

Grand Floral Tour & Rhine River Cruise 2012
13 DAYS / 12 NIGHTS
Double Occupancy Rates From: \$4,414.00 per person
Single Supplement \$1,148

APRIL 17TH – APRIL 29TH, 2012



Floriade is a World Horticultural Expo staged once every ten years in the Netherlands. During the period from April until mid-October 2012, the sixth edition of Floriade will be organised in Venlo. The participating countries, businesses and horticultural companies and public and semi-public bodies present visitors to Floriade 2012 with the opportunity to enjoy the world's most exquisite and exceptional flowers, plants, trees and fruit and vegetables.

But Floriade 2012 offers much more. Each day features a cultural programme of music, dance, literature, theatre and visual art from all over the world. Sustainable, pioneering architectural eye catchers, as never seen before, will be shown for the first time at Floriade 2012. With countless exciting, innovative and educational attractions and activities, Floriade 2012 is a spectacular voyage of discovery for children. Various characteristic restaurants and friendly, welcoming cafes offer visitors a place to savor delicious local and international cuisine, naturally prepared with home grown ingredients.

Or enjoy a picnic surrounded by flowers and trees, lounge on the banks of the water and delight in the countless shows and parades. Floriade 2012 lets you experience nature. Using the senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell you can experience at first hand the influence horticulture has on the quality of our daily lives.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Day 1, April 17 ARRIVAL DAY

Transfer by private coach and English speaking guide from Dusseldorf Airport and proceed to Benrath Palace for a tour of the gardens, plus a visit inside at the Museum of European Garden History.



A group lunch will be served at a local restaurant before arriving at the Dutch town of Vlodrop for an overnight. Group dinner at the hotel

Day 2, April 18 FULL DAY EXCURSION FLORIADE

Breakfast at leisure.

08:30 hrs Depart Vlodrop

09.00 hrs Arrival Floriade

One hour tour through the Floriade with an English speaking guide

Free time at the Floriade

Guests will receive a lunch voucher which is valid in all restaurants on the Floriade grounds.

16.30 hrs End of the visit to the Floriade
Transfer back to the hotel by private coach and English speaking guide.

17.00 hrs Arrival at the hotel

19.00 hrs. Dinner at own arrangement

Day 3, April 19 Asparagus & mushrooms

Breakfast at leisure.

09.00 hrs Transfer to Museum De Locht

09.30 hrs. Guided tour at the museum
After the tour of 45 minutes coffee and pie will be served in a private room.

Farmstead "De Locht"

Farmstead "De Locht" was built in 1859. Extensions have been added in the following decades until it got its present 120-yard-long façade. The predecessor of the farm was already mentioned as "De Locht" in 1423. The museum that is now housed in this farm depicts farm-life as it used to be in these parts. The farmstead has been restored to its original state as closely as possible.



The National Asparagus- and Mushroom Museum

The museum is housed in an old barn that was originally built elsewhere and rebuilt here in the traditional way. It shows the old and modern methods of cultivating these products. Historical, biological, economic and culinary aspects are also dealt with. The exhibition is elaborately illustrated by texts and videos. In the museum, you will find an auction-clock which can be operated from the auction-benches.

The north of Limburg is Holland's most important region for the production of both asparagus and mushrooms. The sandy soil is very suitable for asparagus. This vegetable is harvested in the months of May and June. The asparagus museum shows you how the vegetable is grown and various special tools and implements used in the production and harvesting. Crop improvement is also dealt with.

11.00 hrs End of visit at Museum De Locht

Continue to Amsterdam.

12.30 hrs Stop for lunch at a local restaurant in the countryside

14.00 hrs Depart the restaurant and continue to Amsterdam

Free time at leisure

18:30 hrs Start private welcome dinner cruise.
3-course dinner with drinks will be served during a 2 hours canal cruise.

