

'Les Molyneux'

Luxury Accommodation and a Warm Welcome in the Heart of Champagne



T 0033 326 48 20 52

E yvonne@yvonnehalling.com

W <http://www.bedandbreakfastinchampagne.com>

Les Molyneux

Your guide to the Champagne region.

Whether this is the first time you've heard about the region of Champagne (and many people don't know it's a region as well as the famous drink) or you've been here many times, this guide is designed to provide you lots more food for thought about what to do, where to go and what to see in this little-known corner of France. It's for champagne and wine lovers, for nature lovers and walkers, for those of you travelling with children, for those romantics who desire a quiet getaway alone, for foodies and gastronomes who can't wait to try out a new restaurant, for art & culture lovers who just love those old French buildings, and for historians of the Great War, where the front lines were just down the road.

We believe that Champagne is for everyone and we invite you to peruse this guide and then join us. We'd love to make our home, your home!

Dive in, and please let me have your feedback at yvonne@yvonnehalling.com and of course any other questions you may have when planning your next trip.

But first, let me tell you a little about who we are and why we're qualified to talk to you about the Champagne region, and, about [Les Molyneux](#) our luxury bed and breakfast in the heart of Champagne.

We are Yvonne, Jiles, Chloe and Lucy Halling, and we've been living here in Champagne, France for the most of the past 15 years. We came to Champagne in 1996 with Jiles' job. He worked for 8 years at Moet et Chandon, travelling the world, staying in luxury hotels and drinking champagne! Tough job, but someone had to do it!

In 2000 we bought our lovely home in Verzy, renovated it to our own taste and opened our B&B accommodation in 2001. Since then we have upgraded and enhanced our home, and now we have 4 beautiful rooms for you to choose from. Read on to find out more and how to make the most of your special holiday in Champagne.

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The house

Nestled in the heart of a Grand Cru village, you'll find luxurious accommodation for up to 10 people, peace and quiet, in fact everything you'll need for a complete getaway a la champenoise. If you're looking for somewhere different where you can relax and "feel at home", then [Les Molyneux](#) may well be the best choice you make.

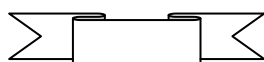
[Les Molyneux](#) is a beautifully restored former grape-grower's farmhouse in the centre of the village of Verzy. The 4 bedrooms are all light and spacious with private bathrooms, soft duvets and fluffy towels.

There's a huge lounge where you can relax, read a book, play a game or listen to a CD you'd forgotten how much you loved.

And in the summer why not sit the garden or on the terrace, while sipping a chilled glass of champagne. There's also wifi internet access in case you want to get back in touch with the real world!

Take a look through this guide, print it off and keep it for reference, and do email me your questions at yvonne@yvonnehalling.com and I'll be happy to help you plan your next trip to Champagne.

Yvonne





If you love champagne, wine and even whisky....

Did you know that there are over 5000 small independent champagne producers in Champagne, and most people can only name a handful. That's because the big international brands have the huge marketing budgets, and the little ones don't. But that doesn't mean that the big brands are better, they just have deeper pockets.

We'd love to help you to discover the passion and dedication of some of the smaller producers' champagne, sometimes called grower champagnes, so we've put together a list of some of our own favourites. We hope you enjoy them too:

Arnaud Margaine, Villers Marmery
03 26 97 92 13

<http://champagne-margaine.isasite.net/ElementsSousRubrique.aspx?SITE=MARGAIN&RUB=642>

Fantastic blanc de blanc champagnes from the Montagne de Reims area, which are both crisp and fruity and a wonderful introduction to this particular style

Penet Chardonnay, Verzy
03 26 97 94 73

<http://m.penet-chardonnet.com/>

Alexandre Penet makes a unique style of champagne with little or no added sugar and exceptionally long ageing, attracting lots of attention from champagne connoisseurs around the world.

Henriet Bazin, Villers Marmery
03 26 97 96 81

<http://www.mymaninchampagne.com/Montagne-de-Reims/champagne-henriet-bazin-welcome.html>

Marie-Noelle is the latest descendant of the Henriet family. She has developed a wide range of styles, including blanc de blancs and blanc de noirs which offer brilliant quality at very good prices.

Etienne LeFèvre, Verzy
03 26 97 96 99

<http://www.champagne-etienne-lefevre.com/accueil.asp?ID=13103>

Etienne Lefevre makes a typical Montagne de Reims champagne with powerful fruity flavours, great for an aperitif and delicious with gutsy food.

