

French Flair on CroisiEurope's Cyrano De Bergerac



CroisiEurope's Cyrano De Bergerac is ideally suited for clients looking for an authentic taste of France.

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PHOTO: Champagne flying cork. (photo courtesy of Thinkstock)

BY: Heidi Sarna

Family-owned [CroisiEurope](#) was founded in 1976 as a French river cruise line for French guests. In the past few years, as the fleet has grown to more than 50 riverboats, the line has begun reaching out to the North American market by offering all-inclusive fares and active shore excursions like bicycle tours.

Still, the product remains quite French, which is a big plus for your clients who want more immersive river cruise experiences. English and [French](#) are the official languages on board, but the majority of passengers are French and [German](#). Not surprisingly, the food and wine on a CroisiEurope river cruise is also very French.

Accommodations: There are three decks of nearly identical 140-square-foot cabins aboard the *Cyrano de Bergerac*, with the top two decks of 62 cabins (Middle & Upper Decks) bathed in natural light, thanks to the large picture windows that slide open for fresh air and sweeping views—a really nice touch. The 25 cabins on the lowest Main Deck have portholes. All rooms have satellite TV, hairdryer and safe, but no mini-fridges. There are no suites or balconies.

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What's Included: For North American passengers, all excursions are included, even a thrilling helicopter ride from Pauillac over the Medoc region's vineyards and chateaux, including the famed Margaux. All drinks are part of the fares, including nine French wines served at lunch and dinner daily, plus beer, cocktails, and soft drinks. Wi-Fi is free in the lounge and bar area, though signals are often weak. Gratuities and transfers are extra.

What's for Dinner? Duck, duck and more duck! The French looove duck, and on Bordeaux cruises it's served daily at lunch or dinner, whether as a main course (such as confit) or as a touch of foie gras worked into an appetizer. There's a single seating for all meals at tables mostly for four and six. Breakfast is buffet-style, and lunch and dinner are three-course meals (with dietary requests accommodated with some advance notice). Besides duck, various salads, beef, and seafood were popular choices with guests on a recent sailing. Cuisine highlights included a cod fillet with mushroom risotto and vegetable ratatouille. Desserts were rich and tasty, from peaches and cream to a crème brûlée. At breakfast, the center of each dining room table was taken up with a generous heap of fresh flaky croissants and delicious bread.

Best Entertainment: This cruise isn't geared to sophisticated entertainment. A duo sings and plays the keyboard before and after dinner in the main lounge, and an activities director drums up interest in contests and talent shows most evenings. Otherwise, it's drinks and chitchat with new friends or such games as Scrabble.

Favorite Excursion: No question, the helicopter ride over the Medoc region is a thrilling 10-minute whirl. It's a treat to get a birds-eye overview (literally) of the green patchwork of vineyards embroidered with golden chateaux. Seeing the contrast of the long white Cyrano de Bergerac docked in the muddy milk chocolate Gironde estuary is another bonus.

Guided bicycle excursions were offered in two ports, both conveniently departing just steps away from the ship docks. The best is a half-day, 15-mile or so pedal from Pauillac around the vineyards and chateaux of the Medoc region, ending at a winery for a tour and tasting.

Who Goes on This Ship? Guests are generally in the 50- to 70-age range. While the majority of guests are French and German, the number of North Americans, Australians and British passengers is continuing to grow.

Insider Booking Tip: Avoid booking the aft cabins on the Middle Deck next to the restaurant due to noise. However, these cabins are conveniently located for those with mobility issues.

Key Selling Points: First, the experience is ideally suited for your clients who want an authentic taste of France on board and off while cruising Bordeaux. Second, at \$1,759 per person (for a July 2018 cruise), the five-night Bordeaux cruises are an excellent value, considering they include all drinks and excursions—and even a helicopter ride.

Agent Assistance: Commissions start at 10 percent. Sales training is offered online or in person upon request. Fam opportunities are offered from time to time, and agent rates are always available on all [CroisiEurope cruises](#); the line is eager to work with North American travel consultants.