

Champagne

The River Marne

Panache: 🍷 Deluxe | 👤 12 Passengers | 🍷 6 Crew

La Nouvelle Etoile: 🍷 Ultra Deluxe | 👤 8 Passengers | 🍷 5 Crew

The River Marne flows from Epernay to Paris, meandering through the beautiful region of Champagne. There is a plethora of vineyards spread across the undulating plains as far as the eye can see and there will be plenty of opportunity to sample the sparkling wine to which the region has given its name, including private tastings at renowned champagne houses.

This is also a part of France that is rich in both modern and ancient history and during our voyage we visit a number of significant landmarks, châteaux and one of the finest Gothic cathedrals in the country where 33 kings of France were crowned.

As well as champagne, the region is rich in other delicious products, particularly its wonderful creamy cheeses, with the towns of Meaux and Coulommiers at its heart.

You can cruise the Champagne region aboard the 12 passenger hotel barge Panache (see page 70), or the 8 passenger hotel barge La Nouvelle Etoile (see page 96).

Typical Cuisine Aboard

Gastronomy

Filets de Saumon à la Sauce Champagne;
Blanc de Volailles à la Crème de Maroilles;
Cassiolette de Saint Jacques au Champagne

Wine Cellar

Champagne Frerejean Frère; Champagne
Domaine Pannier; Domaine Ferraton, Saint
Joseph 'La Source'; Domaine Sainte Eugénie
'La Reserve'

Cheese Board

Brie de Meaux, Chaource, Cendré de
Champagne; Langres; Maroilles; Caprice des
Dieux; Belle des Champs

Cruise Highlights

- Private tour and tasting at world-renowned champagne house, Moët & Chandon
- Tour the majestic cathedral in Reims, where the Kings of France were once crowned
- Visit the boutique champagne house of Frerejean Frères and enjoy lunch in the family domaine
- Enjoy a private winery tour and tasting at Maison Pannier, the largest champagne house in the western Marne Valley
- Cruise the pretty River Marne past waterside vineyards
- Visit Château-Thierry, the scene of fierce battles in World War I, and Belleau Wood

Reims Cathedral



Aisne-Marne American Cemetery



Frerejean Frères Champagne Cellars



Moët & Chandon Vineyards



View
deck plan on
page 102-103



ITINERARY

Château-Thierry to Châlons-en-Champagne

Day 1 Château-Thierry

Guests are met at The Hotel Westminster in Paris and transferred by private chauffeured minibus to Panache where a champagne welcome awaits them. Dinner on board.

Day 2 Château-Thierry to Dormans

This morning, we visit Maison Pannier, a select champagne house with a labyrinth of medieval underground cellars, for a tour and a private tasting. After lunch, we cruise along the River Marne to the pretty riverside town of Dormans, the site of a château, water mill and World War One memorial. Dinner on board.

Day 3 Dormans to Damery

This morning we visit the World War One battlefield and monument at Château-Thierry and the American cemetery at Belleau Wood. After returning to the barge and lunch on board, we enjoy a relaxing afternoon cruise along the Marne to our mooring at Damery. Dinner on board.

Day 4 Damery to Dizy

After a leisurely breakfast, we head off for a private champagne tasting and tour at the boutique Grand Cru winery of Frerejean Frères with a stop en route at a hillside vineyard to learn some of the key attributes of champagne grape growing. After the tasting we enjoy a gourmet private lunch in the salon of the family domaine. Return to the barge to continue our cruise along the Marne to Dizy. Dinner onboard.

Day 5 Dizy to Tours-sur-Marne

This morning, we visit the world renowned, Moët & Chandon, founded in 1743, where we are guided through their vast underground cellars, the largest in the region. This is followed by a tasting of some of Moët's best-known vintages in an elegant private salon, hosted by an experienced cellar master. After lunch back onboard we cruise to our pretty mooring at Tours-sur-Marne, joining the Canal Lateral à la Marne en route. Dinner on board.

