



Gardens, Villages & Châteaux of Normandy and Brittany

6 JUN – 26 JUN 2020

Code: 22021

Tour Leaders **Stephen Ryan, Craig Lidgerwood**

Physical Ratings 

Led by Stephen Ryan, this tour celebrates the lovely gardens, agricultural landscapes, delicious local produce, great monuments and exquisite, unspoilt small villages of Normandy and Brittany.

Overview

Tour Highlights

- Led by [Stephen Ryan](#), with the assistance of [Craig Lidgerwood](#), this cultural garden tour explores the gardens, agricultural landscapes, villages, towns and great monuments of two of France's most beautiful and historic regions: Normandy and Brittany.
- An introduction to the wide range of gardens in French history, featuring visits to medieval monastic gardens, grand Renaissance estates, and intimate modern creations.
- Private gardens (several listed as 'Jardin Remarquable'), many visits will be hosted by their owners.
- Work inspired by the great André Le Nôtre at the Château Champ de Bataille and Château de Sassy, and the influences of Edwin Luytens and Gertrude Jekyll at Le Bois des Moutiers.
- Le Jardin du Vastérial, residence of the late Princess Sturdza, containing one of the finest plant collections in France.
- The beautiful, unspoilt northern coast of Brittany with its deep-cut inlets and inland wooded valleys enjoys an exceptional climate due to the Gulf Stream; we explore the Jardins de Kerdalo with a rich collection of plants, the private manor house garden, Le Jardin du Pellinec; and Le Grand Launay which boasts a beautiful modern garden built around an old castle.
- A journey 'in the footsteps of the Impressionists', to Monet's garden at Giverny, the coast he painted, and the port town of Honfleur; the Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux (Le Havre) containing one of the most extensive collections of Impressionist paintings in France.
- Visits to major monuments such as the Abbeys of St-Georges de Boscherville and Mont Saint-Michel; Romanesque and Gothic Cathedrals such as Notre-Dame (Rouen) and St-Étienne (Caen).
- The megalithic site on the south coast of Brittany in Carnac, where we examine the largest Neolithic alignment in the world (3500-3000 BC).
- The Bayeux Tapestry Museum, containing the 11th-century embroidered cloth depicting the Norman conquest of England.
- Explore a rich variety of village architecture in a number of 'Les Plus Beaux Villages de France' including the pretty half-timbered houses of Lyons-la-Forêt and Dinan, the medieval stone houses of St-Cénéri-le-Gérei, the walled towns of Vannes and Saint-Malo, and the charming washhouses of Pontrieux.
- Sampling of French regional produce, with visits to specialist local markets; tastings of Normandy's Livarot, Pont l'Évêque cheeses, apple juice and calvados, and Brittany's crêpes, seafood, the famous custard cake, 'Far Breton' and the 'Kouign-Amann' (cross between a croissant and a palmier).
- Fine dining in renowned restaurants including historic restaurant *La Couronne*, Rouen.

Testimonials

This tour certainly exceeded our expectations. The mix of history and wonderful (often private) gardens made for a memorable tour. David & Chris, QLD.

On the 'Gardens, Villages & Chateaux of Normandy & Brittany' tour the weather was generally pleasant and the venues were lovely and very interesting. I loved the charm of many of the French people, their generosity of hospitality, the stunning countryside, and the food, especially when it was local fresh and not nouvelle cuisine. Rhyll, VIC.

21-day Cultural Garden Tour of Normandy & Brittany

Overnight Rouen (6 nights) • Honfleur (2 nights) • Bayeux (3 nights) • Bagnoles-de-l'Orne (2 nights) • Vannes (2 nights) • Perros-Guirec (3 nights) • Saint-Malo (2 nights)

Leaders



Stephen Ryan

Horticulturalist, nurseryman, collector, prolific writer and award-winning broadcaster. Stephen brings his profound knowledge to ASA garden tours in France, Morocco & New Zealand. He is also leading ASA's flora and fauna tour to Madagascar in 2019.

Deryn Thorpe is a fanatical gardener who is passionate about communicating her love of gardening to others. She has worked as a journalist for more than 30 years, writes monthly articles for *Gardening Australia Magazine*, a gardening column and garden stories for *The West Australian* newspaper and other national magazines. She can be heard as a garden host of ABC and commercial radio talkback, is a vivacious and popular speaker at garden clubs and community gatherings, runs gardening workshops, has edited garden books and worked as a garden TV presenter.

Deryn also works in her family's revegetation and landscaping business [Plantation and Landcare Services](#), which plants trees around Perth and the south-west wheatbelt of WA; and landscapes home gardens.

She volunteered for six years with Open Gardens Australia, was chair of selectors, and has opened her own beautiful, cottage style garden to the public.

In 2011 she was made a Life Member of the Horticultural Media Association Australia (HMAA) and in 2015 a Life Member of the Nursery and Garden Industry of WA (NGIWA) for services to these organisations. She has won the prestigious HMAA Paper Laurel for the best garden story published in an Australian newspaper or magazine.

Deryn loves showing people the world and started working as a European tour guide in the mid 1980s. Today she takes tours around Australia and overseas, discovering great food, culture and beautiful gardens.



