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EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL ROUTES

STUDY BY

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I. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Definition	4
3. Aims	4
4. Resources	4
5. Partners	5
6. The Council of Europe's role	5
 II. FEASIBILITY STUDY: preparation of a sample outline for an environmental route.	6
1. Introduction	6
2. Aims	7
3. Implementation	8
a. inventory of resources	8
b. choice of location	9
c. preconditions	9
d. partnership	10
e. environmental education	11
f. target group	11
4. Communication media	11
5. Investigation of needs	13
6. Reception facilities	14
7. Conclusion	15
 III. THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROUTE : "Discovering the environment along the waterways: from the Mediterranean to the North Sea". (Rhine - Doubs - Saône - Rhône)	16

I. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

1. Introduction

Since 1987 the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation has been conducting exploratory activities in the form of pilot experiments which may be implemented initially at local and regional level, but are designed for translocal and transregional interrelations: European cultural routes.

The proposal to organize transnational cultural routes in the form of cultural events co-ordinated by various European countries on certain themes bringing out common aspects of the European heritage and current cultural expression met with wide support in other milieux dealing with the development of cultural co-operation.

A cultural route is an operation aimed at introduction to and gradual discovery of an existing, eminently European reality of which the public know little or nothing in the logical form conferred by this approach. It thus has a highly educational and cultural significance.

Its practical implementation entails preparing an overall definition of the route by identifying the salient places and indicators: towns, monuments, museums, landscapes, villages, events, festivals, celebrations, etc, all connected up along a specific theme (eg the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Ways).

The value of such a project resides in the idea of creating or re-creating visible itineraries, a system of thematic symbols, and prospective opportunities for new forms of leisure activities. The originality of the Council of Europe's objectives resided in promoting local and European identities and high-quality tourism, and strengthening cultural co-operation.

Another valuable aspect of the project was that it demonstrated that the European heritage is far from being well-known, sometimes even to those most closely involved with it. For example, the silk theme has revealed the existence of realities and operations which are exemplary in terms of culture, education, society and economics. A whole series of "sub-themes" for activities or projects have emerged and developed.

It should be stressed that the cultural routes also have a special socio-educational vocation and function, since their target group comprises not only "visitors" but also the resident communities of the places visited, and they, too, are partners in and beneficiaries of the cultural dynamics, creating strong feelings of identification with both local and European themes.

Unlike the projects developed by other organizations, the design of the cultural routes took account of population groups who were called upon to become closely and lastingly involved in such local development activities.

Some international organizations (European Community, UNESCO, European

Cultural Foundation, World Tourism Organization) have properly grasped the importance of the project, but the Council of Europe remains the initiator and originator, and also a partner open for co-operation.

That is especially important as Central and East European countries alone constitute a gold mine of prospective activities. Only a Pan-European context enlarged to the East can do justice to the common identity of Greater Europe.

Further to the memorandum prepared by the Research and Programming Unit (CDPE (91) 10) and the secretariat information on current activities and those planned for the 1992 budget, the Steering Committee for the Conservation of the Environment and Natural Habitats has agreed to carry out pilot studies of the development of "environmental routes", on the understanding that the activity will not require any financial resources in 1992 and will not mobilize the secretariat.

Creation of these routes requires prior documentary and joint research. This feasibility study, followed by a proposal for the creation of a route, comes within the scope of contract No. 259/91.

2) Definition

By an environmental route we mean an itinerary taking in one or more countries and/or regions, based on themes of European significance in terms of the environment, ecology and tourism, because of either the route's geographical layout or the environmental and/or scope of its content and significance.

3) Aims

The Council of Europe's promotion of environmental routes through member and non-member countries has three aims:

- to enable the citizens of Europe to discover or rediscover their environment and convince them of its importance for both human beings and flora and fauna.
- to protect and enhance the European natural heritage as a factor in improving the living environment and a source of tourist (green tourism) and cultural development for local and regional communities.
- to give citizens new opportunities for self-development in their leisure time by putting the emphasis on green tourism and related activities.

4) Resources

The aims might comprise various means of conducting activities, which might develop in successive stages or simultaneously and in parallel:

- taking stock of natural, historic and cultural wealth, and the accommodation facilities around a site, a waterway or a region, etc, in order to define the elements constituting the special value and originality of the route;
- enhancement of the natural heritage by organizing environmental-based activities;
- heightening public, and particularly young people's, awareness, and launching the routes;
- introducing environmental routes into today's tourist habits.

5) Partners

National, regional and local political and administrative authorities which have statutory, financial and other incentive mechanisms;

the official services dealing with the environment, environmental conservation, culture, the historic heritage and tourism, whether national, regional or local;

National and regional parks, environmental reserves, etc, regional or local, and possibly national and international, associations;

research institutes (universities, CNRS, other research centers).

6) The Council of Europe's role

The Council must provide motivation and co-ordination:

1. launching phase: development of one or two specimen cases.

- preparation of a sample outline of environmental routes;
- awareness campaign;
- laying out well-defined routes which are negotiable by motivated Europeans interested in the theme.

2. project monitoring phase:

- setting up a group of experts responsible for analyzing proposals, choosing themes, carrying out activities, etc.

II/ FEASIBILITY STUDY: preparation of a sample outline for an environmental route

1) Introduction

The natural heritage represents the real-life relationship between man and his environment. However, environmental is more often than not neglected or quite simply destroyed for obvious commercial reasons, whereas the built and artistic heritage has always been widely respected and protected.

Installed in the natural environment, the habitat of yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's human beings, an environmental route is a vehicle for future well-being, and regardless of language barriers, social inequality, different national identities, it places us on an equal footing in our encounter with environmental.

Environmental routes facilitate the study of interrelations in the environment. This type of structure is currently being envisaged for national and regional environmental parks, but they might also be considered more frequently in different urban or rural setting.

The routes offer a multitude of possibilities: short or long trip for families, longer trips in groups guided by a scientific officer, rambling or horse riding, cycling, trap riding, canoeing etc.

Open-air museums are aimed at preserving a given environment. They are of indisputable scientific and educational interest. They generally have a team organizing permanent activities in situ. "Pro-environment concern" is today developing in many natural history and science museums.

Their activity structures might be used as a support for investigations in clubs and associations concerned with developing the routes.

Permanent centers dealing with introduction to or education in the environment are generally more highly developed structures with accommodation facilities for classes, clubs or families. They generally have activity teams and specific introductory equipment and programs. This formula would be well worth developing further, especially in the environmental field.

Farms, villages, open spaces, landscapes and environmental are the images which tourists have in the mind when seeking to spend their holidays in the country, something which has become popular only in recent years. The contrast with the concentration, anonymity, rapid change and the lack of reference values in the major cities induces city-dwellers increasingly to consider the countryside as a reserve of open space, basic natural wealth and social accommodation structures. They want both to enjoy these assets and to help protect them, concerned as they are about pollution and the destruction of environmental, endangering its integrity and survival.

Surely we can work towards "green tourism" integrated into rural activities as a genuine complement to the local population's work, with tourists welcomed into local accommodation rather than undesirable mass infrastructures. Such tourism would embrace the discovery or rediscovery of, and respect for, the real riches of environmental, including contact and exchange enriching local social, cultural and sports life.

The environmental route is the ideal medium for developing such alternative tourism.

2) Aims

Each route should reflect part of the local "homeland". It should thus, if possible, be based on local parameters and enhance their specificities. In that way it derives its originality from its relationship with the landscape along it.

The aims are as follows:

- promoting public awareness of environmental issues by highlighting public responsibilities;
- encouraging direct contact between man and environmental;
- promoting general knowledge of plant and animal species;
- promoting knowledge of one's country at local level (local history, study of the heritage, geology);
- promoting understanding of basic biological processes and farming methods;
- promoting understanding of the interdependence peculiar to natural habitats;
- promoting responsible attitudes to the environment: the spirit of natural and environmental conservation;
- encouraging the development of green tourism (discovering and respecting the true riches of environmental, creating contact and exchange enriching local social and cultural life);
- heightening public awareness of the disastrous consequences of all types of pollution, based on specific examples;
- impressing on the public the importance of natural habitats as an indispensable medium for life.

To achieve these aims, the routes as a "product" must reach as large a target group as possible, meeting its needs, whether expressed or not, for knowledge, recreation and information.

3) Implementation

a) Inventory of resources

The action to be implemented includes taking stock of the places, natural resources, flora and fauna species and landscapes, etc, not forgetting the cultural resources.

The requisite themes concern environmental, archaeology, history, local economy and geography in general. Information must be collected in order to define all the elements making up the specific value and originality of the environmental site.

The compiled data will enable us to decide on the particular message to be got across concerning the discovery of environmental along a given route.

The inventory of local resources covers the following questions, transformed into maps, photos, plans, diagrams and signposts, etc:

- what are the most significant features of the local environment, commune and/or region, etc?
- what are the really special features as regards geography, geology, land use - both past and present -and the history of human activities?
- what are the constraints on conservation: is the habitat fragile, are the species rare or vulnerable? What restrictions are required for visitor safety?
- what main roads are used and how intensively?
- what car parking facilities are available?
- what boating, walking, cycling and horse-cab facilities are available?
- what public reception facilities are available?
- what new means of transport can be developed?
- etc.

The inventory should provide an opportunity for seeking the participation and support of a variety of partners. Consulting a number of sources provides not only a wealth of documentation but also sets off local dynamics and prevents rejection or misunderstanding. This research phase is to some extent a test to measure or establish dialogue with local inhabitants, with a view to securing their co-operation. The tangible in situ infrastructure is the result of a public reception policy which is part of a development and management

program linked to local planning.

It is not sufficient merely to mention or define the routes: they must also be inserted, together with the requisite organization and structures, into the everyday activities of anyone wishing to experience them.

