

BLACKBOURNE U3A - 17th - 24th SEPTEMBER 2023

CRUISE THE BORDEAUX REGION

ON THE GARONNE & DORDOGNE RIVERS

COMBINING A LUXURY COACH & HIGH-SPEED TRAIN TRAVEL &
WITH HOTEL STOP-OVERS IN PARIS & LILLE

PRICE
INCLUDES
ALL MEALS
& DRINKS ON
BOARD THE
SHIP

8-DAYS

£1525

MIDDLEDECK
CABIN



COMBINING LUXURY COACH & HIGH-SPEED TRAIN TRAVEL

This holiday dovetails luxury coach with high-speed train travel. The train effortlessly eats up the miles at speeds of up to 200mph, while the coach offers convenience, carries the luggage and cost effectively provides the transport for all the sightseeing excursions.

SPECIAL NOTE

Please rest-assured that this holiday has been carefully planned with Blackbourne U3A Travel Club specifically in mind.

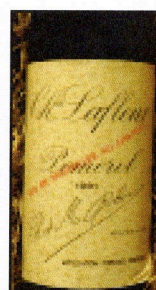
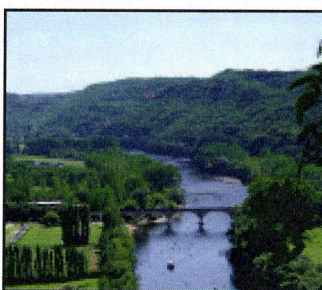
It's not only a case of making sure the luggage is taken care of, but rather the whole itinerary has also been matched to the group's interests and its level of stamina & mobility.

This will particularly apply to the stop-overs in Paris when we will sure that everything is kept as relaxed and simple as possible

At first glance, river cruising may look like an expensive option, please remember that buffet breakfasts, 3 course lunches and 4 course evening meals are all included in the tour price, not to mention the overnight stays in Paris and Lille, a luxury coach throughout, and TGV journeys that make light of the distance between Paris & Bordeaux going down and Bordeaux & Lille coming home.

It is also important to stress that the price includes all drinks on board, including wines, beers, gins & tonic etc, soft drinks, teas, coffees, fruit juices and mineral water and even sparkling wine from Croisi's own vineyard in Alsace. We would also mention that coffees, teas and snacks are available throughout the day.

Furthermore, we should add that dinner on the first night is preceded by a Welcome Cocktail Party and that the holiday includes a Gala Dinner on the fourth night of the cruise.



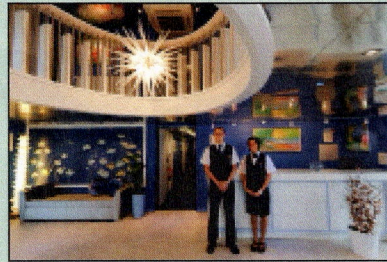
THE MS CYRANO DE BERGERAC

ONE OF CROISI'S PREMIUM CLASS SHIPS

Spacious and light the MS Cyrano De Bergerac entered service in 2013 having been specifically designed for service on the River Garonne and built in Croisi's own shipyard in Belgium.

All cabins are similarly sized and offer either twin or double beds, bathroom with shower and toilet, radio, tv, hair dryer, personal safe and free wifi.

The key difference in the cabin types is the window size, basically, the higher the deck the bigger the window and the better the view.



LIFE ON BOARD THE MS CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Life on board the MS Cyrano De Bergerac is very relaxed and follows a tried and tested formula. Each cruise starts with the traditional Captain's Welcome Cocktail Party followed by dinner. After that each day normally offers half a day of cruising and half a day of sightseeing, divided by lunch on board ship, and followed by a gourmet standard evening meal.

When the sightseeing is arranged for the afternoon, it is always made sure that everyone gets back to the ship in good time to both relax and get ready for dinner, before which most people like to meet for an aperitif.

When cruising you can choose between the sitting in the main salon or on the sun deck that also provides areas of shade. Of course, if you prefer, you can enjoy the scenery from the privacy of your cabin. Whichever, do remember that alcoholic and non-alcoholic refreshments are available at all times and are included in the price of the holiday. Snacks are also available, as are coffees and teas.

