

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£200
PER PERSON

GARDENS OF THE RHONE

A journey along the Rhone
aboard the MS Van Gogh

24th to 31st May 2027

NOBLE CALEDONIA

France, and Provence in particular, offers fascinating old buildings and picturesque landscapes and gardens which are a joy to behold. This delightful journey aboard the elegant MS Van Gogh has been specially designed for those with an interest in gardens and landscapes, combining visits to some of the region's most beautiful historic gardens with the cultural treasures and picturesque towns that line the banks of the Rhone. Stifling summers and harsh winters present challenges to the Provencal gardener, and yet this region produces some of the most stunning botanical gems in Europe. Join us for a leisurely springtime cruise as we meander along the scenic Rhone River and visit some of the most attractive horticultural delights of this beautiful region. Our programme combines guided excursions ashore as well as time at leisure, so you can truly relax and experience all that Provence has to offer.



The week is timed to enjoy colourful displays and unique examples of Provencal garden design including Le Jardin Medieval with more than 400 plants used domestically during the Middle Ages, the beautiful Renaissance gardens of Chateau Val Joanis, a charming setting where three carefully designed terraces overlook rolling vineyards, and the Medieval castle garden of the Ducs d'Uzes, an imposing Ducal castle amidst the charming cobbled streets of Uzes. In addition we spend time in the papal city of Avignon and visit the beautifully preserved Roman aqueduct of the Pont du Gard and witness the dramatic limestone scenery of the Ardeche Gorges.

With visits to beautiful gardens, charming towns, historic abbeys and Medieval buildings, our river cruise offers a wonderful insight into the heritage, artistry and flavours of southern France. We will be joined on board by a Guest Speaker who will add to your enjoyment by delivering a series of talks and informal discussions on board.



GUEST SPEAKER – MAUREEN LITTLE



An accomplished horticulturist, author, inspirational speaker and educator, Maureen's roots were firmly planted in horticulture but her career has encompassed a wide range of interests and experiences. These include serving in the Women's Royal Naval Service; lecturing in English Literature at University; owning her own plant centre and studying Art History. Her time as a qualified, professional garden designer and owner of a plant centre specialising in pollinator-friendly plants and culinary herbs inspired her to write six published books on horticultural topics, the latest being *The Little Book of Plants for Pollinators: A Gardener's Guide*. Her qualifications include a HND in Garden Design, a BA (Hons) in English Literature and an MA in Women's Studies. Both degrees contained extensive elements of Art History, a subject that Maureen has followed with enthusiasm over the years and which also forms part of her speaking repertoire. Maureen is a self-confessed oenophile; achieving Level 3 in Wines at the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) in London she went on to become a qualified Wine Educator. In addition, she is a full member of both the Garden Media Guild and the Society of Authors.



Lyon



Medieval Garden, Uzes



St Paul de Mausole



Viviers



Tournon sur Rhone

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Lyon, France. Fly by scheduled flight. Upon arrival transfer to the MS Van Gogh and embark. Meet your fellow travellers this evening during welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 2 Lyon. There will be a choice of tours this morning as we explore Lyon. Our city tour begins with a stop at the Fourviere Basilica which dominates the skyline of Lyon and from where we can take in breathtaking views. The history of the basilica dates from 1168 when Olivier de Chavannes, a canon of Lyon Cathedral, founded a church over the ruins of the old Roman forum. The small chapel that was dedicated to the Virgin Mary has been destroyed and rebuilt many times. Its current known form dates back to 1740 and its most recent renovation was in 2008. Later, we return to Lyon's old town where during our walking tour we will discover the 'traboules', a type of passageway that is typical of the city. Alternatively, discover one of France's most iconic urban parks the Parc de la Tête d'Or, a vast green sanctuary that blends botanical beauty, serene lakeside landscapes and elegant 19th-century design. From the historic rose garden with its thousands of varieties to the botanical greenhouses showcasing rare and tropical species, the park offers an exceptional journey through plant diversity. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a leisurely afternoon on board as we cruise to Avignon.

Day 3 Avignon & Uzes. Arrive this morning in Avignon, the famous City of the Popes which is enclosed by Medieval walls. From our mooring close to the walls, we will depart for the nearby commune of Uzes. This charming town has a captivating history and boasts many beautiful and imposing buildings. Visit the castle of the Ducs d'Uzes, including the Medieval castle garden set within its walls. This garden focuses on plants used during the Middle Ages for feeding, healing and many other uses in domestic life. We will enjoy lunch ashore, before heading to the scenic Gardon Gorge, an area of natural beauty around the River Gardon. See the famous Pont du Gard, an aqueduct bridge that spans the river in three tiers of arches. This exceptionally preserved bridge once provided fresh water to the Roman city in Nimes and remains one of the best-preserved sections of aqueduct in the world. Return to Avignon in the mid-afternoon and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure to explore independently. Moor overnight.

