherwise inaccessible, such as the meanders of the Meuse and the vineyards of the Marne. Rental of boats, boat rides and cruises are all possible along the region's waterways.

Ardennes Nautisme
(rental of boats on the Meuse, based at Pont-à-Bar)
www.ardennes-nautisme.com

Bateau Champagne Vallée
(cruises on the Marne, based at Cumières)
www.champagne-et-croisiere.com (in French and Dutch only)

A.N.C.R.E
(boat rides and rental on the Canal from Champagne to Burgundy, based near Chaumont)
www.canalenchanteur.com

Marne Plaisance
(Boat rides and rental on the Marne, based at Chamouiley near St. Dizier)
http://netoos.org/marneplaisance

For more detailed information about the different water activities in the region, go to:
www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk/adrenalin/water-activities/watersports.aspx
REGIONAL NATURE PARKS

There are 3 Regional Nature Parks (Parcs Naturels Régionaux, known as PNR) in Champagne-Ardenne.

A Regional Nature Park is set up by an association of the communities within a rural, habited area in order to preserve, protect and develop the local natural and cultural heritage. The programme of conservation and development is set out in a quality charter for each park, usually over a period of 12 years and the PNR label is officially endorsed by the State.

In order to qualify for the PNR label, the proposed territory must be of a significant rural and cultural interest, such as having outstanding landscapes potentially at risk or traditional activities in decline, and, due to depopulation or the urban pressure from a nearby agglomeration, be in need of special protection in order to preserve the countryside and encourage rural economic development. The latter is in contrast to France’s National Parks where the priority is to protect the natural habitat and wildlife in a mainly unpopulated area.

Tourism is an important part of a PNR’s economy, and visitors are welcomed at the parks’ visitors’ centres (Maison du Parc) where information is available on local traditions, such as traditional manufacturing or crafts, producers of local specialities, historical sites, places of interest and a range of activities such as walking and cycling.

ARGONNE ANIMAL PARK

Wolf pack

Few animals have captured the fantasies or primeval fears of men like the wolf. To help unravel the mysteries of this ‘Lord of the Night’, the Argonne Discovery Park is home to a family of wolves since 2010. On the edge of a special wooded enclosure of a hectare, visitors are able to observe the behaviour of this wolf pack and the relationship between the animals.

Birds of prey Show

A special bird show will be available every day from 5th April 2014 to show the prowess of owls, falcons and other kites.

Nocturnia

The park also features ‘Nocturnia’, an animal centre where a night time environment has been artificially created in order to witness the activities of nocturnal animals - an ideal outing to experience as a family. The Park organises a programme of themed discovery events: documentary films, puppet shows, workshops, face-painting activities and seminars.

NEW FOR 2014

A refurbishment of the Nocturnia centre is underway in order to present 30 different species of 201 nocturnal animals including bats, hedgehogs, toads, insects and spiders. The visit will be completed by a new 3D film on the life of the wolves in the park. The centre is due to reopen in summer 2014.

The Argonne Discovery Park is managed by the Community of Communes of the Argonne in Ardennes (2C2A) and is open from March to October.

Parc Argonne Découverte, Olizy-Primat
www.parc-argonne-decouverte.fr

ARGONNE ANIMAL PARK

PNR des Ardennes
Visitor’s centre: Hargnies
www.parc-naturel-ardennes.fr

PNR de la Montagne de Reims
Visitor’s centre: Pourcy
www.parc-montagnedereims.fr

PNR de la Forêt d’Orient
Visitor’s centre: Piney
www.pnr-foret-orient.fr

NATURE - FAUNA AND FLORA

In addition to the region’s rich cultural and architectural heritage, the vast areas of unspoilt nature mean that wildlife abounds, from migrating birds stopping off at the lakes to the mating call of the stag echoing through the forests. There are also carpets of orchids, trees resembling giant bonsais, majestic waterfalls, deep valleys, inland waterways and grandiose landscapes... nature is treasured here and offers a truly green experience!
THE WILD BOAR

Sedentary, territorial, robust, combative, stubborn, and found in the forests of the Ardennes, the wild boar has become so deeply entwined with the history of its people that it is now the emblem of the Ardennes. Indeed it’s difficult to avoid because it appears everywhere, whether it be in local legends, chocolate specialities or proudly displayed car stickers. And of course, all football fans know that the wild boar features on the crest of the team of Sedan and that one of the most glorious players of the 1950s, international defender Roger Marche, was nicknamed the ‘Boar of the Ardennes’ because he hailed from these parts.

The biggest wild boar in the world can be spotted as you drive into the Ardennes. Known as ‘Woinic’, this 10m high masterpiece of metal stands guard over the service station on the motorway between Reims and Charleville-Mézières.

