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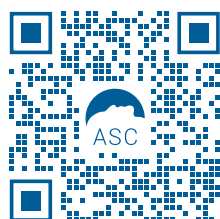
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WHAT'S UP

A Stars and Stripes Community Publication

Europe Office

COMMANDER

Katie R. Fidler, LTC, U.S. Army

BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER

John Rodriguez

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, MANAGER

Carrie Farrell

WRITER-EDITORS

Tamala Malerk, Kat Nickola, Katie Wells

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Amanda DeHart, Rryan Joye

MARKETING COORDINATOR

Kristen Thoennes

MARKETING ASSISTANT

Al Green

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, MANAGER

Doug Dougherty

MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING, CONSULTANTS

Sean Adams, Heidi Bayfield, Kandace Blevin,

Nate Jamison, Capri Roe, Jeff Teeselink

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Danny Padro

ADVERTISING OFFICE

Unit 29480, APO, AE 09211

Postfach 1980, 67607

Kaiserslautern, Germany

+49 (0) 152-5672-5020

COVER DESIGN BY

Rryan Joye

Washington Office

PUBLISHER

Max D. Lederer, Jr.

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Laura Law

REVENUE DIRECTOR

Scott Foley

ENGAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Chris Verigan

PUBLISHING & MEDIA DESIGN, DIRECTOR

Marie Woods

TO ADVERTISE CONTACT:



KANDACE BLEVIN

KAISERSLAUTERN

MULTIMEDIA CONSULTANT

blevin.kandace@stripes.com

TEL: 0172-666-8134

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GERMANY

May Day

Celebrations and Demonstrations Across Germany | May 1

May Day, as a celebration of the first day of summer, dates back to the Iron Age. Nowadays, men present saplings to their lovers, maypoles are erected and bonfires are lit to ward off witches. It also serves as Germany's Labor Day.

29th Freienfels Knight Games

Weinbachs-Freienfels | May 9–12

Pentecost Festival: Travel back to 1631

Rothenburg | May 17–20

Tolkien Days | Geldern | May 24–26

Bernau Hussite Festival | Bernau | May 30– June 2

The Big Meeting: Fantasy Festival

Aach am Bodensee | Aug. 9–11

Museum Embankment Festival | Frankfurt | Aug. 23–25

Beethoven Festival | Bonn | Sept. 5 to Oct. 3

BELGIUM

Procession of the Holy Blood | Bruges | May 24

Ommegang Pageant of Brussels | Brussels | July 3 and 5

The Battle of Waterloo Reenactment

Braine-l'Alleud | June 18

Why not attend a reenactment of one of the most famous battles in history? Watch as Napoleon and over 90,000 troops fall to the Duke of Wellington.

Beselare Witch Parade | Beselare | July TBD

Festival of Wallonia: Celebration of Belgian Independence | Namor | Sept. 12–16

IRELAND AND THE U.K.

St. Patrick's Day | Cities across Ireland | Mar. 17

Gloucester History Festival Spring Weekend

Gloucester | Apr. 12–14

Glastonbury Abbey Medieval Fayre

Glastonbury | Apr. 27–28

Highland Games | All over Scotland | May–Sept.

Southwick Revival "Spirit of D-Day"

Southwick | June 8–9

Chalke Valley History Festival

Broad Chalke | June 24–30

What began as a small festival in 2011, has grown to host over 25,000 visitors across 70 acres every year. This festival entertains you with reenactments, discussions, workshops, live music, debates and more.