Day 6 Tours-sur-Marne to Châlons-en-Champagne

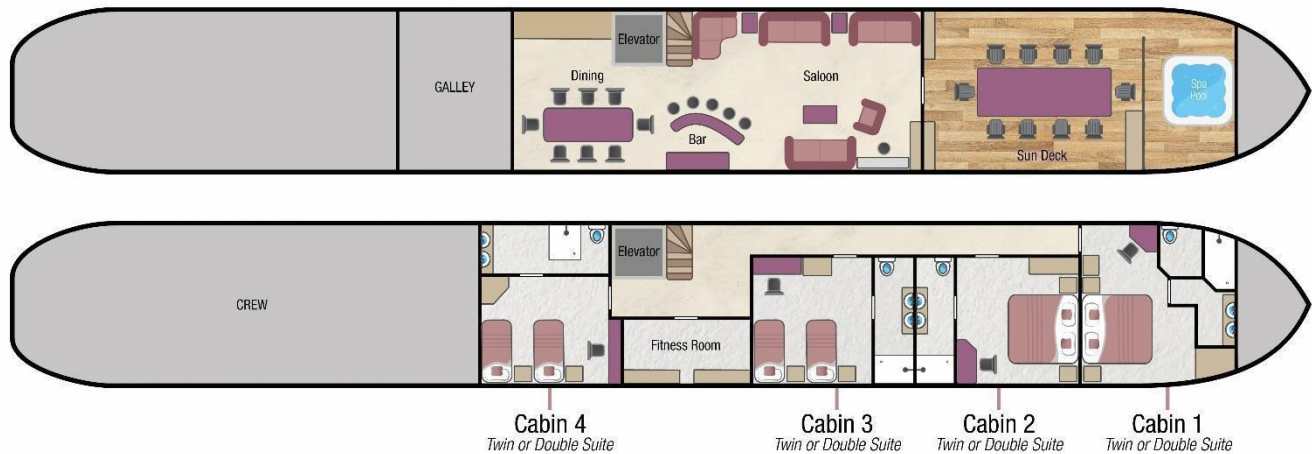
This morning, we visit the magnificent 800-year-old Reims cathedral, a Gothic masterpiece where the Kings of France were crowned, before some free time perhaps to wander around this delightful city with its grand squares and elegant shopping arcades. After lunch on board, we cruise to our final mooring at Châlons-en-Champagne. Captain's Farewell Dinner on board.

Day 7 Châlons-en-Champagne

After breakfast, guests are transferred by private chauffeured minibus to Paris.



La Nouvelle Etoile - Fact Sheet



Barge Specifics



Former purpose:	Transport barge
Original year of construction:	1965
Dimensions:	129ft x17ft (39.05m x 5.08m)
Year converted to a Hotel Barge:	2002
Generators:	2 x Yanmar 40kva
Main Engine:	2 x Volvo Penta 174hp
Maximum Speed:	9 Knots
Water capacity:	24m ³
Fuel capacity:	5m ³ diesel

Your crew on board

Crew of 7:	Captain, Tour Guide, Executive Chef, Hostess, Stewards (2), Pilot/Engineer
Nationality of crew:	Our crew are usually European. All speak fluent English as well as French, Dutch & other languages.

Accommodation on board

Maximum 8 passengers / 4 suites

All 4 suites can be configured with either 2 single beds or a Grand King bed.

Single beds are 200cm long by 90cm wide (6 ft. 7 in. by 3ft)
Each suite has an en-suite bathroom. There is ample storage and each has 1 wardrobe, 1 cupboard with shelves and a large drawer under each bed for suitcases. All cabins have 2 nightstands with small drawers, television with DVD player and panoramic windows. All cabins are fitted with safes.

Bedding provided is sheets with a comforter and blankets and choice of down or synthetic fill pillows.

Cabin Sizes

All suites are 13ft 2in x 16ft 5in (4m x 5m/200 s.f.) including bathroom

Suite # 4 has been adapted for wheelchair access with hand rails and wider doors to the shower & WC (more info under Restricted Mobility)

Ceiling height: in the cabins is 6ft 7" (2.02m)

En-suite bathrooms:

Each bathroom measures 13ft 2" x 4ft (4m x 1.2m)

Each has a large walk-in shower with tiled floor and walls and 2 wash basins. They all have WC in a separate room within the en-suite. Washing gel, hand soap, shampoo, towels, face cloths, dressing gowns and hair dryers are all provided.

