

Paris & the Heart of Normandy

The cruise was delightful – the cabins were very nice, the food scrumptious, and the scenery gorgeous. Ken, the cruise's program director, was fantastic. He and the rest of the wonderful Viking crew, along with our fun and friendly fellow passengers made the trip both stimulating and relaxing. We were also lucky to have terrific weather for our cruise.

All of the tours of the towns where we stopped were high quality and interesting. Our first stop was in Vernon, and included a tour of Giverny, Monet's estate and gardens. Wow! What a gorgeous place. In early May the flowers were in full bloom and even I, the curmudgeon about photographs, was moved to take pictures. In June the famous Monet water lilies were expected to bloom on the lake. That must also be a sight to behold.



Our next stop was Rouen. The first order of business was learning to pronounce



Rouen, which was quite a mouthful for those of us not fluent in French. This was a great city. We particularly enjoyed an early evening stroll on a path along the river. A highlight of the trip was our day at the Normandy beaches. It was a long day, but I don't think any of us would have given up anything we saw. We visited three of the beaches where U.S. servicemen landed in the Normandy Invasion, including Omaha Beach, where Cindy's and my father came

ashore in WWII. After seeing the WWII Museum, we went to the Normandy American Cemetery where we viewed the iconic scene of 9,385 marble crosses and stars of David. Our group was large enough that we were able to have a very moving memorial service there at the foot of the statue of the Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves. Spectacular.



We loved the little town of Les Andelys, our last stop before heading back to Paris. It was charming place with a ruined castle to explore and nice shops for last minute purchases.

Alas, after a chance to see Paris sparkling by night, our trip came to an end. Whisking our way home the next day we had the rude awakening that we weren't really princesses—we had just been treated that way. Would I go again? In a minute. This was really a nice trip. Do it!