CROISI EUROPE

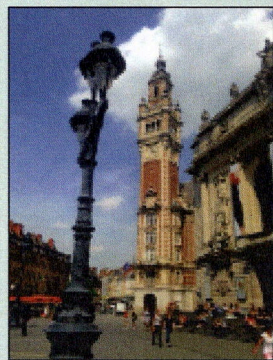
Croisi is the largest river cruise company in Europe. As a private, family-owned company, it is very mindful of its reputation and so absolutely determined to maintain the high standards that have made the company so successful over the last 42 years.

They operate throughout Europe and their ships, which usually accommodate between 100 and 140 passengers, are staffed by competent, well-trained crews, a large proportion of whom have been with the company for 5 years or more, with many staff having worked much longer than that.



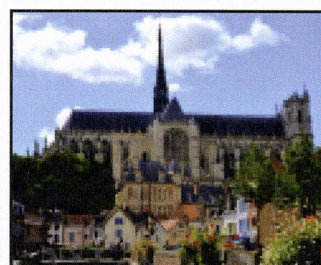
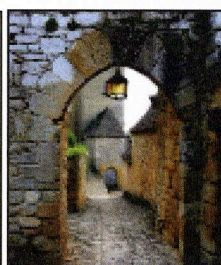
OVERNIGHTING IN PARIS & LILLE

Although when travelling between Suffolk and Bordeaux by train stop-overs are a practical necessity, we are very keen that they become holiday highlights in their own right. The hotels would be chosen carefully both for their comfort and service, and for the ability to dovetail beautifully with the itinerary.



Going out the group have a free evening and morning in Paris before getting the train to Bordeaux in the early afternoon.

Coming home the train will arrive in Lille by late afternoon giving you the evening and following morning to see just how the city's rejuvenation plans have so beautifully come together. The coach will leave Lille at mid-day and drive to the Chateau de Cocove for a 3 course lunch before returning to Calais to catch a Eurotunnel crossing back to the UK.



THE ITINERARY

Sunday : After departing Thurston 08.00 the coach will head for Paris. The group will arrive in the Paris by early evening, allowing for comfort breaks. Having checked-into your hotel, the 3* Delambre the evening is completely free and you will find a great choice of restaurants, cafes and bars within the immediate vicinity of the hotel, including the famous 'La Coupole' brasserie on Boulevard Montparnasse (2-mins walk from the hotel).

Monday : After loading your luggage on the coach, the morning is free in the French capital as you will only need to wander over to the Gare Montparnasse for your early afternoon TGV down to Bordeaux, where the coach will be waiting to drive you the short distance to the ship. Your luggage will be quickly delivered to your cabin and there will then be time to freshen-up and relax before attending the traditional Captain's Welcome Cocktail Party that precedes dinner.

Tuesday : The ship cruises gently towards the Gironde Estuary, with breakfast being served as the ship passes the islands of Patiras and Cazeau before docking in Pauliac as lunch finishes. In the afternoon there will be an optional scenic coach trip through the vineyards of the Medoc that will conclude with a wine tasting. Alternatively, you can have a stroll around the town or, if you prefer, simply relax on board ship.

Wednesday : - Setting off again the ship heads towards the historic fortress town of Blaye. Breakfast and lunch will be served as you cruise. In the afternoon your time is free for relaxing or independent sightseeing. Once everyone is back on board the ship will start its passage up the River Dordogne and dinner will be served as you cruise towards Bourg.

Thursday : - This morning the ship heads further up the Dordogne with breakfast and lunch being served as you cruise to Libourne on the confluence of the Isle & Dordogne rivers. Here you have a choice of spending the afternoon sightseeing independently, joining a trip to St Emillion, or simply relaxing on board. Whatever though, everyone will want to be back on board in good time to prepare for this evening's Gala Dinner. Of course, should you prefer, you can stay on board and relax.