Craig Lidgerwood

Accomplished Botanical artist who exhibits widely, Craig leads garden tours with Stephen Ryan, whose 'Dicksonia Rare Plants Manual' he illustrated. Together they lead garden tours to France and Madagascar.

Craig's working life began in the arts but moved to the travel industry 24 years ago. He has since travelled

extensively recording, photographing and drawing plants in their natural habitat.

In the late 1980s Craig studied drawing and watercolour at the Council of Adult Education, Melbourne, and art classes in the Macedon Ranges. From 2006 to 2011 Craig attended botanic art classes with renowned artist Anita Barley and attended various botanic art workshops through the Mt Macedon Horticultural Society with established botanic artists.

In 2008 he illustrated Stephen Ryan's book, the *Dicksonia Rare Plants Manual* and in 2010 Craig and his artwork were featured on ABC television's Sunday arts program, *Art Nation*.

Exhibitions include *The Art of Botanical Illustration 2010 & 2012*, Melbourne Botanic Gardens, *Botanica 2012 & 2013*, Sydney Botanic Gardens, *Capturing Flora: 300 years of Australian botanical art*, a major retrospective at the Ballarat Art Gallery (2012), and also in 2012 Craig's first solo exhibition, *An Inquisitive Eye: the Botanical Art of Craig Lidgerwood* was held at the Sofitel Hotel, Collins Street, Melbourne.

Craig's passion for travel has seen him visit parts of Eastern Europe, South America, South and Eastern Africa, Madagascar, India, North Western USA, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Craig is an adventurous traveller, trekking in Eastern Nepal, Kilimanjaro, the Andes and the Inca Trail, Darjeeling and Sikkim. Craig has also spent three months walking in southwest France, the French Pyrénées and Corsica.

Combine this tour with

Natural Landscapes & Gardens of the Channel Islands: Jersey, Guernsey, Herm, Burhou & Sark
22 MAY – 4 JUN 2020



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of museums and gardens which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=evening meal.

Rouen - 6 nights

Day 1: Saturday 6 June, Paris CDG – Lyons-la-Forêt – Rouen

- Afternoon tea in Lyons-la-Forêt village
- Introductory Meeting
- Welcome Dinner

Today we set out from Paris Charles-de-Gaulle Airport to the magnificent regional city of Rouen, to begin our journey through the gardens, great houses, villages and historic monuments of Northern France.

En route we stop in Lyons-la-Forêt, one of France's most picturesque villages, for an afternoon tea in the *Hôtel Les Lions de Beauclerc*. Most of its houses, many of which have façades featuring intricate wooden frames, are from the 17th century, but Lyons was once a Roman settlement and afterwards site of a castle built by Henry I of England, son of William the Conqueror. Kings were attracted to the region by its magnificent hunting grounds in the nearby beech forest. Lyons also has an excellent covered market from the 18th century, which was used in both Jean Renoir's and Claude Chabrol's films of *Madame Bovary*. We shall also pass the house of one of France's greatest musicians, Ravel. Ravel, Debussy and Erik Satie all derived inspiration from Normandy's beautiful landscapes.

After stopping in Lyons-la-Forêt we continue our journey to Rouen, arriving in the evening. After checking into our hotel, and some time at leisure, we shall have a brief introductory meeting followed by a welcome dinner at the *Brasserie Paul*, near our hotel. (Overnight Rouen) D

Day 2: Sunday 7 June, Rouen – Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville – St Pierre-de-Manneville – Rouen

- Romanesque Abbey of St Georges-de-Boscherville
- Manoir et Parc de Villers, St Pierre-de-Manneville
- Orientation walk of Rouen
- Evening meal at restaurant *La Couronne*

Our excursion from Rouen takes us first to the Abbey St Georges-de-Boscherville. A Celtic shrine existed here for several centuries until in the 7th century a chapel dedicated to St George was built over it. In the 11th century the great chamberlain Raoul de Tancarville founded here a college for canons that was transformed into a magnificent Benedictine abbey. We shall visit the abbey with its fine Romanesque carvings and explore its garden, dedicated to plants believed by the monks to cure souls.

After lunch we visit one of the magnificent country manor houses of Normandy, the Manoir de Villers, a beautiful half-timbered manor house begun in the time of Charles VII (1403-1461) and added to for three centuries. A special delight will be a guided tour of the manor's interior in which the owners M. and Mme Robert Mery de Bellegarde will show you the magnificent family furniture collection. It is surrounded by themed gardens where we shall enjoy a light lunch prepared by our hosts.

We then return to Rouen for an orientation tour of this beautiful historic city. The city grew up as an important centre of Roman Gaul, called 'Rotomagus', a derivation of the Celtic name 'Ratuma'. It became an important ecclesiastical centre from the 3rd century and part of the Duchy of Normandy and then the Norman kingdom (1066), until lost to the French by King John in 1204. Rouen surrendered to Henry V of England in 1419 after a protracted siege, but was reclaimed by France in 1449. By the end of the 15th century it had become a centre of the French Renaissance.

Rouen has some of the finest Gothic architecture in France. The façade of its cathedral fascinated Monet, who painted it at different times of the day. Other churches include the 15th-century church of St Ouen and the church of St Maclou (1437), both notable examples of French flamboyant architecture. The Gros-Horloge is a Renaissance pavilion containing a 15th-century clock, and the Tour Jeanne d'Arc is where the saint was imprisoned before her execution. The Hôtel de Bourgheroulde (1501-37) is the best example of the city's medieval domestic architecture.