INTERNATIONAL PHOTO FESTIVAL OF WILDLIFE AND NATURE

Each November, this festival brings together more than 50 photographers from France and around the world. This exceptional exhibition takes place in the town of Montier-en-Der in the Haute-Marne and includes seminars and workshops and a competition for the most beautiful or the most original photo. 20-23 November 2014

www.festiphoto-montier.org
SAINT BASLE AND THE ‘FAUX DE VERZY’

Towards the end of the 6th century, Basle, priest of the monastery of Verzy, left the Order to live as a hermit in the forest above the town. Many miracles are attributed to Basle and he was declared a saint after his death in 620AD. The archbishop of Reims, Saint Nivard, ordered an abbey to be built in the honour of Saint Basle in the forest of Verzy.

Founded in the second half of the 7th century, the abbey took 2 centuries to complete, but later fell into ruins and was destroyed during WW2. All that remains today is the Chapelle Saint Basle, built in the abbey grounds by the side of the D34 road between Verzy and Louvois (and just opposite one of the entrances to the Perching-bar - see page 41).

The curiosity of the site of the ancient abbey is a unique group of trees, estimated at between 700 and 1000 specimens, mainly beech but with some oak, stunted in growth and having contorted and twisted branches that cover the tree like an umbrella. The effect resembles giant bonsai trees. They are also characterised by their longevity (several hundred years) and the fusion of the twisted branches back into the same tree, or even into a neighbouring one.

These mysterious and misshapen trees are known as ‘Faux’ (singular: ‘fau’), the old French name for beech coming from the Latin Fagus. Appropriately, the modern-day French meaning of faux (singular and plural) is ‘false’! Growing alongside tall, straight beeches and oaks, the exact causes of the ‘Faux de Verzy’ are unknown, although some sort of genetic mutation is the most likely hypothesis. They have given rise to many legends, including the gauillots, evil spirits of the woods who twisted the trees with the sound of their magic flutes.

Concentrated deep in the forest, in the former abbey grounds, over an area measuring 3km by 300m, a car park next to the Saint Basle Chapel and well maintained forest paths leading to the Faux enable visitors to view these marvels. There are also 2 fine specimens growing in the little ‘green’ in the centre of the village of Verzy. The tomb of Saint Basle lies in church of Saint-Pierre in Verzenay.

Regional Nature Park of the Mountain of Reims
www.parc-montagnedereims.fr
THE TUFAS FORMATIONS AT ROLAMPONT

Classified since 1982, biological organisms have been live and active at this site at Rolampont for over thousands of years, creating an enormous natural staircase by formations of “tufa”.

Tufa is a very light, porous, chalky rock that forms in calcareous areas around water sources. The Rolampont site is particularly humid, being covered with little springs, producing an abundance of moss. This moss then absorbs the carbon dioxide from the water for photosynthesis, producing an insoluble calcium carbonate which is then left as a crusty chalk deposit. As this builds up over the years, cushioned ridges of moss-covered tufa are formed. These ridges act like dams, creating a series of graduating ponds that look like giant steps in the natural landscape.

At this site, you can also find alpine plants, such as certain types of ferns, that you would not normally see in the lowland, and numerous types of dragonfly, such as the rare Southern Blue Damselfly (Coenagrion mercuriale), which is in danger of extinction.

Langres Tourist Office
www.tourisme-langres.com

LAND OF THE ORCHID

These delicate flowers, often thought of as exotic, have a particularly strong presence in the Haute-Marne, where 40 different species are to be found. From the legendary Lady’s Slipper, with its yellow throat and crimson petals, to more original specimens, like the Lizard Orchid, with its unpleasant scent, and the Bee Orchid, which disguises itself in order to attract insects and thus ensure its pollination.

Other varieties to be found include the Military Orchid, Lady Orchid, Fragrant Orchid, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Broadleaved Helleborine and Rock Cress. Here, blooming beside the path, one finds Devil’s-Scabious, Hawkweed, Valerian, Bloody Cranesbill, Scorpion Vetch, and other rare species like the Great Yellow Gentian, Violet Limodore, Stylised Orchid, Perennial Sweet Pea, as well as rare ferns such as Green Spleenwort and Fougère de Robert. These plants are fragile and demanding and, in order to preserve their natural rhythm, the mowing of verges is restricted on some 50 minor roads.

Haute-Marne Tourist Board
www.tourisme-hautemarne.com
THE THREE JARDS
CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE

Over time, ‘gart’, a word of Germanic origin meaning ‘garden’, evolved into ‘jard’. The Jard dates back to the 14th century but four hundred years later the Intendant of Champagne, Rouillé d’Orfeuil, redesigned the garden, dividing it into three smaller ones: the Petit Jard, Grand Jard and Jard Anglais (English garden).

