



Barge Meanderer

Restore mind and body with luxury barge tours in the Upper Loire.

Like the fine wines and produce of France this historic countryside is best savored slowly, and there is simply no better way to enjoy France than to glide aboard the luxury barge Meanderer. Visit magical châteaux, savor great cuisine, discover vineyards and galleries – a Meanderer voyage lets you have a French dream vacation on your own terms.

We'll help tailor an experience that's perfect for you – whether you prefer to bicycle or walk down country lanes, or simply lounge on board the Meanderer with your favorite vintage and watch one of the world's greatest landscapes float by.

Cruise with us aboard the Meanderer – connect with a time and place where life moves a little more slowly and elegantly. Let us help make this one of your most memorable vacations.

A few words of introduction from the proud owners of Meanderer, George and Susan Kovalick.

In a sense, we have been preparing our whole lives for the Meanderer experience. We've both spent our entire professional lives in the service, lodging, and hospitality industries, with a focus on luxury experiences and first-class travel. We appreciate the difference between the very good and the great, and understand that the best high-end experience is always natural and transparent. You typically don't notice the effort that went into it.

Both of us come from Europe. Susan grew up in England, and from there enjoyed a career in senior client-service positions with major luxury brands like Chanel and Bally.

George grew up in France. He has been in the travel industry handling high end corporate and private travel as well as major events and corporate planning. He has years of first-hand experience from the client side of what discerning travelers want, need, and expect. He and Susan have a track record of delivering these results consistently.

Two other factors that make a Meanderer experience stand out. First comes the cuisine. Susan and George have also owned an upscale restaurant which has consistently garnered rave reviews. We will apply our knowledge and experience to ensuring that the culinary experience on Meanderer is of the same caliber as its other services.

Second are the activities and knowledge of the area. Susan and George are true world travelers and avid about fitness. They will work personally to ensure that each and every guest does as much—or as little!—as he or she wishes. This can range from organizing an appropriate bike or running trail, to a personalized tour of local vineyards, chateaux, special shopping opportunities, or simply unique photo opportunities.

We are capable navigational hands as well – we have owned and enjoyed a 48 ft. sailboat for over 20 years in the coastal waters of the US Northeast. We both speak fluent French and know France well. We are avid exercise participants enjoying tennis, biking, hiking, camping and, in general, being active. We share a love for the arts, food and wine, and enjoy sharing those experiences with others.

Meanderer has a crew of six and we know that selecting the right staff is an important part of creating wonderful vacations. Our crew is hand-picked for their personalities and then trained to provide service to our exacting standards.

Our goal is to build on our background of service excellence and continue to improve and add to the wonderful features of Meanderer to assure its ranking as one of the top barge experiences in France.

We look forward to welcoming you aboard!

With warm personal regards,
Susan and George Kovalick



The Six-Passenger Meanderer

Originally a 1948 Belgian Spitz commercial barge, Meanderer was converted to a luxury hotel barge in 1992. Since her conversion she has been continually upgraded and now offers probably the most luxurious six passenger barge specification available in Europe. With three en-suite cabins each measuring in excess of 125 square feet, large lounge and dining areas, a spacious, teak covered sun-deck and an outdoor heated spa-pool, she is the perfect vessel for exploring the Upper Loire in style.

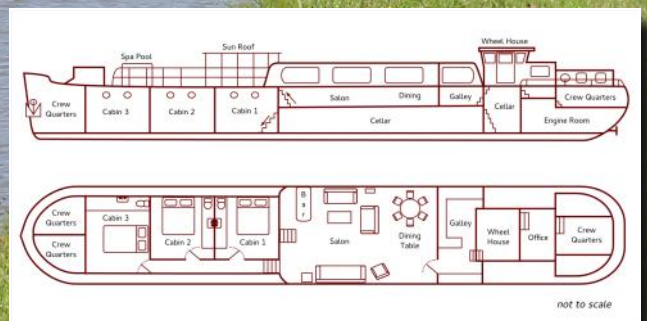
The flexible twin or queen bed arrangements and newly decorated, air-conditioned cabins and salon perfectly complement the spacious outdoor space.