Tonight we dine together at restaurant *La Couronne*. Housed in a superbly preserved half-timbered home, it is considered the oldest inn in France, dating from 1345. (Overnight Rouen) BLD

Day 3: Monday 8 June, Rouen – Buchy – Bosc-Roger-sur-Buchy – Montmain – Rouen

- Buchy village market
- Le Jardin de Valérianes, Bosc-Roger-sur-Buchy
- Les Jardins d'Angélique, Montmain

A second day trip from Rouen takes us first to the small village of Buchy, where we shop for our lunch in the Monday market. Like so many local markets in Normandy, Buchy's Monday market features exclusively local produce. Many of local farms specialise in organic products. The medieval covered market hall has fixed wooden tables that were originally butchers' blocks.

Three kilometres outside Buchy, Le Jardin de Valérianes, tucked away in a corner of the countryside, was created by a couple of passionate gardeners, Michel and Maryline Tissait, who named the garden after their two daughters. This English-style garden of over 4000 square metres offers much visual pleasure with its combination of perennials, roses, trees and bushes.

Next, we travel to Montmain to visit the Jardins d'Angélique, which comprise two wonderful gardens. Originally created by Gloria and Yves Le Bellegard in memory of their daughter Angelica, the two separate gardens are distinct in character. South of the manor house is a formal garden with walkways and clipped hedges, Italianate in style with box-edged beds of perennials and ornamental grasses, punctuated by yew topiary and a central fountain. It is designed to complement not only the rear elevations of the house, but to provide marvellous panoramas of the surrounding countryside. To the north is a flowing 'English-style' garden: dreamy, romantic, with grassy paths winding between hundreds of shrubs, plants and trees.

In the late afternoon we return to Rouen, where the evening is at leisure. (Overnight Rouen) B

Day 4: Tuesday 9 June, Rouen – Giverny – Auzouville-sur-Ry – Rouen

- Monet's House and Gardens, Giverny
- Le Jardin Plume, Auzouville-sur-Ry

This morning we depart Rouen for Giverny, in the heart of Normandy, where the great Impressionist Claude Monet lived for forty-three years. We visit the artist's beautiful home and garden, a dominant theme of his later paintings, created when as an old man he was unable to travel. The water-lily pond and wisteria-covered Japanese bridge were of his own design and his favourite motifs. Monet's house, 'Le Pressoir', and its gardens have been faithfully restored and opened to the public. Our visit to his house will include a stroll through the garden with its thousands of flowers, including the Nymphaeas. We cross the Japanese bridge hung with wisteria to a dreamy setting of weeping willows and rhododendrons. Monet's studio barge floated on the pond. In September the lawns are typically full of pink colchicums. The dahlias are eye-catching, and there are usually roses and nasturtiums in bloom at the house garden. No wisteria flowers, but the vine covers the bridge, and the pond is surrounded by greenery and impatiens.

In the afternoon we drive to Auzouville-sur-Ry to visit Le Jardin Plume, where owners Sylvie and Patrick Quibel have converted their orchard into a parterre. There is also a spring garden, summer garden and autumn garden. The summer garden is a kind of modern knot garden with a very formal layout of clipped box in a square edged pattern. Each 'box' is then filled with a very natural planting of grasses and perennials but the colours are superb – lots of golden yellow, deep red and burning oranges. The overall mix of formal and informal, the sombre green of the box and the jewel-like colours of the flowers is really superb. In September the box hedges are typically filled with vibrantly coloured flowers, interspersed with grasses. Favourite plants here are dahlias, crocosmias, heleniums, kniphofias and of course grasses – giving the plumes the garden is named for. (Overnight Rouen) B

Day 5: Wednesday 10 June, Rouen – Varengeville-sur-Mer – Tourville-sur-Arques – Rouen

- The Shamrock Garden, Varengeville-sur-Mer
- Le Bois des Moutiers, Varengeville-sur-Mer
- Church & Sailor's cemetery, Varengeville-sur-Mer
- Château de Miromesnil, Tourville-sur-Arques

Today we head north to the coastal village of Varengeville-sur-Mer where we shall visit two gardens owned by the Mallet family.

We will start with Le Bois des Moutiers. The residence and garden have been in the family's possession since 1898. At that time, a young English architect, Edwin Luytens, who was to become famous for his houses and for the layout and architecture of imperial New Delhi, was asked to modify both the residence and the garden. Luytens designed Munstead Wood for Gertrude Jekyll, and the influence of both of these great English designers is evident in the gardens of Le Bois des Moutiers. The influence of Gertrude Jekyll is seen everywhere, including the design and plantings of the front garden, which slopes toward the sea.

After a picnic lunch in the garden, we drive a short distance to Varengeville-sur-Mer Church and sailors' cemetery. Varengeville is an astonishing commune perched atop white limestone cliffs. It has attracted many artists including Claude Monet, and is famous for its church, with its stained-glass windows by Georges Braque. From the sailors' cemetery, where Georges Braque, Albert Roussel and Porto-Riche are buried, there is a superb view of Dieppe and the cliffs towards Le Tréport.

