

LANDSCAPES & GARDENS OF FRANCE

WITH ROSEMARY LEGRAND

SEPTEMBER 2020

NOBLE CALEDONIA

GARDENS, CHATEAUX & LANDSCAPES OF THE LOIRE VALLEY

A week long visit to the remarkable 'Garden of France' region with **Rosemary Legrand** staying at Chateau d'Artigny

7th to 14th September 2020

Once of great strategic importance, kings, queens, dukes and nobles came to the Loire Valley to establish Feudal castles which were later remodeled as pleasure palaces for the aristocracy, and the region is now legendary for these enchantingly beautiful chateaux and their exquisite formal gardens. We have combined both these facets in our new tour which offers the opportunity to see a selection of diverse gardens at a most optimum time to experience the palette of brilliant colour from the autumn flowers, foliage and ornamental vegetables.

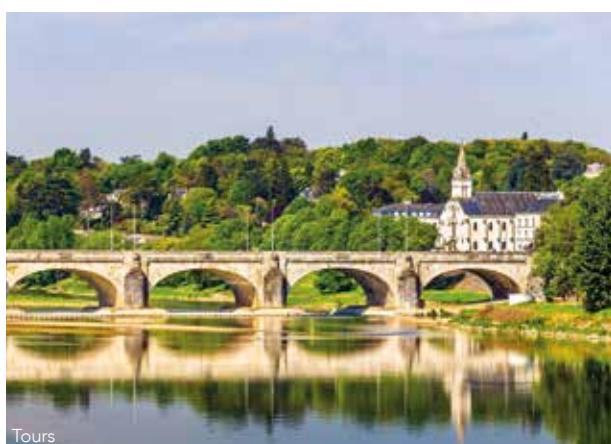
Our programme will include guided trips to the Loire's most splendid gardens as well as to some of the region's highlights including the ancient royal fortress of Angers Castle which houses the incredible Apocalypse Tapestry. This large French Medieval tapestry shows the Apocalypse according to the Revelation of Saint John and is the oldest to have survived. There are also charming towns and villages to be discovered along the way as we journey through the beautiful, gentle landscapes and of course we will sample the gastronomic delights of the region too.

For our stay we will be based at the wonderful Chateau d'Artigny and when not exploring there will be free time to relax and enjoy the hotel's facilities and extensive grounds. Throughout the week we will be joined by horticultural expert Rosemary Legrand who will provide enlightening talks and escort us to the region's most alluring gardens that she has personally selected for our visit.

GUEST SPEAKER – Rosemary Legrand



Rosemary is a former nursery owner and daughter of the late George Hyde, who was a hybridist of azaleas and rhododendrons. Many of his award-winning hybrid plants can be seen at the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Wisley, Surrey, the de Rothschild rhododendron gardens at Exbury, Hampshire, and the National Trust Gardens at Kingston Lacy in Dorset. Rosemary had the honour of presenting HM The Queen with a collection of her late father's azaleas named after the Queen's former Head Gardener, Fred Nutbeam, at Chelsea Flower Show in 1996. She has travelled extensively to gardens in many parts of the world and is an experienced public speaker. She is on RHS Speakers Register and also speaks for NADFAS; she wrote a number of contributions for the book, '1001 Gardens you must see before you die' and an article for the Royal Horticultural Society 'Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia 2014 Year Book'.



Tours

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London Gatwick to Nantes, France. Fly by scheduled flight from London to Nantes. Arrive in the early afternoon and, following the course of the Loire upriver, transfer to Chateau d'Artigny. The chateau, a former Belle Epoque castle, is located just south of Tours and will be the base for our seven night stay. Enjoy dinner at the hotel this evening. (D)

Day 2 Tours. After breakfast a short transfer from the hotel brings us to beautiful Medieval Tours. Here we will visit the Prieure de St Cosme which offers a charming and contemplative setting for an enchanting modern garden built around the ruins of the Monastery in honour of the 16th century Prior and poet Pierre de Ronsard. Explore the eight stepped sections of garden over three terraces, amongst them the Pink Garden, Cut Flower Garden, Francis Poulenc Garden, Velvet Garden and Cloister Garden. Of particular note are the 75 ancient varieties of fruit planted in the orchard. Following some free time for lunch in the historic city centre, continue on to the nearby Jardin Botanique, a 14-acre site that includes glasshouses, a herb garden and plant order

beds classified according to the evolution of vegetable families. There are numerous perennial plants to discover including an impressive peony collection and an arboretum of over 200 trees that includes a champion Gingko Biloba, one of the largest in Europe. The Jardin des Simples features medicinal and poisonous plants divided into dyes, narcotics and medicinal usage. We will also explore the 'Biodivers' greenhouses to see the Flora of South Africa and the Flora of Tropical Undergrowth Exhibition. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy a talk by Rosemary before dinner. (B, D)