As many partners as possible must also be involved in supplying the routes with the resources they need to exist in real terms: a coherent sign-posting system; publication of a high-quality work on the subject for the general public; installation of information and reception structures; involvement of tourist services; and organization of activities connected with the routes.

b) Choice of location

The choice of a site to install the route necessarily depends on three criteria:

- frequency of current or potential visits;
- the image which the developer wishes to give to the natural area under his management;
- the determination of local political and socio-economic operators.

c) The preconditions

The site must fulfill three conditions:

- it must provide the public with pleasant trips (by all means of locomotion) and be generally attractive;
- it must comprise areas where negotiable tracks with stable edges can be laid out;
- it must be easily accessible to as many people as possible (if information provided to the public must be easy to understand);
- it must have existing access routes, or such routes will have to be created;

Depending on the angle from which the environmental routes are viewed, they may be classified as follows:

- economic educational routes (eg walking tracks with guided tours of farms and discussion of their impact on the environment);

- historic educational routes (walks or horse-cab trips around an old town);
- geological educational routes;
- botanical educational routes;
- zoological educational routes;
- forest educational routes;
- combined educational routes (with plants, animals, forests and countryside);
- educational routes in the wider sense (open-air museums etc);
- etc.

d) Partnership

Installation of an environmental route requires a very rigorous approach and also a great deal of time; a schedule must be drawn up showing a breakdown of the work. In order to plan the laying out of a route, several stages must be respected, each necessitating the involvement of qualified persons.

Co-operation within the Council of Europe with the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the Council for Cultural Co-operation would be quite feasible and desirable. A multi-disciplinary approach would contribute an additional aspect to the project, taking advantage of the experience gained from the cultural routes.

By definition the routes must be interregional and/or international if they are to be acknowledged by all the regions concerned and at European level. The project must bring in various partners and financial contributors from the regions, and also, possibly, the European bodies. The following is a hierarchy of the various partners:

- Countries;
- Regions;
- Municipalities;
- Tourist organizations;
- Bodies responsible for infrastructures;
- Various museums, centers, educational bodies, etc.

Associations offering young people activities to heighten their environmental awareness play a major role, taking over where the traditional educational sectors leave off: their activities complement (or prepare for) the

introduction to a given environment provided at school.

Scientific associations can organize day-trips based on specific themes: eg, installation of a nuclear power station, or a visit to a reforestation area. They can draw public attention to:

- biosphere equilibrium;
- local problems;
- problems of short- or long-term pollution;
- etc.

e) Environmental education

Environmental education must be directed at young and old alike, and not only at city-dwellers wanting their share of greenery.

It may even be a high-performance utility for the development and creation of socio-economic activities in the countryside.

The aim of such education is also to develop a living, dynamic view of one's environment. To go beyond the museum aspect. Not to attempt to "artificialise" in order to promote.

Environmental education uses interdisciplinary scientific methods to attempt to make people aware of their place in the environment, their effect on it, and make them capable of responsible conduct.

f) The target group

As we conceive it, the European environmental route is open to all groups.

However, its educational aspect places the emphasis on certain groups: schoolchildren and students, teachers and local leaders. Their functions are such that they can have an amplifying effect, spreading the word about the routes and motivating visitors. Thus they may well constitute a target for communication because of their social role.

4) Communication media

a) Guide

A guide to the environmental routes must be produced.

The flyleaf will summarize the various itineraries. The layout of each route is presented on a general map at the beginning of the respective chapter. Each route is divided into sections presented on a map with a trilingual commentary

(German, French and English), giving details of the villages along the way and the sights to be seen. The guide should be written by enthusiasts and connoisseurs of the environment and heritage of the areas in question. Although it must of course inform about the more spectacular sights, it must also as far as possible draw attention to the area's unknown treasures.

b) Media and press

The media are currently underemployed as regards the environment, producing little educational material in that field, although, objectively speaking, some efforts are being made in that direction.

Although the media do sometimes discuss the issues, they more often than not confine themselves to the sensational aspects. With a few exceptions, their approach quickly leads to disinformation.

Environmental education is not simply a matter of discovering or creating an event; each individual, each person in a position of responsibility must be prompted to a change of attitude, to respect for the environment and a different way of managing it. Press articles and the TV news might be used to inform the public about the routes, on the basis of local events.

c) Colloquies and meetings

Routes might also be launched at colloquies and meetings, events where experts from the different countries, regional authority officials, economic agents and tour operators can share mutual experience and set up co-operation.

d) Private and public bodies

Tourist offices, town halls, universities, bookshops and libraries might serve as relay-stations for passing on information. It might be useful to design a logo for the route, to be used for sign-posting.

e) Exhibition

An exhibition on the environmental route would be another information medium. It could travel from municipality to municipality on request. The public would be offered prospectuses showing an overview of the routes, with order forms for the guides. Each exhibition would have a stand selling brochures.

A logo should be produced for each theme for ease of identification of the different routes.

f) Telematics

The facilities and methods of organizing activities might appropriately include possible use of telematics¹, bearing in mind the extensive facilities offered nowadays by this technology, with a telematics service eventually complementing the trilingual guide.

The guide offers the user a visual medium consultable anytime, anywhere. It is transportable and easy to use. However, it is only an information medium which does not allow for exchange.

A telematics application functions as an interactive medium and therefore can fill the communication gap by offering the user interactive dialogue.

The user can obtain the information he wants anytime by interrogating the service on a public access screen or at home, if he has the requisite equipment (in France, the Minitel).

Information may also be very promptly modified by those providing the services. This permanent updating facility ensures that the user has reliable information.

5) Investigation of needs

The environmental route should be created by promoting awareness among the local population that the public must be informed about environmental issues, and calling on the competence of the various partners in the conservation of the environment, sites and monuments, regional planning and regional and local history.

To that end we must enhance our natural heritage in the eyes of the public by giving them access to the information stored in the various services dealing with the environment. The public must be given the inclination and the opportunity to participate in the region's cultural life. The route must be dynamically promoted.

However, these aims cannot be attained without analyzing the target group's needs and wishes.

The analysis of needs breaks down into two stages:

1. Investigation of the profile of the tourists visiting the European regions covered by the route, on the basis of general data supplied by the

¹ A term coined from the combination of computers and telecommunications, "telematics" refers to services which deal with the use of information and are accessible via data transmission networks.

various regional, national and European bodies:

- Tourist offices
- INSEE
- Directorate General of Tourism
- Ministry of Tourism, etc,

and on the basis of interviews with various tourism professionals.

2. Behavior of target group

An investigation would have to be conducted in each country to collect basic information enabling us to classify target group members.

The aim is to obtain a better grasp of:

- the characteristics of the tourist population (age, socio-professional group, family make-up etc)
- travel, accommodation and reservation habits
- improve the response to their needs in terms of accommodation, environmental planning, new services and information needs, etc.

6) Accommodation facilities along the route

All the towns and villages along the environmental route should be inventoried as follows:

- population ;
- cafes and restaurants ;
- foodstores ;
- sports and leisure facilities ;
- accommodation capacity ;
- available accommodation types.

The information must be made available throughout the countries involved. For France, all the information is stored in communal inventories and the commune bulletins published annually by the INSEE. For other countries the regional tourist offices, local authorities and voluntary associations must be consulted.

7) Conclusion

The project will succeed on condition, firstly, that a nucleus of individuals and organizations undertake to create the routes and, secondly, that the project's aims are met:

- active participation by the project's target group;
- promotion and revitalization of the countryside, under threat of population drift;
- the success of a certain idea of Europe, offering Europeans a series of routes on themes illustrating in situ its geography, history, cultures and languages etc;
- The boom in new tourist activities.

III/ EXAMPLE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL ROUTE : Discovering the environment along the waterways: from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. (Rhône, Saône, Doubs, Rhine)

"The symbol of purity, water is the source of life and is vital for the growth and survival of all vegetable, animal and human life" - Article 1 of the European Water Charter.

The first living cells emerged in the water. Since then, life has never ceased to exist and evolve in that element. To our day, an infinite variety of animal and vegetable life forms has never left the water in millions of years. Moreover, water is constantly increasing in importance: we need only think of drought periods and their many tragic consequences.

Modelled by climatic changes, depending on the terrain through which they flow, waterways present great diversity, each having a different personality. Deeply imprinted on the landscape, a waterway is an integral part thereof. On a valley bottom or among human settlements, it bestows a unique character on an area.

However, the fate of a waterway also depends on human activity. Waterways in most industrialized countries have been over-corrected and are suffering the onslaught of technology, with inexorably decreasing numbers of stretches left in the natural, wild state.

The use of waterways for educational purposes is increasing in frequency and is very worthwhile: all the aspects of aquatic life are diversified, the trace of man is there for all to see, and the impact of human activity on the environment is easy to assess, especially as it's aspects changes with the landscape.

Educational environmental routes would seem to be an original response to the need for information and knowledge, prompting modern man to change his way of handling the environment.

Travelling from the Mediterranean to the North Sea along the waterways to explore the environment, ie following the Rhône, the Saône, the Doubs and lastly the Rhine, also means setting out to discover Europe and its regions.

In practice, this exploration of Europe and its regions along its waterways could center on four aspects which might provide the inspiration for several routes.

1. The history of the landscape;
2. The natural environment : discovering the flora and fauna;
3. The environmental impact of the activities of industrial companies : Rhine and Rhône, the center of the chemical industry;
4. The causes and consequences of human action on waterways: problems of environmental management and landscape change.

We felt that whichever of these was selected, it was important for a specific theme to be targeted (discussion continues on this subject). We selected wine-growing a route could be created centering on vineyards and wine, possibly under the title of "Vineyards and Rivers" (with the history of the landscape as its focal point). It would follow the Rhône, the Saône and the Rhine and its tributaries. The route would offer an introduction to the history of wine in each landscape, always based on the geological origins. The aim would be to explain how humankind created wines and why they are now so different.

The project would involve visiting the various vineyards of the Rhône Saône and Rhine valleys. The original geological features, climate, exposure, vegetation, traditional and new methods of cultivation and human impact would be presented in respect of each river. Also included in each case would be parts of our heritage which ought not to be missed (such as the Ungersheim Ecomusée, in the Alsace wine area, and Clochemerle in the Beaujolais wine area).

2. Presentation of the "Vineyards and Rivers" route

We decided to use this theme as an example in this feasibility study of environmental routes because it is a perfect symbol of the relations over the years between humankind and the surrounding natural world and the resulting interaction.