We then head back to the village to visit the second garden of the Mallet family, the Shamrock Garden. Created in 1984 by Corinne Mallet, it displays a wonderful Hydrangea Collection including 2000 plants from over 1200 varieties. It has been since given the status of French National Collection .

In the late afternoon we continue to the Château de Miromesnil at Tourville-sur-Arques, a splendid 17th-century (Louis XIII) château, where Guy de Maupassant was born. It is located within a large plantation dominated by a two hundred-year-old cedar of Lebanon, and contains a very fine kitchen garden. Its vegetable plots are surrounded by a bewildering variety of flowers. The park is enclosed by old brick walls and features fruit trees, rose trees, magnolias, arborescent peonies and a magnificent variety of clematis. Following dinner at the Château de Miromesnil we return to Rouen for the night. (Overnight Rouen) BD

Day 6: Thursday 11 June, Rouen – Le Neubourg – Rouen

- Château Champ de Bataille, Le Neubourg
- Afternoon at leisure in Rouen

This morning we depart Rouen and travel south to Le Neubourg to visit the Château Champ de Bataille, belonging to interior decorator Jacques Garcia. Garcia has completely renovated the 18th-century castle and gardens over the past 20 years. The château boasts a magnificent garden based in part on the classic French style and heavily influenced by drawings by the French designer Le Nôtre – hence its inclusion in Monty Don's first programme of his new BBC2 series, *French Gardens*, which aired on 1 February 2013. Monty was exploring *Gardens of Power and Passion* in and around Paris, with emphasis on those designed by André Le Nôtre, the son of Louis XVIII's gardener at Les Tuileries. The original gardens at Champ de Bataille fell into disrepair and had virtually disappeared when the present owner, Jacques Garcia, took it upon himself to recreate a garden in the grounds of the château. An outline plan of the former gardens had survived, which revealed the basic outline and terraces of the missing garden. This was used only as a general guideline, rather than copied slavishly. The resulting garden (which was begun in 1993 and took 12 years to complete) is a masterful blend of classical French and Italian design and inspiration, with modern influences. Parterres, follies, classical temples, fountains, lakes – 43 hectares of park and garden in all, crowned by a stunning view that stretches over a mile down the garden from the main terrace of the Château du Champ de Bataille.

After a light lunch in restaurant *Le Café Garcia*, located in the former stables of the château, we return to Rouen for an afternoon at leisure. (Overnight Rouen) BL

Honfleur - 2 nights

Day 7: Friday 12 June, Rouen – Varengeville-sur-Mer – Sainte-Marguerite-sur-Mer – Honfleur

- L'Étang de Launay, Varengeville-sur-Mer
- Lunch at *Le Piment Bleu*, Varengeville-sur-Mer
- Le Jardin du Vastérial, Ste Marguerite-sur-Mer

This morning we leave Rouen to visit L'Étang de Launay, the recently created private gardens of Jean-Louis Dantec, with its highly-pruned specimen trees leading to a lake and ponds, with extensive woodland planting beyond. Only 20 years in the making, this very private garden has already gained a reputation as one of the finest woodland gardens in Europe.

After a lunch at *Le Piment Bleu*, located in the grounds of the Château de Varengeville, we drive to Marguerite-sur-Mer to visit the gardens of Vastérial, residence of the late Princess Sturdza. Vastérial is acclaimed as containing one of the finest plant collections in all France. The gardens are very informal, consisting of some twenty acres surrounded by a natural woodland. Cleverly designed paths wander throughout the garden, through the rich under plantings of the woodlands, and issue into glades with countless surprises. The garden is world-famous for its collections of rhododendrons, hydrangeas, maples, birches, viburnums and camellias.

In the late afternoon we make our way to the old trading and fishing port of Honfleur, situated at the mouth of the Seine, where we shall spend two nights. (Overnight Honfleur) BL

Day 8: Saturday 13 June, Honfleur – Le Havre – Honfleur

- Morning at leisure: Old Port of Honfleur and Saturday Market
- Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux, Le Havre

This morning there will be time at leisure to explore Honfleur, with its old, picturesque port, characterised by its houses with slate-covered frontages, painted by many artists including Gustave Courbet, Eugène Boudin and Claude Monet. Honfleur is also famous for its Saturday market, taking place around the lovely Sainte Catherine church, the largest timber church in France.

After lunch, we drive south to Le Havre, situated on the right bank of the estuary of the river Seine on the English Channel. Here we visit the André Malraux Modern Art Museum, which contains the second-most extensive collection of Impressionist paintings in France. There are paintings by Claude Monet and other artists who lived and worked in Normandy including Camille Corot, Eugène Boudin (with the largest collection of his works in the world), Eugène Delacroix, Gustave Courbet, Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Alfred Sisley, Camille Pissarro, Paul Sérusier and Édouard Vuillard. Modern art is also well represented with works by artists such as Henri Matisse, Albert Marquet, Raoul Dufy, Kees van Dongen, Fernand Léger, Alexej von Jawlensky and Nicolas de Staël. (Overnight Honfleur) B

Bayeux - 3 nights

Day 9: Sunday 14 June, Honfleur – Ouilly-le-Vicomte – Mézidon-Canon – Bayeux

- Château de Boutemont, Ouilly-le-Vicomte
- Château de Canon, Mézidon-Canon

This morning we depart Honfleur and continue our exploration of Normandy with a visit to the Château de Boutemont. Dating back to the 12th century, this fortified half-timbered manor is a great example of castles

built along the coastline after the Norman victory of Hastings in 1066. It is today surrounded by an 11-hectare park listed as 'Jardin Remarquable'. The French gardens designed by Achille Duchène at the beginning of the 20th century have since been completed by landscape architect Georges Hayat's creations, including a Renaissance Italian garden, rose trees-decorated arches and a small 'scent garden'.