There are large size panoramic windows in each cabin (2ft high x 3ft wide), which cannot be opened. Fresh air vents are provided in each cabin as well as air conditioning.

All sizes are approximate.

Climate Control

Each suite has individually controlled air conditioning and heating.

Computer and Telephone

Wi-Fi is available throughout the barge and in each suite for passengers who wish to bring their own appliances, this may be subject to availability in more remote locations.

In the saloon there are plenty of USB ports integral to the seating for charging cameras, phones and i-pads

There are no passenger phones on board *La Nouvelle Etoile*.

Currency

The local currency in all counties where *La Nouvelle Etoile* cruises is the Euro.

We are unable to accept credit or debit cards.

Cycling & Walking

Most cruise itineraries offer lovely opportunities to walk and cycle along the towpaths. This can be limited, however, when cruising in Holland and also between Holland, Belgium and France.

You are welcome to walk or cycle using the on board bicycles as often as you wish. Most guests choose to disembark the barge at a lock and visit local villages, returning to the canal and meeting the barge a little further along. The barge travels at a slow speed; therefore, catching up is not a problem.

There are 8 bikes on-board, 4 regular bikes with 8 gears and 4 E-bikes. Safety helmets are provided. Children's bikes, helmets and child bike seats can be arranged if required on request. Please contact our reservations department at least 8 weeks prior to departure.

Dining Room & Saloon

The Saloon area combines the Lounge, Cocktail Bar and spacious Dining Room and is 14m x 4.80m (46ft x 15ft 9") with a ceiling height of 7ft 4" (2.23m).

The Lounge and Dining Room are each 23ft (7m) in length and the Cocktail Bar and elevator is located between the two.

The Lounge area has a small library, a digital music library with over 26,000 recordings, a computer terminal and an upright piano. The saloon is furnished in rich teak wood.

There is an elevator between floors which helps accommodate guests less mobile.

Electricity

La Nouvelle Etoile is wired for 220 volts with a 110 volt socket in each bathroom and at each stateroom desk. We recommend you bring an adapter if you need a particular appliance near your bed or in the Saloon, which corresponds to the standard French 2-pin plugs. If you wish to use your electrical appliance on-board, please speak to a crew member on arrival to ensure it is suitable for the barge's electrical system.

European Waterways cannot be held responsible for unforeseen voltage fluctuations, which sometimes occur when swapping from one voltage system to another

Excursions

La Nouvelle Etoile has an air-conditioned Mercedes Sprinter van which is used for transfers and excursions. It has extra head-room and a sliding step.

For charter bookings, the itinerary can be adapted to suit your group's particular needs. If a destination or excursion is within a reasonable distance of the barge, we will do everything we can to arrange it. Please speak with our Reservations team in advance of your cruise and we can pre-arrange with the Captain.

Any guests not wishing to participate in an excursion are welcome to remain on the barge.

Facilities on board

- Gymnasium (exercise room) on the lower deck with a treadmill, exercise bike, stair stepper and weights.
- Elevator between floors which can fit 5 people
- 4 person Jacuzzi hot-tub on foredeck
- Electric Sun Canopy on foredeck, retracts when not required.
- Herb garden
- 4 Regular Bikes & 4 E-Bikes (see cycling and walking)
- Large pop up TV, music player in the Saloon
- 24hrs Coffee, Tea and Hot Chocolate machine
- Terrace heating outside
- Pioneer sound system with Bose speakers
- Computer terminal in the Saloon
- Upright Piano
- Wedgewood porcelain and Chrisoffle silver
- TV & DVD player in each cabin

Food & Drink

All meals on board are freshly prepared by your chef and most meals are a set-menu (there is no choice available). International and local cuisine is featured.

We are able to arrange special meals, e.g. vegetarian / no fish / vegan etc, and we are able to cater for any preferences or allergies. However it is most important that we are notified of any specific requirements at least 8 weeks prior to your departure date.

Failure to notify European Waterways in advance of your cruise may result in disappointment on board.

There is no assigned seating for meals and the dining table on board *La Nouvelle Etoile* accommodates all guests at a single sitting.

Breakfast: Your day on *La Nouvelle Etoile* starts with a Continental Breakfast with fresh breads & pastries, fruit, freshly-squeezed orange juice and hot beverages. A hot breakfast option is always offered cooked to order.