Emmanuel Pithois, Verzenay
03 26 49 48 63

<http://www.champagnepithois-emmanuel.com/>

Emmanuel is a larger than life character and full of anecdotes and stories. His champagne is another great example of pinot noir dominated champagnes so characteristic of the Montagne de Reims area.

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Franck Bonville, Avize
03 26 57 52 30

<http://www.champagne-franck-bonville.com/default.asp>

Offering a range of top quality champagnes based around the Chardonnay grape, many of which are Grand Cru. One of the best champagne makers in the Cotes des Blancs area.

Corbon, Avize
09 66 42 34 93

<http://www.champagne-corbon.fr/home.aspx>

Agnès Corbon is a very small scale producer of specialist champagnes including some wonderful blanc de blancs and long-aged champagnes.

Pascal Doquet, Vertus
03 26 52 16 50

<http://www.champagne-doquet.com/#>

One of the leading organic producers in Champagne, and very much in demand by a growing number of champagne connoisseurs.

Laherte Frères, Chavot
03 26 54 32 09

<http://www.champagne-laherte.com/ORIGINS>

Consistently mentioned amongst the best up and coming champagne makers, Aurélien Laherte specialises in bio-dynamic production with a range of innovative and distinctive champagnes.

Edmond Barnaut, Bouzy 03 26 57 01 54

<http://www.champagne-barnaut.com/>

Phillipe Seconder is the current head of the Edmond Barnaut family and you'll find them in the heart of the village of Bouzy. Fabulous gift shop and equally fabulous range of champagnes from this iconic village.

Christian Briard, Jaulgonne
03 60 90 07 02

<http://www.champagnechristianbriard.fr/>

Relatively new champagne maker specialising in pinot meunier grapes from this pretty Vallee de la Marne village. Christian's champagnes are fruity, easy to drink and come in specially designed bottles.

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J rome Dehours, Cerseuil

03 26 52 71 75

<http://www.champagne-dehours.fr/eng/Once-upon-a-time.htm>

Over the past 20 years, Jerome has built a range of outstanding and distinctive champagnes and is considered one of the leading young champagne makers in the Vallee de la Marne.

Benoit Tarlant, Oeuilly

03 26 58 30 62

<http://www.tarlant.com/>

Extremely dynamic young champagne maker with a very varied and innovative range of champagnes which have a growing international reputation.

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Christophe Mignon, Festigny
(Website under construction)

<http://champagne-christophe-mignon.com/>

Specialising in pinot meunier, this vineyard has a rare and wonderfully drinkable 100% pinot meunier brut NV champagne at an excellent price.

Sanger, Avize
03 26 57 50 42

<http://en.sanger.fr/>

Sanger is a co-operative run by the former students of the Viticultural College in Avize. Students make the champagne under the supervision of a master champagne maker and are rapidly developing a brand that's attracting a lot of attention.

De Sousa, Avize
03 26 57 53 29

<http://www.champagnedesousa.com/en/index.html>

Eric de Sousa is specialising in bio-dynamic chardonnay driven champagnes from this Grand Cru village, He deservedly has high reputation wines for real champagne lovers.

Vazart-Coquart, Chouilly
03 26 55 40 04

Jean-Pierre Vazart makes a range of Grand Cru champagnes from this village at the top of the Cotes des Blancs. There's a wide range of champagnes including one that was specially blended to match with foie gras – a must for lovers of fine food.

André Bergère, Epernay
03 26 32 07 19

<http://champagne-andrebergere.com/>

If you're visiting Epernay and the stylish Avenue de Champagne, don't miss out on a visit to the latest arrival to this prestigious street. It maybe the least well known name in the Avenue but you'll be impressed with their welcome and their champagnes.

Festivals, Fairs, Tours, Museums, Champagne Houses and More!

There are also several champagne and wine festivals which take place in the region. The best we've found is the Reims Wine Festival on the 11th, 12th and 13th November in 2011, where literally hundreds of wine and champagne producers from all over France exhibit under one roof. You can chat with the makers, taste the wines, and take home some wonderful new gems, that no-one else has heard of. There are also stalls with oysters, snails, foie gras, chocolates, coffee, and many other specialities of France.

A true delight for wine lovers and foodies alike.

Many village festivals take place in the summer, some of the best ones to visit are: ring Fair in Mailly Champagne. Mailly is a small village on the Montagne de Reims, and every year in May the champagne producers open up their cellars to visitors, where you

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can just drop in and taste. Speciality foods are on offer too, and you can spend a lovely afternoon, just eating and drinking! You might spot a new champagne you haven't tasted before and of course you can chat with the producers, which is always fun.