Our final visit for the day is to the gardens of the Château de Canon, residence of M. Alain de Mezerac. Here, an 18th-century house is surrounded by contemporary gardens and a park, created by Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Elie de Beaumont and his wife Anne-Louise. The family has owned this property since the Middle Ages. Their alteration of the house to the Neoclassical style, which brought on a lawsuit, resulted in a splendid two-storey structure, while pavilions and statuary in the garden landscape are English in style.

In the late afternoon we continue our drive to Bayeux, our next base in Normandy, which is famous above all for its tapestry. (Overnight Bayeux) BL

Day 10: Monday 15 June, Bayeux – Brécý – Bayeux

- Cathedral Notre-Dame & historic centre of Bayeux
- Bayeux Tapestry Museum
- Château de Brécý, St-Gabriel-Brécý

Our program begins today with a walking tour of Bayeux's historic centre and fine Cathedral of Notre-Dame. This gem of Norman architecture was consecrated on 14 July 1077 by Bishop Odo of Conteville, in the presence of his illustrious brother, William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy and King of England.

Mid-morning, we visit the special museum dedicated to the Tapisserie de Bayeux which chronicles the Norman invasion of England. This Anglo-Saxon work, presented by la Reine Mathilde (Queen Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror), to Bishop Odo in c.1080, was inspired by manuscript scrolls and the continuous narratives of the antique columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius in Rome. It chronicles events from the promise of Harold Godwin to bequeath his kingdom to William to the death of the Saxon king on the field at Hastings; it is fascinating for its detailed depictions of arms and the 11th-century methods and machinery of warfare.

After lunch at leisure, we drive to the Château de Brécý, residence of M. and Mme Didier Wirth. This will be a perfect introduction to the formal French garden; intimate in scale and exquisite in detail. Set in a wooded hamlet, the château would resemble a Norman farmhouse were it not for the pedimented entrance. The house dates from the 17th century, when it belonged to the Le Bas family, friends and associates of the great French architect after whom the distinctive pitched roof is named, François Mansart. The house bears many hallmarks of Mansart's architecture. The garden, which is immediately behind the house, consists of five terraces, fine stone work, elegant parterres, pools, topiary and wrought-iron gates that provide views into Normandy's countryside. (Overnight Bayeux) B

Day 11: Tuesday 16 June, Bayeux – Saint-Maurice-en-Cotentin – Castillon-Plantbessin – Bayeux

- Le Jardin de la Bizerie, Saint-Maurice-en-Cotentin
- Les Jardins de Plantbessin, Castillon

This morning we drive across the Cotentin Peninsula to visit the private gardens of La Bizerie. Benefiting from the Cotentin micro-climate, Jérôme Goutier has transformed a damp valley into a unique garden, filled with mediterranean plants as well as semi-tropical species usually found in the southern hemisphere.

After lunch we return to Bayeux via Castillon to visit the Jardins de Plantbessin, created by Colette Sainte Beuve as a water garden to complement her plant nursery. Here you will find a marvellous treasure trove of plants that includes beautiful samples of Japanese plants as well as herbs and heather, situated on a site which measures less than a quarter of an acre. (Overnight Bayeux) BL

Bagnoles-de-l'Orne - 2 nights

Day 12: Wednesday 17 June, Bayeux – Caen – Bagnoles-de-l'Orne

- Fine Arts Museum, Caen
- Abbaye-aux-Hommes & its abbatial church St Étienne, Caen

This morning we depart Bayeux to visit the excellent small art museum of Caen (with works by Van der Weyden, Perugino, Poussin and Veronese), which is built within the ruined walls of William the Conqueror's castle.

After lunch at leisure in Caen, we explore the Abbaye-aux-Hommes, and its church St Étienne. This masterpiece of Romanesque church architecture, which survived the 1944 Allied bombardment, was begun by William the Conqueror as his mausoleum. One reason for the finesse of this building, which influenced many later Romanesque churches, was the abundance of good building stone in the region.

We stay for the next two nights in a lovely small heritage hotel, Le Manoir du Lys, at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne, owned by a family noted for their fine cuisine, which we shall sample at our evening meals. The hotel is set in a pretty garden on the edge of the Andaine Forest. (Overnight Bagnoles-de-l'Orne) BD

Day 13: Thursday 18 June, Bagnoles-de-l'Orne – Sassy – St-Céneri-le-Gérei – St-Christophe-le-Jajolet – Bagnoles-de-l'Orne

- Saint-Céneri-le-Gérei village & lunch at the *Auberge de la Vallée*
- Jardins et Terrasses du Château de Sassy, Saint-Christophe-Le-Jajolet

A day trip today takes us to yet more lovely Norman villages and gardens. We begin with a visit of the village of Saint-Céneri-le-Gérei. In the 6th century an Italian anchorite, Céneri, established a hermitage here and this grew into the village of Saint-Céneri which is now considered one of the most beautiful villages of France. In the 19th century, its stone houses, Romanesque church with beautiful frescoes of the 12th and 14th centuries and its small stone bridge attracted many artists, including Camille Corot, Gustave Courbet and Eugène Boudin. We shall have lunch at the charming *Auberge de la Vallée* and take a guided tour of the village before making our way to Saint-Christophe-Le-Jajolet.