TANKFEST 2024 | Bovington | June 28–30

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (Irish Traditional Music Festival) | Wexford | Aug. 4–11

The Yorkshire Wartime Experience

Yorkshire | Aug. 9–11

Puck Fair: Ireland's Oldest Festival

Killorglin | Aug. 10–12

National Ploughing Championships

Scraggan | Sept. 17–19

Up Helly Aa: Viking Tradition Festival

Shetland | Jan. 28, 2025

SWEDEN

National Day | Stockholm | June 6

Midsommer Day | Cities across Sweden | June 24

Stockholm Early Music Festival – A Classic Fest

Stockholm | June 4–9

This is a festival for history and music lovers alike. As one of the most popular music festivals in Sweden, it features musicians from all over the world performing music from the Baroque, medieval and Renaissance eras. Put on your classiest attire and prepare to enjoy delicious Swedish fare between performances.

Medieval Week | Visby | Aug. 4–11

AUSTRIA

Summer Solstice Celebrations—Fire Festival: Since 1604 | Wachau and Nibelungengau | June 22 and 29

Mozart Week | Salzburg | Jan. 2025

CZECHIA

Royal Silvering of Kutná Hora | Kutná Hora | June 22–23

Five-Petalled Rose Celebrations

Cesky Krumlov | June 21–23

Summer Shakespeare Festival | Prague | June–Sept.

ITALY

Explosion of the Cart | Florence | Mar. 31

Easter Procession/Procession Of Mysteries: 24-hour procession | Sicily | Mar. 29

The Procession of the Snake Catchers | Cocullo | May 2

Game of the Bridge Festival | Pisa | June 29

Festa della Madonna Bruna | Matera | July 2

Quintana of Ascoli Piceno | Ascoli Piceno | July–Aug.

POLAND

Jewish Cultural Festival | Krakow | June 23–30

SWITZERLAND

Swiss National Day | Across Switzerland | Aug. 1

Fête de l'Escalade: Celebration of Geneva's victory against Savoyard | Geneva | Dec. 7–8 ■



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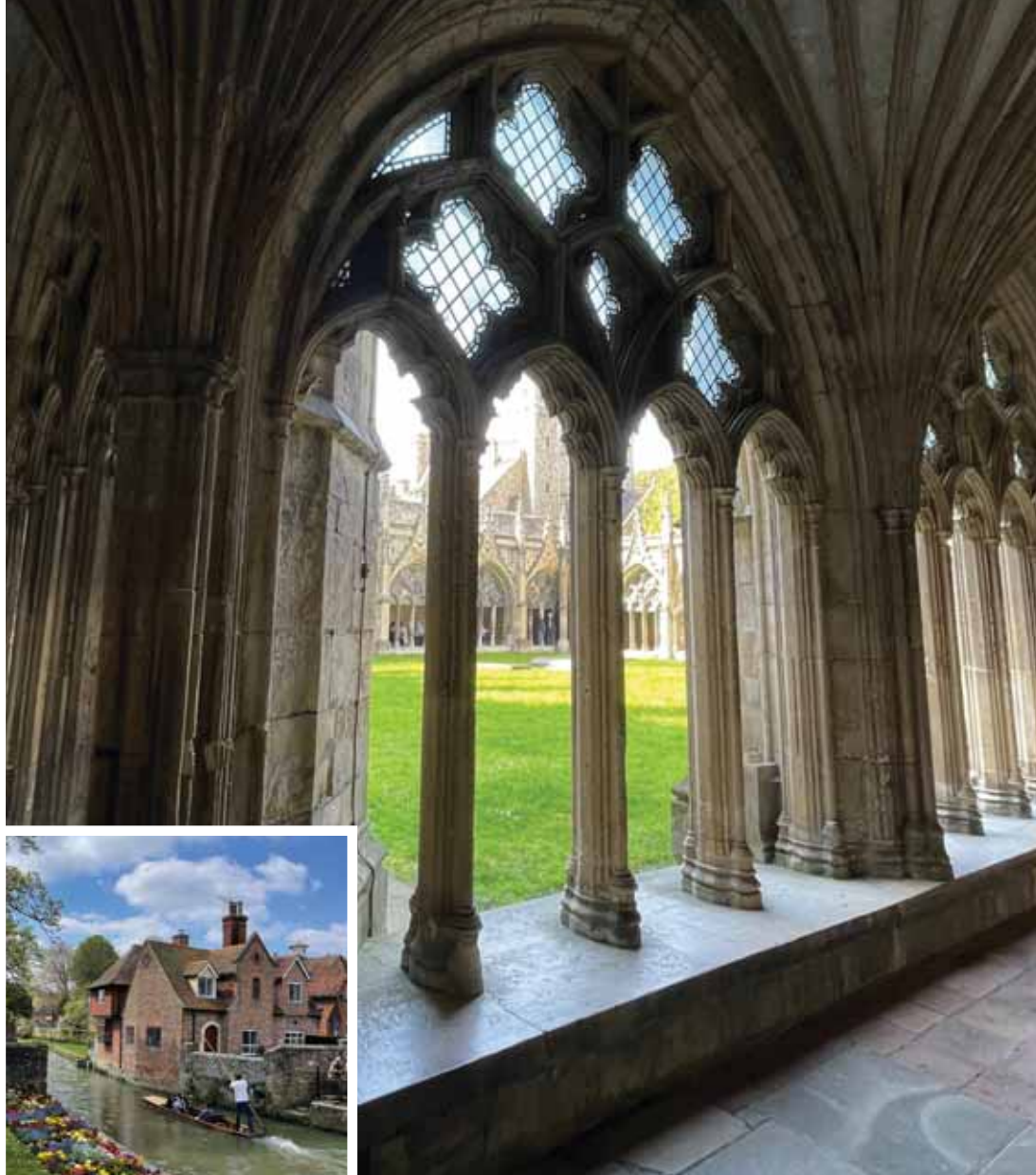
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Spotlight On



