



In Search of Literary France 2024

8 JUN – 27 JUN 2024

Code: 22418

Tour Leaders **Susannah Fullerton, OAM, FRSN, David Henderson**

Physical Ratings 

Explore the world of many great French novelists: Dumas, Balzac, Zola, De Maupassant, Rimbaud, Verlaine, George Sand, Cocteau and more!



Overview

- Lectures and site visits by [Susannah Fullerton](#), President of the Jane Austen Society of Australia, with the assistance of award-winning artist [David Henderson](#).
- Learn about the racy lives and bad behaviour of many great French novelists - Dumas, Balzac, Zola, Flaubert, De Maupassant, Colette and more!
- Visit the medical museum in Rouen, Flaubert's childhood home, where he watched his father perform gruesome operations, and see the room in which this great novelist was born.
- View the château and pastoral landscape where Balzac went to write (and escape his creditors).
- See the childhood home of Maurice Leblanc, today a museum to his fictional creation Arsène Lupin, gentleman thief, now one of the most popular literary museums in France.
- Enjoy great art at the Boudin Museum, the Fine Arts Museum of Rouen, the Modern Art Museum in Le Havre, a Cocteau chapel, the Richard Anacréon Museum of Art, and view the Bayeux tapestry and Braque stained glass.
- Explore an amazing variety of literary homes – Proust's, Alain Fournier's schoolhouse, Dumas' Château de Monte Cristo, George Sand's gracious manor house, Zola's country retreat, Guy de Maupassant's birthplace, historian Michelet's study, Verne's luxurious Amiens home, Corneille's rural hideaway, and Colette's birthplace to learn about the lives of these writers.
- Seek out 'lost time' in the footsteps of Proust – see where he holidayed at Deauville, visit the Museum of Time Found, and sample madeleines, one of the most famous literary foods of all time.
- Visit villages that are classified as 'most beautiful villages in France' and explore half-timbered medieval towns.
- Tour the superb Christian Dior museum in Granville.
- Dine at gourmet restaurants frequented by great writers, including Julia Child's La Couronne, and experience the best of Norman cuisine.
- Conclude with a 3-night stay at the 4-star [Pavilion Henry IV](#), formerly the residence of the Sun King Louis XIV.

Overnight Villers-Cotterêts (2 nights) • Amiens (1 night) • Rouen (3 nights) • Honfleur (2 nights) • Bayeux (2 nights) • Vitré (2 nights) • La Châtre (3 nights) • Fontainebleau (1 night) • Saint-Germain-en-Laye (3 nights)

About the Tour

France! The very name is full of magic! France is one of the most civilised countries on earth and French food and wines, French paintings, French cinema, French fashion, French villages, the glorious capital city of Paris, and the châteaux scattered through the lovely countryside are all justly famous. It is hardly surprising that France attracts more tourists than any other country.

One of the great glories of France is its literature. Writers and intellectuals have traditionally enjoyed great prestige there. Many members of the Académie Française have been authors and have pronounced on public events and held high office in the land. Statues of famous writers can be found in so many public parks, and squares and streets have been named after the great novelists, poets and playwrights in hundreds of towns and cities. French novels and short stories are considered some of the greatest ever written, French plays are familiar to us through film and opera, French poets have broken new ground.

This tour offers you the opportunity to see France through the eyes of great writers and their works. You will learn about their fascinating lives – the strings of mistresses, the debts, the scandals, the meals they enjoyed, their travels – and you will see the landscapes that inspired them and the places where they wrote. You will meet playwrights – Corneille and Victor Hugo; novelists such as Flaubert, Balzac, Dumas, Hugo, Proust, Alain-Fournier, Colette, George Sand, Jules Verne and Zola; and the poets, Rimbaud and his lover

Verlaine. You will see where they are buried, admire statues erected in their honour, wander through their homes and dine where they dined. Their characters have become part of our imaginative landscapes, but now you will see the physical landscapes they inhabited as well – the provinces which stifled Madame Bovary, the half-timbered villages where Guy de Maupassant's characters lead their often tragic lives, and the bedroom where Proust's narrator eats a little cake and experiences something extraordinary.

Writers in France have travelled around their country, experiencing so many facets of French life. This tour reflects that variety of experience. You will visit châteaux and humble cottages, elegant restaurants and simple cafes, stroll along grand boulevards and country lanes. You will go to school one day, and see the home of an iconic dress designer on another. You will admire beautiful gardens and ancient cedar trees, watch lace being made and Calvados produced. There will be stunning cathedrals and rustic churches, a war memorial, water-mills and grand squares, woods (including the one that prompted Chateaubriand's Romanticism), lakes, islands and beaches.

When the Impressionist painters first tried to display their works, they were met with ridicule from the art critics of the day. One man, however, was more discerning – the novelist Émile Zola. He championed their paintings at the risk of losing his own reputation, he put his friend Cézanne into one of his novels, and he sat as a model for both Cézanne and Manet. Literature and art connect often in France. We will walk through landscapes that inspired both the pen and the brush, see how Cocteau decorated a local chapel, and rejoice in the treasures of several superb galleries – the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, Honfleur's Boudin Museum, the André Malraux Museum of Modern Art in Le Havre and the great tapestry in Bayeux. You will walk in the footsteps of the Crozant School of painters and see where the stunning 'Lady and the Unicorn' tapestries were found. David will tell us more about the art we view, and about some of the artists we encounter.

No French literary tour would be complete without an emphasis on food, for French writers have lovingly described meals, set scenes in cafes and used food endlessly in their works. We will sample some of the delicacies they described, sip the fine champagnes and wines they indulged in, and treat ourselves to fine cheeses, just as the characters they created did on market days.

France is one of the largest countries in Europe and it is not possible to visit all its literary sites in 3 weeks. This tour concentrates on northern France (Picardy, Champagne, Brittany, Normandy, the Loire), a truly lovely part of the world.

A reading and film list will be supplied and the more you read from that list, the more you will enjoy the tour. However, it is not essential to have a detailed knowledge of French literature in order to enjoy the journey. Susannah will narrate the stories of the authors themselves and inspire you to further reading. Local guides and hosts will join us along the way, to further add to your knowledge and enjoyment.

Flaubert once wrote that "pleasure is found first in anticipation, later in memory". With this tour you will encounter both his sorts of pleasure, but you will also find pleasure in between the anticipation and the memory – the intense pleasure that comes from the actual experience of searching out and discovering the treasures and the personalities, the art and the architecture, the scenery and the sacred sites, of literary France.