Lunch is usually buffet style with colourful salads, pates and cold meats accompanied by hot soup or entrée, delicious desserts and a selection of regional cheeses accompanied by quality wines selected by the chef.

Dinner: Always a gastronomic adventure created by your talented chef. A taste of regional cuisine by candlelight, complemented by fine wines, followed by a selection of regional cheeses, coffee and liqueurs.

Captain's farewell dinner is held on the last night of your cruise. Guests may choose to dress slightly formal.

Drinks included in the cruise price: The well-stocked bar is open 24 hours, which includes wines & premium spirits, beers & soft drinks. All wines are provided with meals and there is a Champagne welcome on arrival. Non-alcoholic beverages and regular or decaffeinated tea and coffee, whole or low fat milk, are offered with all meals.

Drinks not included in the cruise price: Some brands of Champagne and special vintage wines, however these can be purchased in advance of your cruise at cost price, please speak to our Reservations team. We do not recommend specific beverage orders unless you are chartering the whole barge.

Hot Air Ballooning

Hot Air Ballooning is usually available when cruising in Champagne & Burgundy in France.

Once on board, the Captain can arrange this directly with the hot air balloon company. Flights usually last for approximately 1 hour and are weather dependent. The cost is approximately 230 Euros per person and this should be paid directly to the balloon company on the day of the flight (they do accept credit cards).

Kindly advise our Reservations team in advance if you are interested in ballooning.

One of the operating companies is France Montgolfieres and their website is www.franceballoons.com

Laundry

On the lower deck, there are laundry facilities available for guests to use. A washing machine (powder is provided), tumble dryer and an iron & ironing board.

Luggage / What to pack

Please try and fit everything for your cruise into one reasonably sized case per person. Soft bags are preferable as these can be stored in the drawers under the beds.

Practical comfort and casual clothing is the norm aboard *La Nouvelle Etoile* and for most excursions. The dress code for dinner is relaxed and informal. For the Captain's Farewell Dinner on the last evening, guests often dress-up, which is optional.

The weather is hottest in June, July, and August when temperatures can reach the mid 30s°C / top 80s°F.

Suggested things to pack:

- Light clothing including shorts and polo shirts. A sweater or lightweight jacket is recommended for evenings and the air-conditioned interiors.
- During spring and autumn, you may need medium weight clothing. A lightweight raincoat for showery times would be advisable.
- In summer, a sun hat can be useful.
- Comfortable walking shoes with textured non-slip soles as the deck can be slippery when wet.
- There is a hot tub on board, so don't forget your swimsuit.

Medical

Please let us know in advance of your cruise if you require frequent or ongoing medical attention.

The crew are unable to administer medicines but can accompany you to a pharmacy for you to purchase any necessary medicines. Due to your cruise often being in a rural location, we recommend you bring all necessary medication with you.

Doctors are usually not far away for an urgent consultation and the Emergency Services can be called if required.

Problem during your Cruise

If you have a problem during your cruise, please give us the immediate opportunity to make things right. Please bring any concern to the private attention of your Captain who will often be able to solve any issue immediately.

Restricted Mobility

There are 10 steps between the Saloon to the lower cabin deck and a further 2 steps down to access cabins 3 & 4. Handrails are fitted throughout.

There is an elevator on board. The lift is 112cm (44") and 97cm (38") deep. Entrance is about 85cm (33") and the cabin most suited for passengers with mobility restrictions is **Cabin #4**, with a door entrance of 88cm (34"). There are handrails in the en-suite bathroom for the toilet and shower. Cabin #4's en-suite bathroom entry door is double-hinged for accessibility and the shower is fully accessible. The bathroom

entrance is 88cm (34"), toilet door is 82cm (32") and the shower is 75cm (29")

There is also a wheelchair available on board for passenger use, which is free of charge. **Any passengers with restricted mobility, please contact our reservation team for more details.**

Safety and Security

Once you are on board, your Captain will talk you through the Cruise Safety Procedures. Safety Instructions are detailed on the last page of this document.

