

Cruise France by hotel barge
LUCIOLE





Welcome aboard

Cruise on the Luciole in beautiful Burgundy for a vacation of a lifetime

Hotel barge Luciole cruises the exceptional Nivernais Canal, thought by many to be the most beautiful in France. Round every bend the vista changes, as the waterway weaves through the heart of Burgundy's beautiful scenery.

We began cruising in 1976 and our experience is evident from the attention to detail on board. The crew of six maintain the warm yet professional atmosphere, so appreciated by our guests.

The barge accommodates twelve passengers in eight en-suite cabins, with an attractive saloon and inviting sundeck. On board, guests will experience the gastronomy of France with fine regional wines and delicious gourmet meals.

The week's itinerary combines cruising the waterway with daily excursions in the barge's private bus, to visit famous vineyards for wine tasting, Medieval towns, historic châteaux and colorful markets.



Penny Liley
Owner

While the Luciole cruises the canal, soak up the sun on deck or stroll down the towpath. We also have bicycles for those wishing to explore nearby villages.



The Luciole

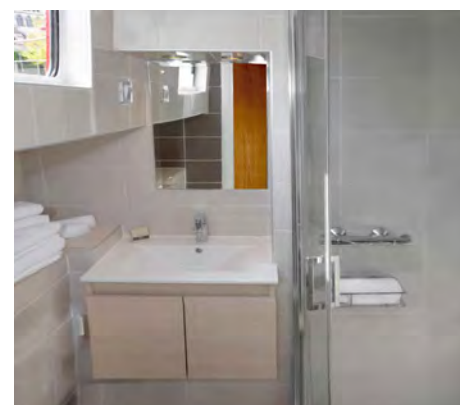
First hotel barge on the French waterways

Built in 1926 as a working vessel, she was later converted to a hotel barge in 1966, becoming the first of her kind in France. Renamed 'Luciole', French for Firefly, our barge has travelled many regions, before making the Nivernais her home.

We are proud to honor the Luciole's namesake with genuine warmth, friendship and fun. Our professional crew are caring and attentive; their passion and knowledge of our corner of France is evident to all.

The large picture windows of the saloon offer splendid views of the glorious Nivernais landscape. Medieval villages stand beside the route, hillside vineyards look down upon the valley. As dusk falls, the Luciole at her mooring is a haven of warmth and fellowship – with gastronomic delights in store to be shared with friends.

The Luciole's interior is spacious and tastefully designed. Our eight en-suite cabins offer comfortable accommodation with all the modern conveniences.



Nivernais Canal

Escape the crowds on this enchanting waterway, where time stands still

The Canal du Nivernais takes a dramatic and varied route, with breathtaking panoramas at each twist and turn. Here the majestic River Yonne interweaves with man-made canal. A total of thirty-five hand-operated locks mark the way, each with its own house and keeper, providing the opportunity to disembark for a stroll or admire the lock-keeper's garden.

The waterway was once important for transporting goods to Paris, first using the river; then in 1784 work began on the Nivernais Canal as we know it today. Freight soon rose in variety and volume: stone, wood, grain and wine were carried northwards.

Today the canal is a sleepy backwater, where few other barges navigate. A lost oasis of the canal system, where little has changed in the decades that we have cruised this tranquil waterway of 'France profonde'.

A smooth towpath runs alongside the canal for our whole route. With no cars, it provides a perfect opportunity to stroll or cycle the short distances between the locks.





Cruising

This is no ocean voyage. The pace is gentle, there is no rocking of the boat

As the barge gently slips through the water; there is time to look around, admire the bankside flora and absorb the beauty of the countryside. Luciole halts at each lock, fitting into it snugly, rising to meet the water; then, as the gates swing open again, makes her way forward on the next chapter of her journey. Guests may even try their own hand at barge steering – under the supervision of the Captain!

The Luciole cruises between two key destinations: the city of Auxerre and the Medieval town of Clamecy further south. Between these points; willow trees hang into the water while white Charolais cows graze, offering an artist's dream landscape of rural Burgundy. Herons stand sentinel, geese cluster by a farm's gate and at night time great swathes of stars fill the sky. There is tranquility here.

As we cruise through the day the landscape alters. Our raised sundeck lends itself to wonderful views as we pass by 12th Century farms and even a German World War II air base.