Susannah's video highlights her passion for wonderful French novels, poems, and dramas and takes you on a memorable journey through the important sites of French literature that you'll visit on this incredible tour. <https://youtu.be/-Q3YQsfSjXo>

One of the great glories of France is its literature. Writers have traditionally enjoyed great prestige there,

and literature and art connect often. Novelist Émile Zola championed artists and sat as a model for his close friend, Paul Cézanne. Susannah Fullerton and David Henderson discuss the friendship between these two great men, and the book that cracked it apart.
https://youtu.be/LNH9J4Aj_SA

Leaders



Susannah Fullerton, OAM, FRSN

President of the Jane Austen Society of Australia, Susannah has published several books on Jane Austen and has lectured extensively on famous authors, their lives and works both in Australia and overseas.

Susannah Fullerton, OAM, FRSN, majored in English Literature at the University of Auckland. She then completed a postgraduate degree in Victorian fiction and prose at the University of Edinburgh. For over 25 years Susannah has been President of the Jane Austen Society of Australia. She has lectured extensively on Jane Austen in Australia and overseas and has published many articles about Jane Austen's works. She is the co-author of *Jane Austen – Antipodean Views* and published *Jane Austen and Crime* in 2004, and *Brief Encounters: Literary Travellers in Australia* (Picador) in 2009. Susannah's latest books are *A Dance with Jane Austen*, *Happily Ever After: Celebrating Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice* and a memoir *Jane & I: A Tale of Austen Addiction*.

Susannah is very well known on the Australian speakers' circuit as a literary lecturer. She gives talks on famous authors, their lives and works, and on history and art, at the Art Gallery of NSW, State Library of NSW, ADFAS, WEA, schools, for a great variety of clubs and societies, and on zoom. Susannah uses her training in drama to delight her audiences with dramatic readings from novels and poems. Her interest in literature is wide ranging. She is a member of the Dylan Thomas Society of Australia, the Australian Brontë Association, the NSW Dickens Society and she is Patron of the Kipling Society of Australia. She has worked on literary prize committees, organised literary conferences and is a most experienced lecturer and group leader.



David Henderson

Award-winning artist & Royal Academy graduate who paints half the year in Italy, David brings an artist's eye & profound knowledge of European art to ASA tours.

After initial studies in architecture in Brisbane, David graduated in painting from London's Royal Academy Schools in 1985. The Royal Academy awarded him a prize for painting, and he was twice selected for their annual summer exhibition. David has held many solo exhibitions of his work in Brisbane, Melbourne and London and has been the recipient of several awards. He has taught art part-time at various institutions; for many years, he lectured and ran courses in the history of art and design at QUT. David now paints full-time and divides his year between Australia and Italy. Since joining ASA in 1995, David has led over 50 tours to a variety of destinations including Italy, France and the UK. He brings a trained artist's eye to an analysis of painting, sculpture and architecture and takes great pleasure in sharing his knowledge.

Combine this tour with

Natural Landscapes & Gardens of Madeira & the Azores 2024

18 MAY – 5 JUN 2024

Romania Revealed: Saxon Villages, Transylvanian Cities and Byzantine Monasteries 2024

22 MAY – 4 JUN 2024



Itinerary

The following itinerary lists a range of site visits which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but some require special permission. 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. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B =breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Villers-Cotterêts - 2 nights

Day 1: Saturday 8 June, Paris – Villers-Cotterêts

- Morning transfer Paris CDG Airport Hotel to Villers-Cotterêts
- Welcome Meeting
- Orientation walking tour of Villers-Cotterêts
- Musée Alexandre Dumas, Villers-Cotterêts
- Welcome Dinner

Meeting Point: Please meet your group leaders at the Novotel Paris Roissy CDG Convention at 10.00am.

After an early morning arrival in Paris, we begin our tour by getting to know one of the most colourful personalities of French literature – Alexandre Dumas. He was born in 1802 in the village of Villers-Cotterêts. The village was also his penultimate resting place – his body was later moved with great pomp and ceremony to the Panthéon in Paris.

Delightful Villers-Cotterêts is an important place in the history of the French language. It was there in 1539 that an Ordinance was signed which discontinued the use of Latin as the language for official French documents, and instead insisted that French must be used. We will enjoy a walking tour of the town – see the exterior of the house in which Dumas was born, and visit the cemetery and St Nicholas Church.

The Dumas Museum, which we will visit, covers not only the famous author of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, but also his father General Dumas (whose legendary strength inspired Porthos, one of the musketeers) and his son, Alexandre Dumas fils, author of *The Lady of the Camellias* (later turned into the popular opera *La Traviata*). Dumas manuscripts, letters, portraits and first editions are on display.

Dumas loved food and actually wrote a cookbook, so we will enjoy a group evening meal in his honour in Villers-Cotterêts. (Overnight Villers-Cotterêts) D

Day 2: Sunday 9 June, Villers-Cotterêts – Juniville – Charleville-Mézières – Longpont – Villers-Cotterêts

- Musée Verlaine, Juniville
- Musée Rimbaud & Maison des Ailleurs, Charleville-Mézières
- Dinner at Restaurant Hôtel de L'Abbaye, Longpont

We set off this morning for Juniville. When poet Paul Verlaine fell in love with Arthur Rimbaud, he left his wife and son to follow his lover in a life of wandering and drinking. After two years in prison for trying to shoot Rimbaud, Verlaine moved to Juniville in the 1880s, where he worked as a teacher. Today the Verlaine museum (once the village inn) records his life as a symbolist poet, an absinthe drinker and his important work as an editor. Verlaine's life might have been out of control, but his poetry is unsurpassed in its ability to capture moods and nuances of perception.

Arthur Rimbaud is the bad-boy genius of French poetry. He wrote stunningly inventive poems and remains one of the most discussed and influential of all French poets, but he wrote all his poems before turning 21, then walked away from literature for good. He was born in Charleville-Mézières and is buried there. We will visit the Rimbaud Museum, learn about his scandalous affair with Verlaine (and the infamous shooting), and see the statue the town has erected in his honour. Rimbaud rarely bathed and delighted in flicking the lice from his hair at passing priests, however, the town has now forgiven his unruly behaviour. The museum is housed in a delightful water-mill and we will also visit Rimbaud's nearby childhood home, the place which inspired his greatest poem *Le Bateau Ivre*.

There will be time to stroll into the magnificent Place Ducale, a model of Louis XIII urban planning.

Before returning to Villers-Cotterêts, we will enjoy dinner at the historic Hôtel de l'Abbaye in Longpont. (Overnight Villers-Cotterêts) BLD

Amiens – 1 night

Day 3: Monday 10 June, Villers-Cotterêts – Amiens

- Maison de Jules Verne, Amiens
- Walking tour of Old Amiens and Amiens Cathedral
- Time at leisure

This morning we head to Amiens, capital of Picardy. Jules Verne, author of *Around the World in Eighty Days* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, lived for nearly two decades in Amiens, "a sober civilized town whose society is cordial and cultured". There is a museum in his former home which recreates his study and holds a huge collection of his books. His couch once provided comfort for many famous 'derrières' – those of Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and Georges Sand (who helped inspire one of his novels). Verne is buried in the local cemetery.