Day 3 Amboise & Villandry. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before we head further up the Loire Valley to Amboise, home to the Chateau de Clos Luce, the last residence of Leonardo da Vinci prior to his death there in 1519. A guided tour reveals the rooms and studios he inhabited, and the impressive on-site museum illustrates his achievements in experimental science. We will also explore the Leonardo da Vinci Park, home to life size copies of the creations that Leonardo the engineer, painter and architect constructed.



After a local lunch we drive west to the Chateau de Villandry, a real highlight of the programme and the last of the great chateaux of the Loire to be built during the Renaissance. We will have time to explore the six different gardens within the 12 splendid acres of the site, which were restored over a period of eighteen years by the Spaniard Joachim Carvalho following his purchase of the chateau in 1906. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon in time for a further talk from Rosemary before dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Angers. This morning head west to the city of Angers, which has existed since Roman times on the banks of the Maine, a major tributary of the Loire. Visit the imposing castle whose massive Medieval fortifications are punctuated by 17 towers and are surrounded by impressive parterre gardens at its base. The castle also houses the famous Tapestry of the Apocalypse, commissioned by the Duke of Anjou in 1375 and with a total length of 100 yards it is an exceptional piece of Medieval art. After the visit enjoy some free time for lunch and independent exploration of the historic city centre before spending the afternoon at two of Angers' horticultural treasures. Explore the English-style Jardins des Plantes, where we hope to see the chrysanthemums in flower, before we continue on to the Arboretum Gaston Allard, home to over 4000 specimens and a national collection of hydrangeas. (B, D)

Day 5 Chaumont-sur-Loire. A short transfer this morning brings us to Chaumont-sur-Loire, home to a pale stone Renaissance chateau overlooking the river, whose grounds have staged the

International Garden Festival (France's biggest) since 1992. Garden designers from around the world compete to design one of the 30 or so show gardens in the grounds of the castle. Explore both the chateau and Festival grounds at your own pace today and take lunch independently at one of the many on-site catering outlets. After a busy day exploring, we escape the crowds and make a brief stop at the Chateau et Jardins de Valmer where we enjoy a wine tasting on the High Terrace, affording us spectacular views of the tiered gardens, vineyard and the Brenne Valley. (B, D)

Day 6 Montlouis-sur-Loire & Chenonceaux. We continue our exploration of the gardens of the Loire with a morning visit to the Chateau de la Bourdaisiere in Montlouis-sur-Loire, a restored Renaissance castle set in 55 acres of beautiful gardens. Enjoy the dahlia displays, visit the Tuscan-style pavilion and the 19th century walled kitchen garden where we hope to sample some of the produce. After a local lunch, transfer to the fairy-tale beauty of the Chateau de Chenonceau, one of the most photographed and visited chateaux of the Loire Valley. Surrounded by ancient hunting woods, the estate was given by King Henry II of France in 1547 to his mistress Diane de Poitiers, who set about the planting of the extensive flower and vegetable gardens. Following the death of the king, his widow Catherine claimed Chenonceau for herself and added to the beauty of the site by creating the Catherine de Medici Garden. In later years the chateau saw service as a hospital in the Great War and found itself straddling the border of Vichy France and the occupied

territories in World War II, the River Cher being the demarcation line. During our visit we will tour the chateau, gardens, and the Carriage and Hospital Museums. (B, L, D)

Day 7 Chambord. Our touring concludes with magnificent Chambord, the undisputed jewel in the crown of the Renaissance chateaux of the Loire and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1981. Commissioned by King Francis I in 1519 and originally intended as a hunting lodge, it was only partially completed by the time of his death in 1547, and construction continued throughout the reigns of Henry II and Louis XIV. Set in Europe's largest enclosed woodland park (by a 20-mile-long wall), its five acres of formal gardens are a delight to explore but are utterly eclipsed in scale by the huge scale of the chateau itself. The enormity of the building is breathtaking with

its 426 rooms, 77 staircases and 282 fireplaces forming part of one of the largest construction projects of the Renaissance. Our full day tour will give ample time for independent exploration following a guided tour of the chateau and gardens. Perhaps climb up to the roof terrace for spectacular views of the estate and the chance to see the impressive towers, turrets and chimneys up close. The gardens in their present form date from 1750 but were badly neglected in the period following the French Revolution and what you see today is the result of a huge replanting project that started in 2016. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy a farewell dinner this evening. (B, D)

Day 8 Montbazon, Nantes to London Gatwick. After breakfast at the hotel transfer to Nantes Airport for our return scheduled flight to London. (B)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Tradition Room	£2995
Superior Room	£3195
Deluxe Room	£3395
Junior Suite	£3645
Tradition Room for sole use	£3695
Superior Room for sole use	£3895
Deluxe Room for sole use	£4095

Please refer to page 6 for information about Chateau d'Artigny.