The link between geology and wine is not always immediately obvious, as vines do in fact adapt to grow in almost any kind of soil (except wet ground), provided that the climate is temperate. So they were cultivated throughout France in the past, when there were no practical and speedy methods of transport. The subsoil certainly plays an important part in determining the quality of the wine produced: this link is clear in Burgundy, where the only vines - Pinot Noir for red wines and Chardonnay for whites - grow in specific geological conditions.

Vines have been used for producing wine since very remote times. They have always been a symbol associated with beliefs, mythologies, religions and civilizations. They have flourished over tens of millions of years.

The factors which have had varying degrees of influence on the continued existence or disappearance of vines over the years are: climate, exposure, the

nature of the ground, the stock of vines and tradition.

Vines have remained where the climate was favorable, particularly on slopes, as frost is more frequent and more damaging in valley bottoms. Thunderstorms and heavy rain may damage shoots or grapes or wash away topsoil. It used to be the women's work to bring back to the top of the slopes the soil which had accumulated by the low walls which wine-growers built below their vines.

The sun plays a crucial part, and vines are planted facing the south and east where possible. Microclimates have an important role to play; these are produced by favorable combinations of air humidity, amount of sunshine and altitude, giving exceptional production which determines the wine-growing area.

A wine's character is determined not only by the bedrock and subsoil, but also by the composition and properties of the topsoil. In Alsace, the late Sylvaner vine ripens on very varied soils, while Gewurztraminer grows on granite, mainly limestone and alluvium.

The "Vineyards and Rivers" route described here crosses two countries of Europe, France and Germany, but also extends eastward into Switzerland. The Rhine flows on to the Netherlands, but there are no vineyards along this part of the river. The route could, of course, be extended to other countries and other rivers, such as the Danube.

In our description of the chosen route, we have decided to place more emphasis on geology where France is concerned and on the historical aspect of the landscape for Germany, highlighting the two aspects to be developed when the route is created; it would of course be difficult to cover present all the natural and cultural assets of this route in a few pages.

A. France

a. Provence: the starting point of our route

The soil of Provence was the first to have vines planted in it and the first to produce wine in France. Before the Roman conquest, the vines of Provence had been improved through the addition of new varieties bred by the Greeks. Provence has a very complex geological structure. The most important aspect is the existence of three parts: the Hercynian substratum, the skin and the Alpine cover. In spite of the geological diversity, it is the sun which is the common factor enabling the soils to dry out easily, whether on limestone, on schist or on volcanic rock.

In Camargue, where our route begins, the coastal sand dunes give us the Local Gulf of Lions wines ("Vins de pays des sables du Golfe du Lion"), the best known of which in red, rose or white are the Listel produced by Salins-du-Midi, as well as the very light and clear Gris de Gris. It is worthwhile, before setting off on the route, visiting the Camargue National Reserve, which holds the Council of Europe diploma, as well as the surrounding park.

Following the Rhône upstream, you see to the east the slopes of Baux de Provence, on the center and southern side of the Alpilles. Leaving Arles, and therefore the river (see figure 1), and heading for Saint-Rémy, you cross the plain on the northern side of the Alpilles, in the area beloved of Van Gogh. Before reaching Saint-Rémy, you come across the raised plateau of Petite-Crau, an old Rhône terrace planted with vines. Turning towards Baux at Saint-Rémy, you cross an area which is the site of an archaeological dig (Roman remains)(1). The road suddenly arrives in a low-lying area as it crosses the Baux fault. In the hollow on the right there are thick calcareous, colluvial deposits, well drained, on which is situated the wine-growing area of Mas-de-la-Dame. The D27 road takes you to the old village of Baux, standing on a spur of Burdigalian sandstone (2). There is a magnificent view over the marshes of Baux, la Crau and the Camargue to the south and south-west, and of the nearby Alpilles and the vineyards of Coteaux-des-Baux.

Coming back towards Arles, a detour to visit Alphonse Daudet's celebrated mill should not be missed.

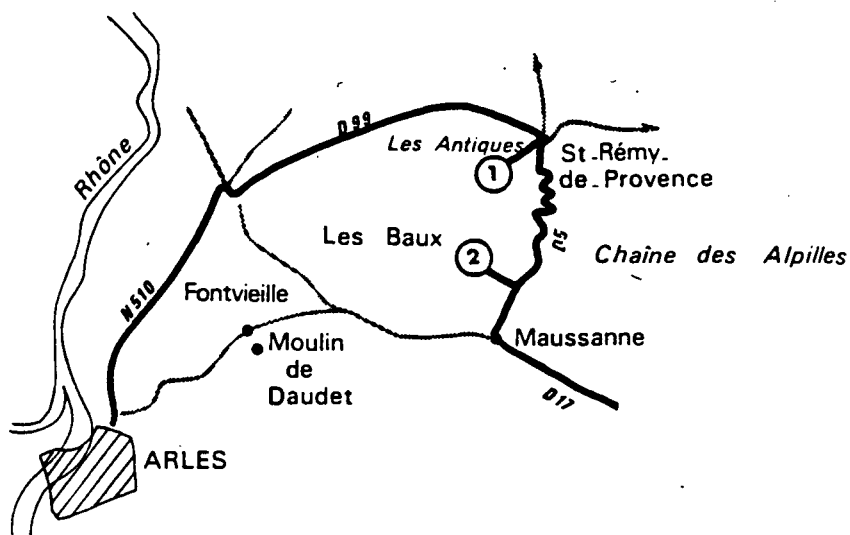


Figure 1 : Provence route.

b. The Côtes du Rhône

Pliny in his "Natural History" mentioned vines around Gigondas. Their existence was confirmed in the medieval period, but it was not until the fourteenth century, when the popes were resident in Avignon, that some vineyards expanded considerably.

Just discovered in the heart of the Tricastin area, near the village of Donzère, is "... the largest and oldest wine-grower's cellar of the Roman period (early first century). More than 600 dolias (wine jars), various items of equipment and objects which could have coped with the harvest from a 50-hectare vineyard".

Côtes du Rhône wines are basically produced from Grenache vines, which give them their tannin, body, alcohol and strong flavors. A land rich in contrasts! So many very different landscapes within a single department! The banks of the river, this "god river", which has now been tamed, are rich in vegetation, with apple orchards and fields of cereals stretching out, alive with the buzz of insects. Further to the east and north, the plains of Comtat Venaissin and Haut Comtat stretch out, used mainly for market gardening and cereal and fruit production. Wherever there is a low hill or the tiniest plateau, there are luxuriant vineyards.

While the northern Côtes du Rhône grow on relatively homogeneous ground (granite or gneiss), and each wine comes from a single variety of vine, the southern Côtes du Rhône (figure 2) grow on very varied soil and come from numerous types of vine (23 for the regional Côtes du Rhône appellation).

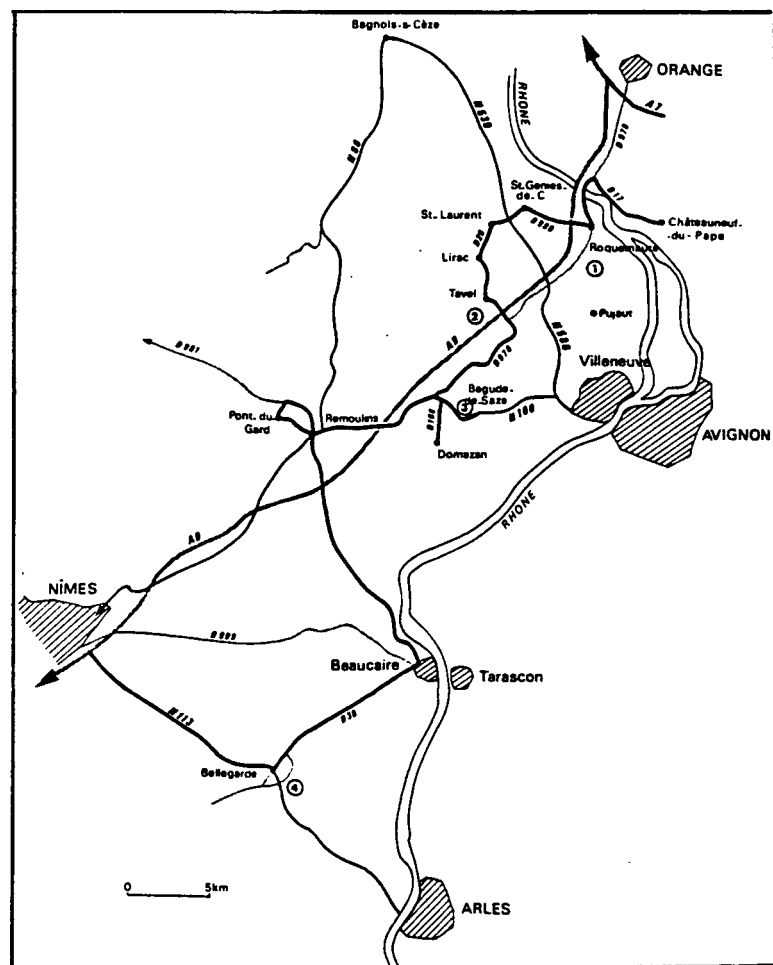


Figure 2 : Route in the southern Côtes du Rhône area.

The most famous, of course, is Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Nothing more can be said in praise of this prestigious "cru national", its strength, flavor and body. The great majority of the vines grow on specific alluvial ground : gravel with very large quartzite pieces, with a red clay matrix, washed down by the fast-flowing waters of the Rhône during the early Quaternary period. These pebbles can be seen everywhere, and wherever they are they absorb trap the heat from the sun and pass it on at night to the luxuriant vines.

A good number of private vineyards, as well as the wine co-operative, offer the complete range of available Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines, young and old. Having left Châteauneuf-du-Pape and passed through Orange, you can take a route of some 40 km from Travaillan (see figure 3) to Vindobres, in the valley of the Aygues (a tributary of the Rhône), and visible along this route are the various geological formations on which the Aygues valley vineyards grow.