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If you haven't yet visited one of the big international champagne houses, then we recommend a trip to Moët et Chandon in Epernay. Their cellar tour and tasting is very slick and professional, and you'll learn about the champagne making process, explained in detail by a multi-lingual guide.

Some of the other houses worth visiting are Mercier, which is a great tour for the kids and less mobile members of your party, as the tour takes place in a cellar train. Pommery in Reims is great too, with its Roman chalk cellars, which are quite different from the long tunnels in Epernay. The Romans dug the cellars not for their wine, but for the chalk with which they constructed their houses.

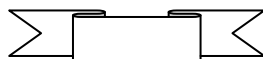
It was later discovered that the temperature in these huge bottle shaped cellars was perfect for storing wine – a happy accident! Ruinart is the oldest champagne house in the region, established in 1727. Its cellars are also worth visiting, but you will need an appointment, as with Bollinger, Taittinger and Roederer.

And if you really want to get into the nitty gritty of how it all works from a vinicultural point of view, then you'll want to take a tour of the vineyards with our friend [Nicolas Rainon](#). What he doesn't know about the vines isn't worth knowing. He'll take you off road in one of his 4x4s to the parts of the vineyards that normally can't be reached, and he'll finish off with a champagne tasting, of course.

Don't miss the [Whisky Distillery](#) at Louvois. How about trying a single malt from the Montagne de Reims? Strange, but true. You can find out why Thierry Guillon expert whisky maker decided to open a distillery back in 1997 by visiting him at Louvois. A curiosity not to be missed.

[Le Phare de Verzenay](#) is a museum of the champagne industry, dating back over 200 years. Situated in a lighthouse originally built by a local producers, it's a fascinating insight into the ways and the sufferings of the champenois. Life hasn't always been bubbly for the people of this region.

[Le Pre en Bulles](#), Trepail is a wonderful experience for champagne lovers. A journey into the art, costume, champagne making and photography of the region.



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If you love walking and exploring nature...



The fabulous Parc Nationale de la Montagne de Reims is dotted with forests, and you can choose any one of them to explore. You can get lots of information at the [Park Office](#).

There is a huge forest next to the village of Verzy, where some rare beech trees grow. They are known as "Les Faux" and they only grow in three places in the world, here, near Malmo in Sweden, and near Hanover in Germany. No-one really knows how they came to be, but here in Verzy, it is thought that the monks of the ancient abbey of St Basle (which is no longer there) planted them, but it's by no means certain. Les Faux is a national monument.

The forest walks go on for miles around the region, and you can find peace and tranquility exploring on your own with a local map, which you can purchase from the Tourist Office in Epernay. The trails are marked or you can go off-trail whenever you wish. You can also walk in the vineyards, as long as you don't touch the precious vines.



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Verzy is also on one of the old pilgrim trails leading to Rome or to St Jacques- de- Compostelle in Spain. Many people embark on this journey for all sorts of reasons. Some are going all the way, taking about 3 or 4 months, and some are just taking a week out to experience the solitude of the trail. Some take a couple of weeks out every year and gradually make their way to the end over a number of years.

There is also a disused railway line passing next to the village, called the CBR, which means chemin de fer de la banlieue de Reims (Reims suburban railway). You can walk along this for miles as well.

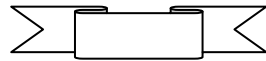


For bird lovers, there is the [Lac du Der](#), near Troyes which is about an hour's drive south. The migration of the grey cranes in February is a spectacular sight to witness.



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If you're looking for a romantic break...

What better place to choose than Champagne! Apart from the delightfully romantic notion of the region and the drink, there are lots of other ways to surprise and delight your partner.

Take a romantic balloon ride over the vineyards with [Air Tonic](#).



Every day (weather permitting) from April to the end of September, they are available to whisk you and your partner off, floating high above the vineyards and forests, and finishing with a delightful champagne tasting afterwards.

What about a tour in a horse-drawn carriage? [Les Attelages de Verzenay](#)



are offering several tours of the vineyards around Verzenay, where you will relax and unwind as the beautiful Haflinger horses trot at their own speed through the surrounding countryside. Your guide is Thierry Georgeton.

Or how about [cruising on the River Marne](#)? Your evening cruise on the beautiful River Marne will include dinner, cabaret and dancing.

You can rent your very own motor boat from [Blue Nautic](#) in Epernay (without a licence!) and gently navigate the River Marne just the two of you. Pack your picnic and your chilled bottle of bubbly for a great experience.