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights accommodation at Chateau d'Artigny • Meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) • Wine, beer & soft drinks with dinner • Tour Manager • Guest Speaker • Excursions as described with local guides • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

NB: All of the excursions involve extended periods of walking including steps and over uneven terrain. We therefore do not recommend this tour for those with walking difficulties.

Group Size: We are restricting the group size to just 25 participants.

GREAT GARDENS OF THE DORDOGNE

A week long visit to the beautiful gardens & chateaux of France's Dordogne region with **Rosemary Legrand** staying at Hotel Plaza Madeleine in Sarlat-la-Canéda

19th to 26th September 2020

Come with us to the idyllic Dordogne region of France to enjoy some of the most beautiful French gardens at their autumnal best. Over the course of seven days we will visit some splendid and varied gardens in the company of our horticultural expert Rosemary Legrand including the exquisite topiary gardens of Jardins de Marqueyssac and Jardins du Manoir d'Eyrignac.

In addition to the wonderful gardens we can offer seven days of absolute bliss with the best of the region on offer from bucolic landscapes of pastoral green meadows and vineyards, beautiful chateaux, charming towns and fortified villages to sampling the traditional French gastronomy. During our guided excursions we will explore the renowned Chateau Milandes, former home of the legendary dancer Josephine Baker, take a leisurely boat trip along the River Dordogne and visit the Museum of Prehistory at Les Eyzies de Tayac Sireuil. Other highlights will include Rouffignac Cave with its amazing collection of prehistoric art, the World Heritage Site of Rocamadour and nearby Martel, Town of the Seven Towers where we will travel on a vintage train to enjoy breathtaking eighty metre high views over the glorious Haut-Quercy countryside.

We have chosen the centrally located Hotel Plaza Madeleine in the beautiful Medieval town of Sarlat-la-Canéda as the base for our visit to the region and the itinerary has been devised so that, in addition to the guided excursions, there will be time to enjoy the hotel facilities and explore the town and its many restaurants and cafes at leisure.

River Dordogne from Chateau Beynac



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London Gatwick to Bordeaux, France. Fly by scheduled flight from London to Bordeaux. Arrive in the afternoon and our transfer from the airport will take us across the Garonne River into the Dordogne and to the charming town of Sarlat-la-Canéda. Upon arrival we check in to Hotel Plaza Madeleine for our seven night stay. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant this evening. (D)

Day 2 Beynac-et-Cazenac. After breakfast a short transfer brings us to the Chateau Marqueyssac

in Vézac, where we explore the series of terraced gardens that provide a superb view of the Dordogne Valley. Famous for its 150,000 box plants and some amazing cloudlike topiary, the 49-acre gardens were established in the late 19th century by the chateau's owner, Julien de Cerval. Modern additions include the sinuous, serpentine path of santolinas and rosemary in subtle shades of green and silver-grey foliage, and the cascading waterfall. After our visit, we transfer to Beynac for a local

lunch before visiting the town's castle, one of the most authentic and best-preserved fortresses of the Perigord. It has dominated the local skyline since the 12th century and was conquered by Richard the Lionheart before seeing action during numerous battles in the Hundred Years' War. Transfer down to the river and embark a replica of a 19th century gabarre, a traditional barge, for a scenic cruise. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy a talk by Rosemary before dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 3 Chateau de Milandes & Terrasson-Lavilledieu. This morning we will visit Chateau Milandes, the former home of the legendary performer Josephine Baker. Built in 1489 on the south bank of the Dordogne, the castle was home to the Caumont family but fell into ruin following the French Revolution. Bought by a local industrialist in 1900, the castle was extensively restored, and a winery and farm were added, before the gardens were commissioned in 1908 and created by the renowned Parisian gardener Jules Vacherot.