We drive through the majestic Forêt d'Écouves to the gardens and terraces of the Château de Sassy. This is a spectacular formal garden, a benchmark of the French formal style, featuring clipped yews. It was designed in the first decades of the 20th century by the famous Achille Duchêne for Etienne d'Audriffet. The designer took his inspiration from the great Le Nôtre, who was responsible for the gardens of Versailles and Vaux-le-Vicomte. The garden, which rolls out like a great carpet below an 18th-century château, is located in the Pays d'Argentan between hedged farmlands and the vast plains of the north. Its strict formality beautifully counterpoints a pastoral landscape of hedges and clumps of fruit trees where thoroughbred horses graze. A deep perspective of terraces with intricate broderies ('boxwood embroideries') planted in the shapes of Arabesques passes tiers of moats and features a round pool. A lovely small pavilion flanked by two monumental fastigiate yews and rows of shaped lindens forms the perspective's centrepiece. (Bagnoles-de-l'Orne) BLD

Vannes - 2 nights

Day 14: Friday 19 June, Bagnoles-de-l'Orne – St-Biez-en-Belin – Vannes

- Le Jardin d'Atmosphère du Petit Bordeaux, Saint-Biez-en-Berlin

Today we drive out of Normandy toward the Maine region. Our first visit is to Le Jardin d'Atmosphère du Petit Bordeaux, in the town of Saint-Biez-en-Belin. This delightful garden was voted the 'Preferred garden of the French' in the Pays-de-Loire region in 2014 by viewers of the France 2 television channel. It was also awarded the 'Jardin Remarquable' label in 2007 by the French Minister of Culture. This private garden, which covers 1.5 hectares, has been created since 1987. A wonderfully mature garden, it is full of trees under planted with hydrangeas, day lillies, hostas, ancient roses, acers and dogwood. Every season has its own interest and two large ponds provide focal points in the garden. There are more than 4000 different plants including collections of Acers, Hydrangeas, Cornus (including the beautiful Cornus kousa 'Salomi'), roses and grasses.

After a picnic lunch we travel west to the south coast of Brittany. Nestled in the Gulf of Morbihan, in one of the world's most beautiful bays, Vannes boasts all the discreet charm of a fortified town with two thousand years of history. There you will have the opportunity to sample *Far Breton* and *Kouign-Amann* – two of the region's famous specialities. *Far Breton* is a traditional custard cake with prunes, while *Kouign-Amann* (pronounced 'queen a-mahn'), is made with flaky, buttery, caramelised pastry. (Overnight Vannes) BL

Day 15: Saturday 20 June, Vannes – Carnac – Auray – Vannes

- Guided tour of Carnac: stone alignments and circles
- Lunch at *Crêperie Saint Sauveur*, Auray
- Guided tour of the walled town of Vannes incl. Saint-Pierre Cathedral

This morning we travel to Carnac to explore the largest Neolithic alignment in the world (3500-3000 BC), with almost 3000 upright stones arranged in 11 almost parallel lines over several kilometres, and consider the various explanations which have been offered for their purpose and function.

We then head for lunch to the pretty town of Auray which features the picture-postcard ancient quarter of St-Goustan, with its delightful 15th and 16th-century houses. The bend in the River Loch was a natural setting for the town and it soon became one of the busiest ports in Brittany. In 1776, Benjamin Franklin landed here on his way to seek the help of Louis XVI in the American War of Independence. Here we shall eat together at a local crêperie. The word *crêpe* is French for pancake and is derived from the Latin *crispus* meaning 'curled'. Crêpes originated in Brittany and were once called *galettes*, meaning flat cakes.

We return to Vannes in the afternoon for a guided tour of its remarkable old quarter, home to the impressive Saint-Pierre Cathedral. We also take a walk along the town's ramparts. These 13th-century fortifications, which were regularly remodelled until the 17th century, provide wonderful views of the city's formal gardens and its cathedral. (Overnight Vannes) BL

Perros-Guirec - 3 nights

Day 16: Sunday 21 June, Vannes – Pont-Aven – Les Monts d'Arrée – Perros-Guirec

- Pont-Aven Museum
- Eco-musée des Monts d'Arrée, Natural Regional Park of Armorique

This morning we leave Vannes for Pont-Aven, a small and picturesque Breton village which owes its fame to the artistic life that flourished here between 1860 and the mid-20th century. There we shall visit the world's first gallery devoted to the work of the Pont-Aven School. Reopened in 2016 after having been completely renovated, the museum hosts paintings from post-Impressionist Gauguin and his fellow-artists. You will then have time at leisure to explore the village, walk along the River Aven and sample the town's 'galettes' – butter biscuits invented here in 1920.

