



## RIVER CRUISING ON THE SEINE

### Visiting a Normandy Castle and tasting Calvados

In Caudebec, we had a choice to take [the excursion](#) to the Normandy Beaches or to the apple growing area of the Upper Normandy where the famous Calvados is made. For those of you who are not familiar with Calvados: it is an apple brandy and tastes simply wonderful (I have grown up with Schnaps -fruit brandy in Austria - and when I am very cold in winter or very upset I have been known to have a "shot" of Schnaps from Austria such as Marillen Schnaps - apricot brandy or Obstler - a mixture of various fruits, not for the weak hearted...).



*A little bit of Austrian history: The world can thank Empress Maria Theresa (Marie Antoinette's mother and the sole female ruler of the Hapsburg Empire) for legalizing this simultaneously fiery and delicate libation. During her reign in the eighteenth-century, she introduced a grant permitting any household to make upto two hundred liters of distilled spirits annually.*

*In legalizing distillation, she fostered experimentation, a free market that rewarded quality, and a widespread tradition that encouraged farmers to*

*make use of berries and fruit that would have otherwise gone to waste.*

So you probably gathered by now that my Austrian friend and I chose the later. Traveling through picturesque landscape with blooming apple trees on the “route de cidre” we visited a famous Calvados distillery and were offered tastes of different aged Calvados (apple brandy) and apple cider.



In the nearby small Normandy towns we found all kinds of typical Calvados related souvenirs and admired the picturesque old houses and had a fun meal in a local pub. [The excursion](#) ended with a visit to the Norman castle Chateau de Livet (16th century) situated in a fabulous park where several peacocks greeted us (like a stage setting). Afterwards we traveled back by bus to our ship.

Next time you will hear about the final phase of [our Seine river cruise](#).

Keep in mind there are other benefits to Schnaps besides instant fiery warmth - [a taste of Austria](#). You can find some great [Austrian “land” adventures on our website](#)

More next time from *Susanne Serwin*

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