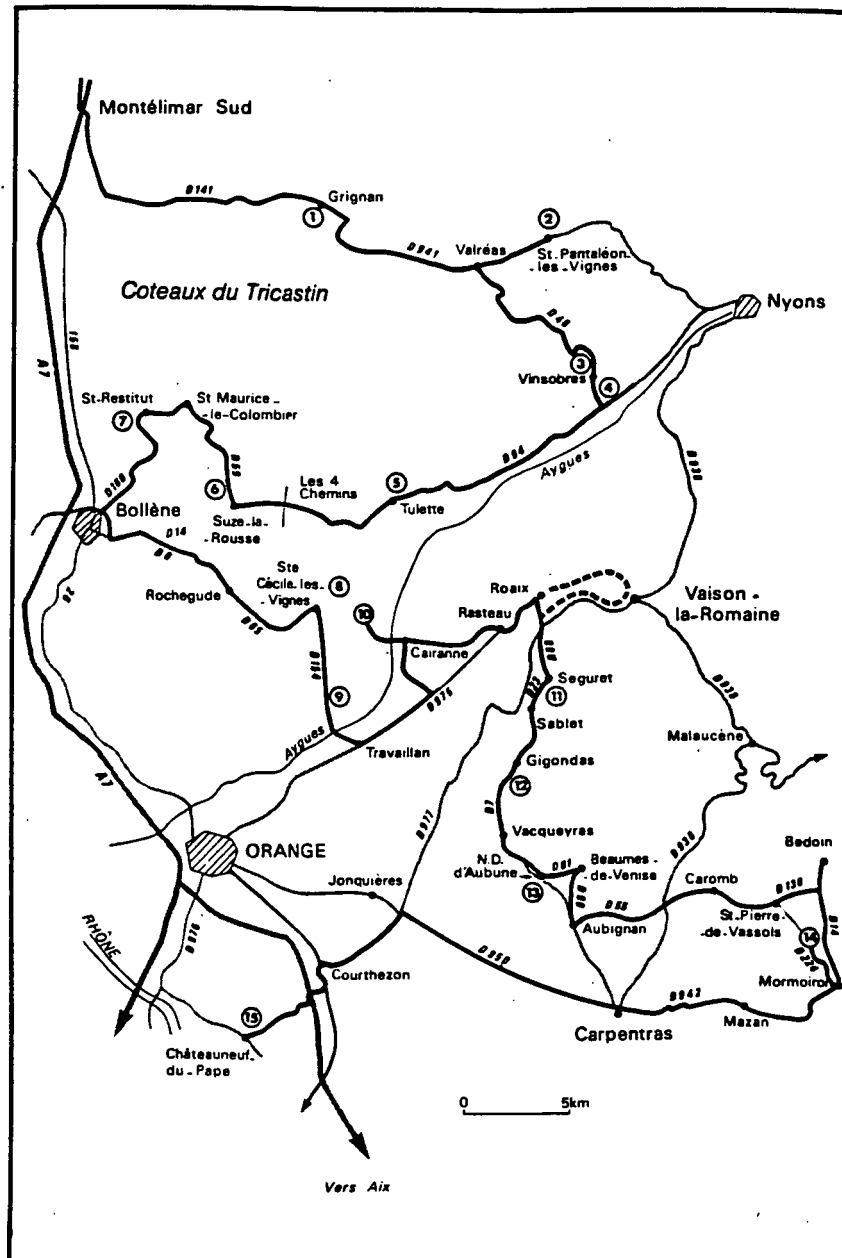


Figure 3 : From Grignan to Chateauneuf-du-Pape.

As you head northwards, you arrive in Suze-la-Rousse, where a medieval chateau houses the new, but already famous University of Wine. From Suze you can follow the Tricastin loop, taking the D59 to the north as far as Saint-Maurice-le-Colombier, where you take the D218 towards the hill of Saint-Remitut, which is a must for a visit (7) : in the magnificent stone quarries, partly underground, there is soon to be a wine-ageing cellar (at the end of the chemin de Belvedere). A very pleasant surprise is in store if you then go to Bollène, Rocheguide and, particularly, Lagarde-Paréol (domaine de Fonsalette).

Moving on from this area, you will find a good number of vineyards dotted on the slopes of the Ardèche part of the Massif Central all along the Rhône valley, even spilling over onto the left bank of the Rhône in the area of Tain-l'Hermitage, in the Drôme (see figure 4).

The route then takes you northwards along the N86 to Serrières. The rocks are basically metamorphic, with migmatites and gneiss, and passed with local occurrences of granite in ellipses. Here and there they are covered with superficial deposits of loess.

The vineyards are scattered in order to achieve the best exposure. We suggest going from Saint-Péray to Glun, via the site of the Rhône dam, and on to la Roche-sur-Glun, where there is a north facing outcrop of the last jurassic calcareous rock in the Rhône flood plain. Then you enter the department of Drôme, with its extensive terraces of gravelly alluvium from the later Quaternary period at the confluence of Rhône and Isère. Take country roads across the Drôme (10), where there is a mixture of vineyards and other crops on the flat alluvial soils, which are gravelly and well drained to a good depth. This is the area of Hermitage wines, stretching north to beyond Tain.

This is where excellent red and white wines are made, all of which should be presented. The vineyards throughout which produce them rise in the north on the granitic spur of Tain, a spectacular series of terraces with low walls, facing due south (11).

Further north, you come to the Côte Rôtie vineyard (5), which derive their name from the fact that they are "rôtis" (roasted) by the sun, for which there are two reasons: the main body of the vineyards are between Verenay and Semons (Rhône), downstream from Vienne, on slopes which face south-west, and the steeply sloping gravelly terraces are bare and fully exposed. This is the oldest vineyard site in the Lyonnais area, dating from the second century BC.

After Lyons you follow the Saône northwards to discover the wines of Beaujolais and Burgundy.

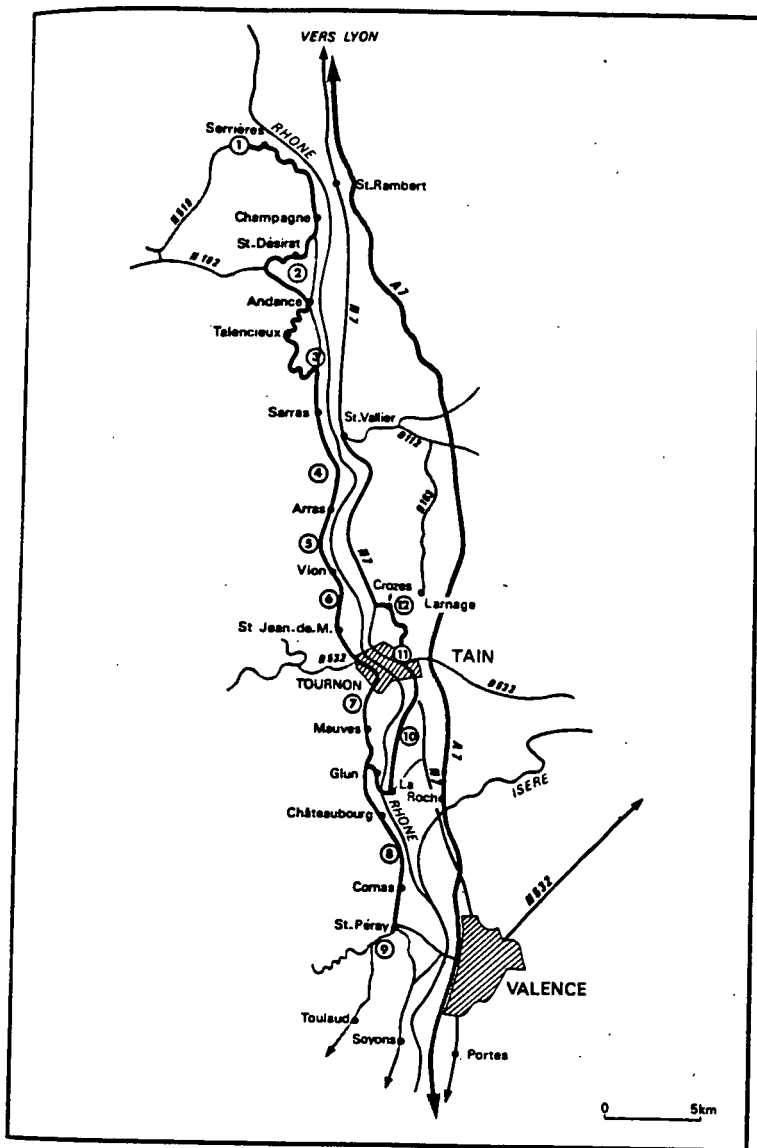


Figure 4 : Route in the northern Côtes du Rhône area.

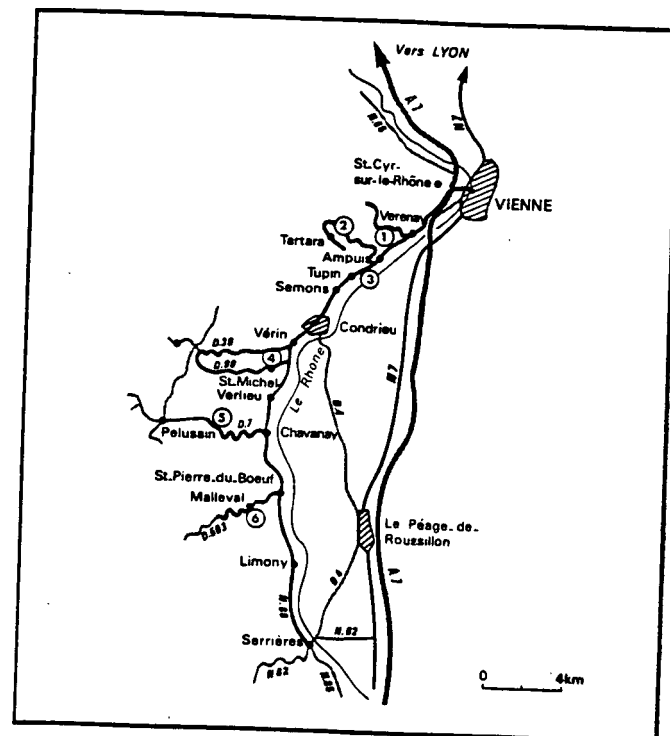


Figure 5 : Côte Rôtie and Chateau-Grillet.

c. Burgundy and Beaujolais

It was during the Gallo-Roman period that the first vineyards spread to these hillsides ; this is confirmed by an analysis of the Gallo-Roman materials found, particularly during the Bolards excavations at Nuits-Saint-Georges. In Burgundy, the role of exposure in relation to hours of sunshine is crucial, so geology plays a part by making such exposure possible thanks to its structures (fault relief) or the unequal resistance of the soil to erosion. Of course, to understand the Burgundy vineyards, account has to be taken of the nature of the soil : the granite of the Hercynian substratum, clayey and calcareous secondary cover and gravelly or sandy clay deposits from the Tertiary and Quaternary periods.