20:30 hrs End of the private dinner cruise.
Short walk back to the hotel

Day 4, April 20 FULL DAY EXCURSION TO THE AALSMEER FLOWER AUCTION AND A PRIVATE GREENHOUSE NURSERY

- 07:30 hrs Breakfast at leisure and hotel checkout.
Visit to the Flower auction in Aalsmeer. The world's largest auction building where millions of flowers and potted plants are auctioned yearly
- 08:00 hrs Arrival at the Flower auction Aalsmeer with a guided tour

Flower auction Aalsmeer

You walk out of the Visitors Center over a gallery through the auction complex where you can see into the auction rooms where the flowers are auctioned at the clock, where the products are shown and the buyers do business from the auction gallery. The route is marked out with signs which explain in four languages (Dutch, French, German and English) what you see on your way.

- 10.00 hrs Depart from the auction grounds. Proceed to visit a private plant and flower nursery. It is a greenhouse operation where the owner will show you around the greenhouses and premises while explaining the logistics and details.
- 12.30 hrs The group stops for lunch at a local restaurant in the countryside.
- 14.00 hrs You proceed to the windmills of the Zaanse Schans, a small community on the banks of the Zaan River. This is an area where over 800 windmills produced the power that formed the first industrial region of the Netherlands. Visit one of the windmills and a wooden shoe farm.
- 17.00 hrs You return to Amsterdam to board the Rhine River Cruise Ship, MS Europe. Embarkation takes place in **Amsterdam** between 5.00-6.00 PM. There is time to settle comfortably into your cabin before meeting the crew during a welcome cocktail reception in the lounge. Dinner is served on board. Overnight is in Amsterdam.

Day 5, April 21

AMSTERDAM

After breakfast on board, our full day of touring begins with **the Keukenhof Gardens where our participants are able to view the spectacular tulip fields in a most beautiful setting. During the morning in the gardens, there will be time for lunch on your own. After lunch, we move on to the charming town of Delft.**



Keukenhof is a historic park covering an area of thirty-two hectares, full of tulips, hyacinths, daffodils and all the other spring bulbs. The floral displays in the park and unique flower shows in the various pavilions are a glorious visual feast. And in the midst of this magnificent spectacle of colour there are also exquisite works of art.

Keukenhof is an unforgettable experience for people of all ages. It has been one of the most popular destinations in the Netherlands for almost 60 years and is famous worldwide. Here you can gain inspiration while you relax in the magnificent surroundings of the park which has no less than fifteen kilometres of footpaths. For children there is an exciting playground, a large maze and an animal paddock. Keukenhof is a unique experience and guarantees the most fabulous photos. Come to

Keukenhof with your family, friends and associates and enjoy the ultimate spring feeling. Taste the spring at Keukenhof!

Delft is one of Holland's most perfectly preserved city centres which we will explore by foot. Since the 17th century Delft has acquired a world wide reputation for its hand-painted Delftware. The production process will be explained during a visit to one of the surviving factories.

There is free time in Delft for shopping in the historic centre.

After a full day of touring it is back to the ship for dinner on board. Enjoy a free evening in Amsterdam. Overnight sailing begins just past 12:00 Midnight.

Day 6, April 22

AMSTERDAM – HET LOO PALACE (NIJMEGEN) – KREFELD

There is an early morning departure from Amsterdam in order to begin the cruise south on the Rhine River. Breakfast is served on board while cruising towards **Nijmegen**, where we have a scheduled port call. The Garden Group disembarks in Nijmegen where a coach and guide are waiting to take them to the Het Loo Palace & Gardens for a special tour. Return back to the ship in time for lunch on board. We then begin sailing south, passing the towns of **Wesel** and **Duisburg** along the way towards Krefeld. Dinner is served on board before arriving before arriving at our destination in late evening. Overnight is in Krefeld.

Day 7, April 23

KREFELD – DUSSELDORF – COLOGNE – KOENIGSWINTER

The ship begins sailing at 7.00 AM with breakfast served on board. The Garden Group will disembark at Krefeld to begin a full day of special touring by coach. The morning is spent on board the ship. After lunch on board, the ship arrives in Cologne at 2:00 PM with time for individual sightseeing. The Cologne Cathedral is only a 10 minute walk from the pier. There are also many sidewalk cafes where you can buy coffee, local beer and wine. Return to the ship at 5:00 PM before cruising on towards **Bonn** (an old university town and former capital of West Germany). Dinner will be served on board before mooring for the night in **Koenigswinter**.