Day 4 Gardens of Abbaye Saint-Andre & Avignon. This morning, we take a leisurely visit to Saint-Andre Abbey and its beautiful gardens. Impeccably designed, this Florentine inspired garden sits within the Saint Andre Fortress and offers excellent views of Avignon and the Rhone Valley. Following our visit we will return to Avignon for a tour of the historic centre. Marvel at the impressive facades of the Papal Palace and Cathedral and visit the remaining arches of the famous Pont St Benezet. Enjoy lunch and a leisurely afternoon on board as we sail to Arles where we will arrive this evening and moor overnight.

Day 5 Chateau Val-Joanis & Arles. Today there will be a choice of tours from our mooring in Arles. You can choose to join a full day tour to Chateau Val-Joanis, situated north of Aix-en-Provence and set in the southern part of the Rhone valley. Enjoy an introduction to the winery followed by a tour around the beautiful gardens, which are built on three terraces connected by a long rose-covered arbour and cut into a hillside overlooking the vineyards. The lower terrace is devoted to fruit trees, the middle terrace to flowers and ornamental plants and the upper terrace is the vegetable garden. After lunch, we will continue to the Monastery St Paul de Mausole which is closely associated with the life and work of Vincent van Gogh. In the late 19th century the monastery functioned partly as a psychiatric asylum, and it was here that Van Gogh voluntarily admitted himself in May 1889 following a period of severe mental distress. The peaceful surroundings of the monastery, olive groves, cypress trees, wheat fields and the rolling Alpilles hills, became a major source of inspiration for his paintings including 'The Starry Night' and 'Wheat Field with Cypresses'. Alternatively, join a half-day walking tour in the city of Arles. Visit the famous amphitheatre, archaeological site, and the former cathedral of St Triomphe, a Romanesque basilica constructed in the 12th century. Sail this evening as we begin our return upstream.

Day 6 Ardeche Gorges & Viviers. From our mooring in the sleepy town of Viviers, we will visit the magnificent Ardeche Gorges, noted for its spectacular limestone cliffs and the Pont d'Arc, the largest natural arch in Europe. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure to relax on board or discover the winding, cobbled streets of Viviers independently. Sail this evening.

Parc de la Tête d'Or, Lyon



Pont St Benezet, Avignon



Day 7 Tournon sur Rhone. Arrive overnight in the town of Tournon sur Rhone, overlooked on one bank by Tournon Castle, and on the other by the terraced vineyards of Tain L'Hermitage. This morning, take the opportunity to see something different from the traditional European garden styles at the Erik Borja Zen Garden. Opened in 2004, this Japanese style garden is a peaceful oasis nestled among the vineyards, and includes a rock garden, tea garden, bamboo grove and lotus pond. Following our visit, we return to the town for a walk through the centre, admiring the Medieval church and famous school. This afternoon enjoy time at leisure or alternatively, cross to the opposite bank of the river to visit Tain L'Hermitage. This important winemaking centre produces many excellent Cote du Rhone wines and we will visit one of the local vineyards for a tour and a tasting. This evening we enjoy our farewell dinner as we sail for Lyon.

Day 8 Lyon to London. Disembark this morning and transfer to Lyon Airport for our scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Main Deck Twin	£3495	£3295
2	Upper Deck Twin with French Balcony	£3795	£3595
3	Main Deck Single	£3495	£3295

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights aboard MS Van Gogh on a full board basis • All-inclusive drinks from 10am to 11pm daily (please note premium brands & sparkling wine are not included) • Shore excursions • Cruise Director • Tour Manager • Guest Speaker • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes • Airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Annecey Pre-cruise Extension

21st to 24th May 2027

If you would like to spend some time in France's Haute-Savoie region before embarking the MS Van Gogh we are offering a three night extension in the charming lakeside city of Annecey.



The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Annecey, France. Fly by scheduled flight to Geneva. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to Le Pelican Hotel, located on the shores of Lake Annecey just a five minute walk from the historic centre of Annecey. After check in enjoy free time before we meet for dinner this evening. (D)

Day 2 Annecey. After breakfast in the hotel we will discover Annecey, the capital of Haute-Savoie and known as the "Venice of the Alps". Stroll through the old town with its charming canals, flowery banks, adorable little bridges and beautiful houses with colourful facades. In the heart of the old town, admire the Palais de l'Île, a former prison and courthouse, and stroll along rue Sainte-Claire lined with pretty arcaded houses. Explore the quays, bridges and old pedestrian streets to discover the eventful history of the city built along the Thiou. After lunch we return to the hotel for a free afternoon and evening to explore at your own pace, you may wish to climb up to the Chateau d'Annecey for views over the town or take a wander on the lakeside. (B, L)

Day 3 Yvoire. Depart this morning for a tour of Yvoire. On the shores of Lake Geneva, this adorable Medieval village is considered one of the most beautiful villages in France. With over 700 years of history, we will see the charming ramparts, fortified gates and the impressive 14th century castle and garden. After lunch at a local restaurant, we make our way back to Annecey for a final afternoon and evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 4 Annecey to Lyon. After breakfast in the hotel we will drive to Hautecombe Abbey located on the shores of Lac du Bourget, France's largest natural lake. Here we will tour the abbey and enjoy a cruise of the lake. After lunch we continue our journey to Lyon to embark the MS Van Gogh. (B, L)



PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Room Category	Price
Classic Twin	£1495
Superior Lake View	£1895
Classic Single	£1795
Superior Lake View Single	£2195

Price Includes: Three nights at Le Pelican Hotel in Annecey, meals as indicated including drinks (B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner), tours as described, Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



MS VAN GOGH

For our voyages along the Rhone we have chartered the delightful MS Van Gogh from our associates at Croisi Europe. The vessel accommodates a maximum of 105 passengers and offers spacious public areas and comfortable cabins. She is a charming vessel and joining you on board will be a Noble Caledonia team including a Cruise Director, Tour Manager and Guest Speaker.

Your Cabin

The cabins are spread across the Main and Upper Decks and all are outside facing. All cabins are attractively furnished and feature an en-suite bathroom with shower, TV, telephone, safe, hairdryer, individual air-conditioning and heating controls, and a closet. Twin cabins measure 15 square metres and single cabins measure 11 square metres. Cabins on the Main Deck feature picture windows, and those on the Upper Deck feature French Balcony style (floor to ceiling) sliding windows, allowing you to admire the passing scenery from your cabin.

Your Space

The public areas aboard the MS Van Gogh are both elegantly furnished and spacious. The lounge on the Upper Deck is a relaxing environment in which to admire the passing scenery, socialise and enjoy a drink from the bar. There is also a spacious Sun Deck with comfortable deck furniture, the perfect place to relax and appreciate the beautiful vistas whilst cruising along the Rhone. The open-seating restaurant is located on the Upper Deck and there is a small souvenir shop on board.

Your Dining

Meals are taken in a single sitting in the MS Van Gogh's bright and airy restaurant located on the Upper Deck. The open-seating restaurant offers delicious international cuisine and regional specialities. Breakfast and lunch are buffet style with hot and cold items and dinner is a served set menu with a choice of either two main courses or a vegetarian option. Alcoholic and soft drinks are included in your holiday price (excluding premium brands and sparkling wine) as are tea and coffee which are available throughout the day on a self-serve basis and with meals.





Lounge



Bar

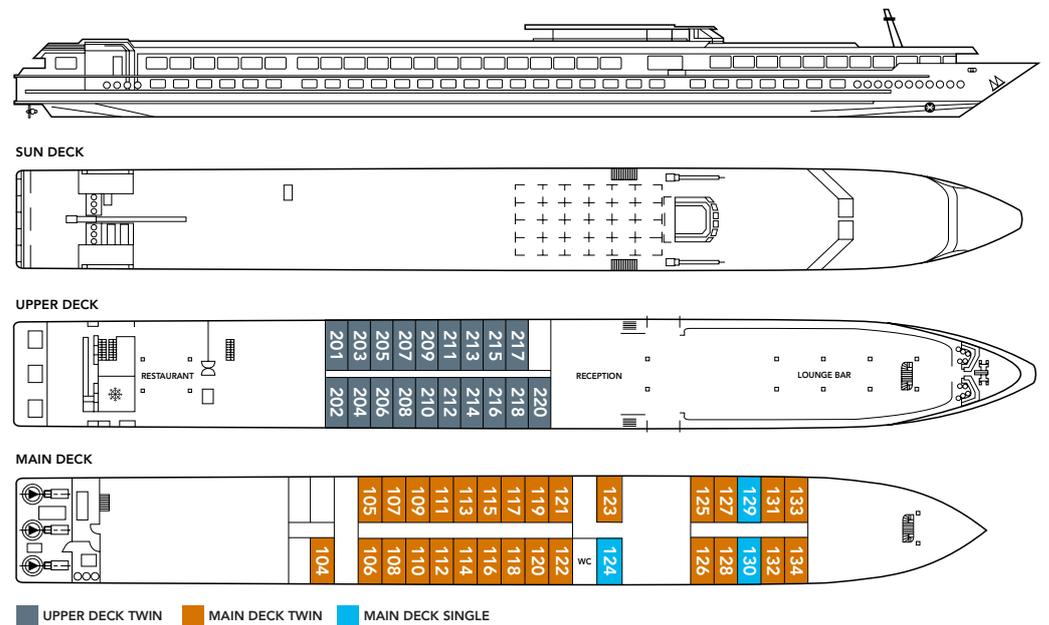


Restaurant

Life On Board

The friendly onboard staff will provide you with excellent service and do much to contribute to your enjoyment throughout your journey. You will find yourself amongst like-minded guests in an English-speaking environment and the atmosphere on board is relaxed and informal with a comfortable and casual dress code. A daily briefing by the Cruise Director will provide you with information on the next day's activities and expert English-speaking guides will accompany you on the included excursions. In addition, you will be accompanied by a Guest Speaker who will provide entertaining and informative talks.

DECK PLAN



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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: Abbaye Saint-Andre.