Please note that European Waterways cannot be responsible for any valuables that you bring on board. We strongly recommend that you do not bring valuables with you unless required and that you ensure that all valuables are covered by your travel insurance.

Safes are provided in each cabin on board *La Nouvelle Etoile*. The cabin doors are not usually locked for safety reasons.

Smoking/Vaping

We have a strict non-smoking/non-vaping policy for safety reasons and for the comfort of your fellow passengers.

If you would like to smoke/vape, we request that you smoke on shore or on the deck away from other guests, with their consent.

Sundeck

The lovely sun deck measures approximately 17ft x 22ft (5.08m x 6.7m) and has a Spa Pool which can accommodate 4 people. There are 8 reclining chairs for sunbathing and a large table for dining al-fresco. For shade, there is an electronic retractable canopy. The sundeck also has outdoor heating should the evening turn chilly.

Themed Cruises

Biking, Walking & Wine Appreciation cruise itineraries are available for charter groups, please ask our Reservations team for more details.

Special interest cruises often have a supplement, details can be found at

Tipping

Gratuities are not included in the cruise fare. Tipping is entirely discretionary but is greatly appreciated by the crew if you are fully satisfied with the level of service on board. As a guideline, the average tip given by our guests from around the world is 5%-10% of the Cruise Fare.

The usual way to give the tip is to give the amount in cash as one lump sum to the Captain / Cruise Director on the last day of the cruise. They will distribute the amount equally amongst the crew.

Euros or Dollars are equally appreciated. ATMs are accessible for cash withdrawal on most itineraries during the cruise and the crew can advise where these are located.

Transfers

For details regarding *La Nouvelle Etoile's* vehicle, please see "Excursions". The approximate transfer duration is between 2 and 3 hours depending on the cruise itinerary & direction, except for cruises in Holland when the transfer is just 45 minutes.

Water

Tap water on board *La Nouvelle Etoile* is potable and bottled water is also available. There is also a water softener on board.

Safety Instructions on *La Nouvelle Etoile*

On arrival, the Captain will talk you through the Cruise Safety Procedures on board.

In addition, it is important that all passengers are familiar with the safety instructions detailed below.

- Please follow the instructions of the Captain and crew at all times.
- Remember that decks can be slippery. Please wear non-slip shoes and do not run or jump whilst on board.
- Do not walk on the side or rear decks or outside the guard rails.
- Passengers are not permitted in the engine rooms, technical areas or crew accommodation at any time, or in the galley or wheelhouse unless accompanied by a crew member.
- Do not embark or disembark the barge unless the gangplank and handrail are in place or the crew have advised that it is safe to do so. Never do so when the barge is moving.
- Be careful when the vessel is being moored up with the barge ropes. In particular do not step into a loop in the rope or try to release the mooring rope from a bollard.
- Keep clear of any overhead obstructions and remain seated if on deck whilst the barge passes under bridges with restricted headroom.
- Do not attempt to touch the sides of any lock or bridge.
- Life jacket preservers are located in the designated locker in the Saloon. Once on board, please take the time to identify their location and read the instructions.
- For fire safety reasons, smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the barge.
- The barge's equipment such as the hot tub and bicycles must only be used following preparation by the crew. Use of the bicycles and the hot tub is at your own risk. Breakable glasses are not permitted in the hot tub and alcohol consumption is not advised.
- There is an open bar policy on board. However, excessive alcohol consumption can be dangerous, particularly in a warm climate and in proximity to deep water and the Captain has the discretion to withhold alcohol if safety to passengers or crew is at risk.

In an emergency

- Keep calm. Do not return to your cabin to recover your possessions.
- If you discover a fire on board, sound the fire alarm and notify a crew member immediately. If possible, close doors behind you to confine the fire. Please take the time to identify the location of fire alarms and fire extinguishers.
- If the alarm sounds or you hear repeated continuous blasts on the barge horn, you must, if possible, assemble on the sundeck for further instructions.
- If you discover water below deck, notify a crew member immediately and go to the sundeck to await further instructions.
- If you are in your cabin and the way to the sundeck is obstructed, follow the signs to the alternative fire exit. Please take the time to identify all fire exits.
- The emergency number for fire, police or medical assistance on all public phone networks is 112.

Please ask a member of the crew on board if you require any further safety advice