

Great Houses & Gardens of Franconia

ABOARD THE *MS JOHANN STRAUSS*

11th to 23rd September 2012 with Michael Michieli & Nicholas Merchant



Residential Palace, Wurzburg



Regensburg

Rose Garden of the Bamberg New Residence



Miltenberg



Nuremberg's Hospende Gardens

On our passage along Germany's three great rivers we will encounter some of her greatest Romanesque buildings and travel through time to the beauty of the Baroque, so well executed in her great country estates. The Rhine and its tributaries the Main and Moselle were some of the busiest rivers in Europe, a water highway that not only transported people and goods, but ideas and fashions. They were also a source of wealth and much of Germany's finest architecture, museums and art are to be found close to their banks.

Whilst any river trip along these great rivers must include elements of all the arts and history both ancient and modern, on this trip we will also concentrate on the splendid Baroque country houses and gardens. Somewhat different in taste and style to our own great houses and gardens, but fascinating all the same for the extraordinary marriage of styles from the past.



The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Prague. Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival, transfer to the Esplanade Hotel or similar for your two-night stay.

Day 2 Prague. Morning guided city of Prague including the main attractions. Afternoon at leisure.

Day 3 Prague to Regensburg. Check out of your hotel today and drive to Regensburg to embark the *MS Johann Strauss*. After stopping for lunch we cross the border into Germany and reach Regensburg in the afternoon. After a brief but fascinating tour of this beautiful medieval city we continue to St Emmeram Palace for a tour that will include the romantic landscaped park of the Thurn and Taxis baronial family.

Day 4 Nuremberg. Explore the capital of Franconia on a guided tour of the old city within the vast walls. The tour will include a visit to the Hesperides Gardens which date back to the 17th and 18th centuries and evolved from the cottage gardens of the Middle Ages.

Day 5 Bamberg. This morning we will visit the gardens of Bamberg New Residence that were designed under the reign of Prince-Bishop Friedrich Carl von Schönborn. Continue on to Seehof Castle, among the features reflecting the splendour of the former Rococo garden are some of the original sandstone sculptures by Ferdinand Tietz.

Day 6 Wurzburg. Arrive in historic Wurzburg, the wine capital of Franconia. Visit the Residenz Palace on a guided tour with its stunning parkland. We will take a walk through the court gardens at Veitshöchheim, the best-preserved Rococo garden in Germany.

Day 7 Miltenberg. This afternoon, on a guided tour, explore the delightful Lower Franconian town of Miltenberg with its half-timbered houses.



Day 8 Darmstadt, Worms & Heidelberg. Drive to Darmstadt to visit the enchanting small summer

palace of Prince George which houses a priceless grand ducal porcelain collection. The adjoining garden is a superb example of a period garden laid out according to late 18th century French gardening principles and is a jewel of Baroque gardening art. Afternoon free in Worms to visit St Peter's Cathedral. Alternatively, join an optional excursion to Heidelberg, one of the most picturesque and romantic of German cities.

Day 9 Rudesheim. This morning explore the colourful riverside town of Rudesheim independently with its cobblestone streets of the Drosselgasse. Sail at lunchtime and enjoy the afternoon cruising towards Koblenz where we join the Moselle. This section of the Rhine is regarded by many as the most romantic.

Day 10 Koblenz. Today drive to nearby Sayn Palace, the rebuilt neo-gothic home of the Princess of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn. See the 22 acre English-style park garden built for Prince Ludwig in the mid 19th century. Afternoon cruising.

Day 11 Cochem. The town of Cochem is famous for its 11th century Schloss and the Reichsburg. On the guided tour, walk along its winding medieval streets and see the Baroque Town Hall.

Day 12 Bernkastel & Trier. Here in the heart of the Moselle Valley we will explore lovely Bernkastel and sample some of its locally produced wine. Later cruise to nearby Trier, one time capital of the Roman Western Empire.

Day 13 Trier to London. Disembark after breakfast and transfer to Luxembourg for your return scheduled flight to London.

BOOK BEFORE 30 SEPTEMBER 2011 AND SAVE £400 PER PERSON OFF THE PRICES SHOWN

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy Tour Code: RCJS110912

CAT	DECK	CABIN DESCRIPTION	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	SOLE OCCUPANCY
D	Polka	Forward	£2895	£3695
C	Polka	Mid-ship	£3095	£3895
BF	Opera	French balcony forward	£3295	£4095
B	Opera	French balcony	£3495	£4295
A	Waltz	French balcony	£3695	£4495

NB. Ports subject to change. Water levels may also affect itinerary. All special offers are subject to availability. Due to low level bridges on certain sections of the river, please note that on occasion, Polka deck cabin windows may be below water levels and the sun deck may be closed.

Price includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, 2 nights at the Esplanade Hotel in Prague on bed & breakfast basis, lunch on day 3, 10 nights aboard the *MS Johann Strauss* on full board, house wine, beer and soft drinks with dinner onboard, shore excursions, guest speaker, services of a cruise director, tour manager, transfers, port taxes, gratuities to crew and whilst on shore excursions, airport taxes. **Not included:** Travel insurance, optional shore excursion to Heidelberg, gratuities and meals other than those stated while in Prague.