Meanderer in Brief

- ✦ Passengers: 6
- ✦ Crew: 6 - Captain, Pilot, Chef, Hostess, Guide and Boatman
- ✦ Length: 125 ft.
- ✦ Width: 17 ft.
- ✦ Headroom: In excess of 6 ft 6 ins. throughout
- ✦ Cabins: three, each with configurable queen or twin beds, private bathroom with WC and shower, wardrobe, closet space, opening windows and skylights, hair dryer and bathrobe
- ✦ In-room personal safe
- ✦ Central heating and air conditioning throughout
- ✦ Satellite flat screen TV's, Video, DVD and CD players in cabins
- ✦ Wireless Internet Access
- ✦ Jacuzzi spa-pool
- ✦ 6 identical bicycles for guest use
- ✦ Private air-conditioned mini bus for round trip transfers from Paris and all excursions
- ✦ All inclusive program - all meals, all wines, fully stocked open bar, on board games, books and film library and much more
- ✦ Owners (Susan and George) are full time members of your Crew
- ✦ The barge is equipped with 220v AC power sockets throughout

We regret the barge is unsuitable for small children. However, we welcome children of 12 and over for charter groups and over 16's for non-charter bookings.

For the safety and comfort of our guests we operate a no-smoking policy throughout the barge.



Canal de Briare

Upper Loire Cruise Itinerary – Montargis to Sancerre (Montbouy to Léré)



Welcome to the magnificent countryside of France. Our cruise itinerary is based in the fascinating region of the Upper Loire. Originally the River Loire carried commercial barges but the constantly changing conditions rendered it unsafe for navigation, leading to the building of the Canal de Briare and later the Canal Latéral à la Loire.

We cruise the full length of the Canal de Briare, the first connecting canal built in France. Construction began in 1604 during the reign of Henry IV and was completed in 1634. The canal was built to enable produce from the Burgundy and Loire regions to be taken to Paris.

The Loire region is often referred to as the "Garden of France," a typically French landscape with peaceful, rolling countryside. Our cruise begins at Montbouy, at the northern end of the Canal de Briare close to the regional capital, picturesque Montargis, which welcomes visitors with fabulous floral displays. The canal, once the lifeblood of the capital, winds through its heart, passing 17th century buildings and crossing the many smaller waterways that bisect its narrow streets.

Beyond Montargis the canal parallels the course of the River Loing through villages and hamlets, many of which pre-date the canal. At Montbouy the remains of the Roman Baths and Amphitheatre are clearly visible, a testimony to the heritage of this prosperous region. In Chatillon-Coligny the original riverside washhouses lead to an imposing feudal castle, once home to the Counts of Champagne. Although almost entirely destroyed during the French revolution the labyrinth of tunnels, chambers, and the imposing keep still remain.

The original flight of seven locks at Rogny-les-Sept-Écluses (the highest point of the canal) is now preserved as a National Historic Monument. The new course of the canal takes us via a shorter flight of locks to the village of Rogny itself, considered by many to be the most unspoilt village of the region. The magnificent lakes of the Puisaye at the summit of the canal originally supplied the water for the functioning of the canal, before modern pumping stations were installed allowing uninterrupted use of the locks. The Puisaye is famous for its clay, used by local tradesmen to produce some of the finest pottery in Europe.

A gentle descent to the town of Briare takes us through majestic woodland and open farmland to the most famous waterway landmark in France. The 700 yard long aqueduct, which carries the canal across the River Loire, was built by the great engineer Eiffel (better known for the famous Parisian tower). Our cruise comes to a close in the town of Léré on the Canal Latéral à la Loire on the banks of the imposing River Loire.