The vineyards run almost uninterrupted from the edge of the Lyons conurbation to the outskirts of Dijon, a distance of almost 200 km, situated on the eastern side of the Massif Central or on the adjoining plateaux; these eastern slopes are of tectonic origin, caused by the system of faults along which the Saône valley sank during the tertiary period, and are now shaped by erosion and dissected by the rivers which flow into the Saône.

The Beaujolais area

If people are to enjoy the Beaujolais route (figure 6), they must be reminded of certain features of these vineyards, which produce wines which vary all along the route. At first there is only one variety of vine, Gamay Noir, producing grapes which give a white juice which takes on its fine red coloring during fermentation in the vat.

The same Gamay variety gives different wines, determined largely by the subsoil in which it grows. Let us start with the lower Beaujolais region, where the wines are not very alcoholic and are fairly acidic: these are good table wines or house wines, young and light, served in Lyons in 46 cl measures. Wines with much more body are now often preferred to these. The nine Beaujolais "grands crus" come from the same Gamay grape, but grown on weathered granite or schist; they have more substance and body and can be kept for longer, even for ten years or more in the case of Morgon or Moulin-à-Vent, for example.

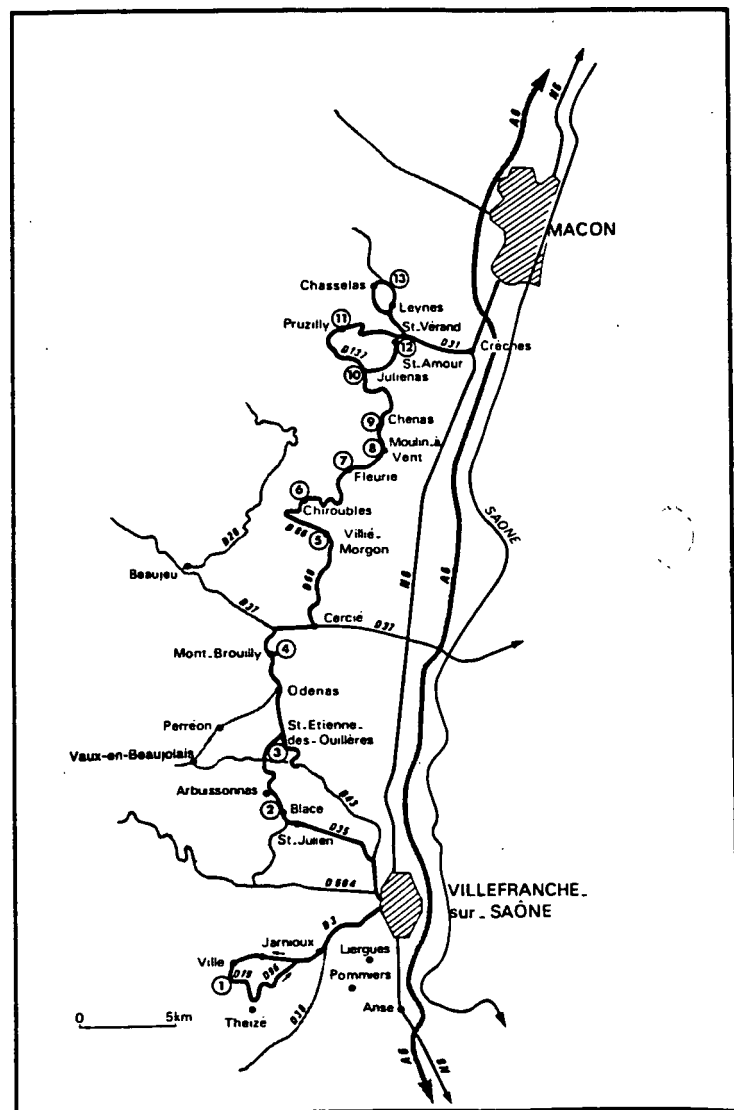


Figure 6 : Route in the Beaujolais area.

The Mâconnais area

The village of Azé (figure 7) is well-known for its caves and tiered galleries, one of which contains a prehistoric site (bear and rhinoceros remains). Wine-growing areas are scattered throughout this region, wherever the sunshine, slope and exposure are favorable, amidst grazing land, arable farmland and woodland. The villages are typical, with their Romanesque churches and galleried houses over store rooms and cellars.

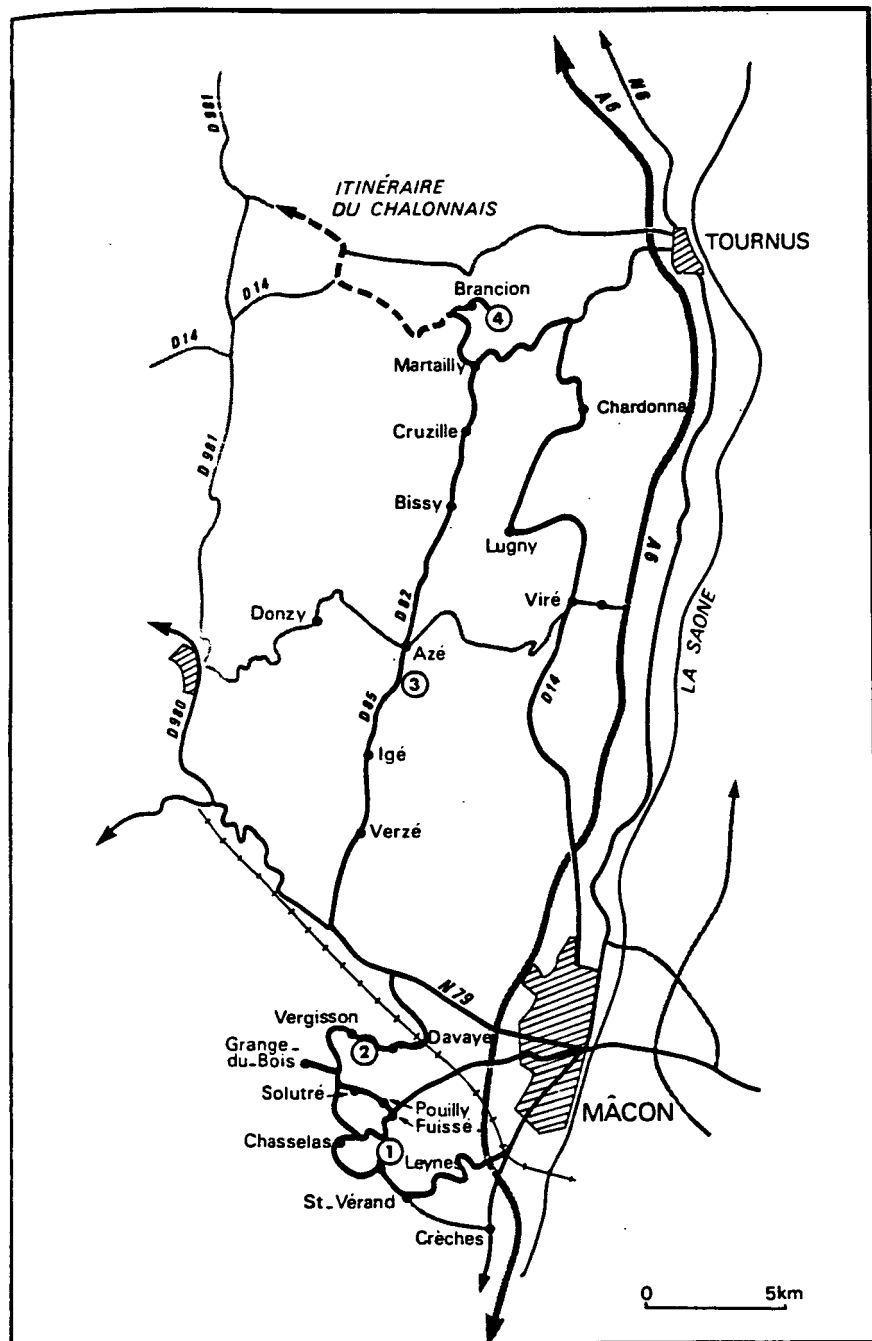


Figure 7 : The Mâconnais area.

The Chalonnais area

The Chalonnais vineyards (figure 8), particularly well-known for their Mercurey, Rully, Givry and Montagny wines, stretch northwards from Saint-Gengoux-le-National to the valley of the Dhemme, a river which winds round Chagny, the northernmost point of this region.

Approaching from Mâcon, the route takes you to Tournus on the A6 motorway or the N6 and on then the D215 towards Mancey, Sercy, Chantilly and Saint-Boil. Crossing the Grosne, just before Sercy, you see the Mâconnais hills from the Chalonnais area.

In Saint-Boil, you should ask the way and take a minor road to the left, leading to a Gallo-Roman quarry in soft calcareous rock, "Kimmeridge Oolites". This is coral oolite.

