

The Richmond Garden Club  
Gardens of The Loire Valley – April 25 – May 2, 2020

***Saturday April 25, 2020***

Depart Canada for Paris, France

***Sunday April 26***

Arrive Paris – Transfer to your accommodations in the Loire Valley. En route, stop by the **Castle of Chambord**, the biggest Royal Castle in France. You will have some free time to stroll the grounds and walk around the castle and enjoy some free time for lunch at one of the small coffee shops there.



This evening, you will meet the owner of your lodgings, an 18<sup>th</sup> century Manor House who will welcome you into his family home. Meals : D



***Monday April 27***

Today you will visit the **Rivau Castle** and its gardens, guided by the owner.

It would seem as if Château de Rivau had sprung from a fairy tale... A shrine to the medieval castle, yet the **fairy tale gardens** are a contemporary creation.

The fourteen **splendid thematic gardens** of the Château du Rivau are original and all have fairy-tale names. The gardens boast an amazing collection of irises and a unique collection of 450 varieties of fragrant roses, which has been labeled by the *Conservatory of Specialized Plant Collections*.



This afternoon, Savour the monastic charms of the 12<sup>th</sup> century **Royal Abbey Of Fontevraud** and its Gardens. Meals B,L,D



## ***Tuesday April 28***

This morning enjoy a visit to the **Prieuré de Saint Cosme**, a fifteenth-century priory, famous as the last residence of Pierre de Ronsard, (the Prince of poets) who lived here between 1565 and 1585 where the monks welcomed him into their community. He divided his time between his writing, walks, prayer and gardening, taking inspiration from his peaceful surroundings. On the site today you can see the ruins of the priory and the prior's lodge in all its austere splendour. You get to stand in Ronsard's writing room and in there you can see where some of his inspiration may have come from! In 1988 it was decided that his love of roses should be commemorated by the development of a formal garden surrounding the priory. Each year, in spring it plays host to the 'Days of the rose' evoking his famous lines: "Live so my advice, do not wait until tomorrow. Pick today the roses of live" - *Live for today*. Join us for a “surprise” lunch today.



In the afternoon, enjoy the visit of Villandry castle and gardens. The **gardens at Chateau De Villandry** are the grandest examples of formal **Renaissance style gardens** in France. The gardens, which are terraced on three levels, were influenced by Italian gardeners brought in by Charles VIII. Some spectacular gardens, where the skillful hands of its gardeners turn vegetable gardening into an art form! Meals B,L,D

## ***Wednesday April 29***

This morning, visit **Clos Lucé (Leonardo Da Vinci's home and Garden)**.

The Clos Lucé is one of the Renaissance's jewels. The **park** gives the public the opportunity to discover the spectacular machines conceived by the inventor : aircraft, automobile, helicopter, tank, swing bridge...

**Leonardo's Garden** spreads over 2.5 acres on a damp area, typical of the Loire Valley. This natural preserved area was arranged and planted with full respect of the spirit in Leonardo's paintings and drawings. A fresh and quiet space, both shaded and mysterious, scattered with aquatic, wild, decorative and medicinal plants, humid grottoes, spouting springs, strange mists...



You will also visit the inside of Leonard's home with its beautiful original furniture and the room where he died on May 2 1519.



Enjoy some free time in town for lunch and shopping.

This afternoon, head to Chateau Gaillard, a special visit for those who are passionate about gardens. And it is of significant importance for the history of French gardens as well, as “Pacello da Mercogliano”, who layed out Chateau Gaillard and created its gardens, is known as a *précurseur* of French formal and Renaissance gardens in Val de Loire. He also worked for two other French kings : Louis XII and François 1st. - Meals B,D



**Thursday April 30**

Today, you will depart your hotel to visit **Chenonceau Castle and its Gardens** .

Built on the river in the heart of the Loire Valley, the Château de Chenonceau, (also known as the Ladies’ Chateau) is one of the best loved, best known and most visited historic monuments.

Located in an absolutely beautiful forest , the castle offers an impressive **French formal garden** surrounding the chateau. It also has an amazing cutting garden where they grow flowers for the stunning flower arrangements displayed throughout the castle. Lunch will be served near Chenonceau.



This afternoon, head to Chaumont Sur Loire for a real treat “ **The Chateau’s Annual International Garden Festival**”. Each year the festival has a new theme, and each of the 25 or so gardens are chosen from around 300 applications worldwide and they must adhere to the theme in their own way. A must see!!

Meals B,L,D



***Friday May 1***

A Relaxing morning before your afternoon visit of the **Chateau of Cheverny** known for its incredible furnishings. Visit the inside of this beautifully furnished privately owned chateau and walk around the grounds and discover the kennels with the owners hounds used for hunting

Transfer to your hotel at the Paris airport.

Meals B,L



***Saturday May 2***

Flight back to Canada