Enjoy lunch on-site before a scenic drive brings us to Chateau de Losse on the banks of the River Vézère. Surrounded by ramparts and a moat, the castle was built in Renaissance style in 1576 and its huge fortified gatehouse is the largest of its kind in Europe. Surrounding the castle are its lovely gardens - awarded 'Jardin Remarquable' status in 2004 and laid out in a French formal style with walls of box hedging clipped into symmetrical shapes. Our final stop is at the distinctly modern Jardins de l'Imaginaire in Terrasson, which feature a spectacular water garden with a grid of fountains emerging from textured cobblestones beside a narrow canal. (B, L)

Day 4 Hautefort & Carsac.
Journey north this morning to the magnificent Chateau de Hautefort, originally a Medieval fortress, which today blends its original defence features with a classical central castle built between 1630 and 1670. The castle was transformed into a leisure manor in the 17th century, and today it houses a remarkable collection of period furniture from the 17th and 18th centuries. We also explore its English-style park and French-style gardens, designed by the Count of Choulot in the 19th century and home to some impressive formal box parterres. After lunch at a local restaurant we continue on to les Jardins d'eau de Carsac, which offer us a touch of Monet and a multitude of water lilies. Its varied collection of exotic species will have passed the peak of its flowering season but will still display the most remarkable seed heads on the lotus, containing seeds that can still be germinated 1000 years into the future. The

beautiful garden comprises of a number of large ponds and small lakes filled with a huge variety of water plants. (B, L)

Day 5 Les Eyzies & Rouffignac.
The Vézère valley is home to over 200 palaeolithic sites, 15 of which have been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We begin our exploration of the ancient history of the area at the fascinating National Museum of Prehistory in Les Eyzies. Opened in 2004 it houses France's most extensive paleolithic collection with over 12000 exhibits. Learn of the major cultural and environmental changes related to the succession from Neanderthals to Homo sapiens, the perfect introduction for our afternoon visit to one of the highlights of the region, the stunning Rouffignac cave which is home to an amazing collection of prehistoric art. We explore the cave system by a small electric train that takes us past many of the engravings and line drawings made between 10000 and 50000 years ago, the highlight of the visit undoubtedly being the Great Ceiling, where a whirl of 65 animal figures dominate a shaft leading to the lower levels. Return to Sarlat in the late afternoon for an opportunity to further explore this beautiful Medieval town at leisure. (B, L)

Day 6 Martel & Rocamadour.
This morning we drive the short distance to Martel, the Town of Seven Towers, where we take a trip on a preserved railway, le Train de Haut Quercy. Known locally as 'Le Truffadou', the line originally transported the truffles for which the region was famous, and was re-opened by enthusiasts in 1997, seventeen years after its closure. Carved into the cliffs

of Mirandol, towering 260 feet above the River Dordogne, the trip offers spectacular views from the train as we travel to Saint-Denis. Next, we continue on to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Rocamadour, a Medieval village that clings onto the cliffside above the River Alzou. Enjoy a walking tour prior to time at leisure for independent exploration and the chance to find a local restaurant for lunch. (B)

Day 7 Carlux & Salignac. Head east this morning to les Jardins de Cadiot in Carlux, a smaller site that is made up of ten differently themed gardens that have been created over thirty years by the present owners. Stroll through the decorative vegetable garden to the structured orchard, peony and wild rose gardens. A short transfer brings us to Eyriignac manor where following lunch at leisure we explore the topiary gardens

surrounding the charming 17th century house, a typical example of the local Perigord architecture. The unusual gardens were created over forty years ago and are set over three levels in the classical French tradition of box, yew and hornbeam, with pencil slim cypress trees that also give the site an Italian influence. Unforgettable features and effects such as the amazing lines of flying buttresses grown in hornbeam, the gorgeous green rotunda, the magical white gardens and glorious wildflower meadow, together with the bijou family chapel make this a very special and elegant garden. Meet for a farewell dinner in Sarlat-la-Canéda this evening. (B, D)

Day 8 Sarlat-la-Canéda to London Gatwick. After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to Bordeaux Airport for our return scheduled flight to London. (B)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Business Room	£2795
Executive Room	£2995
Privilege Room	£3195
Prestige Room	£3395
Business Room for sole use	£3295
Executive Room for sole use	£3495
Privilege Room for sole use	£3695
Prestige Room for sole use	£3895

Please refer to page 7 for information about Hotel Plaza Madeleine.

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights accommodation at Hotel Plaza Madeleine • Meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) • Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch & dinner • Tour Manager • Guest Speaker • Excursions as described with local guides • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

NB: All of the excursions involve extended periods of walking including steep inclines, steps and over uneven terrain. We therefore do not recommend this tour for those with walking difficulties.

