

# Cruise in Champagne on Serenity Barge





## Welcome aboard

Sailing along the peaceful canal, afternoon visits to vineyards, charming villages or historic cities and of course, plenty of champagne – what’s not to love about a barge cruise through France’s beautiful Champagne region?

Our all-inclusive cruises include daily tour guide led excursions, all meals, all drinks onboard and transport to/from Paris. We typically spend 3 to 5 hours cruising each morning through the varied landscape of peaceful countryside and vine clad hillsides, passing historic villages and châteaux on the way. Traveling along the canal at around 6km/h (3 mph) Serenity is in no hurry, giving you the opportunity to truly get away from it all and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

In fact barging really is the ultimate in slow travel, because not only is there time to drink in the scenery whilst cruising but our excursions focus on revealing the hidden places and local people of our area, far from the tourist crowds.

With three en-suite cabins, you can either charter the whole barge or book an individual cabin. Our approach is good old-fashioned hospitality – we hope you arrive as guests and depart as friends.



**Graeme and Claire**  
Owners and your hosts aboard

We look forward to welcoming you aboard!



## Your barge

Serenity has been traveling Europe's canals since 1937, first as a cargo barge carrying bulk products like grain and wood and, since 2004, giving guests the opportunity to experience the waterways of France.

At 128ft (38m) long, she offers all the space and comfort of a boutique hotel, whilst transporting you through tranquil countryside, beautiful villages and the heart of historic towns.

And from the moment we pick you up in Paris our crew will take care of everything so you can just sit back and relax.

## Facilities onboard

- Three ensuite cabins
- 480 sq ft saloon with large windows and lounge seating for six people
- Dining area comfortably seating six guests
- Large outdoor deck area with table & chairs
- Outdoor jacuzzi on deck
- Wheelhouse with 360° windows and seating for guests
- Wifi throughout the barge
- Satellite television (UK freeview channels), DVD player and stereo system
- Library of books, magazines and board games
- Bikes for exploring
- 9 seater vehicle and driver for excursions and transfers



Our three guest cabins are all en-suite (with shower) and double or twin beds.

Generously proportioned at over 150 sq ft, each cabin has island style beds (accessible on all three sides) as well as ample hanging space and drawers so you can unpack and feel at home. The window and skylights provide a light, airy feel.

Our rooms have all the convenience and comfort you'd expect, with independently controlled air conditioning, 300 thread count linens, hairdryer, bathrobe/slippers and toiletries from L'Occitane.



## ....or book an individual cabin

We know that lots of you want to cruise just as a couple or with a friend, so each year we offer a number of 'cabin cruises', where you can book an individual cabin. And with only three cabins on board, you'll be sharing the barge with a maximum of four other guests.

As soon as your deposit is paid your cruise departure is guaranteed, regardless of whether any other cabins are booked. In fact you might end up getting a private cruise for just the two of you, which happened to one lucky couple last year.

“Thank you so much for a fabulous six days on board the good ship Serenity. We've regaled friends many times about the barge trip and the extensive itinerary you prepared for us”

*Shirley and Daron*

With our cabin cruises we offer a balance of excursions that showcase the best of the area's wine, countryside and history. You'll find detailed itineraries for each cabin cruise departure on our website.



## Charter the whole barge....

Being a small ship you have the option to charter the whole barge for your group - it's like having your own 'private floating villa' that moves to a different location each day and as we do all the organisation, everyone can relax and enjoy their holiday.

For our charter cruises we create a bespoke itinerary of excursions, tailored to your interests - and with just your group onboard the pace is totally up to you.

Able to accommodate up to six people, a charter cruise on Serenity is great for groups of friends celebrating a special birthday or just getting together to relax and enjoy each others company. Or if you're a family looking for a multi-generation holiday there's the flexibility and freedom to cater to everyone's interests and energy levels.

For a larger group we can partner with another barge and travel in tandem, accommodating up to 12 people.





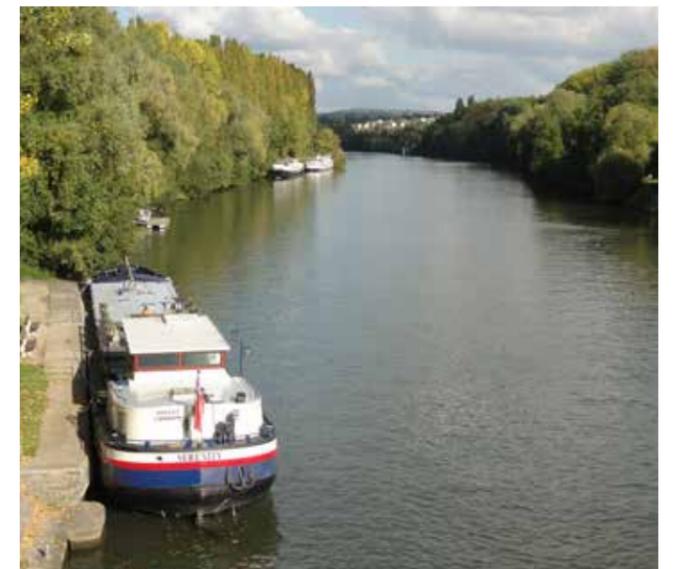
## Relaxed cruising

Cruising on both the winding River Marne and man-made 19th century canals, Serenity travels through the heart of the Champagne region. In fact it was these very waterways that helped make champagne famous, as for over 100 years the wine was transported by barge to Paris and the port of Rouen to be shipped across the world.

