

## HOLLAND & THE ROMANTIC RHINE VALLEY

TOUR DAYS: 08 DAYS

TOUR TYPE: RIVER CRUISE

USA - AMSTERDAM – COLOGNE – RUDESHEIM – HEIDELBERG – MANNHEIM – STRASBOURG - USA



### **TOUR SUMMARY:**

This splendid 8-day journey along the Rhine, takes the guests from Amsterdam/Holland to Strasburg/France through various German picturesque cities such as Rüdesheim, Cologne and Dusseldorf. Daily land excursions offer the opportunity to discover architectural treasures, explore world-renowned museums, stroll through enchanting cities. Aboard the MS Gérard Schmitter, travellers will pass along lush vineyards, observe charming and towering European castles and enjoy breathtaking scenery with Europe's largest and most experienced Rhine river cruise line.

### **TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Enjoy Amsterdam, the "Venice of the North" and the Amsterdam canals on a river boat
- Discover Rüdesheim and its famous Drosselgasse
- Wander around The Keukenhof Gardens
- Explore the charm of the romantic Rhine valley and the legendary rock of the Lorelei

**TOUR PRICE 2017/18:**

**Oct: 2017**

Per person on a twin sharing basis:  
Single Person Supplement:

**MAIN DECK**  
**USD 2990**  
**USD 590**

**Apr: 2018**

Per person on a twin sharing basis:  
Single Person Supplement:

**MAIN DECK**  
**USD 3190**  
**USD 690**

**May: 2018**

Per person on a twin sharing basis:  
Single Person Supplement:

**MAIN DECK**  
**USD 3290**  
**USD 690**



**TOUR LODGING INFO:** *06 Nights Cruise Cabin*

Accommodation will be provided on a twin sharing basis

<b>CITY</b>	<b>NIGHTS</b>	<b>SUPERIOR CRUISE</b>
Cruise	06 Nights	MS Gérard Schmitter

**TOUR PACKAGE INCLUDES:**

- Cruise on MS Gerard Schmitter for 6 days
- Double occupancy cabin with shower in private bathroom
- Daily Breakfast
- 04 Lunch + 05 Dinner
- **Unlimited complimentary onboard beverages**, including beer, fine wine, spirits, mineral bottled water, soft drinks specialty coffees and tea
- Onboard entertainment
- Assistance from onboard multi-lingual host/hostess
- Boat tour of Amsterdam
- All tours mentioned in the itinerary
- Welcome cocktail
- Gala dinner and evening
- All port fees
- International airfare from New York/Chicago (Inc. taxes)

**TOUR PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE:**

- Meals not mentioned as being included
- Visa fees if applicable
- Optional tours and activities
- Travel insurance



## **TOUR ITINERARY:**

### **DAY 01: USA - AMSTERDAM**

Board your international flight. Overnight onboard flight.

### **DAY 02: AMSTERDAM (-/-/D)**

On arrival in Amsterdam transfer to port and board your cruise. You will have a presentation of the crew and a welcome cocktail. That evening, enjoy dinner on board followed by a riverboat tour. Leave the ship on foot with the host/hostess to board a boat for a **canal tour**. You'll travel along the famous Port of Amsterdam and continue along the legendary canals. Even today they continue to define the city's landscape, and in 2010, Amsterdam's canal ring was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Besides providing a stunning backdrop to the city's historical center, cruising the canals is one of the most memorable ways to discover the city. Take a relaxing trip through the Dutch capital. After our tour, return to the ship with our host/hostess or spend some free time on your own in the city.

Overnight in Amsterdam.

### **DAY 03: AMSTERDAM (B/L/D)**

This morning visit **Amsterdam and its diamond merchants**. You'll leave by coach for a guided tour of the city. Amsterdam is one of the most unique and extraordinary cities in the world, from its romantic canals to its world-renowned museums and historical significance, it's a city that never ceases to surprise. Your first stop will be the De Rieker Windmill, one of the eight windmills in greater Amsterdam. Built in 1636 to help drain water out of the surrounding land, the De Rieker Windmill is now an elegant private residence. You will have no doubt have seen the mill in many of Rembrandt's painting and engravings. You'll then head to the Diamond District to observe how the talented cutters facet the raw diamonds into the jewels we buy. The guide will explain in detail how a diamond is valued. After the tour, you'll be able to spend some time browsing the shop. Return to your coach and head for the famous flower market. This is the only floating flower market in the world, and one of the most fragrant places in Amsterdam in any seasons. It includes 15 florist and garden shops, as well as a range of souvenirs. At the end of our visit, return to the ship by coach.

