

## LA BELLE FRANCE: THE ALEXANDRIA/CAEN TANGO CONNECTION:

Two observations: France is beautiful; Europe is pricey. My challenge is to give you all experiences you wouldn't get traveling alone, interactions with locals, and great concerts by QuinTango, all the while balancing the trip price versus the group size. My compromise is that we go with a bigger group this time – a great mix of old friends and new – and fewer group meals. This will allow you to tailor your eating and drinking habits to your budget and have a bit of an adventure (we will provide recommendations, of course). Here's the itinerary. Activities may be added.

**MEET IN PARIS:** We should all arrive at CDG (Charles deGaulle PARIS) between 6:30 and 8:30 AM on September 10, 2018. Most of us will be on the United or Air France/Delta flights (7 AM to 8 AM arrival). We will all take the same bus from the airport, so coordinated arrival is important. Note: if you want to spend time in Paris before or after the trip, talk to me so we can coordinate.

**DAY ONE: Monday, September 10:** After meeting up at CDG we head to [Giverny](#) for a tour of Monet's fabled garden and a welcome lunch at [Les Nymphéas](#), a charming farm house restaurant whose menu is a culinary journey to Monet's time. After lunch and the tour, there is siesta time on the bus until our arrival at the [Hotel Moderne](#), our boutique hotel in the heart of [Caen](#). Within walking distance of museums, shops, and restaurants, this small gem has a cozy lobby bar where we can share adventures over the next five days



GIVERNY

**DAY TWO: Tuesday, September 11:** Breakfast of yummy breads, jams (a French specialty), coffee, juices, yogurts, granolas, cold cuts and cheese. In the afternoon we will visit the [Memorial Museum](#) as a prelude to our tour of the Normandy beaches tomorrow. D-Day is huge here; they have never forgotten the sacrifice Americans, Canadians and Brits made in Normandy. Tonight you will be dinner guests in the homes of



DINNER AT DOLLY'S, CAEN

French families. Many hosts speak some English, but if you have any French skills, I would love to know (rusty high school French counts).

**DAY THREE: Wednesday, September 12:** We hit the landing beaches with our guide and my friend, Marie Coquelin. We will end the tour at the [American Cemetery](#), and possibly the German Cemetery ([La Cambe](#)). If any of you has a relative who landed in Normandy, let me know, as the Cemetery may want to talk with you. This will be a long and emotional day. Kleenex and walking shoes recommended

**DAY FOUR: Thursday, September 13:** Today we see another side of Normandy's beaches: [Honfleur](#), a seaport with medieval ramparts, and [Deauville](#), known as *Paris Deux*, once a mecca for the Impressionists and now a weekend destination for France's elite. If you have been longing for charm, today is your day: the *Pays d'Auge* is winding roads, apple orchards, half-timbered barns, brown & white Norman cows, [calvados tasting](#), camembert, upscale shopping, and Erik Satie's house in Honfleur.



HONFLEUR

**DAY FIVE: Friday, September 14:** You have the morning to browse the weekly outdoor market near the hotel – clothing, food, crafts, people watching. For anyone eager to see the Bayeux tapestries, we can arrange it this morning (the town is about 40 minutes away). In the afternoon we will tour Medieval Caen, following in the footsteps of William the Conqueror (originally known as [William the Bastard](#)) and his wife Mathilda. By day's end, you will understand the special relationship between Great Britain and Normandy. Tonight we celebrate the Alexandria/Caen connection with a reception and a concert by QuinTango.

**DAY SIX: Saturday, September 15:** We leave Caen and head to one of the few Norman villages not obliterated by bombs – [Villedieu-les-poêles](#). The world's top chefs pick out their copper pots and pans here at the *Atelier de Cuivre*, where copperware is crafted with techniques handed down from the fourteenth century. Equally historic is the large bell foundry from which Notre Dame de Paris ordered its last six bells. Next stop: the beach-front hotel [Nouveau Monde](#) along the Sillon in St Malo, our new home. We arrive in time to wander the



BEACH AT ST MALO

winding streets of [St Malo's Intra Muros](#) and watch the sunset from the ramparts.



DINAN

**DAY SEVEN: Sunday, September 16:** Today is a photo op from beginning to end. We start with a guided tour of St Malo and move on to [Dinan](#), a beautifully preserved Breton town. After the *galettes* (buckwheat crepes), *cidre* and the tranquility of the Rance valley, we return via [Dinard](#) to marvel at the Belle Epoque mansions.

**DAY EIGHT: Monday, September 17:** We head out early to [Mont Saint Michel](#),



MONT SAINT MICHEL

France's most visited monument and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Expect to be amazed as Marie leads us through the medieval maze of streets winding up to the [Abbey](#). Claude Debussy, a frequent visitor to MSM, is said to have had the Abbey in mind when he wrote the piano prelude *La Cathedrale Engloutie*. As we head across the peninsula to Cancale take time to marvel at the retreating vision of Mont Saint Michel, timeless in a tidal landscape of quick-sand. Queen Elizabeth

ordered her oysters from [Cancale](#). You can do the same as we end our stay with a farewell dinner by the sea.

