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UNCORKING FRANCE

Avalon Waterways to Set Sail in Bordeaux in 2025

TORONTO, ONTARIO – February 7, 2024 – Bonjour Bordeaux! This week, Avalon Waterways announced new one-, two- and three-week sailings through the bountiful beauty of Bordeaux. With new, captivating cruises on the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers and cruise combinations that also include the Seine, Saône, Rhône and Rhine Rivers, this award-winning river cruise line is leading the rise in small-ship cruising by increasing its France offerings by 30 percent (30%).

It's a shore thing, from Avalon to Bordeaux. From the historic halls of castles and Châteaux to romantic cellars and kitchens where wine bouquets and bon-vivant cuisine tempt the palate, Avalon is bringing Bordeaux to life for the first time for cruisers in new ways thanks to Active, Discovery and Classic excursions on its new France-focused itineraries.

“Wine-lovers aren’t the only cruisers raising a glass to Avalon’s new Bordeaux itineraries,” said Pam Hoffee, president of Avalon Waterways. “Along the shores of the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers, we’re elevating immersive experiences for guests, offering them deeper discoveries of the richest traditions in Southwest France. From unparalleled panoramic cruising aboard the *Avalon Artistry II* to on shore Châteaux visits, Sauternes tastings and crème puff baking classes mixed with e-biking through vineyards and free time in postcard-perfect places like Saint-Émilion, Bourg and Arcachon, for Avalon guests in Bordeaux, the world is their oyster to enjoy as they please.”

The all-new France cruise being unveiled by Avalon Waterways in 2025 is [***Bonjour Bordeaux: Châteaux, Wineries & Charming Villages***](#). This 8-day cruise starts and ends in Bordeaux with visits to Cadillac-sur-Garonne, Cussac Fort Médoc, Blaye, Bourg and Libourne.

New cruise highlights include:

- **Day 1: Bordeaux – Welcome aboard!**
 - Embark on the *Avalon Artistry II*. Get to know your 128-passenger home “suite” home for the next week.

- **Day 2: Cadillac-Sur-Garonne – On the Steps of Montesquieu.**
 - **Classic sightseeing:** Take a guided tour of Château de la Brède – birthplace of Montesquieu, political philosopher and author of “The Spirit of Law.” This fortress-style castle still sees its reflection in the encircling moat while offering guests a reflection of the past.
 - **Discovery excursion:** Join a guided visit and wine tasting at a local château to sip sweet notes of Sauternes, the beloved golden-yellow wine of the region.

- **Day 3: Cussac Fort Médoc – Bikes, Vines & Wines.**
 - **Active outing:** Enjoy an e-bike guided tour through the picture-perfect vineyards and countryside of Bordeaux’s finest wine region.
 - **Discovery excursion:** Take a guided visit of a historic Château in the Médoc area and enjoy a wine tasting of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

- **Day 4: Blaye to Bourg – Fine Art, Fine Bubbly and a Fine Day for a Drive.**
 - **Classic sightseeing:** Enjoy a guided visit to the Citadel of Blaye, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, followed by a panoramic drive of the famous Route de la Corniche along the right banks of the River Dordogne.
 - **Discovery excursion:** Join a guided tour of Blaye from a different perspective – one of an eclectic art gallery with wine tasting.
 - Plus, free time in Bourg, including a **Discovery** option to join enjoy a Rémy Martin Cognac tasting at its distillery.

- **Day 5: Libourne plus Saint-Émilion – A Village Amid the Vineyards.**
 - **Classic sightseeing:** Join a guided tour of the medieval village of Saint-Émilion – a UNESCO World Heritage site of legends and legendary landscapes. Once complete, guests are invited to spend the day walking the cobblestones of this charming village, stopping to shop or enjoy its café culture.
 - Alternatively, **Discovery** options include a pastry baking class or chocolate and wine pairing tasting in a beautiful Bordeaux chateau.

- **Day 6: Bordeaux – Sights and Brilliant Lights.**
 - **Classic sightseeing:** Join a guided walking tour through the heart of Bordeaux to stroll its stunning squares, avenues and cathedrals.
 - Guests are also invited to enjoy an optional **Discovery** excursion to Marche des Capucins – the “Belly of Bordeaux” – via tram to enjoy an insider peek into French market culture. Also on the menu is the Les Bassins de Lumières for a breathtaking visit to the original Nazi submarine base that’s been transformed into an art and music installation.

- **Day 7: Bordeaux plus Arcachon’s Bay – Seas, Shells and Sips.**
 - **Classic sightseeing:** Join a full-day guided tour of the seaside resort of Arcachon on the Atlantic coast, including an oyster farm visit for a tasting of the French delicacy.
 - Alternatively, guests can stay in Bordeaux to enjoy the day their way, including biking along the postcard-perfect views of the Les Quais.

What a Trip! Avalon's new, 8-day itinerary can be combined for two- and three-week cruising options.

They are:

- 1) ***[French Masterpiece: Paris, Normandy & Bordeaux](#)***. This 15-day cruise from Paris to Bordeaux sails on two Suite Ships on the Seine, Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. It combines Avalon Waterways' ***Paris to Normandy*** itinerary with the river cruise line's new Bordeaux cruise.
- 2) ***[France, Uncorked: The Rhône, the Seine & Bordeaux](#)***. This 22-day cruise from Arles to Bordeaux sails on three Suite Ships on the Rhône, Saône, Seine, Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. It combines Avalon Waterways' ***Grand France*** itinerary with its new Bordeaux cruise.
- 3) ***[Vineyards, Châteaux & Bordeaux](#)***. This 22-day cruise from Basel to Bordeaux sails on three Suite Ships on the Rhine, Seine, Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. It combines three itineraries: the ***Romantic Rhine, Paris to Normandy*** and new Bordeaux cruises.

A post-pandemic trend, according to Hoffee is a rise in the length of trip people want to take. "In the past, many of our guests have chosen seven (7) to 10-day journeys with us. Others have even opted to test the cruise waters on micro-cruises of 3- and 4-nights. But our new 'Wish List' survey results indicate that river cruisers are increasingly looking for longer vacations."

Of those 15,000 past Avalon Waterways guests who were surveyed, most (66%) said their next vacation will be two weeks or more compared to those (34%) who are planning to book a one-week vacation. "Our new, two- and three-week cruise combinations for 2025 – all of which feature Bordeaux – perfectly fit with this trend," added Hoffee. "They invite our guests to cater their experience to their interests, their budgets and their time, offering them the opportunity to enjoy a more thorough and in-depth vacation through Europe."

For more information, consumers can visit [avalonwaterways.ca](https://www.avalonwaterways.ca). Travel advisors can get details on the [travel agent portal](#).

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ABOUT AVALON WATERWAYS

Cruising Elevated. Avalon Waterways has redefined cruising by going against the current and away from the ordinary. Delivering unparalleled experiences and boundless exploration, Avalon puts you in the captain's seat to navigate your journey, fuel your passions and steer clear of the unexpected as you cruise down the world's most memorable and mesmerizing waterways. One step aboard our modern, luxurious Suite Ships with the grandest views in cruising and you'll see how the tides are changing. Welcome to a new wave in cruising. Welcome aboard Avalon Waterways. For more information, visit [avalonwaterways.ca](https://www.avalonwaterways.ca); travel agents can visit [agentlingo.ca](https://www.agentlingo.ca)