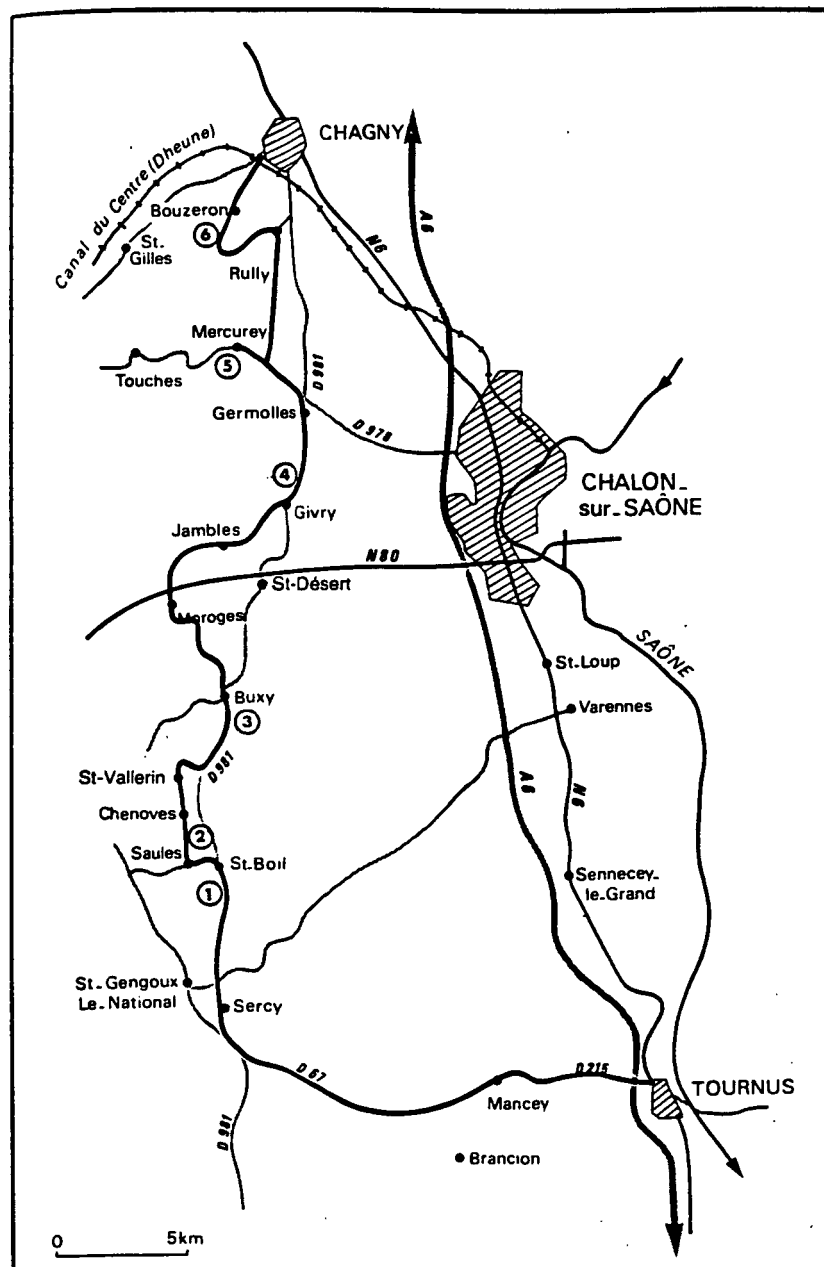


Figure 8 : Route in the Chalonnais area.

The Côte d'Or

Along a south-north axis, this area includes the vineyards of Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits, occupying the eastern edge of the Burgundy plateaux from the valley of the Dhemme to the Ouche valley, running SSW-NNE from Santenay to Nuits and virtually S-N from Nuits to Dijon. To explore this region, you have to leave the Saône behind you and head for Dijon (figure 9).

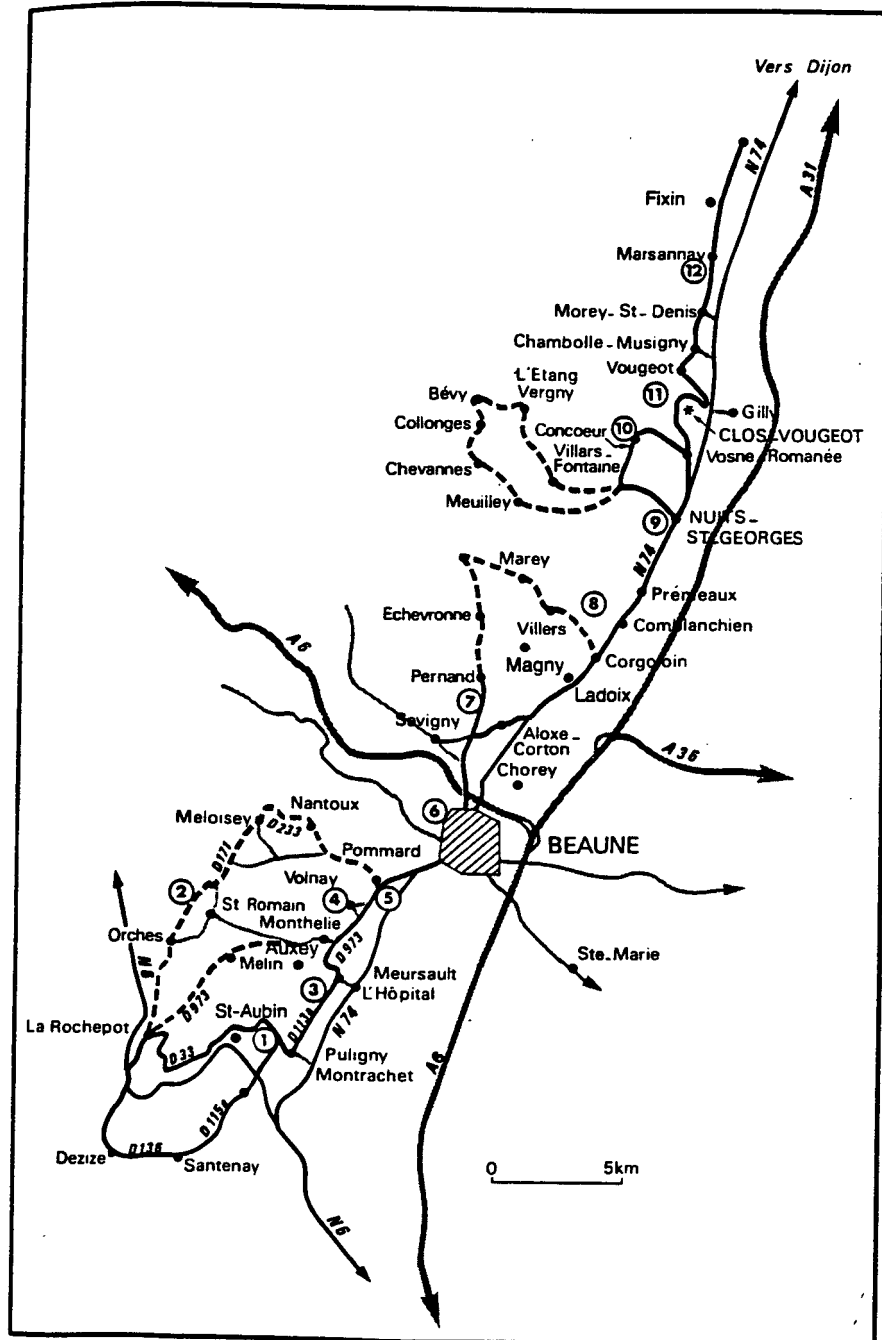


Figure 9 : Route in the Côte-d'Or area.

At Rochepot you can visit the castle, first built in the 11th century, altered in the 15th and rebuilt by Sadi Carnot, the President's son. Another must is the picturesque village of Gamay, which has given its name to the second most widely grown vine in Burgundy.

A stop must be made in Beaune to visit the Burgundy wine museum in the former residence of the Dukes of Burgundy.

Between the Côte de Beaune and the Côte de Nuits is the Côte des Pierres, with Comblanchien at its center. This is a real quarrying area, providing employment for several hundred people.

You must go to Nuits-Saint-Georges and Vosne-Romanée, a typical Burgundy village, stopping to visit the chateau of Clos Vougeot, which was owned by Cîteaux Abbey from the 12th century to the Revolution and has one of the most celebrated vineyards of the Côte de Nuits area.

This chateau comprises a (12th century) store room, a (12th century) fermenting room, with four enormous wine presses installed by the monks, and a Renaissance building, and is owned by the members Confrérie du Taste-vin, which organizes dinners every year at which new members whose gastronomical and oenological merits have been recognized by the Grand Council of the Order, are admitted.

It is in the Côte d'Or that the importance to wine quality of a number of physical features (slope, stoniness of the ground and clay and calcareous content) really becomes clear. For example (figure 10) most of the Burgundy AOCs (Appellations d'origine contrôlée) come from the flatter ground at the foot of the mountains, most of it sloping less than 2%, while the Villages and Cru AOCs prosper on slopes of between 3 and 5% and even up to 20%, an example of the latter being the Corton "grands crus". The vineyards which produce superior wines have to have the best possible internal drainage, so that there is never too much humidity when the vines are growing and grapes ripening, and enjoy the best possible weather conditions.