Food and wine

Time to relax and enjoy Burgundy, the land of fine wine and dining

Meals on board are treasured times, to share with fellow passengers, whether a summer lunch or candlelit dinner. The four course evening meal is the gastronomic highlight of each day.

Glistening glasses and starched linen napkins set the scene of a dinner party with friends. Our experienced chef is encouraged to be imaginative, marrying French cuisine with a contemporary twist, using fresh local ingredients.

The inspiring menus are carefully paired with the wines we serve – selections from Burgundy, Bordeaux and the Loire Valley. We take you on a wine tour of France, through the regions and their grape varieties, combining established winemakers with new discoveries.





Wake up to fresh croissants and pastries from local bakeries along our route. The culinary delights continue through lunch, with savory dishes and a feast of salads. We introduce to you a variety of twenty-three delicious French cheeses, from creamy Camembert to the famous Roquefort.

Tea and coffee are available throughout the day, or perhaps something stronger from the 'open bar'. Special diets are easily catered for aboard the Luciole. Just mention them before your cruise and have a word with the chef when you arrive on board.

At the end of your cruise we give you a copy of the week's menu as a souvenir of your vacation. The buffet lunches, gastronomic four course dinners, cheese board and accompanying wines are all detailed.



Auxerre

The Medieval city of Burgundy, with a skyline to dream about

Auxerre's horizon rises dramatically above the River Yonne. Dominated by the 11th Century Cathedral St Etienne and the older Abbey of St Germain; which dates back to the 5th Century, it is spectacular.

The city was originally a Gallo-Roman town; a busy port and trade route of the 1st Century. Today, the clock tower built in 1483 looks down over the bustling centre, depicting lunar months on a gilded face.

The Luciole moors beneath the imposing Cathedral. As dusk falls, a serene sky provides the backdrop to the city's magnificent architecture, the horizon reflected in the River Yonne.



Auxerre offers ample opportunities to discover French fashion and architecture. A pleasant place to shop, or simply relax in one of the many charming French cafes with a chocolat chaud or chilled bière pression.



Wine tasting

The vineyards of Chablis are home to Burgundy's prestigious Chardonnay

For a memorable wine-tasting experience we visit the heart of the nearby vineyards of Chablis. This renowned region of Burgundy is highly respected by wine connoisseurs worldwide – for Chablis is said to produce the noblest of Chardonnay wines.

Proud domaine owners have tended the same soil here for generations, protecting vines from winter frosts and nurturing the fruit-bearing plants during the summer sun. The most prestigious wines are called the Grand Cru. In Chablis they are grown on a hill-side area of one square kilometer, called La Colline des Grands Crus. During the vendange, the pickers gather these grapes by hand to ensure their quality.

An excursion to Chablis reveals breath-taking views across the vineyards. A wine-tasting here explores wines of real distinction, their complexities and pleasures.