Group Size: We are restricting the group size to just 25 participants.

CHATEAU D'ARTIGNY

Surrounded by over 50 acres of parkland which features a French garden, marble statues and trompe l'oeil frescoes, the majestic Chateau d'Artigny is the ideal base for our exploration of the Loire. Commissioned by the famous Corsican perfumer Francois Coty, the modern-day chateau was built during the 1920s on the site of the original castle, which dated back to the Hundred Years' War. The chateau was occupied by German troops during the Second World War and used as an outreach facility to care for the wounded before being converted into a luxury hotel in 1961. Over the years the chateau has hosted many distinguished guests including Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who stayed at the property in 1963.



Deluxe Room



Bar



Junior Suite

Your Room

For our stay we will be accommodated within the main building which features elegantly decorated rooms offering marvellous views over the Indre and its valley, the French garden, the chateau or the park. All of the rooms feature complimentary Wi-Fi, hairdryer, minibar, tea and coffee making facilities and a safe. There are four room categories as follows but please note that, due to the unique nature of the property, rooms within the same category may vary in style and features.

Tradition Room: These rooms measure 20 square metres and are beautifully decorated with uninterrupted views over the Indre Valley or the park. The tradition rooms have a fixed double bed.

Superior Room: Tastefully decorated with wonderful period furniture, the superior rooms offer views of the French garden, the park or the Indre Valley. These rooms measure 22 square metres and can be configured as a double or twin.

Deluxe Room: Spacious and elegant, the deluxe rooms feature stylish furniture and tastefully chosen wall coverings. Measuring 24

square metres, these large rooms have wonderful views over the Indre Valley, the French garden or the estate woods. Deluxe rooms can be configured as a double or twin.

Junior Suite: The luxurious and spacious junior suites measure 30 square metres and offer a cosy atmosphere with an attractive view overlooking either the gardens or the park. These rooms can be configured as a double or twin.

Your Space

The chateau features the elegant Origane Restaurant which is beautifully decorated with exquisite fluted columns and wood panelling and the perfect space in which to enjoy traditional French cuisine. In good weather the terrace of the chateau is also open for lunch or dinner and it is in an idyllic location overlooking the beautiful Indre Valley. In the old book-lined library you will find Le Salon Bar offering an array of inventive cocktails shaken by award-winning barman Antony Bertin. The chateau also has three luxury lounges each with unique surroundings and décor, as well as an excellent spa which includes a swimming pool with jacuzzi, Hammam and sauna.

HOTEL PLAZA MADELEINE

Ideally located at the entrance to the Medieval town of Sarlat-la-Canéda and overlooking a pretty tree-shaded square and small park, this historic four-star hotel provides the perfect base from which to explore this charming French town as well as the wider Dordogne region. The property features 41 elegant rooms and benefits from a lovely spa and an attractive patio garden from which you can relax and enjoy sampling the local wines.



Executive Room



Reception



Prestige Room

Your Room

There are 41 sound-proofed rooms across the property which are all classically designed with elegant furnishings. All of the rooms feature air-conditioning, satellite TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, a minibar and safe. For your comfort they are also equipped with a hairdryer, selection of toiletries, bathrobe and slippers. All of the rooms are accessible by lift.

Business Room: These rooms measure 18 square metres and feature an en-suite bathroom with shower. The bed configuration can be either twin or queen sized double.

Executive Room: The executive rooms measure 22 square metres and have an en-suite bathroom with bathtub. The bed configuration can be either twin or king sized double.

Privilege Room: These rooms measure a generous 28 square metres and feature an en-suite bathroom with shower. The bed configuration can be either twin or queen sized double.

Prestige Room: Bright and spacious, the prestige rooms measure a generous 30 square metres and have either a large en-suite bathroom with shower and separate bath or a large walk-in shower room. The bed configuration can be either twin or king sized double. These rooms also benefit from a sitting room area.

Your Space

There is an on-site spa with sauna, steam room and multi-sensory shower which opens out on to a delightful patio garden area with potted palm and olive trees, sun terrace and a small outdoor heated pool open for use from Easter until October each year. There is also a heated Jacuzzi available year-round. A delicious hot and cold buffet breakfast is served each morning and, whilst there is no on-site restaurant for lunch or dinner, the hotel is able to recommend nearby restaurants. For pre or post dinner drinks, the Plaza Bar serves champagne, long drinks and a variety of cocktails. A large selection of regional and vintage wines can also be enjoyed here together with small food platters including foie gras, cured hams and cheeses.



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
Cover image: Gardens de Marqueyssac.