From Pont-Aven we continue our journey inland, travelling through the Natural Regional Park of Armorique. We shall drive up to the highest and oldest hills of Brittany, Les Monts d'Arrée, stopping in the town of Saint-Rivoal where we shall visit the eco-museum and be introduced to the Park's unique fauna and flora by our local guide.

In the late afternoon we continue to our hotel located outside the town of Perros-Guirec, on the northern coast of Brittany at the centre of the 'Coast of Pink Granite'. The combination of pink rocks, blue sea and a few islands on the horizon make this area very picturesque. While based in Perros-Guirec we shall visit a number of private gardens as we journey through the area's rocky coastline, deep-cut inlets and inland wooded valleys. (Overnight Perros-Guirec) BLD

Day 17: Monday 22 June, Perros-Guirec – Trédarzec – Penvénan – Perros-Guirec

- Les Jardins de Kerdalo, Trédarzec
- Lunch at *L'Abri des Barges*, Trédarzec
- Jardins de Pellinec, Penvénan

We begin this morning with a visit to the gardens of Kerdalo. The garden, in a valley near the Brittany coast, was the subject of a book by its owner-designer, Prince Peter Wolkonsky: "Kerdalo: Un Jardin d'Exception" (Paris, 1995). He began to create the garden in 1965. Originally a manor farm in its enclosed valley with natural springs, the formal garden merges into a wooded valley with a lake, pools and grotto with a rich collection of trees and shrubs. Since his death in 1997, his daughter Isabelle and her husband Timothy have restored the garden. They both trained as horticulturalists at RHS Garden Wisley.

A short drive will take us to *L'Abri des Barges*, a friendly bistro housed in a 16th-century mill overlooking the Jaudy estuary. The chef, a former food photographer, specialises in dishes made from local seafood and seasonal vegetables.

After lunch we explore a private manor house garden, Le Jardin du Pellinec. Inspired by the gardens at Kerdalo, the seven-acre garden on the Pellinec estuary that has excellent soils was started in 1997. The microclimate has enabled Monsieur Jean to grow a huge diversity of plants laid out in visual harmony. The view is ever changing; at high tide, the sea laps at the garden edges, creating a spectacular sight. This superb garden was awarded 1st prize 'Bonpland' in 2008. (Overnight Perros-Guirec) BL

Day 18: Tuesday 23 June, Perros-Guirec – Ploëzal – Guingamp – Lanrivain – Pontrieux – Perros-Guirec

- Château de la Roche-Jagu, Ploëzal
- Lunch at leisure in Guingamp
- Le Grand Launay, Lanrivain
- Boat tour of Pontrieux's washhouses

This morning we travel to Ploëzal to visit Le Château de La Roche-Jagu, which is surrounded by a contemporary garden in a magnificent setting overlooking the River Trieux. Inspired by medieval gardens, it

features a kitchen garden, a medicinal garden and a flower garden. There are wonderful walks in the woodlands, where you can find areas of palms and camellias and water features.

Following some time at leisure for lunch in the market town of Guingamp we continue our journey inland to Le Grand Launay, a remarkable garden located in Lanrivain featuring a unique design, perfectly shaped topiary and beautiful hedging. The garden was designed by its owners, Jean and Jacqueline Shalit, in collaboration with the landscape designer Gael Boedec. Their work resulted in a beautiful, modern garden with mostly green plants and some white climbing hydrangea here and there. The garden itself is built around an old castle which gives it a specific charm. One of the most fascinating parts of the garden is the so-called 'garden of temptation', where boxwood snakes climb the apple tree as in the garden of Eden.

In the late afternoon we return to Perros-Guirec via the small town of Pontrieux, which is nestled deep in an estuary. Listed as one of the 'small cities of character' in Brittany, the town features fifty or so beautifully restored and flower-decked washhouses which adorn the banks of the River Trieux. We take a short tour by boat to view these charming washhouses and dine at a local restaurant. (Overnight Perros-Guirec) BD

Saint-Malo - 2 nights

Day 19: Wednesday 24 June, Perros-Guirec – Mûr-de-Bretagne – Bazouges-la-Pérouse – Saint-Malo

- Les Jardins du Botrain, Mûr-de-Bretagne (*subject to confirmation closer to the date*)
- Château de la Ballue, Bazouges-la-Pérouse

This morning we depart Perros-Guirec for Les Jardins du Botrain, located outside the small town of Mûr-de-Bretagne. Inspired by English garden design, this romantic garden in the centre of Brittany is a place of relaxation and contemplation. Surrounding an 18th-century manor house with its unique apiary, the gardens consist of many rooms, including a Japanese garden, a rose garden, an iris garden, an area of hostas, acers, a pond and even a small lake.

We then drive east toward the Château de la Ballue, located between Brittany and Normandy, in a unique rural setting with mild hills and woods. This 17th-century château, which once welcomed guests such as Balzac and Victor Hugo, is surrounded by dramatic theatrical gardens. When the castle was built in 1620, it was surrounded by Italian-style gardens. They were abandoned in 1942 and could have remained fields of potatoes if the editor Claude Arthaud had not bought the property in the 1970s. Thanks to his inspiration the architects Paul Maymont and François Hébert-Stevens created a classic garden and a mannerist garden before the gardens were discovered again by Marie-France Barrière and Alain Schrotter. The new owners have redesigned and reinterpreted the gardens with a modern twist. There are neat traditional geometric terraces, and a lush fernery and scented groves.