BOURGOGNE

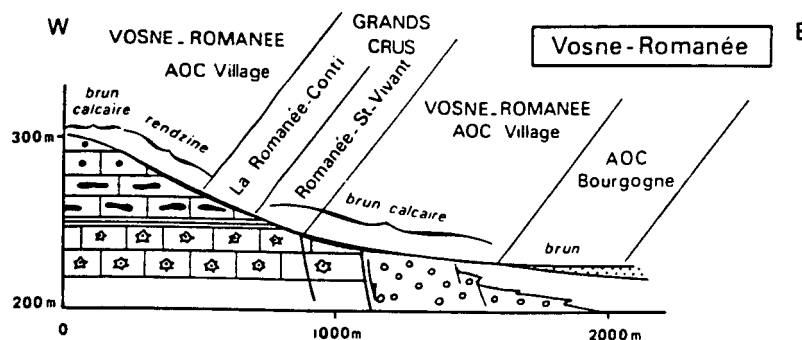
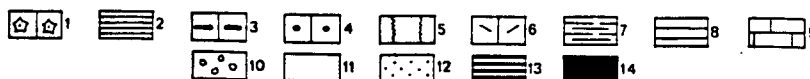
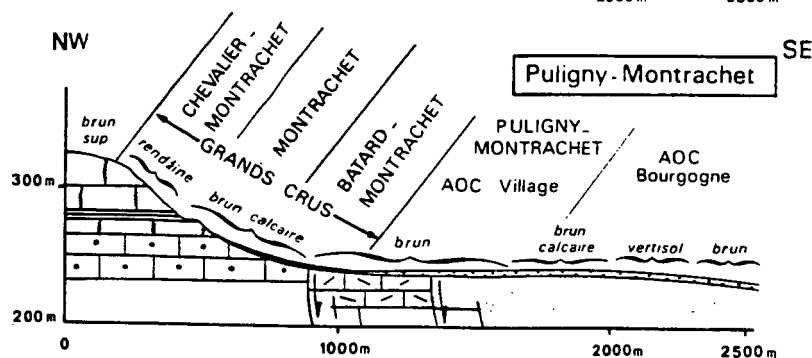
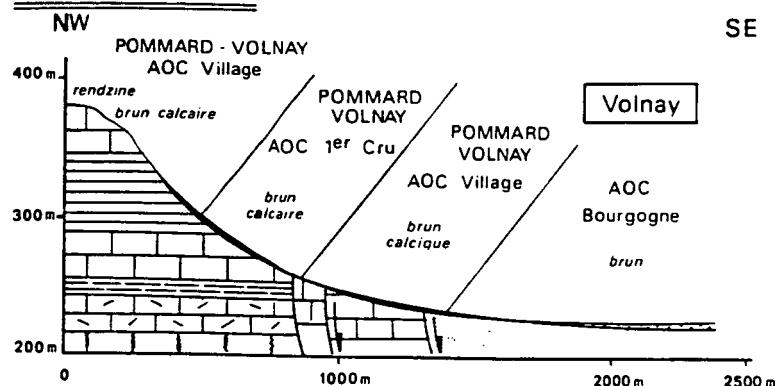
CÔTE DE NUITSCÔTE DE BEAUNE

Figure 10 : Schéma de topolithoséquences de sols dans les vignobles AOC de la Côte (d'après S. Mériaux, J. Chrétien, P. Vermé et N. Leneuf. Bull. sci. Bourgogne, 1981, t. 34, adapté).

Figure 10 : Pattern of topolithosequences of soil in the AOC vineyards of the Côte (taken from S. Mériaux, J. Chrétien, P. Vermé and N. Leneuf. Bull. sci. Bourgogne. 1981, t. 34. adapted).

After Dijon, and before moving on to Alsace, you can take a trip to discover the Champlitte wines in Franche-Comté, which surprisingly are not very widely known.

d. L'Alsace

It is geography which has created such a close link between the history of Alsace wine and that of a town like Colmar. Colmar is at the heart of the Alsace vineyards, close by the foothills of the Vosges.

Alsace wine is more than just a run-of-the-mill alcoholic drink; it involves a whole culture which has come down to us. It is a gift of nature involving a lot of intelligent work, care and tradition, and it is a real symbol of this region and its towns and villages, so typical and absolutely unique.

In days of old, wine growers and their guild held the reins of power. Wines from throughout the region were taken to Colmar, where they started their journey along the Ill and the Rhine, and in some cases across the sea, to the most distant Flemish, English, Hanseatic and Scandinavian destinations. As a result, the town of Colmar prospered and developed, becoming a major center of trade and culture. This town, typically Alsacian and the Ecomusée at Ungersheim should not be missed before you continue northwards.

Many different varieties of vines are found along Alsace's famous wine route (figures 11, 12, 13 and 14). You can explore Alsace off the beaten track: the Alsace wine route² takes you through the heart of the vineyards, where there are 18 wine trails³ enabling you to discover the Alsace of today, either at grape-picking time or in the summer. Among the vines, marked out by informative notices, each wine trail is intended to show the visitor the nature of the soil and subsoil, the work of the wine grower, the types of Alsace wine and the differences between each variety of vine. It is true that the great range of varieties planted in Alsace over the centuries stems from the great diversity of soils, sometimes even within a single plot of vines.

Not to be missed, in the heart of the vineyards, and only a few kilometers away from Colmar, is the famous castle at Kientzheim, the headquarters of the Confrérie Saint-Etienne, once home to Baron Lazare de Schwendi and now containing a museum of Alsace vineyards and wines. This museum does much more than simply bear witness to the history of the specific wine-growing and wine-making skills of Alsace: it is an open window on all the generations of wine growers who have devoted themselves to earning Alsace wine its noble rank and giving it its attractive personality.

²See the annual guide to the vineyards of Alsace and the numerous leaflets issued by the Tourist Office.

³ Soultzmatt, Westhalten, Pfaffenheim, Eguisheim, Turkheim, Bannwihr/Mittelwihr/Beblenheim/Zellenberg/Riquewihr/Hunawihr (trail linking several villages) Bergheim, Scherwiller, Dambach-la-Ville, Epfig, Mittelbergheim, Barr, Obernai, Dorlisheim, Traenheim, Dahlenheim, Marlenheim and Molsheim.

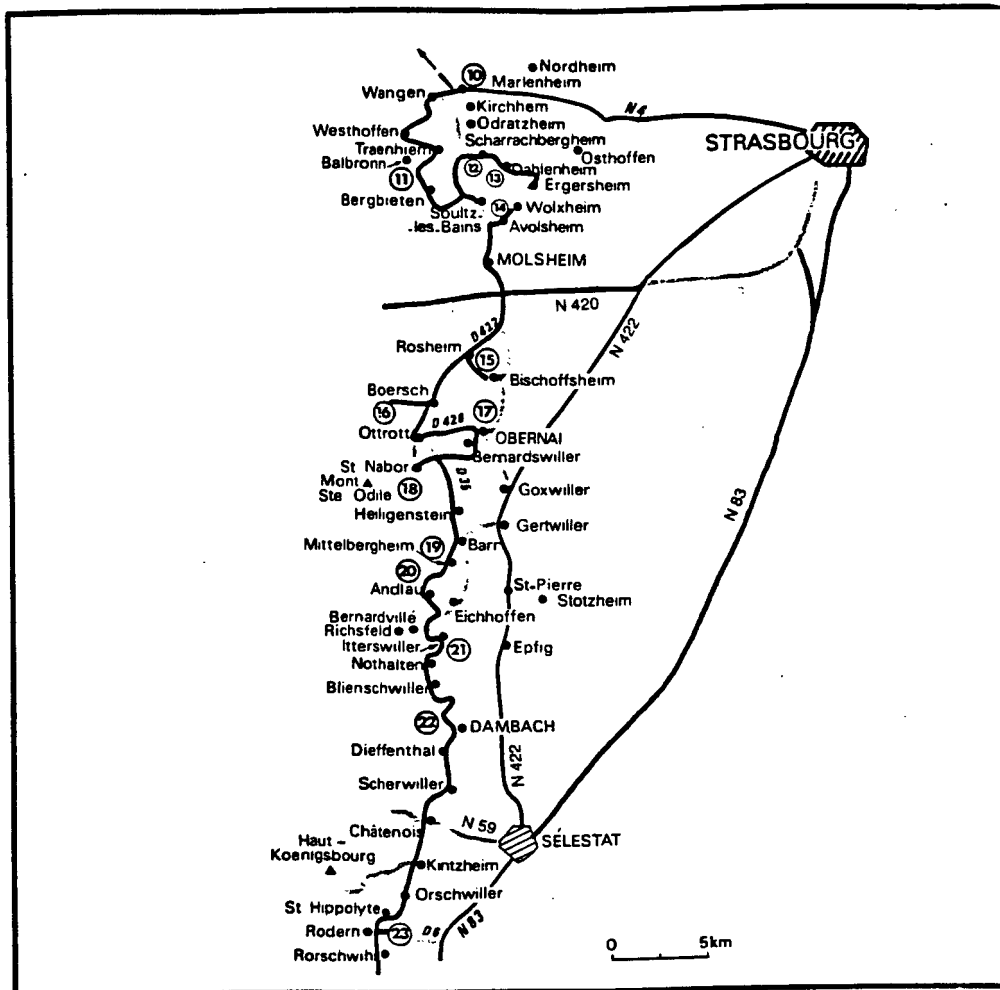


Figure 11 : Route in Alsace : The Lower Rhine.

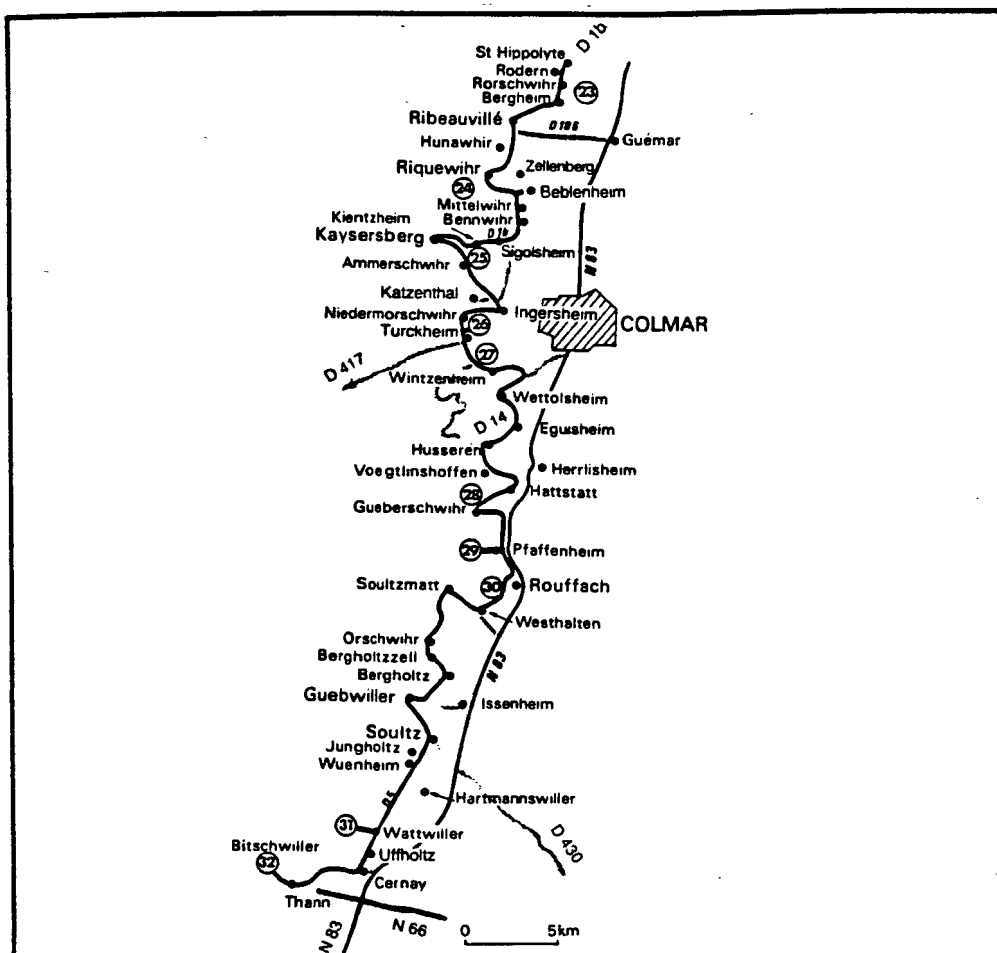


Figure 12 : Route in Alsace : The Upper Rhine.