The bandstand is the focal point of the Grand Jard, whose avenues are raised to keep the Marne from bursting its banks. In 1826 the Marne lateral canal separated the Jard Anglais from the Grand Jard and in 1929 the Jards became listed sites. In the Petit Jard, four statues by a local sculptor, Carlos Carillo, depict the seasons and from the garden, visitors can also see the Petit Chenonceaux, the former market château, standing on the Pont des Archers (Archers Bridge), a vestige of the town’s fortifications. The south façade has a corbelled turret rebuilt in 1602.

Châlons-en-Champagne Tourist Office
www.chalons-tourisme.com

LE GRAND JARDIN

Created during the Renaissance by the first Duke of Guise, Claude de Lorraine, Le Grand Jardin is a testament to 16th century architecture and garden design. Restoration work begun in 1982 has returned the gardens to their former glory. The gardens are a veritable treasure-trove of well thought out vegetation, a reconstructed Renaissance dream attracting garden-lovers all over Europe. From the grand terrace, the eye follows boxwood borders, compartments of hardy perennials, patches of medicinal and aromatic herbs, the orchard with a rare collection of fruit trees, the canal leading to the moat of the château and the labyrinth set at its centre. This scene is crowned by the humpback bridge over the canal, the fountain and the wonderful boarder of greenery that encloses it all. There is also a ‘romantic’ garden, planted with rare species and decorated with original sculptures cast at the Dommartin-le-Franc iron works.

Le Grand Jardin, Joinville
www.legrandjardin.com

THE GARDENS OF MON MOULIN

This is a really peaceful place to stroll around for hours. At the foot of an old windmill, Philippe Lefort invites visitors to explore a creation which cleverly combines different garden styles to form a floral entity of exceptional fragrance and colour: a rose garden, water garden, white garden, hardy perennials, medievale garden and many more. In June, July and September, special days of themed activities are hosted.

Les Jardins de Mon Moulin, Thonnance-les-Joinville
www.lesjardinsdemonmoulin.fr

LA PRESLE BOTANICAL GARDENS

La Presle Botanical Centre between Reims and Epernay has a remarkable garden, nursery and study centre, with specimens collected and introduced over a period of nearly 20 years by Dominique Brochet. Visitors can admire this painstaking work, which includes alpines, vintage roses, a willow grove, a shrubbery and even a Caucasian maze brought back from a 1998 trip to Kyrgyzstan. The centre has been a conservation area since 1995 and was listed a ‘Remarkable Garden’ in 2005. It won the fifth ‘Top des Parcs®’ prize in 2006 from a jury of garden experts.

La Presle Botanical Gardens (10 km from Reims)
www.jardin-brochetlanvin.com

MATTON-CLEEMENCY ARBORETUM

Arboretums are botanical gardens specializing in trees and shrubs which often present a wide variety of trees at all stages of their development, showing different kinds of bark, foliage and blossoms. At Matton-Clémeney, a village close to the border with Belgium and labelled ‘3 flowers’ in the Villages in Bloom scheme, the arboretum covers one hectare. Created by volunteers on former wasteland on the edge of the forest the arboretum now contains 150 species of trees as well as a pergola, waterwheel and pond with a hump-backed bridge. It is open daily without charge.

Matton-Clémeney Town Hall
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 24 22 01 36

CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE,
FRANCE’S No.1 ‘REGION IN BLOOM’

With 459 communes, labelled ‘Towns and Villages in Bloom’ (2012 contest, with awards ranging from one to four flowers), Champagne-Ardenne has earned first place in the classification of French Regions in Bloom. The contest is based on the landscaping of a commune and its floral heritage, efforts made towards improving the quality of life and sustainable development in the commune, and policies concerning the development of tourism and recreational activities for schools, residents and visitors.

• 15 towns and villages hold the top ‘4 Flowers’ label
• 133 hold the ‘3 Flowers’ label
• 141 hold the ‘2 Flowers’ label
• 170 hold the ‘1 Flower’ label

The 15 ‘Four Flowers’ towns and villages have been collected together in a special ‘Four Flowers Route’ brochure detailing 3 different trails for discovering the floral landscapes of Champagne-Ardenne.

The brochure can be downloaded from www.champagne-ardenne-tourism.co.uk
RELAXATION AND WELL-BEING

Although the region has a wealth of cultural and heritage attractions, health and well-being also play an integral role to life here, affording visitors the chance to unwind and relax.