Canterbury

By Kat Nickola

The name Canterbury comes from Old English. Originally called Cantwareburgh, its literal meaning was “the fortified town” (burgh) for the “people” (ware) of “Cant” or Kent. When walled towns were first built, they were designed as an evacuation shelter for people across the local county to use during a Viking invasion. The name for the county of Kent is a much older ancient British Celtic word, likely meaning “the land on the edge.” Most people visit Canterbury for its famous cathedral and the tales that go with it, but it is also worthwhile to explore the ancient walls and take a trip down the river.

The Canterbury Cathedral has been a pilgrimage site since Archbishop Thomas Becket was martyred at the cathedral on Dec. 29, 1170. Becket lived during a time

when the Christian church was heavily overseen by the royal government. He was first a chancellor and advisor to King Henry II and seems to have enjoyed the prestige. However, when the king promoted him to Archbishop of Canterbury, Becket became more devout and favored reforms that separated royal authority over the church. Henry disagreed and Becket was exiled for years. When he finally returned to Canterbury, four of Henry’s knights murdered him. Becket’s tomb at Canterbury Cathedral became a pilgrimage site and the many healing miracles of pilgrims helped canonize his sainthood. Even Henry II eventually sought public penance. Over time a pilgrimage cult grew and was devoted to Becket’s memory as the hero that defied a tyrant, though historians see the story with more nuance. ■



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Eat•Stay•Love Bonn

By Tamala Malerk



EAT

I stayed for three nights in Bonn, and had time to find not one but two coffee spots to caffeinate myself before learning about German aristocrats and modern German history. In our January What's Up issue, I shared my love for **Kaffeesaurus** and its chocolate-drizzled, fruit-covered toast. Another spot to grab a great coffee or tea and some delicious pastries is **Espresso Perfetto**. I started my day at Espresso Perfetto with a fantastic matcha latte, a miniature cannoli and a macaron.

For lunch or dinner, I can recommend the Mexican Cantina, **Cafe Especial**. They have all your Tex-Mex favorites such as nachos, tacos and quesadillas. No matter what you get, save room for the Kahlua crème brulee or flan de caramel after your entrée.