Noyers-sur-Serein

Classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France

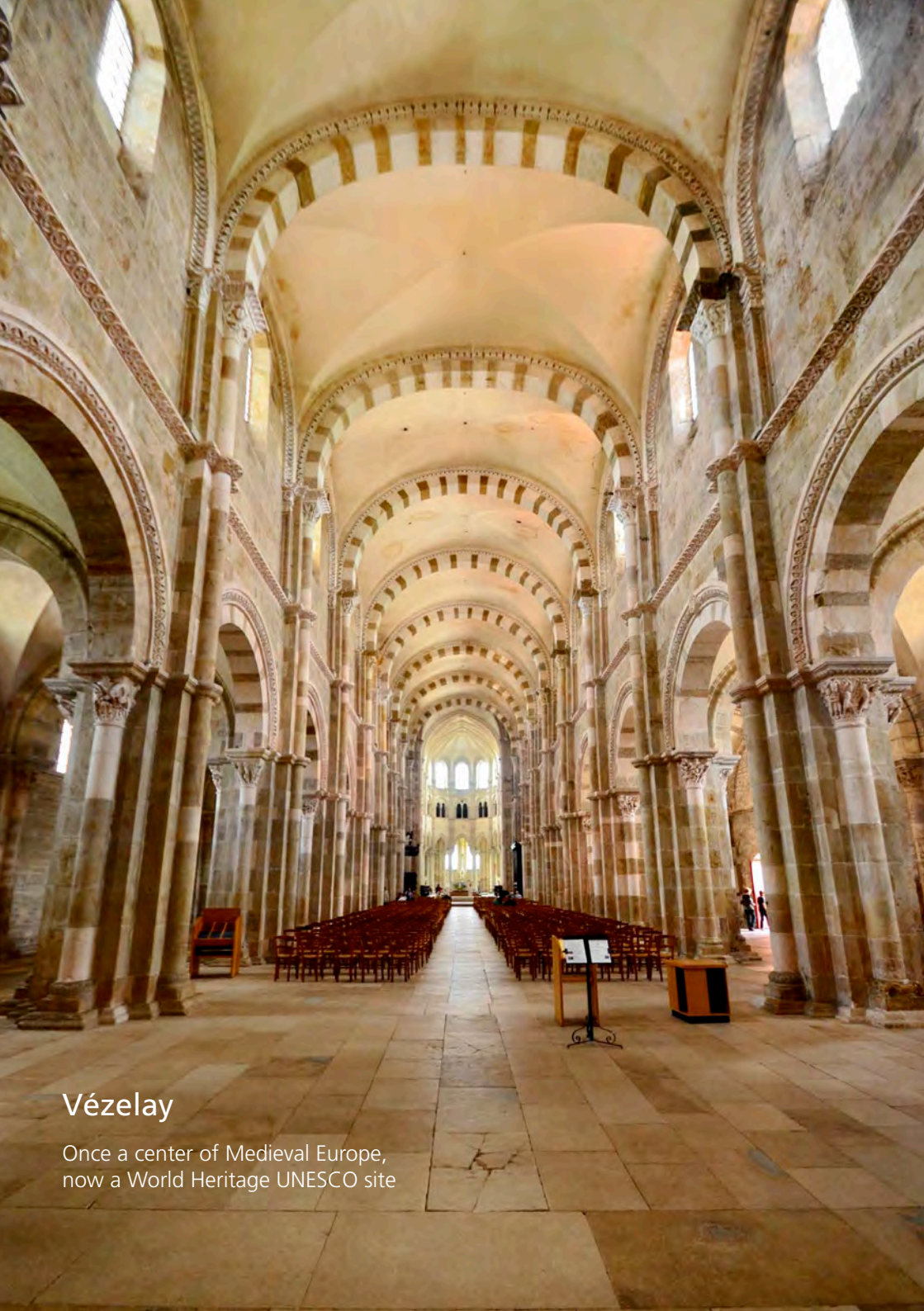
Nestling in a meander of the River Serein, this fortified village is enchanting. Winding cobbled streets invite one to explore the architectural detail of turreted dovecotes and gargoyles.

Here in the 12th Century, the Dukes of Burgundy constructed France's largest château of the time. It was a threat to Paris and in 1599 King Henri IV encouraged the townsfolk to raze it, plundering the spoils, with which they built and furnished their own properties. This is still evident today in the cottage facades. Restoration is now underway to rebuild the château. Working from old manuscripts the rubble is slowly being returned to its former glory.



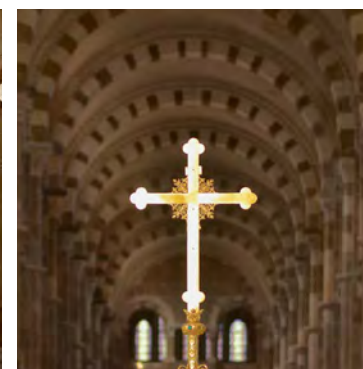
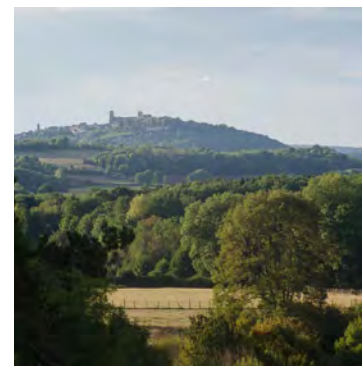
We visit on market day, providing an opportunity to buy gifts from one of the stalls selling silk scarves and jewelry. Ceramics are made and sold in the rustic pottery workshop, while further on; class leather bags and belts are hand tooled. Freshly baked gougères or macarons are tempting to taste as you wander through this picturesque village.