As the barge travels at only around 3 miles per hour (6 kilometres per hour), there's time to look around and take in the beautiful tranquility of the countryside sliding past. Serenity halts frequently at locks which raise or lower the canal to match the contours of the landscape. The barge slowly slides into the chamber with just centimetres to spare before the rear gates close behind us. The lock then slowly fills or empties before the front gates swing open and we continue on with our journey.

Our voyage takes us through the varied landscape of the French countryside past vineyards, châteaux and through woodland and charming villages. Still an important trade route used by barges carrying grain to Belgium, today the canal is a peaceful place with wildlife, fishermen patiently waiting for their catch, pleasure boaters and canoeists. With a tarmac towpath alongside, the canal is perfect for walking or cycling and the short distances between locks mean it's never long before you can hop back on the boat.

While we're travelling, relax on the deck and soak in the scenery, lose yourself in a book, take a nap in the sunshine or, if you want, join the crew and help Graeme with the ropes. You can even soak in the jacuzzi with a glass of something as you watch the champagne countryside gliding past.



“ Wonderful holiday, wonderful people nothing was any bother, truly a great time. Recommend it highly ”

*Jennifer*

# Enchanting excursions

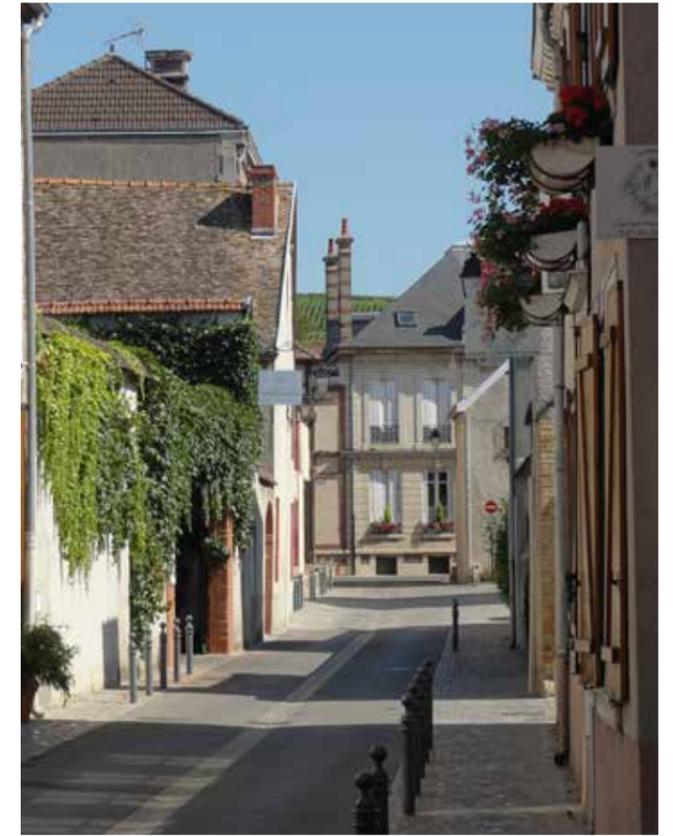
After lunch aboard, each afternoon you'll enjoy an excursion accompanied by a member of the crew. While some visits are just a short walk from our mooring, most days we'll use our comfortable 9-seater van to explore a bit further.

Having been in the Champagne region for several years now we have done the hard work for you and found amazing locations that showcase the best of the area's wine, countryside, history and culture. Whether you are meeting a passionate 5th generation winemaker, visiting the historic city of Reims or exploring a privately owned 18th century chateau you'll meet local people and enjoy authentic experiences.

If you're chartering the whole barge, we'll work with you to create a bespoke itinerary for your group. Whether you're village strollers, wine lovers, culture vultures or history buffs we'll find the excursions that will make your holiday with us memorable forever.

We can arrange a myriad of excursions and activities from golf to hot air ballooning, a tour of the WW1 battlefields to a cooking class, to create a cruise totally customised to your group's interests. Or for the champagne connoisseur, we can make arrangements for a tasting or tour at your favourite champagne houses, even those that are not normally open to the public.

As well as our excursions, the relaxed pace also means there's plenty of time to explore by yourself, either on foot or using one of our bikes. Your crew will be happy to give you tips on which way to head so that you might stumble across a charming church, a spectacular view across the vines or a village square boulangerie.



“What a wonderful trip.....it exceeded all our expectations”

*Wilf and Jodie*





## Example Itinerary

### Day 1 Chateau Thierry

We'll meet you in Paris in the afternoon and drive to the barge in our comfortable 9 seater mini-van. A champagne and canapés reception awaits, giving you the chance to get to know your crew. Then there's time to take a stroll or simply unpack and relax before a three course dinner is served on board.