You cannot go to Bonn without making the pilgrimage to the **Haribo Factory Outlet**. I love gummy candies and this place did not disappoint. They have every type of Haribo gummy imaginable along with cool trinkets, so not every souvenir is edible.



LOVE

Aside from gummy bears, Bonn is probably most famous for being the birthplace of Ludwig von Beethoven. The 18th-century **Beethoven-Haus** museum features Beethoven's piano and manuscripts. The museum is closed on Tuesdays. For additional fun, see how many versions of Beethoven you can find in and around the museum. I spotted statues, Lego figures and even traffic lights.

As a history lover, one of my favorite parts of Bonn is **Museum Mile**. This stretch of road features several museums. The **Haus der Geschichte** is the modern history museum (and my favorite of those I visited). **Museum Koenig** features "staged habitats" and dinosaurs. The **Kunstmuseum**, contains over 8000 works of art. The **Deutsches Museum Bonn** is all about AI. The **Bundeskunsthalle** is where art, culture and science combine. Bonn's Museum Mile has its own U-Bahn stop (Heussallee/Museumsmile) which makes transport easy no matter where you are staying.

Book lovers, movie buffs and history fans will enjoy walking around the Thalia bookstore which used to be an old movie theatre and maintains much of the historical décor. ■



STAY

I like to walk everywhere when we visit a new city (weather permitting). It lets me see things along the way and has led to some great finds. The **Intercityhotel Bonn** provides an ideal, centralized location to get in a good walk without having to commute too far on foot. This hotel is just over 1km outside the city center and 2.5km from Museum Mile, so it was more cost-effective and let us walk off the aforementioned cannoli, lattes and nachos. For those who aren't huge walkers, this hotel is also located next to Bonn's main train station, so getting around is a breeze.

For those looking for more of a history-inspired stay, just over the bridge from Museum Mile, in Bonn-Ramersdorf, is the **Schlosshotel Kommende Ramersdorf**. This castle-hotel dates back to the 1200s and was built by Count Heinrich III. It also has an onsite restaurant featuring Mediterranean dishes and fantastic drinks.



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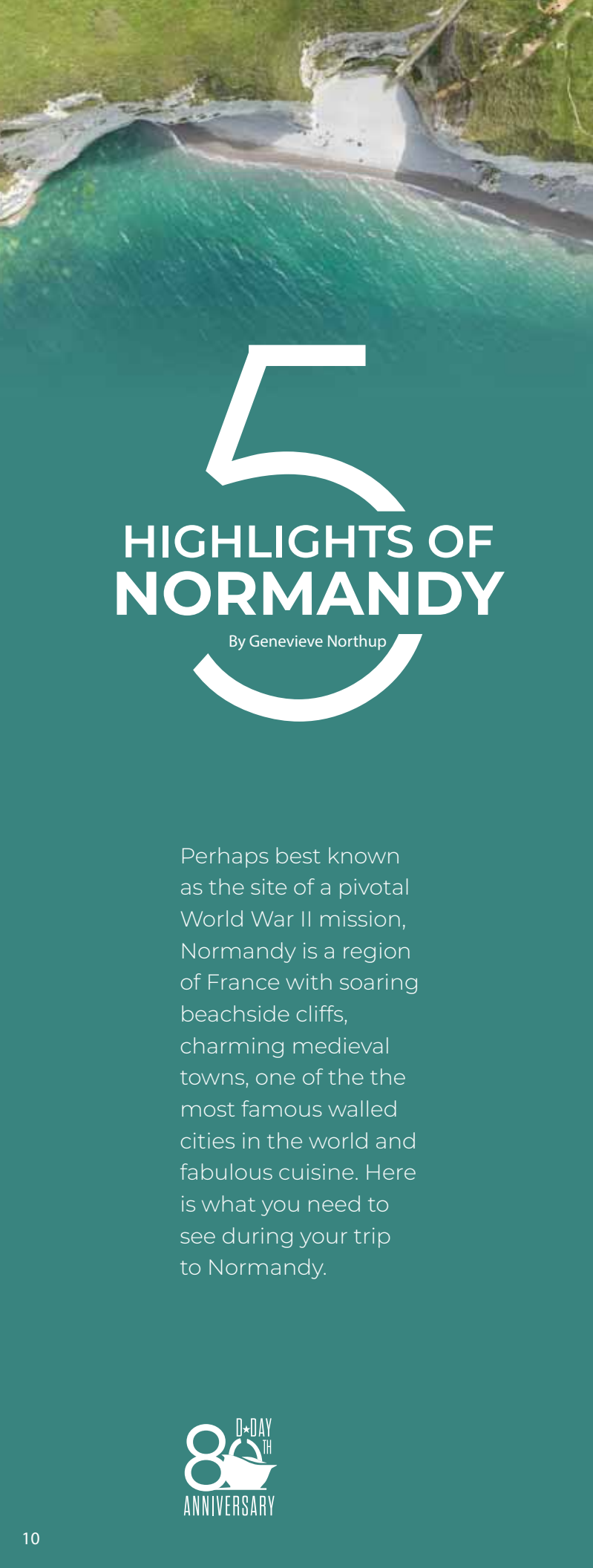
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5 HIGHLIGHTS OF NORMANDY