After lunch we will take a tour of Amien's Gothic cathedral, a building which art critic John Ruskin called "unsurpassable" and which inspired Proust. Amiens is the birthplace of Choderlos de Laclos who wrote the best-selling *Dangerous Liaisons*. We will enjoy a walking tour of the city and cathedral. There will then be time at leisure to view some of the many historic monuments of the city. (Overnight Amiens) B

Rouen – 3 nights

Day 4: Tuesday 11 June, Amiens – Villers-Bretonneux – Lyons-la-Forêt – Vascoeuil – Ry – Rouen

- Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux
- Time at leisure in Lyons-la-Forêt
- Château de Vascoeuil: home of French historian, Jules Michelet. Guided tour and light lunch
- Walking tour of Ry village: in the footsteps of *Madame Bovary*

This Somme region of France will forever be associated with the horrors of World War I, so graphically evoked by war poets Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke and Edward Thomas. The little village of Villers-Bretonneux became famous when it was captured by the Germans in 1918, then recaptured by Australian troops the following day. We will visit the Australian National Memorial there, as we remember the poets inspired by similar battles.

The Forêt de Lyons was once the hunting ground of the Dukes of Normandy. The country town of Lyons-la-Forêt has an 18th-century covered market and charming half-timbered houses. Composer Maurice Ravel stayed there many times and loved the place. It has twice been a setting for filmed versions of *Madame Bovary* and is officially one of the 'Most Beautiful Villages of France'.

The small Château de Vascoeuil has superb formal gardens and a sculpture park. Author Jules Michelet wrote a huge history of France and was the first historian to use and define the French translation of the term 'renaissance' – he detested the Middle Ages and celebrated the Renaissance as an era of dynamism and culture. The château has a Jules Michelet Museum, which we will visit to learn more about this influential writer. We will also explore the sculpture park.

We then travel on to the delightful village of Ry, a farming village north-east of Rouen. The village of Yonville, where Emma Bovary feels so cramped and frustrated in Flaubert's great novel, was almost certainly based on Ry. Situated in the Crevon Valley, Ry has many historic buildings which we will admire on a short walk around the village.

We then transfer to Rouen, the superb cathedral city which will be our base for the next three nights. (Overnight Rouen) BL

Day 5: Wednesday 12 June, Rouen – Veules-les-Roses – Tourville-sur-Arques – Rouen

- Guided walking tour of Rouen including the Cathedral & Flaubert Statue
- Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen
- Time at leisure in Veules-les-Roses
- Château de Miromesnil, Tourville-sur-Arques: birthplace of Guy de Maupassant. Guided tour of the château and gardens followed by dinner.

This morning we take a walking tour of Rouen, a city packed with historical and literary sites. Joan of Arc was burned there by the English (as Jane Austen wrote, "they shouldn't have done it, but they did"), diarist John Evelyn visited and described its bridge and cathedral, Guy de Maupassant wrote of it in his brilliant

story *Ball of Fat*, Shakespeare set part of *Henry V* there, and it was the birthplace in 1606 of Pierre Corneille, founder of French dramatic tragedy. There's a wonderful walrus-moustached statue of Flaubert who was also born in Rouen – Julian Barnes writes comically of it in his book *Flaubert's Parrot*.

The Cathedral, depicted in a series of over thirty paintings by Claude Monet, has many literary associations. The stained-glass window of St Julian the Hospitaller inspired one of Flaubert's short stories, while a low-relief stone sculpture inspired the scene where Salomé dances in his story of *Hérodiade*. Ruskin wrote of it as an example of stunning design in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. Flaubert's Madame Bovary meets her lover in the Cathedral.

We also visit Rouen's Musée des Beaux-Arts, established in 1801 by Napoléon and holding one of the largest art collections in France. Its Impressionist collection is particularly impressive. This art movement, originally denigrated by the critics, was publicly supported by novelist Émile Zola, who was a close friend of Cézanne and Manet. Géricault was a native of Rouen, and we see some of his works there, along with those of Fragonard, Boucher, Monet, David, Degas, Renoir and Sisley.

The Normandy village of Veules-les-Roses has attracted artists over the centuries – Paul Meurice, Samuel Peploe, Étienne Mélingue and Ilya Repin are just some of those who came here to paint. Writers have also visited – Alexandre Dumas fils, Jules Michelet, Alexis Bouvier and Émile Bergerat are some of them, and there is a monument to Victor Hugo who, in 1882, hosted a party for all the children of the village.

Our last and very special visit of the day is to Château de Miromesnil, birthplace of one of the greatest short story writers of all time, Guy de Maupassant. The château has gorgeously wooded gardens, an historic *potager* (vegetable garden), 17th-century brick walls, a 250-year old cedar tree, and a notable collection of clematis. After enjoying a guided tour of the park, we will enter the 16th-century château, see items that belonged to the Miromesnil family and Guy de Maupassant, born there in 1850. A three-course dinner in the chateau will bring our memorable day to an end. (Overnight Rouen) BD

Day 6: Thursday 13 June, Rouen

- Pavillon Flaubert: the remains of Flaubert's family home in the hamlet of Croisset
- Maison de Pierre Corneille à Petit-Couronne
- Musée Flaubert et d'histoire de la médecine
- Dinner at La Couronne

The man many regard as the greatest French novelist, Gustave Flaubert, was born in Rouen.

In the morning we drive to the village of Croisset, on the outskirts of Rouen, where we find Flaubert's pavilion, the only surviving part of his country residence. According to legend, Abbé Prévost wrote *Manon Lescaut* in the Benedictine house that was once on the site. Flaubert didn't write in the pavilion, but he entertained friends Turgenev, Zola and Guy de Maupassant there and, in the 'shouting ground' next to it, he declaimed the words he found so hard to write, to see if they sounded good. He loved to watch the moonlight on the Seine from this spot. This little pavilion is now a museum, containing a stuffed parrot (possibly the one that features in his story *A Simple Heart* and which inspired Julian Barnes' novel *Flaubert's Parrot*).

Nearby, in Petit-Couronne, we visit the weekend home of Corneille, bought by his father in 1608. Although the house has been extensively restored, it still faithfully evokes life in a country house in 17th century France. There will be time to stroll in the playwright's charming garden before we drive back to Rouen.

Flaubert's father was surgeon at the Rouen Hospital and, at the time of Gustave's birth, the family lived in an apartment attached to the hospital, now a Museum of Flaubert and Medical History. Young Gustave loved to see the corpses in the morgue, or climb a tree so he could watch his father amputate limbs and listen to the screams of the poor patients. Medical details fill his novels, so he clearly never forgot these experiences. We will explore the museum, seek out the contending parrot for inspiration for Loulou, the parrot of his utterly beautiful *A Simple Heart*, and enjoy the museum's small garden.