#### ***Optional dynamic excursion package (4:00 hours): Amsterdam by bike:***

*You'll leave on foot to head to the bike rental office. This guided bike tour will last about 3.5 hours, and you'll be able to explore and learn about all the must-see and out-of-the-way sites in Amsterdam. You'll pass in front of some of the most beautiful and interesting monuments in the city, including Dam Square, the Royal Palace, the Anne Frank House, the Nieuwmarkt, the Rembrandt House Museum and more.*

In the afternoon visit **the Keukenhof gardens (open from March 24<sup>th</sup> to May 16<sup>th</sup>)**. You'll leave by coach with our host/hostess for the Keukenhof Gardens. Once you enter the park, you'll be able to stroll through the inspirational gardens at your own pace. Besides the almost 80 acres of flowers, the garden also has unique artwork and great attractions, including a new "selfie" garden. You'll be able to enjoy a fantastic view of the tulip fields located behind the gardens from the windmill at the back of the property. We'll return to our ship in Amsterdam by coach.

The other months, guided visit of **Volendam and Zaanse Schans**. You'll leave by coach for Volendam, a charming village that has preserved its character for over six centuries thanks to the tough vitality of its fishermen. We'll then visit a cheese factory in the area to discover how the famous Gouda cheese is made. We'll enjoy tasting the different flavors and ages available of one of the most popular cheeses in the world. We'll then head for Zaandse Schans, an open-air museum with wooden windmills, barns, and houses. Take a walk through the stunning buildings and the unique peat landscape or watch traditional clog making techniques. Don't miss the small but impressive clog museum that features one of the largest and most attractive collections of wooden shoes in the Netherlands: painted, carved, ice clogs with iron trimmings, horse clogs, and decorative clogs. Take advantage of some free time on this excursion to indulge in authentic Dutch traditions. We'll return to our ship in Amsterdam by coach.

Enjoy a free evening, you can discover the city center for a stroll around the Red-Light District.

### **DAY 04: AMSTERDAM, - NIJMEGEN – KREFELD\* (B/L/D)**

\* Depending on available mooring, the stopover at Krefeld can be replaced with a stopover at Duisburg

Spend this morning cruising until you arrive to Nijmegen. Departure from Nijmegen by coach with the courier from the boat for the **Kröller Müller Museum** situated in the Hoge Veluwe National park, one of the Netherlands' largest national parks, with some 5000 ha of restored nature on a former agricultural zone bought and re-wooded by two rich Dutchmen at the beginning of the XXth century. When you arrive, the courier will hand you an admission ticket and you will be able to visit the museum at you

own pace. The Museum is named after Helene Kröller-Müller, who collected 11,500 objects d'art with the help of an advisor, H.P. Bremmer. She paid for her purchases out of the fortune of her husband Anton Kröller, Director of the company Müller & Co. Hélène Kröller dreamed of a "Museum House", a dream which came true in 1938. In this museum you will find an important collection of canvases by Van Gogh, but by also his contemporaries, including Picasso, Seurat, Monet. In the museum grounds, you will discover an incredible collection of modern sculptures; this part of the museum was opened in 1961 by the Director A.H. Hammacher, who dreamed of being able to display these works outside and was able to do so due to the exceptional location of the museum. Return by coach to the boat at Nijmegen. **Please note that the museum is closed on Mondays in which case you will visit the Dutch open-air museum in Arnhem:** departure from Wesel by coach with the courier from the boat for the **Dutch Open Air Museum** at Arnhem, which is situated in a beautiful wooded park (44 ha). The architecture and life of days gone by in the provinces of the Netherlands are evoked through 80 authentic farms, windmills, workshops, a school, barns, a church. When you arrive, the courier will hand you an admission ticket and you will be able to visit the museum at your own pace. Inside each building, the typical furnishing and the demonstrations (various trades and crafts) make the visit particularly interesting. Certain buildings are grouped together, such as the handsome Limburg timber-framed buildings or the Gelderland farms, but the most charming section is that dedicated to the Zaan region, with its green painted houses with delicately decorated gables. The visit begins with the renovated entrance pavilion, from where there is a fine view over the park and its many windmills. Like the collections centre, several of the areas present farming implements by rotation. The lower level gives access to the spectacular panoramic theatre, HollandRama. In this mobile capsule, films, sounds, lights, odours and temperatures evoke many different landscapes, from city panoramas to the inside of houses. Return to the boat in Nijmegen by coach.

