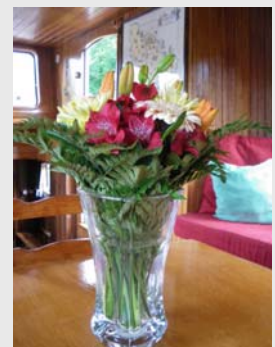


The Traditional Cosy Gem that is the 'Nymphea' is our - Barge of the Month - November 2009



In July 1 - Marie of The Barge Company—was cordially invited aboard the genteel [Nymphaea](#), cruising in the heart of the central Loire Valley; famous for its fairy-tale chateaux (castles) and formidable history. Taking just six honoured guests, she is a real 'gem' of the French waterways, and is owned and Captained by Leigh Wootton (see above, hosting Champagne Reception), who always ensures that guests are well cared for and takes great pride in his truly heavenly barge. What a treat was in store!



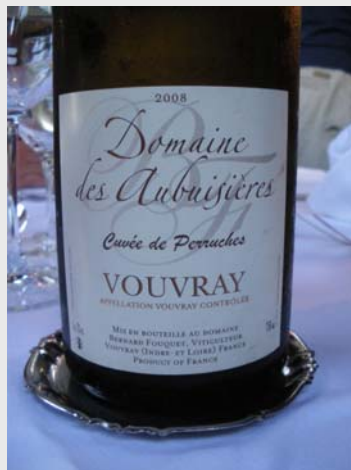
Being on board for two nights/three days I was able to savour the true feel of the Nymphaea and all its traditional qualities. She is a slightly smaller barge than some of the others we represent, and so the atmosphere on board is very cosy and unpretentious. She has a classic, hardwood interior, both in the saloon and cabins, which has been hand finished and the attention to detail really shows. See the lower lounge and dining area below.



In addition to this, there is a higher lounge area where you may put your feet up if you wish, with large table for writing or placing drinks, and surrounded by huge picture windows from which you can see the whole panorama (see below and below right). Many guests prefer, of course, to sit outside on the teak deck chairs and watch the world float by at their leisure. The barge has many options and they are yours to choose from...



The food we were served on board whilst cruising was lovingly prepared by young, talented chef Cecile, and was so perfectly French! Fine wines were also introduced to us at both lunch and dinner by our experienced and knowledgeable 'connoisseur' Captain Leigh. Some are almost 'secrets' of the region and it felt a real privilege to share them!





Evening meals comprised of a starter, main course and dessert, followed by coffee and chocolates and then a 'digestif' if liked.

Lunches were healthy but very satisfying, such as the below—home made *quiche lorraine* with a variety of delicious salads, fine wine to accompany plus the heavenly French bread and cheeses to follow...



There are many treats in store for you during a cruise on the Nymphaea. Cruising on the idyllic River Cher you'll enjoy many special excursions, not least of which is to the Chateau de Villandry with its sumptuous interior and world-renowned Renaissance Gardens (see above right and below).



You will be guided by captain Leigh who knows all the history and will not hesitate to share it with you—if you wish to hear it of course! The chateau is a triumph of renovation by one very special family, and the numerous family photos and plans of the 'before' and 'after' of the chateau that are to be found all over the place lend a family, intimate feel to this grand chateau. It's a really special place. The interior is fully furnished in most rooms and one can only imagine the splendid dinner parties that used to fill the rooms with glamour and warmth (see dining room below left).



Once back to the barge, Leigh will help with your 'education' on the region, by sharing his maps and charts (see right) and explaining a little more of the lay of the land before the evening meal. What a wonderful way to spend a day...This is just one example of the many fascinating excursions that are to be enjoyed during the Nympha's cruise week.



Leigh and Cecile provide all that clients could wish for on this relaxing and decadent cruise week. Other highlights of the itinerary include the Chateau of Valencay—another splendid visit to be savoured, plus the Clos Luce—famous for its Leonard de Vinci connection, and the local ancient 'troglodyte dwellings' - literally the caves in the hillsides where people lived in olden times (and in many cases they still do—you will see!)

If you're considering a break away, why not give the [Nympha](#) a try? For the full information on her including cruise rates, please [click here](#).

If you have questions about the barge, call me (Marie) on the number below, or e-mail me directly by clicking [here](#).

Leigh and Cecile look forward to welcoming you on board very soon!

