

Bonjour tout le monde,

Here are some of the responses I received from the Champagne houses when I asked what kind of experiences they offered. Please note that you can certainly do tastings without the tours for much less at most of the houses if you are not interested in visiting the cellars. Personally, it has been years for me and I'd like to visit least one cellar. Following this, there is more info about other options for while we are in town as well.

Please let me know if/what you are interested in doing. You can what's app or email me at Ruth@bonbeer.com
Looking forward to seeing you all soon! Cheers/Santé!

Champagne Boizel -46 avenue de Champagne, 51200 Epernay. recommended by tourism rep, said that they are a new cellar tour on the ave de Champagne and it is a really nice Champagne house still owned by the family

Boizel -(although it says they are limited in size they told me they will accommodate us as a group of up to 19.)

Our cellar visits last around 1h15 where visitors discover different parts of our winery: La Cuvée with the stainless-steel vat, Le Cellier with the oak barrels and our historical cellar, classified in the UNESCO world Heritage list. The visit then follows to a private tasting room where guests can sit down around a table and in front of their tasting set. We offer 3 different tasting options (prices per person including taxes, 2 glasses):

« Essentiel » 30 € - Brut Réserve and Rosé

« Millésime » 36 € - Brut Réserve and Grand Vintage 2012

« Joyau de France » 50 € - Joyau de France 2008 and Joyau de France Rosé 2007

Alfred Gratien - 30 rue Maurice Cerveaux 51200 ÉPERNAY <https://www.alfredgratien.com/>

My maximum capacity in the cellar is 18 people - 19 people will do for this time, no worry !

Please also note if you would like to have the cheese pairing that the group will be not sited at the same table but split on the tasting room (table + bar).

Here is what we can propose :

- Visit Alfred Gratien « Discovery » : visit of our barrel cellar and underground cellars, followed by a tasting of our 2 emblematic cuvees : Alfred Gratien Brut & Alfred Gratien Cuvée Paradis Brut Millésimé
28.00€ per person
- Visit Alfred Gratien « The Footprint » : visit of our barrel cellar and underground cellars, followed by a tasting of 4 cuvees, including 3 vintage : Alfred Gratien Brut, Alfred Gratien Blanc de Blancs Vintage, Alfred Gratien Vintage & Alfred Gratien Cuvée Paradis Brut Vintage
45.00€ per person
- Workshop « Champagnes & Cheeses » : visit of our barrel cellar and underground cellars, followed by a pairing tasting of 4 cheese going along with 4 cuvees : Alfred Gratien Brut, Alfred Gratien Blanc de Blancs Vintage, Alfred Gratien Vintage & Alfred Gratien Cuvée Paradis Brut Vintage
55.00€ per person – also available without the tour at 45.00€ per person

Champagne Vollereaux www.champagne-vollereaux.fr – 48 rue Léon Bourgeois 51530 Pierry – +33 3 26 54 03 05
contact@champagne-vollereaux.fr

This one is located in Pierry, so is about 4 km from the ibis, a 15 minute bike ride or 8 min by car. This is the one that offers the picnic in the vineyard. They also said if the weather was not good, they would bring us to a sheltered area by the old presses. And as I was told in response to my question about whether champagne was included with the picnic, I was told: Yes the picnic includes champagne but only champagne not wine because we are in champagne area and water of course.

Thank you for your e-mail, we organize different tour so on the 23rd or 24th of August, we can welcome you for:

- our chocolate experience, this activity includes cellar tour with 3 chocolates pairing, the price is 19€/person for a group. (min 4 max 20)
- Or you can have a picnic in our vineyard, a guided tour of the cellars followed by a picnic lunch, the price of this activity is 42 €/person (if you are interested about this activity, I need to know in advance to order the food). The picnic basket includes charcuterie and cheese and a dessert.

During the cellar tour, you will learn about the champagne process and the family Vollereaux.