Day 8, April 24

KOENIGSWINTER – RUDESHEIM

Breakfast is served on board before sailing through the Romantic Rhine. After passing by **Koblenz** and the legendary **Lorelei Rock**, we enter the most beautiful section of the Rhine, where castles perch high atop the hills overlooking lush vineyards and picturesque wine towns. We arrive in **Rudesheim late in the afternoon. Once there, you can choose to shop and sightsee on your own**, or take part in an optional **excursion** by minitrain. The tour includes a wine tasting at a local cellar, as well as, a visit to the musical instrument museum. Dinner is served on board. Afterwards, we invite you to spend a free evening in the lively **Drosselgasse**, which is a world famous pedestrian street known for its open-air restaurants and taverns with their oom-pah bands playing into the night. Overnight is in Rudesheim.

Day 9, April 25

RUDESHEIM – SPEYER or MANNHEIM

We get an early start and begin sailing south while breakfast is served on board. Today, we cruise along the Rhine towards **Speyer**, passing the towns of **Wiesbaden**, **Nierstein** and **Worms** along the way. At about 1:00 PM, we arrive in **Mannheim**. After lunch on board, a private **coach and guide arrives to pick up the Garden Group for an exclusive excursion to the Schwetzingen Palace, which is located outside of Heidelberg**. Return to the ship at the end of the afternoon for dinner on board followed by a gala evening. The ship will sail overnight from **Mannheim or Speyer**, heading south towards Strasbourg.

Day 10, April 26

SPEYER or MANNHEIM –STRASBOURG

Breakfast is served on board prior to arriving in **Strasbourg** where **disembarkation takes place around 9:00 AM.**

At the end of the cruise a coach and guide arrives to pick up the Garden Group for a transfer to the Maison Rouge Hotel in Strasbourg where they will be based for the next 3 nights. Prior to hotel checkin, the group will experience the city by motorcoach, canal boat and on foot. The Strasbourg city tour includes a 1 hour panoramic motorcoach orientation followed by a city walking tour through the gorgeous La Petite France section and a canal cruise around the old town, prior to hotel checkin.



Strasbourg is one of the best-kept tourist secrets in all of Europe. This beautiful Alsatian city is well-known to Europeans as a mecca for great food and wine. The old city center is surrounded by peaceful canals with lovely flowers and willow trees lining their banks. The houses are half-timbered and the red sandstone cathedral boasts an astronomical clock which is one of the high points of this Gothic structure.

Day 11, April 27

MAINAU ISLAND

Full Day Tour to Mainau Island

After breakfast at the hotel, the Garden Group is taken by motorcoach with their guide through Germany's Black Forest to the western shores of Lake Constance and Mainau Island.

The grand dukes of Baden laid out a large park on this 110 acre island on the western shores of Lake Constance. The property of the late Count Lennart Bernadotte since 1932, it is a paradise for all plant enthusiasts. The juxtaposition of the palace, its charming Baroque church and colorful flower beds set in a green parkland contributes to the magic of the island. The mild micro-climate means that exotic plants also thrive there. Further attractions include Germany's largest butterfly house and floral displays that change with the seasons.



An orientation tour of the gardens is followed by free time to explore on your own. Lunch will be served at the restaurant on the island with a bit more free time afterward before heading back to Strasbourg through the Black Forest.

Dinner is on your own arrangements back in Strasbourg.



Day 12, April 28 ALSACE WINE ROAD

The Alsace Wine Road Tour

After breakfast at the hotel, the Garden Group departs with their guide and motorcoach for a beautiful drive through Alsace. The full day of touring includes a wine tasting, a group lunch and a visit to the beautiful city of Colmar.

The Alsace Wine Road is a serpentine ribbon which runs along the eastern slopes of the Vosges Mountains in eastern France. It tranquilly unfolds along the mountain side while crossing through 60 wine-growing towns and villages. Local wineries are most welcoming and they love to have visitors come in to try their excellent wines.



Alsace is not only famous for great local wines and cuisine, it is also known for the flower displays and beds planted by the local government councils along highways and around public buildings. Local inhabitants in private houses also take part in the fun. It is worth noting that northern Alsace has been a major participant in France's Department in Bloom annual trophy competition. In all, 137 towns and villages are rated from 1 to 4 "flowers" with 4 "flowers" being judged the most beautiful. Visitors to the region are able to distinguish how many flowers each town or village has received in that year's competition by viewing the town's welcome sign upon arrival.