Dinner tonight promises to be a very special gastronomic experience. The restaurant of La Couronne is where cookbook writer Julia Child ate her first meal in France in 1948. The food was so good that she decided to spend the rest of her life sharing the wonders of French cuisine with the world. (Overnight Rouen) BD

Honfleur – 2 nights

Day 7: Friday 14 June, Rouen – Rives-en-Seine – Étretat – Honfleur

- Musée Victor Hugo (Maison Villequier), Rives-en-Seine
- Time at leisure in Étretat
- Le Clos Lupin, Étretat
- La Guillette, Maupassant's house in Étretat: exterior tour of the house & afternoon tea

When novelist and critic André Gide was asked to name the greatest 19th century poet, he gave a famed response: 'Victor Hugo – alas!'. Gide did not like Hugo as a man, but the poetry sent him into raptures. This morning we visit the manor house at Villequier, once home to the Vacquerie family of wealthy shipowners. In 1843 Hugo's daughter Léopoldine married Charles Vacquerie. Six months later the young couple tragically drowned in a boating accident and Hugo was devastated. The spot is now marked by a statue of Hugo, with a line from his poem *A Villequier* which speaks movingly of his loss. The couple were buried in the village churchyard, as were Hugo's long-suffering wife Adèle and his other daughter. The manor house is now an excellent museum, furnished in the style of the period and with many items connected with the life of this extraordinary man.

The beach of Étretat is familiar to anyone who loves French art. Its chalk cliffs form three natural arches and a pointed formation called The Needle (this area is called the Alabaster Coast). They were painted by Eugène Boudin, Charles Daubigny, Gustave Courbet and Claude Monet. Guy de Maupassant spent most of his childhood at Étretat and, on one memorable day, he rescued from the water an Englishman named Algernon Swinburne – the two writers became friends. This relationship resulted in his short story *The Englishman at Étretat*. Maurice Leblanc's 1909 novel *The Hollow Needle* features these rocks prominently. When a TV series was made of Leblanc's Lupin novels, much of the filming was done in this area. There will be time after lunch for a promenade along this famous beach.

Gentleman thief and detective Arsène Lupin, who features in 17 novels and 39 novellas by Maurice Leblanc, is the French equivalent to Sherlock Holmes. Le Clos Arsène Museum in Étretat is in Leblanc's former half-timbered home, and it displays items associated with Lupin. Today it is one of the most visited writers' houses in France. Growing in the garden are lupins, originally planted by the author in honour of his own creation.

La Guillette was once the home of Guy de Maupassant. He loved it. The land was originally acquired by his mother, Laure, and it was in this house that he wrote his first novel, *A Life*, which was his filial tribute to her. He adored the garden there and planted strawberries, apple trees and poplars. We will enjoy afternoon tea in the loved gardens of this brilliant writer.

Our base for the next two nights is the charming town of Honfleur. Honfleur was a major defensive port in the 15th century and today has one of Normandy's most appealing harbours. (Overnight Honfleur) B

Day 8: Saturday 15 June, Honfleur – Le Havre – Honfleur

- Literary walking tour of Honfleur
- Musée Eugène Boudin, Honfleur
- Le Pavillon de la Reine, Équemauville
- MuMa – Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre
- Dinner at Le Manoir des Impressionistes

We begin the day by exploring this picturesque town. Charles Baudelaire, the radical French poet who wrote of loneliness and decay, was very happy in Honfleur when he lived there in 1859 with his mother. Proust drew on the place, and other harbour towns along the coast, to create his fictional Balbec for *In Search of Lost Time*. Flaubert also used it as a setting in his fiction. We will see the church of Sainte-Catherine, the largest wooden church in France, as well as the port's defences and trading warehouses, and the quaint shops and houses.

The seascape painter Eugène Boudin was born in Honfleur in 1824 and is renowned not only for his lovely paintings of sea and sky, but also for having 'discovered' the young Monet. The Boudin Museum documents the appeal of the place to Boudin and to Courbet, Sisley, Pissarro, Monet, Renoir, Jongkind and Cézanne, who all came to paint.

The Pavillon de la Reine is located on the hillside overlooking the city of Honfleur and the estuary of the Seine, in the town of Équemauville. Built for Louis XVI and the Queen Marie-Antoinette in 1786, this magnificent residence later became the abode of local writer Lucie Delarue-Mardrus during the 20th century. We shall visit the interior of the house with the owner and enjoy a buffet lunch.

At nearby Le Havre is the André Malraux Modern Art Museum. Our guided tour will focus on the paintings of Boudin and the French Impressionists. The gallery was named for the Minister of Culture at the time it was opened in 1961. It has a flexible exhibition space, in harmony with its marine setting (it faces the sea).

Appropriately, after our art-filled day, dinner will be enjoyed at Le Manoir des Impressionistes, an 18th century manor house facing the sea at the gates of Honfleur. (Overnight Honfleur) BLD

Bayeux – 2 nights

Day 9: Sunday 16 June, Honfleur – Deauville – Cabourg – Beuvron-en-Auge – Bayeux

- Time at leisure to stroll along the Promenade des Planches de Deauville
- Villa du Temps retrouvé (Villa of Time Found): dedicated to the imagination of Marcel Proust & the Belle Époque era, Cabourg
- Beuvron-en-Auge

Normandy's Côte Fleurie is Proust territory, for this was where he set memorable scenes in his great *In Search of Lost Time*, a novel in seven volumes. Deauville is one of the most prestigious seaside resorts in France and in Proust's day, it was the holiday destination for the fashionable and rich. It's the location for Ian Fleming's casino in *Casino Royale*, Fitzgerald mentions it in *The Great Gatsby* (Tom and Daisy honeymooned there), it was the birthplace of Coco Chanel's career in clothes design, the first act of Noel Coward's *Private Lives* is set in Deauville and it has been used as the setting for many movies. The Prix de

Deauville for songs and books is awarded annually. The Deauville Promenade des Planches was *the* place to be seen! We may not be dressed like Chanel or her clients, but we too will stroll the famous promenade.

When Marcel Proust visited, he went on from Deauville to Cabourg, which becomes the fictional 'Balbec' of his writings. It's a terrain of precise social observation and yet also a dream destination. Proust stayed at Cabourg's Grand Hotel (today it serves its guests obligatory madeleines in Proust's honour), and guests can order a 'cocktail Proust' in the evening. It's on the beach at Cabourg that Proust's character Marcel meets Albertine with her "laughing eyes". Today the town no longer attracts the rich and titled, but its topography has changed little since Proust used the place for his novel.