In the late afternoon we continue to the port city of Saint-Malo. Encircled by its strong granite ramparts, this corsair city was destroyed in August 1944, but has been so well restored that its centre exudes an austere yet characterful harmony. (Overnight Saint-Malo) BL

Day 20: Thursday 25 June, Saint-Malo – Mont-Saint-Michel – Dinan – Saint-Malo

- Mont Saint-Michel
- Time at leisure to explore the medieval town of Dinan
- Farewell Dinner

One of the highlights of the tour is a visit to the Abbey of Mont Saint-Michel, which perches upon a great,

isolated granite cone rising from the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel, the sands of which are bared at low tide. There are quicksands here from which, according to a depiction in the Bayeux Tapestry, Harold Godwin saved some Norman soldiers. Believed by the Celts to be a resting place to which the departed were ferried on an invisible boat, it became the site of a hermitage after an apparition of St Michael to St Aubert, Bishop of Avranches (708). A Carolingian church was built in the 10th century, followed by a Romanesque basilica in the 17th century. Count Richard I of Normandy established a Benedictine Abbey here in 966 and it became a major seat of learning in the 11th century. It was progressively fortified in the Middle Ages. We shall visit the small village below the Mount and then participate in a tour of the Abbey, visiting its church, refectory, ancient scriptorium, and cloister.

In the early afternoon we drive to Dinan, for some time at leisure. Once a fortified stronghold of the Dukes of Brittany, Dinan is one of the prettiest and best-preserved towns in the region. It's noted for its 'maisons à piliers', medieval half-timbered houses built on stilts over the sidewalks. For centuries the town has served as a hub of cultural and commercial activity, from the original merchants and traders to today's artists and craftspeople. The centre of town is dominated by an impressive castle and surrounded by ramparts. The 2700 metres of ramparts once protected the medieval citadel, which spread over thirty hectares. The ramparts were built in the 13th century when Dinan became a duchy and were continually improved until the Wars of Religion of the 16th century, after which they lost their defensive role. You may wish to take a lovely circular walk along the ramparts, starting from the castle. In the late afternoon we return to Saint-Malo, where we enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant. (Overnight Saint-Malo) BD

Day 21: Friday 26 June, Saint-Malo – Paris. Tour Ends.

- Transfer to Paris CDG airport

Our tour ends today with a coach transfer from Saint-Malo to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, via Rennes TGV station. B

Accommodation

21-day Cultural Garden Tour of Normandy & Brittany

ASA has selected 3- to 5-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with en suite bathroom. Double/twin rooms for single occupancy may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Double (as Single) Supplement. A hotel list will be given to all participants prior to departure.

- Rouen (5 nights): 4-star Mercure Rouen Centre Cathedral Hotel – a modern hotel close to the stunning Rouen Cathedral in the town's medieval centre. www.mercure.com
- Honfleur (2 nights): 3-star Hotel Best Western Le Cheval Blanc – located at the fishing harbour, this 3-star hotel offers 34 renovated rooms with a view of the Port of Honfleur. www.hotel-honfleur.com
- Bayeux (3 nights): 5-star Hotel Villa Lara – opened in March 2012, located on a pedestrian street in the heart of old Bayeux, just a few steps from the famous Tapestry Museum and the Cathedral. www.hotel-villalara.com
- Bagnoles-de-l'Orne (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Le Manoir Du Lys – a charming manor house located on the edge of the Andaine Forest, close to the spa town of Bagnoles-de-l'Orne. www.manoir-du-lys.com
- Vannes (2 nights): 3-star Hotel Escale Oceania – comfortable modern hotel located in the centre of Vannes, within walking distance from the historical quarter. www.oceaniahotels.com
- Perros-Guirec (3 nights): 5-star L'Agapa Hôtel-Spa – set in a 1930s art deco-style building overlooking the Rose Coast of Brittany, offering panoramic sea views. www.lagapa.com
- Saint-Malo (1 night): 4-star Hotel Oceania - a modern hotel overlooking the sea, located on the Chaussée du Sillon (Sillon Causeway) within walking distance from the the walled city. www.oceaniahotels.com

Note: Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 September 2019

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3-5 star hotels
- Meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees
- Tour Notes
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Paris, Paris-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 21-day Cultural Garden Tour of Normandy & Brittany involves:

- A moderate amount of walking mainly during outdoor site visits, often up and down hills and/or flights of stairs, along cobbled streets and uneven terrain. You therefore need to be a good walker and be prepared to stand for some time in front of buildings and artworks.
- Extensive coach travel - often on minor roads.
- The daily schedule generally involves an early-morning departure (between 8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (between 5.30-6.30pm).
- 3- to 5-star hotels with six hotel changes.
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portorage only includes 1 piece of luggage per person.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$100.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$400.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$500.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities without assistance or support:-

- walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15-20 minutes

- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication

Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double (or twin) room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

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OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male Female

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

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- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

Dated _____

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1

Name of Traveller 2

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$

 (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): Cheque Direct Debit (see below) Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- *via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate*
- *via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.*

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No.

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard & Visa 2%
American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date

 Security Code (CVC)

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ)

Cardholders Name

Cardholders Billing Address

Postcode

State

 Country

Phone

Email

Cardholders Signature

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