**Optional dynamic excursion package: Biking through the De Hoge Veluwe National Park**

*Enjoy a great bike ride through the De Hoge Veluwe National Park, one of the largest continuous nature reserves in Holland, measuring in at 5,400 hectares, or 13,343 acres. You'll ride through stunning forests filled with fragrant pines as well as birches, beeches and other deciduous trees. In addition, you'll pass through some of the biggest sand drifts in Europe and some stunning heaths that glow in purplish hues during the month of August. During this tour, you may see a wide variety of animals, including sheep, deer, wild boars, badgers, foxes and others. Set out on a pleasurable tour of this magnificent natural reserve.*

Continue cruising until Krefeld where you can spend the evening at leisure.

**DAY 05:**

**KREFELD – COLOGNE - KONIGSWINTER**

**(B/L/D)**

Spend this morning cruising on the most beautiful stretch of the romantic Rhine towards Köln. While you cruise enjoy the landscape of lush vineyards dotted with romantic castles, and on past the legendary Lorelei rock. This afternoon, discover the city of Köln (Cologne) at your leisure: stroll through Old Town past St. Martin's Church, and spend some time inside Cologne's Dom, a remarkable Gothic cathedral whose construction began in 1248 and was only completed in 1880. Explore the dockside taverns, cafés and shops on your own. Or enjoy a **guided walking tour of Cologne**: you will discover the city in the company of your guide: a crossroads in Europe since the Middle Ages, which has kept its importance both on a commercial and industrial level and on a cultural and religious level. You will be able to admire the exterior of the huge Köln Cathedral which it took five centuries of patience to finish. Indeed, whereas construction had begun in 1247, it had to be interrupted due to a lack of finance in 1560 and only began again in 1842 at the request of Emperor Frederick Wilhelm IV, who had fallen in love with the building. Construction was finally completed in 1863 and the Gothic Cathedral was the highest building in the world from 1880 to 1884. Around the Cathedral, there are 12 other Romanesque style churches, placed in a circle and representing the 12 apostles. You will continue the tour with Köln Old Town, and you will pass in front of the famous Eau de Cologne house (exterior), in particular. Before returning to the boat, you will have some free time to stroll through the streets of Cologne or try the famous local beer, the Kölsch (own account). You will be able to make your way back to the boat on foot at your own pace. Return to the ship to cruise to Koenigswinter.

**DAY 06:**

**KOENIGSWINTER - RUDESHEIM**

**(B/L/D)**

This morning enjoy breakfast on board while cruising up the Rhine until you arrive to Rüdesheim. On arrival to Rüdesheim, enjoy some time sightseeing on your own or enjoy a ride on a little train that will take you through the Rhine **vineyards of Rüdesheim**. After a tasting of local wines in a wine cellar, the visit will continue with the "Siegfrieds Mechanisches Musikkabinett" museum, also called the music museum. You will hear some very old mechanical musical instruments as well as some barrel organs. You will then walk down the Drosselgasse, famous for its small restaurants with orchestras. Free return on board. In the evening, enjoy time at leisure to discover the Drosselgasse.

**DAY 07:**

**RUDESHEIM - MANNHEIM**

**(B/L/D)**

The ship will cruise during the morning. When you arrive to Mannheim you can enjoy some free time or join a **guided tour of Heidelberg and its castle** where you'll leave from Mannheim by coach and head towards Heidelberg. This cosmopolitan, friendly, and vibrant city is made up of 15 distinct neighborhoods and is particularly attractive to families, students, business people, and researchers. Its high quality of life comes through to visitors, who feel genuinely at home here. We'll begin with a



visit to the outside of Heidelberg Castle, where you'll be able to see the Renaissance ruins and parts of its restoration. The castle has a history that is almost as old as the city itself. From either the Great Terrace or the gardens, enjoy amazing view of Heidelberg, the Neckar River, and the valley. On a clear day, you can see Mannheim. Don't miss seeing the Heidelberg Tun. Built in 1751 by Prince Elector Karl Theodor, it housed the wine paid as taxes by the wine growers in the region. Legend has it that the permanently intoxicated court jester who guarded the cask, Perkeo, died after mistakenly drinking a simple glass of water. Also, enjoy a stroll through the castle gardens, once considered a masterpiece of their time. Built upon several terraces, they were made up of many flower beds, mazes, sculptures, heated greenhouse with orange trees, large ponds, waterfalls, and a man-made grotto. We'll then head for the Neckarmünzplatz, on the banks of the Necker River, and continue with a guided tour of the old city. Pass by the Church of the Holy Spirit, the most famous church in Heidelberg, whose steeple dominates the town. And then you can take advantage of some free time to wander through the streets and shops before returning to the coach. On your way back, you'll cross the center of Mannheim before returning to the ship.

Gala dinner on board.

**DAY 08: STRASBOURG – STUTTGART - USA (B/-/-)**

After breakfast on board and disembark at 9:00 am and transfer to airport. End of your journey.

**END OF OUR SERVICES**