In Cabourg we will visit the Villa du Temps retrouvé (Villa of Time Found), an innovative museum which tells the story of the Belle Époque era. It is located in an elegant family villa built in the 1860s and allows visitors to learn the early history of the town, step back in time to its Edwardian age, and to follow in the footsteps of Proust, one of the greatest of 20th century novelists.

Beuvron-en-Auge is an archetypal Norman village, with its half-timbered houses, 18th century inn, and its shops and stalls of local produce. It is on the Norman Cider Route and holds a cider festival every autumn. This is another of the 'Most Beautiful Villages of France' – not surprising that artist David Hockney has chosen to live here. There will be time to explore this charming village before we make our way to Bayeux. (Overnight Bayeux) B

Day 10: Monday 17 June, Bayeux

- Walking tour of Bayeux
- Bayeux Tapestry Museum
- Afternoon at leisure

Bayeux was the first town to be liberated by the Allies in 1944 as it is only 7km from the coast of the English Channel. The Aure River flows through the town, which has many picturesque streets. We will have a guided tour of the town in the morning, with stops at lace-making establishments and at the cathedral.

Today Bayeux is most famous for its tapestry, an extraordinary piece of story-telling in comic strip form. The 230-foot long piece, commissioned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, was inspired by manuscript scrolls. It tells the story of King Harold's defeat at the Battle of Hastings. Wry comments on its borders, Latin inscriptions and vivid illustrations from one end to the other, make the tapestry a most entertaining 'read'.

Novelist Muriel Barbery, author of *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, was born in Bayeux.

The afternoon will be at leisure to explore this most attractive town. (Overnight Bayeux) B

Vitré – 2 nights

Day 11: Tuesday 18 June, Bayeux – Granville – Fougères – Vitré

- Musée Christian Dior, set in his seaside childhood home, Granville
- Musée d'Art Moderne Richard Anacréon: a collection of paintings, graphic works and books from the early 20th century
- Guided literary walking tour of Fougères: in the footsteps of Victor Hugo, Juliette Drouet & Honoré de Balzac

The art of dress design reached a peak with Christian Dior. The Belle Époque villa 'Les Rhumbs', perched on the cliffs at Granville, was his childhood home and is the only museum in France dedicated to a couturier. We will visit the museum and will learn more about how the son of a fertilizer manufacturer came to found one of the iconic fashion houses of the world.

The Richard Anacréon Museum of Modern Art is in Granville. Most of the works it presents are from the early 20th century – Picasso, Cocteau, Utrillo, Jacob, Genet and Vlaminck. Anacréon was a Parisian collector of art and books, and was a friend to many of the artists of his day.

The town of Fougères in Brittany has a castle more than a thousand years old (it was founded in 1020), cobbled streets and half-timbered houses. It is officially 'a town of art and history' and has many literary connections. Juliette Drouet, Victor Hugo's most faithful mistress (who he once said was far lovelier than Shakespeare's Juliet) was born in the town. Today there is a local cultural centre named after her. Poet Théophile Briant was also born in Fougères, as was children's writer Yak Rivais. The writer Chateaubriand visited his sister in winter (but was not impressed by Fougère's social life), Balzac visited in 1828 and as a result wrote his novel *Les Chouans*, and Victor Hugo stayed there with Juliette in 1836. Our guide will take us on a short walking tour in the footsteps of these writers.

We travel on to Vitré, one of the most impressive medieval towns in Brittany. It will be our base for two nights. (Overnight Vitré) B

Day 12: Wednesday 19 June, Vitré – Combourg – Bazouges-la-Pérouse – Vitré

- Morning walking tour of Vitré: in the footsteps of Marquise de Sévigné
- Château de Combourg, medieval fortress and birthplace of François-René de Chateaubriand: guided tour and light lunch
- Château la Ballue, Bazouges-la-Pérouse, a popular spot for writers including Victor Hugo: Guided tour of the gardens & afternoon tea

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* Victor Hugo praised the Vitré as a "Gothic city entire, complete, homogenous". It is situated on the slopes of the Vilaine river valley, and with its castle, ramparts, ancient streets and religious heritage, is a perfect example of a French town of five hundred years ago. Claude-Étienne Savary, orientalist and translator of the Koran, was born in the town. This morning we will take a guided walk which will show us some of the architectural and historical treasures of Vitré.

The Château du Combourg is a medieval castle perched on a small hill by the beautifully named Lac Tranquille. In 1761 the family of writer François-René de Chateaubriand acquired the property and it was here that he spent his childhood. In his memoirs, he wrote "I became what I am in the woods of Combourg", and the castle has come to be seen as the birthplace of Romanticism in France. In the 1870s the castle was restored by the prominent architect Viollet-le-Duc, and it remains in private hands today. Chateaubriand was hugely influential in the 19th century. He saw himself as the greatest lover, the greatest writer and the greatest philosopher and was not only a writer, but a diplomat, historian and politician (he also gave his name to a Chateaubriand steak). This will be a special opportunity to see the home that meant so much to him.

Built in 1620 and restored several times, secluded Château de la Ballue is a small gem, something out of a fairy-tale. We will explore its elegant formal gardens with owner Marie-Françoise Mathon, and will partake of afternoon tea there as well. Through its history, many literary guests have enjoyed the comforts of the house and grounds – Hugo, Balzac, Chateaubriand, and Musset.

As we journey back to Vitré we will stop briefly to admire the Château des Rochers Sévigné, 17th century home to the Marquise de Sévigné (1626 – 1696), famed for the letters she wrote during the time of Louis XIV. She had many happy visits here and wrote letters to her daughter, the Comtesse de Grignan, from its rooms. (Overnight Vitré) BL

La Châtre – 3 nights

Day 13: Thursday 20 June, Vitré – Saché – La Châtre

- Château de Saché: writers house museum dedicated to Honoré de Balzac

The Château de Saché in the Indres Valley, was the property of Jean de Margonne, lover of Balzac's mother and father of her son Henri. De Margonne welcomed young Honoré to his delightful château whenever Balzac wanted to visit, and the place became the setting for several of the novels in Balzac's majestic *Human Comedy*, his collection of about 100 linked stories and novels which attempts to reflect every aspect of French society of the time. He often returned to stay as an adult, to "replenish" his brain, escape the debt collectors who regularly came to call, and to write novels. *Le Père Goriot* and *Le Lys dans la Vallée* were both written at Saché. "I grew to love its silence, its great wizened trees, and that mysterious aura that pervades its solitary vale", he enthused. Today the building contains an excellent museum to Balzac, displaying the writing desk on which so many tormented characters were created, and his simple bed (which did not give him much rest – he wrote for about 16 hours per day!)