By Genevieve Northup

Perhaps best known as the site of a pivotal World War II mission, Normandy is a region of France with soaring beachside cliffs, charming medieval towns, one of the the most famous walled cities in the world and fabulous cuisine. Here is what you need to see during your trip to Normandy.



1. Beaches of the D-Day Invasion

On June 6, 1944, Allied Forces landed on a 50-mile-long stretch of Normandy's oceanfront during the largest seaborne invasion on record. An aerial assault began overnight before troops came ashore. Pounded by rough seas, cold temperatures and heavy winds, 156,000 soldiers waded onto the beaches under heavy enemy fire. An estimated 4,000 troops died that day. 2024 is the 80th anniversary of this historic event.

The heroic operation resulted in the securing of the Normandy beaches, and soon the Allies headed south toward Paris and Germany. World War II ended less than a year later, thanks in no small part to D-Day efforts.

The best way to truly understand what was at stake during this risky operation is with a tour. Your guide will paint a picture of the battlefield by showing black-and-white photos of the battle and recounting stories from survivors.

2. Normandy American Cemetery

Pay your respects to American service members who gave their lives during World War II at the memorial cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer. A columned half-circle structure contains the names of more than 1,500 soldiers whose remains were never found. Among those buried on the grounds are two of President Theodore Roosevelt's sons, Medal of Honor recipients and Army Ground Forces commander Lesley J. McNair. In addition to gravesites, the cemetery has a small WWII museum.

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3. Sainte-Mère-Église

In the hours before the beach invasion, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne deployed to Sainte-Mère-Église. Private John M. Steele's parachute became tangled on the steeple of the town's church during his descent in the dark. Steele hung from the church for several hours before being captured by German forces. He escaped and rejoined American paratrooper forces to liberate Sainte-Mère-Église.

If you visit the church, you will see a mannequin hanging from the church, its parachute flapping in the breeze. Inside the church is a stained-glass window commemorating the arrival of the paratroopers. The nearby Airborne Museum offers a fascinating, interactive look at the airborne divisions engaged in WWII.



4. Bayeux Tapestry

Located in the beautiful town of Bayeux, the Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of a very different invasion: William the Conqueror's quest to take the throne as king of England in the 11th century. First mentioned in the 1400s, the hand-stitched tapestry provides a chronicle of the two years leading up to the Battle of Hastings. Standing 19 inches tall and stretching 220 feet in length, it is astounding to consider the amount of time that went into hand-stitching the fine details of Viking-style ships, weaponry and facial expressions. An audio guide fills in the historical gaps and explains the symbolism hidden throughout the masterpiece.