Friday : - After cruising back to Bordeaux with breakfast and lunch whilst you cruise, the ship will moor in the centre of Bordeaux. The afternoon is free for sightseeing before a final evening meal on board ship.

Saturday :- As the main tour coach will have started its journey to Lille the previous afternoon, a local coach will provide a guided tour of Bordeaux before dropping the group back at the station to catch the lunchtime service to Lille. The direct journey to Lille takes just 4.5 hours to travel from deep in South West France up to the its north east corner. On arrival in Lille in the late afternoon the coach will be waiting for you to transfer you to the hotel. The evening is then free and Lille offers a great choice of restaurants and cafes.

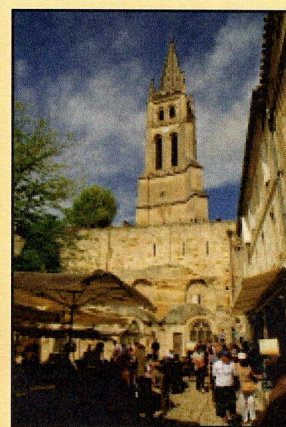
Sunday : - After a free morning in Lille the coach will drive to the Chateau de Cocove for a 3 course lunch. From here we will return to Calais to catch a late afternoon Eurotunnel crossing back to Folkestone, and the anticipated time of arrival back in Thurston is 19.30.

*** We will be asking you to pack a separate, easy to handle overnight bag for the Sunday and Saturday nights as your coach will be carrying everyone's main luggage.*

PLUS ONE MORE BIG ADVANTAGE!

Booking as a club will already mean that you will be paying a lower price for your holiday than the other passengers on the ship, but we will also be offering a couple optional sightseeing trips exclusively to the Blackbourne U3A members that will, as the group has its own coach, cost significantly less than the cruise company's official outings. Plus the guided tour of Bordeaux is included in the holiday price, whereas it is an optional extra for the other passengers.

However, we will also give you the details of Croisi's optional guided walking tours and the official Croisi Vineyard Tour as, whereas our wine tasting will be simple and informal, the official tour may appeal to those of you who are passionate about wine and who really want to make the most of their time in arguably the world's premier wine producing region.



SOME THINGS WE LIKE ABOUT CROISI EUROPE

First class food is a key element in the Croisi experience. No processed cheese, no mountains of pasta, no canned vegetables and no cream sprayed from a can.

Two thirds of Croisi passengers are repeat customers.

Croisi retain their crews 12 months a year rather than employing staff on low paid temporary contracts.

Croisi's house wines are from the company's own vineyards in France and not just the cheapest plonk.

The founder of Croisi Europe was very interested in river ecology and the company continues to observe strict environmental principles.

Croisi design and build & maintain their ships in their own shipyard in Belgium, all the time looking to improve standards

EXACTLY WHAT'S INCLUDED

Use of a luxury British coach throughout
Return ferry Crossing via Dover / Calais
1 night's accommodation in Paris on way out
Return standard class TGV Tickets
Five nights on board ship
2-berth Middle Deck cabin accommodation
Welcome cocktail reception on first evening
Gourmet evening meals each night
Buffet breakfast every morning
Lunches on board each day
Choice of optional sightseeing outings - see above
Gala dinner on final night on board ship
All drinks on board
Guided tour of Bordeaux
1 night's accommodation in Lille on way home

Optional Supplements

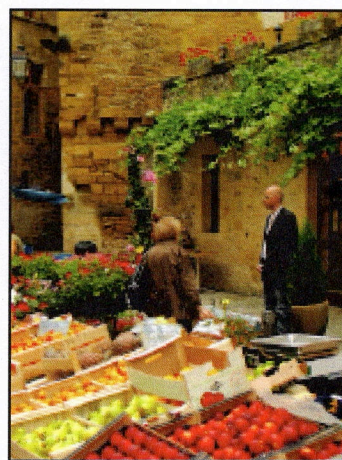
Single supplement £330

Travel insurance £65

Upper deck cabin £130pp

First Class Train Travel - tbc

Main deck cabin - save £100pp



TO BOOK YOUR PLACE PLEASE CONTACT

JOHN SUTTON

2 SANDPIT LANE, THURSTON, BURY ST EDMUNDS IP31 3SD

Tel. 01359 231419 / Email: johnhsutton@hotmail.com

BLACKBOURNE U3A

MAKING THE MOST OF

PARIS



The itinerary allows for a free evening and free morning in the French capital before catching an afternoon train down to Bordeaux.