The town of La Châtre is right in the centre of France, in the beautiful valley of the Indre river. This is George Sand country – she was born in the area, loved it and she made it the setting of many of her novels. The town has a museum dedicated to her life and writings in its old fortress tower (once the local prison). We will take a walk through the heart of the town, seeing medieval buildings, ancient churches, and places associated with this great French woman writer. (Overnight La Châtre) BL

Day 14: Friday 21 June, La Châtre – Lourouer – Montipouret – Épineuil-le-Fleuriel – La Châtre

- Église Saint-Laurent, Lourouer: tour of 12th-century frescoes
- Maison de George Sand, Nohant
- Picnic lunch at Moulin d'Angibault, Montipouret, Montipouret. Sand wrote *Le Meunier d'Angibault* in 1844 after visiting the mill
- Maison École du Grand Meaulnes, Épineuil-le-Fleuriel: home of Alain Fournier from 1891-1898 and where he set his novel *Le Grand Meaulnes*
- Evening at leisure with option to visit the Musée George Sand et de la Vallée Noire, La Châtre

George Sand (Amandine Aurore Dupin) is the most celebrated French female novelist of the 19th century. She was famed not only for her writings, but for her love affairs (with poet Alfred de Musset, and with the composer Chopin) and for her radical political ideas. Today we will follow in her footsteps around this beautiful part of France.

The church of Saint-Laurent in Lourouer has beautifully preserved Romanesque frescoes from the 12th century and others marked by Gothic influence. Discovered around twenty years ago, we recognise the features of a coherent Passion-Resurrection ensemble. In the choir, decorated with Louis XIV woodwork, the latest restorations have revealed a combat scene between a knight and a dragon and above the axis window, the Christ of the Apocalypse.

Next we visit her beloved Nohant, and explore the small château she inherited from her grandmother. Here

she entertained literary and artistic friends, Balzac, Flaubert, Turgenev, Liszt and Delacroix. The local community loved her for her good works, and she loved the place in return, using it as a setting in her works, putting on plays in the theatre she had specially built, and eventually being placed to rest in the local cemetery. George Sand's many literary admirers have visited Nohant in her honour. Edith Wharton came with Henry James on their *Motor-Flight through France* and named their car 'George' after her. Matthew Arnold visited to research an essay on her. Inside one can see Chopin's piano, a table set for her prestigious dinner guests, and the puppet theatre where she put on plays with her son. There will be time to stroll in her enchanting garden and visit her grave.

Our 'pique-nique' for lunch will be eaten in the grounds of the Angibault water mill, setting for Sand's novel *Le Meunier d'Angibault*.

After lunch, we drive to Épineuil-le-Fleuriel and go to school. This is no ordinary school, but the school attended by novelist Alain Fournier, whose book *Le Grand Meaulnes*, published in 1913, is a haunting tale of the passage from adolescence to adulthood of two school friends. Rich in evocation of rural life and landscape, this novel has been highly influential, inspiring John Fowles' *The Magus*, several movie versions, a pop song, and a symphony. (Overnight La Châtre) BL

Day 15: Saturday 22 June, La Châtre – Boussac-Bourg – Crozant – Gargilesse-Dampierre – Chassignolles – La Châtre

- Château de Boussac, Boussac-Bourg: George Sand's holiday place; part of her novel *Jeanne* is set here
- La Vallée des Peintres, a 4km walk in the valley around Crozant: in the footsteps of Impressionist painters including Claude Monet & Armand Guillaumin (incl. picnic lunch)
- Walking tour of Gargilesse-Dampierre including a visit to George Sand's Villa Algira
- Piano concert by Cyril Huvé in Chassignolles
- Dinner at a local restaurant in La Châtre

The Château du Boussac, near Limousin, was constructed in the 14th century. The castle had many treasures hidden away in its rooms and in 1841 writer Prosper Mérimée discovered the incredible 'Lady and the Unicorn' tapestries in one of its rooms. They were suffering from damp and rats. His friend George Sand drew public attention to the plight of the tapestries in 1844 and wrote about them in her novel *Jeanne*. As a result, they were moved, repaired, and eventually placed in the Cluny Museum in Paris, where they are a major attraction.

The village of Crozant is on the river Creuse and its delightful scenery inspired many artists in the 19th century. There were so many that the 'Crozant School' was named for the group, and today there is a Painters' Walk in their footsteps. Armand Guillaumin, Pierre Ernest Ballue, Ernst Josephson, Alfred Smith, Fernand Maillaud, Clémentine Ballot and Solange Christaflour were members of the group. We'll do a part of the walk and see the landscapes that so attracted them.

Then we go on to Gargilesse, another of the 'Most Beautiful Villages of France' and the location of a house bought for George Sand by her lover Alexandre Manceau. She often spent time there so as to have privacy, long walks in the countryside, swims in the river, and inspiration. She wrote of it in 1859 in *Walks Around a Village*. Restored by her daughter, it still has its "two small bleached rooms with lime, ceiled out of rough wood, furnished with beds of wild cherry tree and large chairs braided with straw" that she loved. It is now a small museum.

Our day ends with a special visit to renowned French pianist Cyril Huvé's private concert hall, where he will

perform music by Chopin for us on a grand piano dating from Chopin's time. (Overnight La Châtre) BLD

Fontainebleau – 1 night

Day 16: Sunday 23 June, La Châtre – Bourges – Saint Sauveur-en-Puisaye – Fontainebleau

- Walking tour of Bourges incl. UNESCO World Heritage Cathédrale St-Étienne
- Maison de Colette, Saint Sauveur-en-Puisaye

This morning we travel to the gorgeous city of Bourges, capital of the Cher department. It is dominated by its great Gothic cathedral with 13th century stained-glass windows, a UNESCO World Heritage site. A guided tour will take us through the medieval streets, part of a sixty-five hectare district of half-timbered houses and fine town-houses.

This afternoon we visit the birthplace of Colette, one of the most popular French novelists of the early 20th century. She began as the respectable daughter of a tax collector, but later she broke away from conventionality and appeared virtually nude on stage, mixed with poets and transvestites, took many lovers and described Bohemian Paris in her novels. She was born in 1873 in the village of Château de St-Sauveur and we will visit her home there. She never quite recovered from leaving this beloved house and in her writing tried to recapture the lost paradise of her childhood. She re-named the village Montigny-en-Fresnois in her scandalous *Claudine* novels.

We travel on to Fontainebleau, where we will be based for one night. (Overnight Fontainebleau) B

Saint-Germain-en-Laye – 3 nights

Day 17: Monday 24 June, Fontainebleau – Milly-la-Forêt – Bièvres – Saint-Germain-en-Laye

- Saint-Blaise des Simples Chapel, Milly-la-Forêt, resting place of Jean Cocteau (subject to restoration works being completed)
- Château des Roches: Maison Littéraire de Victor Hugo incl. lunch
- Afternoon at leisure in Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Artist, writer, filmmaker, designer and critic Jean Cocteau was one of the foremost creatives of the surrealist, avant-garde and Dadaist movements and was hugely influential in the early 20th century. In 1947 he settled in the village of Milly-la-Forêt in the forest of Fontainebleau. With him was his lover, actor Jean Marais, later replaced in his life by Edouard Dermit. Cocteau bought an old house and the last seventeen years of his life were spent there. We will see the Saint-Blaise des Simples chapel, once part of a leper colony. It was decorated in 1959 by Jean Cocteau who created pictures of the herbs used to treat lepers – aconite, valerian, mint and buttercup. Cocteau was buried within the chapel.