Some of the possible excursions include:

- ♦ **The royal palace of Fontainebleau** – Napoleon's favorite and final home before being sent to live in exile.
- ♦ **The Château of Vaux-le-Vicomte** – site of beautiful gardens designed by Louis XIV's famous landscape architect, Andre Le Notre.
- ♦ **The Château of La Bussiere** – home of the Countess de Chasseval, with an incredible 18th Century fruit and vegetable garden.
- ♦ **The Château of St. Fargeau** – 1000 years of history in this privately held chateau.
- ♦ **Guédelon** – a reconstruction project of a medieval castle using only the tools and methods of the time.
- ♦ **Sancerre wine country** – visit a winery and tour and taste the exceptional wines of the region.

Cruise Itinerary 2017

Our cruise itinerary is designed to allow as much flexibility as possible. The following is an example of the tour itinerary but we will always try to accommodate any specific group requirements.

A typical itinerary includes:

Sunday – Paris to Montbouy

We collect you from your Paris hotel after lunch for transfer by private mini-coach to Meanderer, moored in the picturesque village of Montbouy (just a few miles from the regional capital of Montargis). After a champagne reception we take an early evening cruise to the village of Montcresson and back. Relax on deck and watch the town and people pass by. Your first dinner on board.

Monday – Montbouy to Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses

In the morning we cruise to Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses, the historic home of an ancient, seven-stage, staircase lock, still considered a marvel of engineering. After lunch the excursion program begins with a visit to the magnificent Château de Sully-sur-Loire, or to the spectacular palace of Fontainebleau, home to generations of French royalty, or to the Château Vaux le Vicomte with its extensive and pristinely preserved formal gardens.



Tuesday – Rogny-Les-Sept-Écluses to La Gazonne

This morning we visit the regional capital, Montargis, the week's best opportunity to explore a busy market town. People-watch or shop for souvenirs and exquisitely packaged confectionary from the famous Mazet Praline shop. Our afternoon cruise takes us to the remote mooring of La Gazonne, in the middle of a magnificent nature preserve.

Wednesday – La Gazonne to Briare

A morning cruise through scenic rural areas takes us to the town of Briare, where we moor just before the entrance to the extraordinary Briare Aqueduct (Pont Canal). Daily excursions continue with a visit to the town of Gien. Set on the banks of the River Loire, the pretty town holds many attractions including the famous Faïence Factory, the Hunting Museum, and the Château de Gien. A short drive brings us to the beautiful private Château de La Bussière, with its magnificent 18th century gardens.



Thursday – Briare to Beaulieu-sur-Loire

We cruise in the morning over the Pont Canal. Our afternoon visit to the splendid 16th century Château de St. Fargeau uncovers the rich history of this castle. Alternatively we can visit the village of Guédelon, a twenty-five year long, living history project, recreating a Medieval castle using only materials, tools and techniques of that period. An optional visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site village of Vézelay is possible, as is a private visit (by appointment) to the Château de Buranlure.



Friday – Beaulieu to Léré

This morning we continue along the Canal Lateral à la Loire to the charming town of Léré, our final mooring. The flat fields and pastures slowly give way to hills and vineyards. An afternoon excursion takes us to the world famous wine region of Sancerre, with the opportunity to sample the local wines and explore the charming hill-top village. A visit to the extraordinary town of La Charité-sur-Loire, surrounded on all sides by the river, is an option. For early risers we visit the farmer's market in Briare. Avid oenophiles have the option to visit two wineries that afternoon: Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé.

Saturday – Léré to Paris

This morning after breakfast we depart for the return transfer to Paris.

Note: Cruises run in reverse direction alternate weeks. It may be necessary to vary the itinerary from day to day according to local conditions.

CANAL DU LOING

Upper Loire Cruise Itinerary – Samois-sur-Seine to Montargis



No less beautiful than our regular route, this canal takes us closer to Paris allowing for a short cruise on the river Seine. Because of the proximity to Paris you will experience more of a taste of the commercial origins of the canals, passing through still active ports where you may see commercial barges in action.

Our cruise begins at the northern end of the Canal du Loing, at the historical village of Samois-Sur-Seine, home of the famous jazz guitarist Django Rheinhardt, and continues through the Canal de Briare to the regional capital of Montargis. On the way we visit Moret-sur-Loing, the splendid hilltop town of Chateau Landon, the charming isolated village of Ferrieres-en-Gatinais, finally arriving at the picturesque town of Montargis with its fabulous floral displays. The canal, once the lifeblood of the capital, winds through the heart of the town passing 17th century buildings and crossing the many smaller waterways which bisect the narrow streets.