Coming home the plan is to get the train from Bordeaux back up to Lille, where the group will overnight before driving home the next day. However, we will be dependent on the yet to published rail timetable, and so we will hold both Paris and the option to fly home in reserve.



THE 3* HOTEL DELAMBRE

Currently rated 4.5/5 on Tripadvisor, the Delambre offers comfortable 3-star accommodation and breakfast in the morning. Its location, in the heart of lively Montparnasse, means that you have a great variety of restaurants and cafes on your doorstep while being less than 5-minutes walk from the Gare Montparnasse. You also have easy access to the whole of Paris via the metro system, although attractions like the Bon Marche Department Store, Des Invalides, the Musée Rodin and the well-heeled St Germain de Pres district are all within walking distance.

But given your limited time, you may prefer to stay in the immediate area of the hotel, in which case a trip up to the viewing gallery on the 56 floor of the Tour Montparnasse is one idea while, for dinner, the famous 'La Coupole' Brasserie on Boulevard Montparnasse is close by, simply turn right out of the hotel. This said, you are spoilt for choice in this district and choosing a restaurant with a less prominent position can pay dividends as these establishments have to work harder and provide better value to attract regular customers rather than simply relying on passing tourists.

Hotel Delambre, 35 Rue Delambre 75014 Paris - Tel. 00 33 1 43 20 66 31

Overnight Bags & Meeting The Coach in Bordeaux - Passengers need to pack an easy to handle overnight bag for Paris while the coach transports the main luggage. On Sunday the coach will stop at a hotel just to the south of Paris that provides coach parking, before continuing to Bordeaux to meet the group off the train on Monday. At Bordeaux St Jean Station your driver will meet the group at the entrance to the platform and guide you to the coach.



Getting To Montparnasse Station From The Hotel - Simply turn left out of the hotel and walk to the end of Rue Delambre, less than 100m. You then find yourself on the leafy Boulevard Edgar Quinet from where you will not be able to miss the 231m tall Tour Montparnasse, which you walk towards and before you get there you will see the glass fronted Gare Montparnasse immediately to the south of the tower. It is less than a 5-minute walk at an average pace but, if you want to be sure, you could just check the route during the evening or the following morning just to be sure.

Montparnasse Train Station - The Tour Montparnasse occupies the site of the old station with the new station being just to the south. You enter on Level 0, the shops and the toilets are on Level 1, and the trains depart from Level 2. There are 24 platforms with numbers 1-10 serving the TGV and mainline routes, while platforms 11-24 serve regional and suburban lines.

Montparnasse Metro Station - This is a particularly complicated metro station, mainly as a result of moving the station which left the older metro lines, even if you use the travelator, a good 5-minute walk from the new station. Nearby Vavin and Edgar Quintet stations are even closer to the hotel and much easier to use.

The LGV Sud Ouest - This 300km extension from Tours to Bordeaux opened in the summer of 2017 dramatically cutting journey times from Paris to South West France.

THE TGV

18th September

**Paris to Bordeaux
Departs Early Afternoon**

The group will have reserved seating. We suggest aim to be on the platform a minimum of 15 mins before departure.

A 'Composition des trains' (train plan) will be showing on the digital departure screens and these will help you to find your carriage.

The train will have a bar carriage serving snacks and drinks.

When the tickets become available we will confirm the price of upgrading to First Class. Standard class on TGV is very comfortable, but First Class offers a larger seat with more leg room, and fewer people per carriage making both boarding and disembarkation easier.

IMPORTANT

Do remember that you have to check-out of your room before 11.00, but the hotel will store your luggage until it is time to catch the train.