In the village of Marigny Brizay, a place with wine-making traditions stretching back to the 12th century, is the Château des Roches. When phylloxera struck in the 19th century, the vineyard was producing hybrid vines, which proved crucially important when traditional vines around the country were being ravaged by the virus. At one time the manor belonged to patron of the arts Bertin l'Ainé and his guests included Liszt, Chateaubriand, Berlioz and Ingres. Victor Hugo would get the stagecoach from his Paris home to come and relax at Bertin's home. His wanderings in the valley resulted in several poems. "Here the soul contemplates, listens, adores", he wrote happily. Hugo's letters, engravings, photographs and books are on display. On his visits he rented a room for his mistress Juliette at a nearby hamlet. We will have lunch there after our visit before heading to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where the afternoon will be at leisure.

We stay for the last nights of our tour at the superb Pavillon Henri IV in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, with panoramic views of Paris. This charming neoclassical building, now a boutique hotel, is all that remains of a vast château, birthplace of the Sun King, Louis XIV. Alexandre Dumas was very fond of the Pavillon Henri IV and wrote much of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* there. Many other celebrities stayed as well – Liszt, Pasteur, Sarah Bernhardt, Offenbach (who composed on his visits), George Sand, Daudet, Zola, Hugo and King George V. (Overnight Overnight Saint Germain-en-Laye) BL

Day 18: Tuesday 25 June, Saint-Germain-en-Laye – Villebon – Illiers-Combray – Saint-Germain-en-Laye

- Château de Villebon: the setting for Guermantes castle in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*
- Musée Marcel Proust: Maison de Tante Léonie, Illiers-Combray

Marcel Proust was a novelist, critic and essayist, best known for his monumental *In Search of Lost Time*, a seven-volume novel of over 3000 pages and with more than 2000 characters. It is a book about the rediscovery of the past through random stimulations in the present. Its style recreates the psychological processes of memory. Today we follow Proust and see the landscapes and houses which inspired this great work. Proust was born in Paris, but it was the small town of Illiers in north central France, where he spent childhood holidays, that is now 'Proust Country'. He called it Combray. In fact, so famous did he make Illiers, that the town changed its name to Illiers-Combray in honour of the fictional name he bestowed upon it.

We begin with the Château de Villebon, residence of his character the Duc de Guermantes (Proust calls it Château de Guermantes). It was built in 1391 and is a medieval jewel of a castle, with crenellated towers, a moat and working drawbridge, and lovely formal gardens. It is privately owned, but the owners will show us around.

There is a local delicacy called a madeleine. Shaped like a scallop shell, this little cake was originally made for pilgrims on the route to Compostela. However, madeleines are now one of the most famous 'literary' foods of all time, thanks to Proust. At the beginning of *Swann's Way* (the opening novel of *In Search of Lost Time*) the narrator eats a madeleine dipped into lime tea: "And all at once the memory appeared to me ... The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday morning in Combray my aunt Léonie would give to me after dipping it in her tea." You will sample a delicious madeleine with your lunch, in honour of this famous scene and perhaps you will create wonderful memories for yourselves?

The nearby Pré-Catalan Garden is the Parc de Tonsonville of Proust's novel. It was designed by Proust's uncle who was a horticulturist – we shall enjoy a stroll in this romantic and very pretty spot.

Our last Proustian visit of the day will be to the 'Maison de Tante Léonie', the house where young Proust stayed as a boy and which he describes so accurately. It has been restored to exactly as described in his opening pages – fiction has shaped its present reality. The museum also displays manuscripts, letters, photographs and other items of Proustian memorabilia. (Overnight Saint Germain-en-Laye) BL

Day 19: Wednesday 26 June, Saint-Germain-en-Laye – Médan – Le Port-Marly – Saint-Germain-en-Laye

- Maison d'Émile Zola, Médan
- Château de Médan: home of Maurice Maeterlinck
- Château de Monte-Cristo, Le Port-Marly: built as a residence for Alexandre Dumas
- Farewell Meal

Émile Zola (1840 – 1902) was the greatest writer in the French school of naturalism. Friend and supporter of

many of the Impressionists, he also bravely supported Alfred Dreyfus and was probably murdered as a result.

This morning we visit his home at Médan. Thanks to the enormous success of his novel *Drunkard*, Zola was able to purchase the house in 1878. It was within its walls that he wrote many of the novels of his great Rougon-Macquart series, including the brilliant *Germinal*, *The Earth* and *Nana*. It was near the train that could take him to Paris, or bring his literary friends on visits. In 1880 he and some of those friends published *Les Soirées de Médan*, a collection of realistic stories about the Franco-Prussian War. The star of the collection was Maupassant's *Boule de Suif* (*Ball of Fat*) and Zola was astonished that his young protégé had surpassed them all.

Médan's château was painted by Paul Cézanne, a close boyhood friend of Zola's. He was one of Zola's first visitors and in 1879 he borrowed Zola's rowing boat, *Nana*, and did much of the painting mid-river. A passer-by, unimpressed by what he saw as an amateur effort, asked Cézanne if he was "trying (his) hand at painting?" The Château de Médan is in private hands, but we will enjoy a tour of the house and grounds.

Our tour began with Alexandre Dumas, a man who shamelessly plagiarised and borrowed and paid collaborators to write parts of his books for him. On encountering his son in a Paris street one day, Dumas senior asked Dumas junior, "Have you read my latest book?", to which his son replied, "No, have you?" Yet none of his collaborators ever made it on their own. Dumas always added his own special magic and his brilliance as a story-teller. He also added magic to his house, the Château de Monte-Cristo, named after his best-selling book. It was his "paradise on earth" and he spent a fortune on it. Too big a fortune, for only 2 years later he had to sell it to pay the debts. Here he wrote *Adventures with my Pets* which includes tales about his pet vulture; here he began his monumental *Grand Dictionary of Cuisine*; here he entertained Hugo, George Sand and his many mistresses (who he sometimes shared with his son). It is a truly delightful building and grounds, and a fabulous last literary visit of our tour. (Overnight Saint Germain-en-Laye) BLD

Day 20: Thursday 27 June, Saint-Germain-en-Laye; Tour ends

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Saint-Germain-en-Laye is today virtually a suburb of Paris, but used to be a separate town. Its royal connections are fascinating – after England's Glorious Revolution of 1688, King James II of England saw out his exile here and is buried in the parish church. Today it looks peaceful and pretty with its tree-lined streets, but in the Occupation it was headquarters to the German army.