Some possibilities include:

- **The royal palace of Fontainebleau** – Napoleon's favorite and final home before being sent to live in exile.
- **The Château of Vaux-le-Vicomte** – site of beautiful gardens designed by Louis XIV's famous landscape architect, Andre Le Notre.
- **Moret-sur-Loing** – A walking tour of the town, famous for its history and once home to the impressionist painter Alfred Sisley.
- **Château Landon** – A town with a remarkable history dating from the 5th century. Our knowledgeable guide will amaze you with the town's heritage.
- **Grez-sur-Loing** – An option to visit this town and hear about the many impressionist painters who made it their home. The church is remarkable for its gothic details. French royalty visited the church as evidenced by the royal symbol in the floor tiles.
- **Ferrieres-en-Gatinais** – A charming town with a gorgeous church and remarkable Abbey.
- **Glass blowing factory** in Soisy-Sur-École where we see the craftsmen at work plying their centuries old skills.
- **Chocolate Factory** in the Nemours region.

Our cruise comes to a close in the town of Montargis. A walk through the old town allows for some great shopping and magnificent sights of old canals weaving their way through the center of town. Stepping over the canals through many beautiful bridges (some built by Gustav Eiffel) is certainly a treat.

Cruise Itinerary 2017

Our cruise itinerary is designed to allow as much flexibility as possible. The following is an example of the tour itinerary but we will always try to accommodate any specific group requirements.

A typical itinerary includes:

Sunday – Samois-sur-Seine to St.Mammès

We collect you from your Paris hotel after lunch for transfer by private mini-coach to Meanderer moored at the riverside village of Samois-sur-Seine, home of Django Rheinhardt. A champagne reception and early evening cruise to the busy waterside town of St. Mammès await you.





Monday – St. Mammès to Épisy

During the morning we cruise to Épisy, sailing past Moret-sur-Loing. After lunch, the excursion program begins with a visit to the busy town and spectacular palace of Fontainebleau, home to generations of French royalty, or Vaux-le-Vicomte, site of the movie "Man in the Iron Mask."

Tuesday – Episy to Nemours

Today's excursion takes us to Moret-sur-Loing and a guided walking tour of this spectacular village, home of Alfred Sisley and inspiration to many famous impressionist painters. Our afternoon cruise takes us to the charming town of Nemours, with its impressive church and beautiful 12th century castle.

Wednesday – Nemours to Néronville

This morning's cruise takes us to a picturesque mooring at the village of Néronville. From there, after lunch, we visit the hilltop town of Château Landon. Many options are available, including a horse-drawn carriage visit of the town (additional fee) or a very interesting guided walking tour. The cruise itself takes us through an industrial section of the canal followed by a contrasting quiet, rural and picturesque section before arriving at Néronville.



Thursday – Néronville to Nargis



The daily excursion program continues with a visit to the village of Grez sur Loing. An optional excursion to Barbizon is available. That afternoon we cruise to another beautiful, secluded mooring in the village of Nargis.

Friday – Nargis to Montargis

In the morning our cruise will continue to our final overnight mooring at the region capital, Montargis. For those interested in wine tasting, we offer a trip to the Sancerre wine region, including tasting and winery visit. An optional trip to visit the beautiful Chateau de la Bussiere with its 18th century garden or Chateau de St. Fargeau with its unique history and present role in the life of local community. We can, time allowing, include a stopover and a walk over the Briare's Pont Canal – the famous 700 yard aqueduct over the Loire River built in 1896 by Gustav Eiffel. For the early riser a visit with the chef to the farmer's market in Ferrieres en Gatinais is an option.



Saturday

This morning after breakfast we depart for the return transfer to Paris.

Note: Cruises run in reverse direction alternate weeks. It may be necessary to vary the itinerary from day to day according to local conditions.