Tonight, after arriving back from a full day's tour of Alsace, we have planned a great farewell dinner at the famous Maison Kammerzell. It is a short walk from your hotel.

Maison Kammerzell



The Maison Kammerzell has been an acclaimed restaurant in the city center of Strasbourg since 1427. Located in the Cathedral Square, it is a monument to Alsatian cuisine and a gastronomic tradition.

Explore the different floors and let yourself be charmed by the Maison Kammerzell: Its magnificent rooms decorated by Léo Schnug, its warm and spacious lounges, and its unique views of the Cathedral.

The cellar offers exceptional surroundings with its vaulted ceilings, its arched windows and its typically medieval atmosphere. This room owes its name to the Alsatian artist who painted the allegorical frescoes which have decorated the walls since 1904. Léo Schnug, well known for the frescoes he painted at the Castle of Haut-Koenigsbourg, painted here "Le nef des fous" (the Ship of Fools), "Le Repas du condamné" (the Condemned Man's Last Meal), "Le Supplice de Tantale" (the Punishment of Tantalus). He also created a unique decor which makes the Maison Kammerzell

Day 13, April 29 RETURN TO USA

Motorcoach transfer to Zurich Airport for the flight back to the U.S.

Program Inclusives / Pre-cruise land in Germany & Holland:

- Airport Assistance on arrival outside the luggage claim area
- Pick up Dusseldorf Airport by private coach on arrival
- 3 nights stay in 3 star hotel including breakfast and taxes
- Hotel portorage in/out
- 2- course lunch on DAY 1 in a local restaurant, DAY 2 Floriade lunch voucher, DAY 3 lunch in a local restaurant and DAY 4 lunch at a local restaurant
- Dinner DAY 1 at the Vlodrop Hotel, Canal boat dinner cruise DAY 3
- Entrances Benrath Palace, Museum of European Garden History, Floriade, Farmstead "De Locht", Aalsmeer Flower Auction, Zaanse Schans, Windmills, Wooden Shoe Factory, Keukenhof
- Private coach including guide assistance on excursion days
- One complimentary for tour leader throughout program based on a single room
- * ½ bottle of house wine and ½ bottle of mineral water

Excluding:

- Portorage at Dusseldorf Airport on arrival.
- Gratuities for guides and coach drivers.
- Meals not listed in the above inclusives.

River Cruise Inclusives:

- *6 night Rhine River cruise from Amsterdam to Strasbourg for main deck cabins. Rates for upgrades to middle and upper deck cabins, as well as, single supplement are available on request.
- *All meals while on board and all taxes, including port taxes.
- *Special Garden Group tours to Het Loo Palace in Appeldoorn, Holland and Schwetzingen Palace in Heidelberg, Germany.
- *Beverages with lunch and dinner. This includes: red and white house wine, draft beer, mineral water and fruit juices.

Not included in the cruise price:

- *Optional tours from the ship. These can be costed in on a group basis.
- *Shipboard and land tour gratuities.
- *Upgrades to middle and upper deck cabins.

Strasbourg Land Program Inclusives:

- *3 nights in the Maison Rouge Hotel (superior tourist class) with daily buffet breakfast and in/out hotel portorage.
- *Strasbourg city tour (panorama coach, walking & canal cruise).
- *Lunch at Chez Yvonne Restaurant in Strasbourg.
- *Full day guided motorcoach excursion to Mainau Island in southwest Germany.
- *Entrance fees to Mainau Island and local Mainau guide for orientation.
- *Lunch at the Mainau Island restaurant (3 courses with 1 beverage).
- *Full day guided motorcoach excursion on the Alsace Wine Road and Colmar in eastern France.
- *Wine tasting at the Becker Cellar in Zellenberg.
- *Lunch at L'Ami Fritz Restaurant in Zellenberg.
- *Farewell dinner at Maison Kammerzell in Strasbourg (3 courses with beverage).
- *All taxes.
- *1 free with 20 minimum paying.
- *Coach transfer from Strasbourg to the Zurich Airport.

Not included in the Strasbourg land program:

- *Gratuities for guides and coach drivers.
- *Meals not listed in the above inclusive.