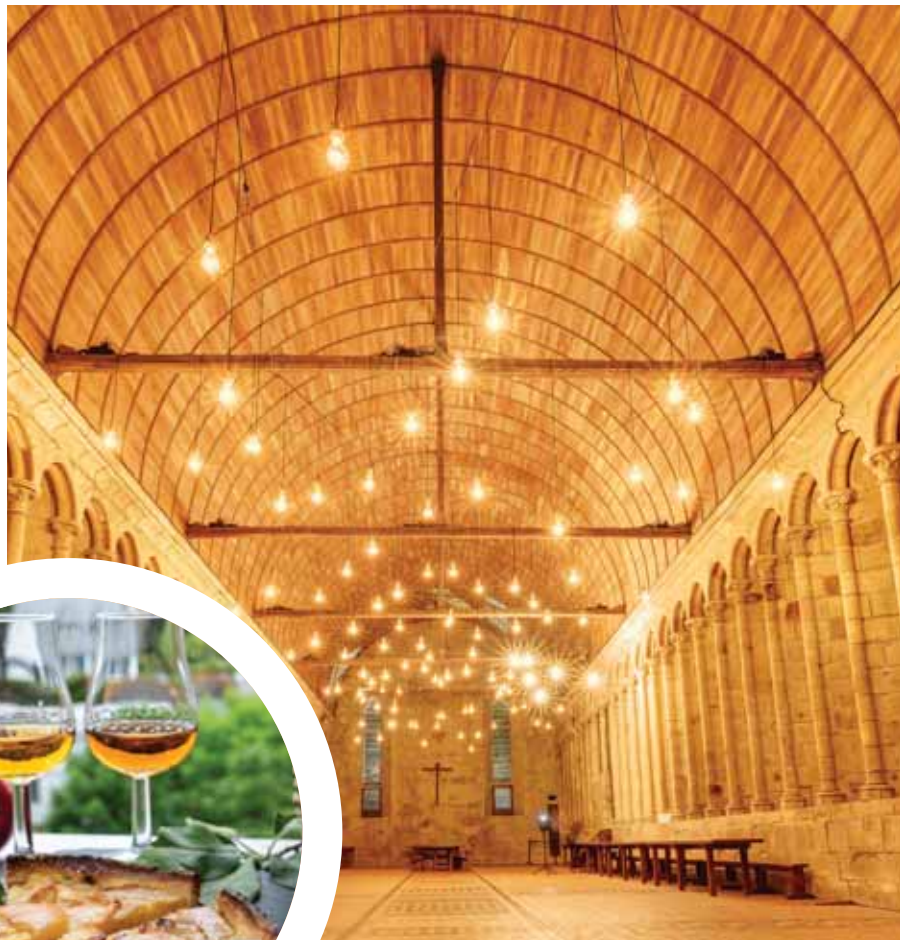


5. Mont St. Michel

A Christian pilgrimage site for a few hundred years, Mont St. Michel began as a refuge for monks seeking a place for quiet reflection. A grand abbey was built atop the hilly island in 966 and was upgraded over the centuries. It is isolated from the mainland during high tide by water and low tide by sandy bogs.

Today, Mont St. Michel is anything but peaceful and far more accessible. Arrive early in the morning to avoid tourists and watch the sunrise above the commune's spires. Walk the maze of cobblestone streets and hike up the abbey steps for panoramic views.

After sightseeing, make sure to enjoy some local food. Buy a warm baguette and smear it with rich Normandy butter or Camembert cheese. Order a pot of mussels in brie-infused cream — you'll want to drink the sauce, even if it embarrasses your dining companions. Finish with an apple tart and snifter of Calvados, a local apple brandy. ■





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WHERE TO GO

FOR HISTORY BUFFS: AACHEN

By Tamala Malerk



Famous comedian, Suzy Eddie Lizzard once said that she grew up in Europe, “where the history comes from.” Since moving to Europe, I have a greater appreciation for that statement. While historical remnants are all over the world, Europe seems to take it a step further.