In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to the Paris CDG Airport. B

Accommodation

ASA has selected 3- and 4-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with en suite bathroom.

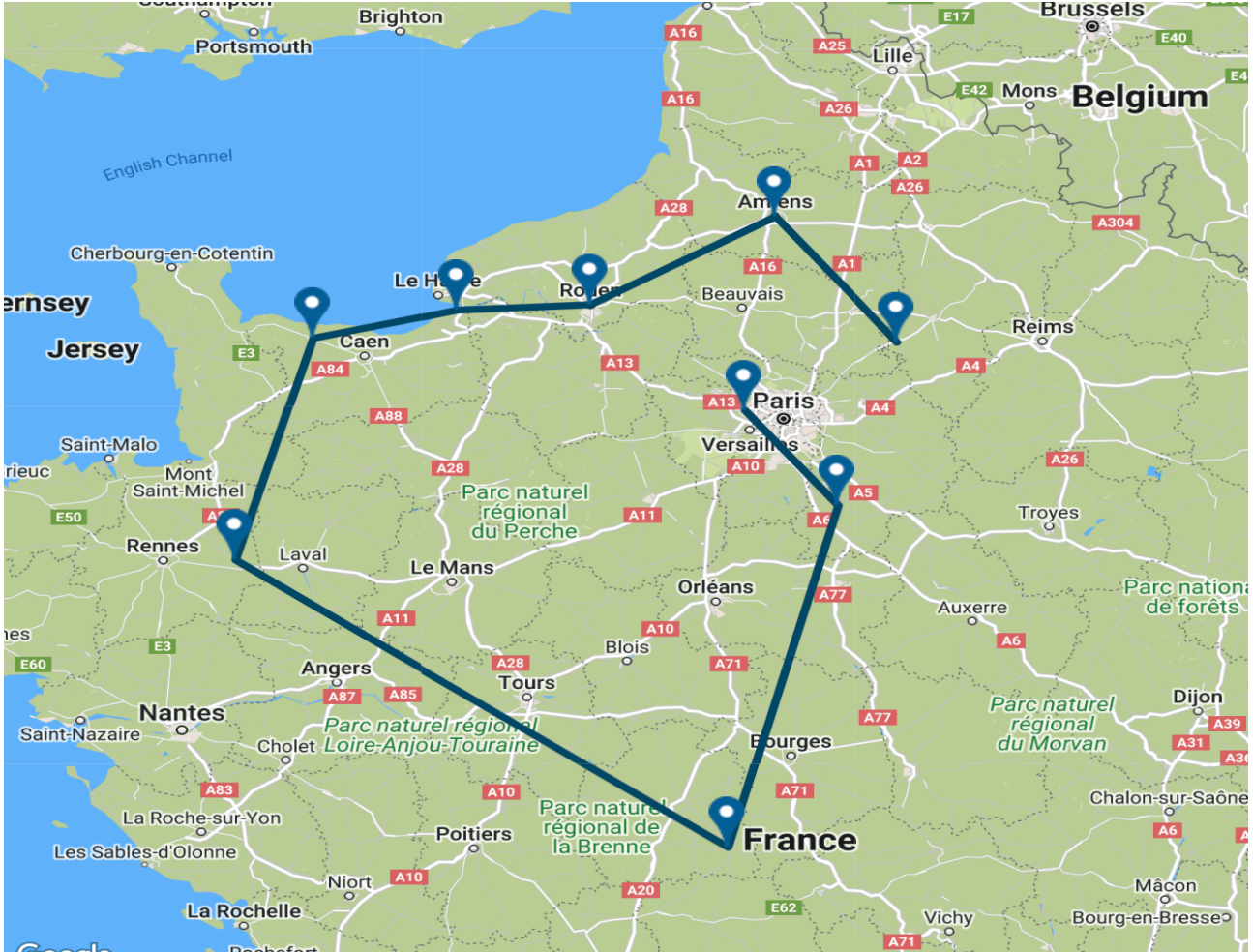
- Villers-Cotterêts (2 nights): 3-star Hôtel Le Régent – a charming hotel situated in a former coach house in the city centre. www.hotel-leregent.com
- Amiens (1 night): 4-star Mercure Amiens Cathédrale – situated in front of France's biggest medieval cathedral, which is listed as a Unesco World Heritage site. mercureamienscathedrale.com
- Rouen (3 nights): 4-star Mercure Rouen Centre Cathédrale – 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 (2 nights): 4-star Grand Hôtel du Luxembourg – located in a 17th century heritage-listed building 700m from the famous Tapestry Museum and the Cathedral. www.grand-hotel-luxembourg.com
- Vitré (2 nights): 4-star Le Magic Hôtel & Spa – situated 100m from the medieval castle. www.hotel-lemagic.com
- La Châtre (3 nights): 3-star Hôtel du Lion D'Argent – located 500m from the town centre and 750m from the George Sand Museum. www.laliondargent.com
- Fontainebleau (1 night): 4-star Mercure Château de Fontainebleau – a private mansion located 500 m from the famous imperial Château de Fontainebleau and its gardens. www.mercurechateaufontainebleau.com
- Saint-Germain-en-Laye (3 nights): 4-star Pavillon Henri IV – once the residence of Louis XIV - the 'Sun King' -- this charming hotel offers an exceptional panoramic view of the Seine Valley all the way to Paris. www.pavillonhenri4.fr

Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

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.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$15,280.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$1960.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3- to 4-star hotels
- Breakfast daily, lunches and dinners indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Transfer from CDG Airport to Villers-Cotterêts
- Hotel-TGV station departure transfer
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour Handbook
- Entrance fees
- 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
- Departure airport transfer
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visa (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 20-day Literary Tour of France involves:

- A daily schedule generally involving an early-morning departure (between 8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (5.30-6.00pm).
- 2-3 site visits most days, involving up to 1-2 hours of walking at each (sometimes on uneven terrain, cobbled streets, and steep slopes) and/or standing, interspersed with coach travel.
- 3- to 4-star hotels with eight hotel changes.
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage 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.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME In Search of Literary France
TOUR DATES 8 June - 27 June 2024

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

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

Passport Number _____ Expiry date ____ / ____ / ____ Nationality _____
 Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed I'm renewing my passport ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date ____ / ____ / ____
 I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

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 _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____

Address _____

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

EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

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. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** 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. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything?
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen?

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs?
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine?

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic?

Are you insulin dependent?

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness?
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

I accept the conditions on this booking form I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

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

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel Tour Deposit
- Balance of Payment Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- Travel Insurance Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation)

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 & 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