Vézelay

Once a center of Medieval Europe, now a World Heritage UNESCO site



The Basilica of St Mary Magdelene is one of France's religious architectural gems, a stunning blend of Romanesque and Gothic styles. It was here that Saint Bernard preached the Second Crusade, and in 1190 Richard the Lionheart, King of England, joined forces with Philip Augustus of France to launch the Third Crusade.

The Relics of Saint Mary Magdelene are enshrined in the crypt. Since the early 11th Century pilgrims have arrived in their masses to pay homage en-route to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain.

Crowning The Eternal Hill, the spectacular Basilica is the focal point of a huge expanse of rich, rolling countryside. On the Southern flanks monks still tend to the vines of ancient vineyards – producing an excellent wine that we are delighted to serve on the Luciole.

Wander down The Eternal Hill at your own pace. Take the time to browse the boutique clothes and antique shops, craft expositions and cafes.

Bazoches

Turreted, elegant and set in a pastoral landscape with views across the valley

The 12th Century Château of Bazoches in 1675 became home to the Marquis de Vauban, genius engineer and military tactician of Louis XIV, the Sun King. During his lifetime Vauban built thirty-seven new fortresses, and radically upgraded three hundred others to withstand attack. Vauban participated in many sieges, frequently leading from the front, as is evident from the musket ball dents in his suit of armor.

Still owned by Vauban's descendants, both the château and its' grounds have been lovingly restored. The Great Hall contains many exhibits, featuring examples of strategic wartime plans and fort designs. Spiral stone staircases lead to bedrooms, splendid in the affluence of the Baroque era, while the downstairs area features a library of rare books detailing the history of France.

A tour through this handsome château offers new insights into bygone France and the history of the nation.





Theme charters

Bespoke itineraries, fully customizable for family and friends taking the Luciole for whole-boat charter

Adventure Cruise

Thrills and fun for mixed aged groups. Cave climbing, canoeing, horse riding and tree-top zip-lining (regular tours also offered).

Bike and Barge

In partnership with 'France a Velo'. A cycling vacation with guided rides from the barge, to our visits. Non cyclists are equally welcome!

Wine Cruises

Tours and tastings at renowned vineyards. In Burgundy we visit Chablis and Beaune and, in the Loire Valley, Sancerre and Pouilly.

Photography Cruise

A week of photography amidst picturesque scenery and medieval villages. We provide the support, know-how and technical help.

Girlfriend Getaways

An indulgent itinerary of pampering and relaxation. Memorable massage, colour consultancy, cookery demonstrations and Burgundian garden visit.

We can tailor the perfect itinerary, combining specialized activities with on-shore excursions and, of course, cruising the Nivernais Canal.



The Luciole accommodates twelve passengers in eight en-suite cabins and is available for whole boat charter or individual bookings.

Our all-inclusive cruise rate covers six nights accommodation, all meals and drinks served on board and travel in the Luciole's bus for excursions with our Tour Guide. Transfers between Paris and the barge are also included.

We rendez-vous on Sunday afternoons at in central Paris. Luggage may be left here by those arriving early, before transfer to the Luciole in our private bus.

Served to you on board:
Continental breakfast
Two course buffet lunch
Four course evening dinner
Wine and 'open bar'
Tea, coffee, snacks and canapés
Dietary requests can easily be catered for by the Luciole's chef.

Up-to-date cabin availability and further information can be found on our website: www.bargeluciole.com

Crew
Captain
Tour Guide
Chef
Hosts - two
Matelot (deckhand)

Barge Dimensions
Length 114 ft (34 metres)
Beam 17 ft (5.18 metres)

Throughout
Non-smoking
220v electricity
Air conditioning
Heating

Saloon
Large picture windows
Comfortable sofa and chairs
Dining area
Mobile Wi-Fi
Open and well stocked bar
Library
Music system

Cabins
3 Doubles (or twins)
3 Twins
2 Singles
Port holes/windows
USB charging points
Good storage

Bathrooms
En-suite
Molton Brown toiletries
Towels
Hair dryer

Exterior
Large raised sundeck
Table and chairs
Bicycles and helmets