I recently spent a few days in the German city of Aachen, “the city of Charlemagne.” I was completely surrounded by history. The city is walled by the debris of a 14th-century fortress. You may randomly stumble upon a gate or tower as you walk to the Eurogress to catch the latest ballet, concert or play.

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If you have ever dreamed of being a 19th-century aristocrat, or are somewhat curious about how they lived, the Couven Museum is the place for you. Inside, each room demonstrates how a house may have been decorated by an upper-class citizen during this era. I marveled at the large collection of gold teapots and kettles. I was shocked at the entire room adorned in different tile styles intentionally so the owner could decide which ones they wanted for the rest of the house. Once you finish touring the house, you can go to one of the many restaurants and cafes right outside their door.

One way to get your steps in Aachen is to stroll along Route Charlemagne, which leads you to the city's highlights. At the Center Charlemagne, one can learn all about the history of Aachen and see

tons of artifacts, interactive exhibits and information dating as far back as the ninth century. At the Dom, I recommend the six-euro guided tour so that you can see the amazing stained glass in the Dom and the Throne of Charlemagne that Napoleon took it upon himself to completely desecrate. Napoleon had the throne carved down to his specific standards.

If media and news are your thing, head over to the International Newspaper Museum which houses more than 200,000 German and international newspapers that date back as far as the 16th century.

If you cannot decide between all of the museums, pick up the "Six-for-Six" card which gives you admission to each of the five municipal museums and the city hall for 14 euros.

Take a short drive to my favorite spot on the trip, Three Country Point, where the borders of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands meet at a point. You can nerd out and stand in three countries at once. There is something for everyone on site. There are hiking trails, playgrounds for the children, a restaurant and coffee shop and a souvenir store. ■



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Bizarre Beasts at the Louvre

By Kat Nickola



LAMASSU

These huge protective creatures are worthy of a place in Harry Potter's wizarding world. With bull bodies, eagle wings and human faces of Sargon II, these massive statues are a wonder. They were built to protect the ancient unfinished Assyrian city of Khorsabad.

 ROOM 229, RICHELIEU WING

MONSTER BACKGAMMON

Look closely at the details of these backgammon pawns and you will see some wild creatures. Carved in walrus ivory, these medieval German game pieces have men riding bearded fish, griffons attacking boars and a centaur shooting a bow.

 ROOM 502, RICHELIEU WING


ST. GEORGE'S DRAGON

There are plenty of artworks depicting St. George's famous slaying of the dragon but visit the anonymous painting of the German School of Art for a truly odd dragon. With webbed feet, odd mammal body and nearly human face, it looks like Gollum sprouted wings.

 ROOM 819, RICHELIEU WING

BLUE HIPPO

More cute than creepy, this Egyptian hippo was found in an ancient tomb in Thebes. It was hand-shaped with earthenware and glazed bright blue before being fired in a kiln. This fun little gal is also covered in plant tattoos.

 ROOM 636, SULLY WING

PUSS IN BOOTS


Outside in the sculpture garden is a monumental bust of the French writer Charles Perrault in his magnificent bourgeois wig. At his 'feet' le chat botté does not want to dance with the girls. His fabulous, feathered hat, blowing cape and precious pirate boots may get dirty.

 JARDIN DES TUILERIES



CENTAURE BORGHÈSE


Why is Cupid trying to pull the centaur's hair? The half-horse, half-man on this Imperial Roman marble statue looks like he got saddled with babysitting duty and isn't pleased. He just wants to keep his beard tidy.

 ROOM 348, SULLY WING ■



DE MONZON

They say it is a lion, but the fancy tail and, well, what looks like a mustache, make this bronze piece a fun find. It was uncovered in a Spanish castle ruin from the 11th-century Caliphate of Córdoba. Why it has its mouth open is a mystery, but it is said to be an automaton.

 ROOM 185, DENON WING



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