**DAY NINE: Tuesday, September 18:** Those returning to the States will be taken from the hotel by bus to CDG. You will want to book a late afternoon flight to the States – after 3 PM. Those travelling to Guernsey will take the ferry around noon from St Malo to St Peter Port and from there by private transfer to the Isle of Sark (or *Sercq*, as it is known locally).



CANCALE OYSTERS



**POST TRIP** (IMPORTANT: there are stairs at hotel and ferry.):

**DAY ONE: Tuesday, September 18:** Today we head to [Sark](#), a tiny island in the Bailiwick of Guernsey, Channel Islands, a two hour+ ferry ride (can be rough, so bring whatever sea sick measures you use; we'll hope for calm ). We will then make the 20-minute journey from Guernsey to [Sark](#) by private boat, circling the island on arrival to give you perspective on this 2-square-mile island (300 inhabitants). Once on land you ride to the top of the town in "the toaster" (a tractor- drawn conveyance where passengers resemble pieces of toast



STANDING STONES ON SARK

shoved into slotted seats! More fun than it sounds). Other than the toaster (available only on arrival), there are 3 modes of transportation: walking, bicycle, horse carriage. We will go by foot and carriage, both magical, to the 400-year old [Stocks Hotel](#), where a pub lunch can be had by the pool. A rest, a walk, and then I encourage you to go for drinks in the cozy bar. Stark is the original Dark Sky Island. You will want to venture out after nightfall to see the Milky Way in all its glory – either in the meadow or with the local astronomer whose shed serves as the island's observatory (reservations and clear night required).



LA COUPEE-LITTLE SARK

**DAY TWO: Wednesday, September 19:** You will start with a memorable breakfast (only Geurnsey cows are allowed on Sark – amazing cream!) Carriages drawn by fluffy-footed Percherons or Dobbs will take us on a tour of the island, eventually crossing La Coupée to Little Sark and ending at the garden of Miss Elizabeth, a native Sarkie whose garden lunches at [La Sablonnerie](#) are legendary. Prepare to linger! You will return via carriage across La Coupée.



SALAD, LA SABLONNERIE

**DAY THREE: Thursday, September 20:** We will take a 20-minute ferry ride to St Peter Port, Guernsey, and lodge at the legendary [Old Government House Hotel](#) (known as OGH). You are on your own to enjoy the spa; take a tour of the fort; visit Hauteville House, [Victor Hugo's](#)

[home during his exile](#) on Guernsey; or hit the pubs and shops. The OGH will take care of your every need. It is the hotel of my dreams! There is a 5-star dining room straight out of the Raj, cream tea in the garden (*pro secco* optional), fish and chips at a neighboring pub or anything in between.

**DAY FOUR: Friday, September 21:** You will start your day with a splendid English breakfast. QuinTango will be working with island youth and preparing for the evening concert at [St James Concert and Assembly Hall](#), a short walk from the hotel. You all may relax in the spa, stroll the streets, read in the garden, shop for last-minute gifts or tour the island. The charming Kirstin Simon, director of St. James, is preparing a special welcome for us that will most likely include toasts and a chance to chat with the music-loving folks of Guernsey. Concert this evening at St James. This is our last night together and it will be memorable – and in English!



BREAKFAST AT OGH, GUERNSEY

**DAY FIVE: Saturday, September 22:** Talk to me before making your reservations to leave Guernsey. QuinTango is on the Aurigny 7 AM flight to London Gatwick, which gives the option to stay on in England, transfer by bus to Heathrow for a return flight to the US, or use an airline that serves the USA from Gatwick. FYI, QuinTango has the following flight schedule: September 9 UA915 depart Washington IAD 5:25 PM arrive 6:55 AM Paris CDG; return September 22 UA 925 depart London LHR at 4:40 PM, arrive IAD 7:40 PM.



QuinTango

## DETAILS

### TRIP BASICS:

- September 10-18 – Normandy-Brittany; September 18-22 – Channel Islands
- Main trip: \$2700 for Normandy-Brittany trip, single supplement \$675
- Channel Islands post- trip: \$1800, with single supplements \$575
- France travel contact: Thierry & Caroline Pic at [A la Carte Events](#) in Normandy.
- Air fares not included; ground transportation and ferries included
- Hotels: **Hotel Moderne** in Caen, **Nouveau Monde** in St Malo, **Stocks** on Sark, **Old Government House** in St Peters Port, Guernsey

### PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

- February 15 - \$1600 due for post-trip
- March 15 - \$2000 due for main trip
- May 15 – single supplements due
- July 15 – balance due (\$700 for main trip; \$200 for post-trip)
- REFUND: 50% refund until March 1
- TRAVEL INSURANCE strongly recommended

### SUGGESTED READINGS:

- THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO-PEEL PIE SOCIETY (film out in April, so there will be a lot of buzz about Guernsey by next summer)
- ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE, Pulitzer-prize winning novel by Anthony Doerr set during WW2 with important references to St Malo.

QuinTango is excited to share la belle France with you. We will send updates on concerts and itinerary details as time draws near. Please call Joan with any questions. 703-548-6811 or cell is 571-241-7683.

[bisous](#) - à bientôt !

*Joan*

Joan Singer  
Music Director, QuinTango  
812 West Braddock Road  
Alexandria VA