### Day 2 Chateau Thierry to Dormans

This morning we start our cruise east along the Marne river. After lunch on board we visit a small-scale champagne producer. You'll learn about the champagne method on a tour of the cellars, before tasting a range of their champagnes. We'll stop at the WW1 memorial chapel in Dormans, with its stunning views of the river valley below, before wandering back to the barge through the village. Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant on the village square.

### Day 3 Dormans to Damery

We continue along the peaceful winding river this morning to our mooring next to a lock. In the afternoon we visit a vineyard where the grapes go right up to the gorgeous turreted Château Boursault, built in 1843 by Madame Cliquot. And whilst tasting the estate's champagnes, one of the group will be taught how to open a bottle using a sword! Dinner tonight is at a restaurant in a nearby village.

### Day 4 Damery to Mareuil-sur-Ay

On today's cruise we leave the river and enter the man-made canal. Opened in 1845, on the canal the locks are much narrower, meaning that Serenity squeezes in with just centimeters to spare each side. We start our afternoon at Château Pierry, a charming, privately owned 18th century château. Small but perfectly formed, we may well bump into the owner as Claire shows you around, before enjoying a glass of champagne in the garden. Then we'll head to



Epernay, where, on a walk down the famous Avenue of Champagne, you'll learn the story of some of champagne's most iconic names. In the evening we return to Epernay for dinner at one of our favourite restaurants in the city.

### Day 5 Mareuil-sur-Ay to Isse

With the towpath alongside and frequent opportunities to hop on and off the barge in locks, this morning is a perfect opportunity to go for a walk or use one of our bikes. Lunch will be served as Serenity climbs towards the summit of the canal up a chain of 7 locks. Later in the afternoon we will drive through the vineyards to Hautvilliers, often considered one of the prettiest villages in the region. Famous as the home of monk Dom Pérignon, who is often credited with discovering how to make champagne, today this village is home to around 800 people and more than 30 champagne houses! On our guided walk around the village you'll visit the abbey and enjoy another champagne tasting at one of the village's small producers. Tonight it's an informal dinner aboard, giving you the opportunity to make the most of our peaceful spot in the middle of the countryside.

### Day 6 Isse to Sillery

The final day of our journey takes us through the Mont Billy Tunnel. Built in 1860, this tunnel took 15 years to complete and carries the canal underneath the hills of the Montagne de Reims. After lunch on board we visit the historic city of Reims. Every king of France since 1130 was crowned in the city's magnificent gothic cathedral, which is one of the largest cathedrals in France. On a guided walking tour of the city you'll discover the city's history through art deco buildings, hidden mosaics and Roman remains. There's also time for a stop at a lovely patisserie and a spot of shopping. Dinner tonight is a gastronomic treat at a Michelin recommended restaurant.

### Day 7 Sillery

After a relaxed breakfast it's time to bid a sad farewell to Serenity as one of the crew drives you back to Paris.





## Fabulous food

Delicious, fresh, local.... an easy mantra to eat by when you are surrounded by amazing produce in the heart of France.

Each morning starts with a feast of croissants and gorgeous pastries from a local bakery, together with fresh fruit, yogurts and cereals. Lunch is your opportunity to try the pâtes, charcuterie, cheeses and quiches that France is famous for, all accompanied by a feast of salads. Served aboard while the barge is cruising, lunch is typically a relaxed affair at the deck-top dining table, in fact one guest described eating aboard as like the perfect dinner party - tasty food, great wine and no washing up!

Typically you will eat aboard on two evenings during your cruise - one formal three course dinner and one informal barbecue night. On the other evenings you'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. We aim to offer a range of dining experiences across the week from village restaurants filled with locals rather than tourists to Michelin starred dining.

Any special diets can be easily catered for - just let us know when you book.

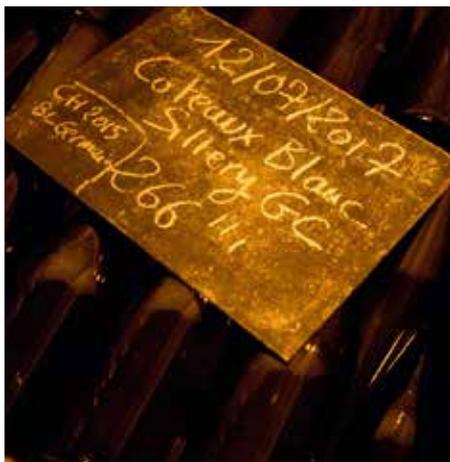
**We passionately believe that eating in local restaurants is the only way to really experience French cuisine - that's why you'll enjoy dinner at one of our favourite local restaurants most evenings.**



## Wonderful wines

More than just a singular style there's actually a dazzling range of champagne styles and terroirs. You'll taste a minimum of 12 different champagnes during your trip, whether it's a tutored tasting with a winemaker or an evening aperitif onboard.

We also offer different wine options with lunch each day, sourced directly from small independent vineyards. During your cruise you'll have the chance to try famous Grand Cru wines and the hidden gems of smaller lesser known vineyards that you'll never taste outside France.



*Serenity*  
Barge

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