Food and Wine



Gourmet dining on board is another aspect of the wonderful, relaxing week Meanderer offers. Dining al fresco under the canopy or inside in the elegant salon are both exceptional experiences.

Menus represent the dining for which France is renowned. Meals on board Meanderer are prepared only with the finest ingredients, and the presentation is exquisite. Our chef shops daily in the local markets for the freshest seasonal gourmet foods available. Menus can be adjusted to accommodate special dietary requests. We will always do our best to customize menus to the likes, or dislikes, of our passengers.

Our chef brings not only culinary expertise but also knowledge of the local wine regions (Burgundy, Sancerre and Champagne), so the wine pairings and selection of wines on board enhance the dining experience.

If children are part of the cruise we will make sure that the menus include age-appropriate dishes and chef will shop for favorite foods.

Special occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, and celebrations are something that our chef loves to cook for, so if the cruise is for one of these events, let us know and we will prepare something extra special for you.

Themed Cruises

The list of special interest themes we could offer is almost endless; the following are just a selection of the most popular ones. If your particular interest or theme is not listed, please ask your agent to contact us for specific ideas. We would be delighted to research a particular interest and suggest a unique itinerary for your group.

Our themed charters include:

Golf

The Upper Loire region offers golfers the chance to play a number of immaculately presented, picturesque courses (including Cely-en-Briere and Golf de Fontainebleau – regularly listed as Europe's top courses.) We have fully researched all of the courses within easy reach of our cruise route and can accommodate both avid players who wish to play a different course each day and those who would like to include just one game in a week's trip. And, should there be non-golfers amongst the party, our regular excursion program can continue for them too.



Biking

Guided biking tours of all levels (from laid back rides following the canal bike-paths to 80 miles plus daily trips) will be offered within our current itineraries. George will guide all biking tours. The rides will be designed to supplement current activities, allow for riding bikes (rather than the bus) to certain excursions by all or some of the guests, replace some excursions or even all of them with biking tours. Six high quality bikes are available for the guests. Avid cyclists may bring their own bikes (we shall arrange to transport the cases to/from Meanderer and have

plenty of storage). High-end road bikes will be available for rentals (estimated cost is \$450.00 per week). The biking options are available to all or individual guests on any given day and custom designed in accordance with biking skills and level of comfort. Maps, GPS, water bottles, helmets and essential spare parts are available. Cyclists can also bring their own shoes and clip-on pedals.

Antiques

The influence of French furniture and art has been evident throughout the world for centuries. One of the charms of scouring for antiques in France is that it takes so little time to find real gems. They seem to be everywhere. Our Antiques cruise includes an extra day touring with an expert guide in the heart of Paris, plus we arrange transport back to the US for any treasures you may have bought along the way.



Family Programs

Whilst a barge holiday is not a place for younger children, we are happy to accommodate the over 12's and can suggest an alternative cruise schedule to keep young minds stimulated! Water parks, adventure playgrounds and EuroDisney are all within easy reach of our regular cruising route.

Winery Tours

Although the standard cruise includes a visit to a winery, this theme is expanded to include additional visits, tastings, and opportunities to view the wine-making process. We will customize the tours based upon guest preferences and will include classes on understanding different wines. This can be for both the connoisseur and the novice.



For detailed itineraries of our golf and biking tours please visit our website: bargemeanderer.com or email us for pdf files of those itineraries: info@bargemeanderer.com

To book a cruise or for more detailed information please do not hesitate to contact us.

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As you float aboard the Meanderer you will enjoy scenic views of the Upper Loire valley. With the area's rich history, glorious architecture, daily town markets, antique shops and museums, your experience can be tailored to your preferences by our crew and hosts. These ancient waterways will take you through the region as one traveled back then – at a leisurely pace, in a relaxing manner and past unforgettable vistas. Our moorings are peaceful and rural with plenty of opportunities to walk, bike, or simply relax and allow the crew to pamper you.

*Come join us, savor the food and wine,
and relax while touring a truly enchanting countryside.*