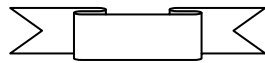
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And to relax and unwind with your partner, try the luxurious [Bozen Spa](#) in Epernay.

All in all, it does seem that the French do love and romance very well!





Travelling with the children?

There are many childrens' activities in Champagne. Here are some of our favourites:

[Arbroxygene, Verzy](#) is a great place for active kids. There are three tree top circuits to navigate depending on how brave you are, with zip wires, tree ladders, and wobbly rope bridges. Afterwards, for the adults, why not take a glass of champagne in the brand new Perching Bar, a bar literally built in the trees. The view is amazing.

[Canoeing and water based activities](#) are great for the whole family. The experience starts at Tours sur Marne where you leave your car and the bus takes you to the starting point. Your boat trip can last as long as you wish and you arrive back at where you left your car. Pack a picnic and enjoy the scenery.

[Zig Zag Parc at Val de Vesle](#), where there's a huge maze, a 400m long zip wire, bouncy castles and lots of fun activities for children who love to be outside and running around.

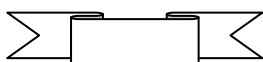
[The Nature Park at Sept Saulx](#) is a great day out for the family too. The whole park is centred on a natural peat bog where rare birds live, and you can take a rowing boat out on the water. There's also a play area and picnic area. A great day out.

[La Ferme Vertuelle](#), Louvois



Run by eccentric Jérôme and his wife Brigitte, La Ferme Vertuelle is a menagerie of animals, birds and children. Lots of hands on animal interaction with games and surprises in store for your little ones.

Do you like swimming? The indoor swimming complex [Bulleo in Epernay](#) has a large olympic-sized pool, and three smaller pools for the wave machine, the giant water slide and a little pool for the toddlers.





For foodies and gastronomes

France is perhaps still the food capital of the world, with its many Michelin star restaurants and you can still find some unexpected gems if you know where to look. If you're into eating and drinking, trying new restaurants and exploring the gastronomy of Champagne, then let us suggest the following restaurants :

[Les Crayeres, Reims](#) houses probably some of the best restaurants in France. The three choices are Le Parc, which is a formal restaurant offering haute cuisine. Next is Le Jardin which is more relaxed and last is La Rotonde, a bar where you can get a light meal any time of the day. All in the grounds of the delightful chateau near the centre of Reims, under the supervision of Chef Philippe Mille.

[La Table Kobus, Epernay](#) in the style of a café parisienne, and you can even take your own wine here. Great atmosphere and very good food, under the supervision of Chef Guillaume Bachellez, and owner Serge Herscher.

[Le Relais de Sillery, Sillery](#)

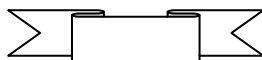
Chef Philippe Vazart offers good food and a lovely setting by the canal. Great for a summer's evening feast.

[La Touraine Champenoise, Tours Sur Marne](#)

A lovely old building and restaurant by the River Marne. Haute cuisine under the supervision of Chef Martine Schossler.

[Le Cheval Blanc, Sept Saulx](#)

Great food here too under the supervision of Chef Fabien



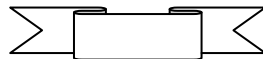


Art and architecture lovers...

For those who love art and architecture, then [Reims](#) with its magnificent gothic cathedral, the Palais de Tau and the Basilic St Remi represents three UNESCO World Heritage sites. The cathedral is particularly renowned for its stained glass windows by Marc Chagall.

The monthly antiques fair takes place at the Parc des Expositions in Reims on the first Sunday of every month. Antique lovers from all over Europe gather here looking for the best pieces at the best prices. Maybe you could go home with a beautiful antique at a great price!

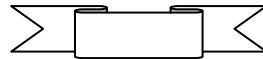
There's also a permanent antiques exhibition at [Champagne Castelnau](#). Plus exploring the various Depots de Vente around the region is always fun.





For historians of the Great War

It's hard to believe that less than 100 years ago the Marne was the front line of the German assault on Europe, and many memories remain. Cemeteries are everywhere, in memory of those who perished. Visit the museum at [Suippes](#), or at [Fort de la Pompelle](#) which was built during the Franco Prussian war and which played an important part in the Great War. The American Cemetery at Belleau Wood is also a moving experience.



We hope you've enjoyed reading this guide and found the information useful. If you'd like to see and experience more then please go our website to check availability and book online at <http://www.bedandbreakfastinchampagne.com>

We look forward to welcoming you to your home from home in the heart of Champagne very soon.



Yvonne, Jules, Chloe and Lucy

