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SAINT LOUIS – AQUITAINE – Bordeaux and Gascony *What to do, where to go, what to see?*



SIGHTSEEING DESCRIPTION & OTHER OPTIONS



Bordeaux is the largest wine producing region in France producing over 700 million bottles of wine each year. In particular St Emilion will be well known to you and we have decided to build a cruise based around this region. As we cruise along this tranquil route reminiscent of the Midi as it used to be (so described by a visiting cruise broker recently) our focus will be on delivering a relaxed cruise with gastronomy of the region, fine wines and interesting and diverse visits along the route with a day visit to St Emilion being the jewel in this beautiful crown.

Generally the rhythm of cruising consists of a half day of gliding along the canal: enjoying the countryside as it drifts by with a cool drink in your hand, walking the tow path, or biking into that picturesque town across the sunflower fields. The second half of the day is usually spent in a guided exploration of all that the region offers in historical sights, wine tasting, artisan crafts, and culture.

In keeping with our philosophy of "custom cruising", we will always adapt a cruise to the interests and wishes of the guests on board. Please remember, cycling (using our guest bikes free of charge) or walking along the canal path is always available and we will of course tailor each cruise to the personal preferences of our guests where at all possible.

- **Agen and its Musée des Beaux Arts**

Meander through this beautiful town and stop for a relaxing coffee and visit the museum. Home to a number of Goyas. Agen's fine arts museum, housed in four of the town's Renaissance hotels, will allow you to discover a rich art work collection The buildings themselves, L'hôtel d'Estrades, Vours, Vergès and L'hôtel Monluc offer an inspiring journey through Agen's monumental history. The museum's collection, including five of Goya's paintings, make it one of the most impressive of municipal art collections.



- **The famous Lilly Gardens at Temple sur Lot**



The water lily garden in the village of Le Temple-sur-Lot boasts "Remarkable Garden" status and is the oldest and most prestigious water plant nursery in the world. Established in 1875 by botanist Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac, this magical place is today home to over 250 species of water lily. It was his hybrid water lilies that provided famous Impressionist painter Claude Monet with the inspiration for his Water Lily series. The garden is a wonderful place for a walk and will delight fans of water gardens with its collections of tropical and hardy lotuses and water lilies, its historic pools, exotic greenhouse, growing pools, rose garden, bamboo garden and natural pond crossed by a Japanese bridge.

- **Third generation barrel makers**

Tonnellerie St Martin near Buzet was founded in 1922 and now manufactures 1200 barrels per month for wine producers around the world.

A fascinating insight into a complex and historic business that will show you the manufacturing process and give an understanding of the different aspects of how the barrel influences the wine stored therein.



- **Castle Grangerie, an Armagnac Distillery located in a 12th Century church**



It is here, in the Land of Armagnac in this former monastery transformed into a castle in the eighteenth century, two brothers and their wives welcome you to introduce you to this place of the production of Armagnac, Floc de Gascogne and Agen prunes. Bought by a Bordeaux ship-owner in 1730 and then by their great-grandfather on an impulse, Antoine and Robert constantly renovate and restore the Castle year after year staying true to its history. Through its unique architecture and amazing relics, you will discover during a visit with the owners, an exciting past and enjoy the fruit of their harvest by tasting their Armagnac and Floc. The quality of

production is guaranteed through respect for traditional methods of development and aging in the cellar located in the former chapel.

- **Mas d’Agenais and its Rembrandt painting**

Perched on the top of a limestone terrace overlooking the Garonne Valley and the Canal, Mas d’Agenais is one of the oldest villages in the Lot-et-Garonne. Occupied by the Romans, the site has more than 2000 years of history and offers some remarkable treasures such as the Venus of Mas d’Agenais and Rembrandt’s Christ on the Cross. The village has changed its location three times over the course of its long history. The original settlement, known as Ussubium, dates from between the first and third centuries and is located to the west of the current town centre. The site then moved to its final location and became Pompejacum, a name that it kept until the eleventh century, when the name “Mas” appeared for the first time.



- **Day excursion to St Emilion**



Home of some of the finest and most prestigious wine producers in the world and an incredible underground church carved out of the limestone hill upon which the town is built.

We arrive around 10.30 and enjoy a coffee together in the central square prior to a guided visit to the church. After a little time to explore this historic village it’s time for lunch at one of the excellent local restaurants before we visit our wine distributor in the town for a private tasting of Bordeaux and St Emilion wines. Guests will learn about terroir, the effect of soil, weather and the art of the winemaker.



We leave the distributor with time to spare for shopping and browsing before returning to the barge.

*NB: This is the description of the excursion to Saint-Emilion part of the classic cruise itinerary. Should guests want to learn more about the Grands Crus Wines of Bordeaux and Saint Emilion, Saint Louis offers a **unique optional excursion: “The Saint-Emilion and Bordeaux Wine Experience”**. Additional costs apply. Contact us for more information.*

- **The gem museum, Musee de la Fallotte**

Enjoy a personal guided tour with the owners who welcome you to their private collection which they have gathered over a lifetime of travelling and housed in a beautiful wooden house on the edge of the Canal Lateral a la Garonne.

Discover a unique museum that brings together more than 3000 varieties of minerals from all sources, shells and sand samples brought back from around the world as well as fossils. Your visit is accompanied by Colette and Jean –Pierre as they introduce you to a fascinating journey through the ages and continents.



- **Chateau de Duras**



An impregnable fortress in the *Middle Ages*, then a country retreat during the Age of Enlightenment, the Chateau de Duras (built 12th to 18th centuries) is today a listed historic monument towering over the Dropt valley. The former residence of the Dukes of Duras contains some 30 rooms showcasing the building's history and past splendour. The visit takes in the *Salle des Trois Maréchaux*, the dining room with terrace, the *Salle aux Secrets*, kitchen, bakery, dungeons, wells and *Salle de la Charpente*. The basement contains a museum about the archaeology and ethnology of the Pays de Duras area. The superb 360° panoramic view from the top of the tower – a must!

- **Marmande**

The town of Marmande lies in a fertile market gardening region and is known as the "tomato capital". It offers visitors a range of interesting heritage, including a Gothic church with Renaissance cloister, half-timbered houses in the Labat district and Place Clemenceau, a square with a statue dedicated to the love apple. The 13th- and 14th-century Gothic Notre-Dame church, whose facade features a beautiful rose window, contains an Entombment of Christ and a 17th-century gilded wood Baroque altarpiece. Adjoining the church is a Renaissance cloister dating from 1540 with a well-preserved gallery. It is flanked by a French-style formal garden with "Remarkable Garden" status that contains beautiful topiary art.



- **Local French markets**



At the heart of every town lies the weekly market. Not put on for show or for tourists, these markets provide a huge variety of local produce and are very well attended by the local residents. A fabulous insight into "old France" that continues today. Depending on the other excursions and the direction of travel it may not always be possible to fit a market visit into the schedule.

- **Activities also available:**

- Horse riding
- Distance road cycling
- Golf
- Wine tastings
- Painting

**Subject to availability, timing and practicality. Additional charges may apply for certain visits or activities.*