BOURBONNE-LES-BAINS THERMAL STATION

The only health spa in the region, Bourbonne-les-Bains has provided an enjoyable route to health for many years. A whole range of revitalizing services is on offer at the spa centre, such as hydromassage baths, essential oil massages and traditional massages, thermal water-based clay packs, body jet showers, massage shower and even a thermal Turkish bath. It is also possible to stay at the spa, with the provision of beauty treatments such as body sculpting, draining slimming wrap, facial treatment, etc.

www.tourisme-bourbonne.com/default.asp?cat_id=11

C & SENS' ESSENTIAL OILS CENTRE

A ‘C & Sens’ well-being session is a real stressbuster. Here, all your knots and worries are analysed and followed up with well-being for all the senses through smell, sound and colours. Also specialising in essential oils, this centre offers a variety of workshops to deepen your awareness of such oils, including: ‘Discovering Essential Oils’, ‘Scents’, ‘Natural Beauty’ (enabling visitors to create their own cosmetics) and ‘Household Fragrances’.

www.cetsens.fr

ACCOMMODATION WITH SPA/RELAXATION CENTRES

DOMAINE DE LA FORET D’ORENT

L’Orée du Bois

With 400 m² of sensuous space heated to 30°C, this spa has been carefully designed to tune in with nature and offers massages and beauty treatments, a large pool with hydro jets, sauna and hamam and a relaxation area with a selection of tisanes available.

www.domaine-foret-orient.com

HOTEL JEAN MOET SPA CENTRE

The Jean Moet Hotel’s spa centre offers a small indoor pool, sauna, massages and other relaxation treatments. The centre is open to the general public as well as to guests at the hotel.

www.hotelheanmoet.com

LA BRQUETERIE

Bulles de Détente

The intimate and ‘zen’ atmosphere of this deluxe hotel’s spa centre offers a real haven of peace to pamper your senses. Facilities and treatments include: a hammam scented with Eucalyptus and essential oils, a dry-heat sauna (between 80°C and 100°C), a jauuzzi (to stimulate the blood circulation and relax the muscles), a hexagonal indoor pool overlooking the gardens, massages and face and body treatments using essential oils.

www.labriqueterie.fr

LA MAROTIERE

Sophora Centre

La Marotière guest house, nestling in a village in Champagne country, has its own rest and relaxation centre, offering beauty and relaxation treatments. It’s well worth investigating its grape-pulp, green tea and chocolate massages.

www.lamarotiere.com

CHATEAU DE RILLY

In the heart of the champagne vineyard and not far from Reims, this former 19th century mansion is today a comfortable, elegant hotel with a spa centre offering a jauuzzi, 2 sauna cabins and 2 treatment rooms.

www.lechateauderilly.com

O SIXIEME SENS

In the tranquil village of Willers, the guest rooms at this bed and breakfast are an ode to rest and repose. Named after the 4 elements, air, earth, fire and water, each room is steeped in aromas, essential oils and fusionsal music to aid emotional harmony. In addition to use of the heated swimming pool, guests can book Reiki sessions with a master practitioner to rebalance energy levels (such as stress, fatigue, depression and pain).

www.osixiemesens.com
## Useful Addresses

### Departmental Tourist Boards

#### ARDENNES
22, place Ducale - BP 149  
08107 Charleville-Mézières Cedex  
T 00 33 (0)3 24 56 06 08  
[www.ardennes.com](http://www.ardennes.com)

#### MARNE
13bis, rue Carnot - BP 74  
51006 Châlons-en-Champagne cedex  
T 00 33 (0)3 26 68 37 52  

#### AUBE
34, quai Dampierre - 10000 Troyes  
T 00 33 (0)3 25 42 50 00  
[www.aube-champagne.com](http://www.aube-champagne.com)

#### HAUTE-MARNE
Cours Marcel Baron - CS 52048  
52902 Chaumont Cedex 9  
T 00 33 (0)3 25 30 39 00  
[www.tourisme-hautemarne.com](http://www.tourisme-hautemarne.com)

## On line

### CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE ONLINE

[Like, share or comment on Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/champagnegb)

Holiday ideas, tips, recipes, photos and other information are posted daily on the Champagne and Ardenne pages of Facebook. For all the latest news, become a fan of the page:

[www.facebook.com/champagnegb](http://www.facebook.com/champagnegb)

### Champagne-Ardenne in video

Gastronomy, discovery, traditional crafts and meeting up with enthusiasts are among the themes that are portrayed in a series of short video clips on Youtube (search term ‘champagneardenne1’) – 24 mini episodes with English sub-titles filmed on location give a taster of what the region has to offer.

[www.youtube.com/champagneardenne1](http://www.youtube.com/champagneardenne1)

## Photo credits


### Champagne-Ardenne Tourisme

50 avenue du Général Patton - BP 50319 - 51013 Châlons-en-Champagne cedex - France  
T 00 33 (0)3 26 21 85 80 - F 00 33 (0)3 26 21 85 90  
[www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com](http://www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com)

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**The abuse of alcohol is dangerous for health, consume with moderation.**

For your health, eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.