Other Champagne Houses – almost all the big ones run different cellar tours, they suggest you reserve and are priced differently depending on how much and which champagnes they are offering at the tasting at the end. This info is all online, among these, **Mercier** looks interesting <https://www.champagnemercier.com/en> again, says only 12 on some of the tours, but I haven't contacted them about a private group. And of course, **Moët & Chandon**, <https://www.moet.com/en-int/visit-us> etc... are all around. If you all have somewhere specific you'd like to see, then let me know and I can ask about a group tour option.

I have contacts referred by friends at these cellars: They are not in Épernay, but are within driving distance and would likely take good care of us:

Chanoine Frères : <https://en.chanoine-freres.fr/histoire-maison-chanoine-freres> - they don't advertise tours but I spoke to them and they are willing to have us visit. They are the second oldest house in the area but appears to be a very modern facility. And looks like they do a nice tasting – I think with some appetizers and likely will not charge as long as we buy a bottle or two. However, despite it being over 300 years old, it looks very modern, shiny stainless etc...but the champagne is supposedly very good and reasonably priced according to my French friend who pretty much lives on champagne, lol. This is located in Reims so should be about ½ hour by car from Epernay. If you are interested, let me know and I can confirm something.

Veuve Virey - 38 Grande Rue 10110 Landreville: <https://champagne-veuvevirey.fr/?fbclid=IwAR0Y3yT6CEVO2g2kAiHuxePQmBloiAbZD8WhMZ1tC2ZHn4UIXOMUsEb6TVM>

This one is another one that doesn't advertise any visits, but is owned by the cousin of a friend who runs the truffle hunting we do in Provence and he always serves this to us with truffles 😊 However it is south of Troyes, so a bit of a hike.

Additional Experiences and Activities:

I am looking into an option for a luncheon with a winemaker at the Villa Signolle by Champagne Michel Gonet. This is something they had offered to the tour operators on a Familiarization trip and looked pretty cool. Will advise when I hear back about that.

There is a hot air balloon that is tethered that you can take up for panoramic view (not the same as a flight over the vineyards, but for a 20 e with a glass of Champagne, why not?

There is a bike rental facility in town that has both regular and e bikes. https://facil-e-bike.fr/index_en.html they can deliver and have reasonable prices and I can always ask for a group rate. I'm fairly certain they will offer maps for self guided rides either from the shop or the tourist office. I love the idea of riding along the Marne.

There is also an option to do a ½ day guided tour, 60 E plus bike rental supplement of 20 e if you don't already have a bike. I haven't contacted them yet, but it says 8 people max, but again, when I ask for private groups, sometimes they bend the rules for us, so if you are interested, please let me know so I can ask. The tour description in English says: The ride will take us through the vineyards of the north bank of the Marne river where we will discover the hillsides of Ay with its 429 hectares of classified vineyards, cradle of the Bollinger and Deutz houses. Then we will climb up the hillside to the village of Hautvillers built in the 7th century, famous for its abbey and its winegrower monk Dom Pérignon. Its 140 ironwork signs decorating the facades are all in praise of the wonderful wine of Champagne.

After this walk in the heights, the path will lead us to the village of Cumières, located at the bottom of the hill and its famous Joseph Perrier Estate. Between the hillsides and the river, this 1st classified growth with clay-limestone soil produces a rich and fruity champagne and a red, full-bodied Coteaux Champenois. This "green" heritage classified since 2015 by Unesco, offers breathtaking landscapes that lift the soul! The immersion is total! In the heart of the terroir! Here, the work of the vine is an uninterrupted show where man has adapted to the conditions of the environment. As a final touch, we will go to meet these winegrowers who, in their cellar, will reveal to you part of the secret of their wine! Then comes the long-awaited moment of tasting in a sparkling and joyful intimacy. Welcome to our home! Welcome to your home!

Restaurant suggestions for Epernay from the tourist rep:

Some restaurants in Epernay :

- La Table Kobus : <https://www.la-table-kobus.fr/>
- Le Théâtre : <http://www.epernay-rest-letheatre.com/>
- Why Not : <https://www.whynot-epernay.com/>