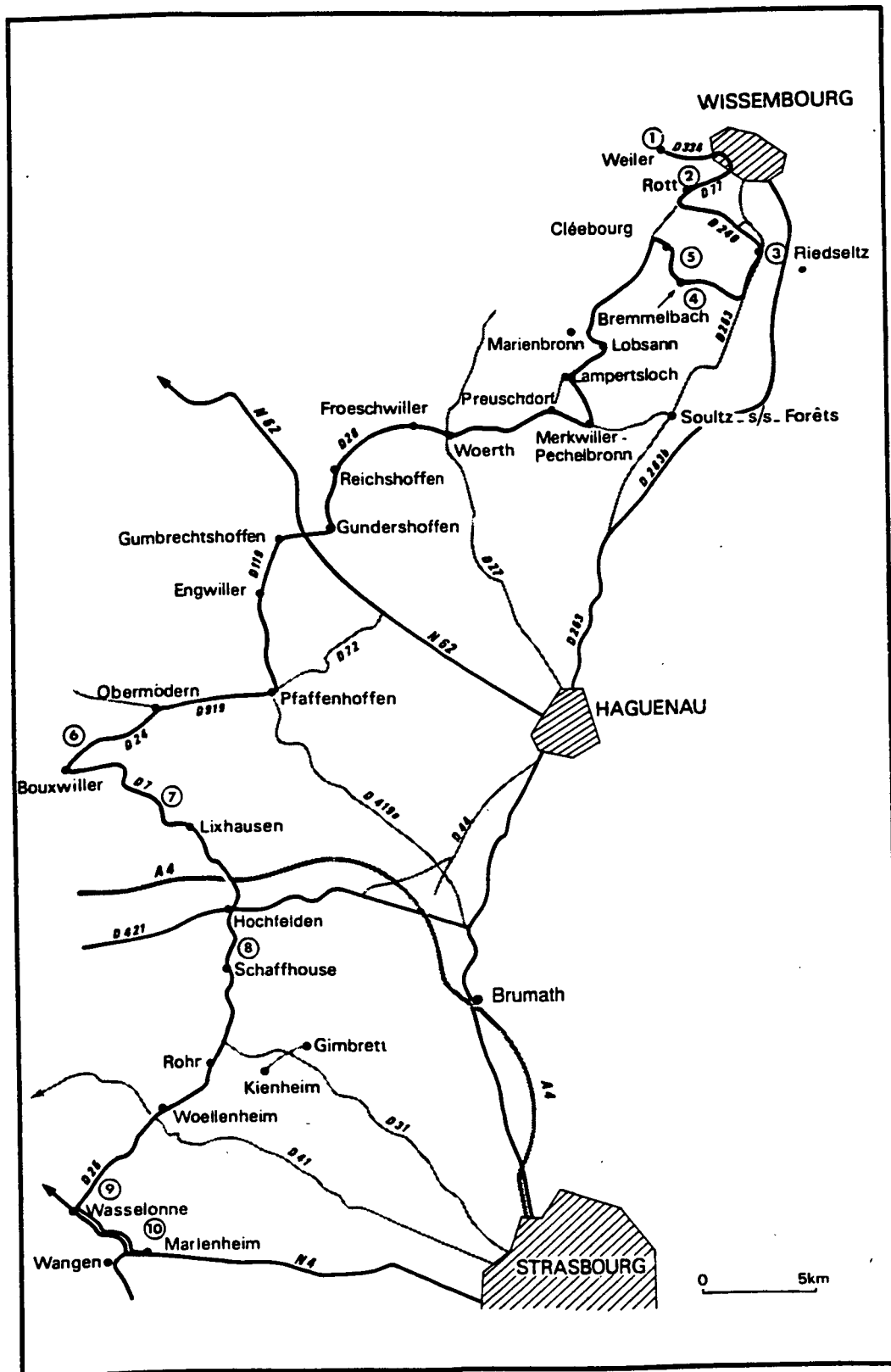


Figure 13 : From Marlenheim to Wissembourg.



Figure 14 : Location of the wine trails of Alsace.

B. An extension into Switzerland

An alternative route from Lyons takes you further along the Rhône towards Switzerland, in search of the vineyards of the Jura. To reach the wine-growing area, you have to take the road from Geneva to Meximieux, from where you climb to the medieval village of Pérouges (1). Here you can already taste the wines of Bugey, in the caveau St. Vincent. These wines differ fairly widely from place to place because of the variety of geological substrata, but also as a result of the variety of vines grown, their exposure, the wine-making process used, the nature of the soil and the slope. The vineyards are very scattered, so it is difficult to specify a route to follow to include the tens of towns and villages involved.

One possibility, still following the course of the river, is to go into Switzerland, to explore the Swiss vineyards and their history. They are found mainly along the banks of Lake Geneva, Lake Neuchâtel and Lake Zurich, as well as in the cantons of Valais and Ticino.

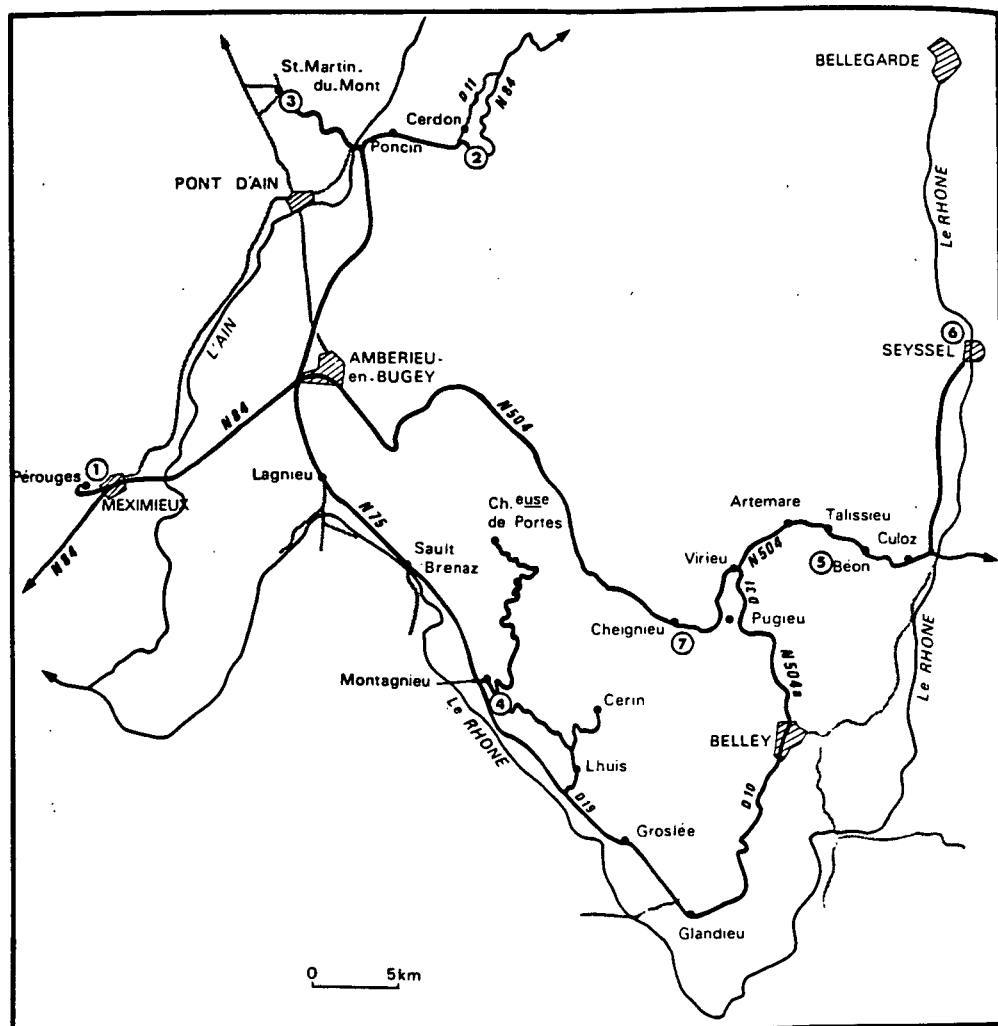


Figure 15 : Route in the Jura.

C. Germany

Here again the easiest way of visiting the wine-growing regions is to follow the course of the Rhine and its tributaries, the Ahr, Moselle, Main and Neckar. All the vineyards are actually on the slopes above the riverbanks. German wines are well-known for being produced from a wide range of grape varieties. Every wine grower is proud of the way in which he cultivates his wine allowing for the nature of the soil and climate. In Germany, too, you can find short trails enabling you to explore specific features of the vineyards.

Mainz is the first stop on the historical route along the Rhine valley. Between Mainz and Cologne the river winds between hills dotted with narrow spires and gilded weather vanes. Model villages perch on the slopes among the geometric patterns of terraced vineyards. German poets have sung the praises of this area, describing it as paradise on earth.

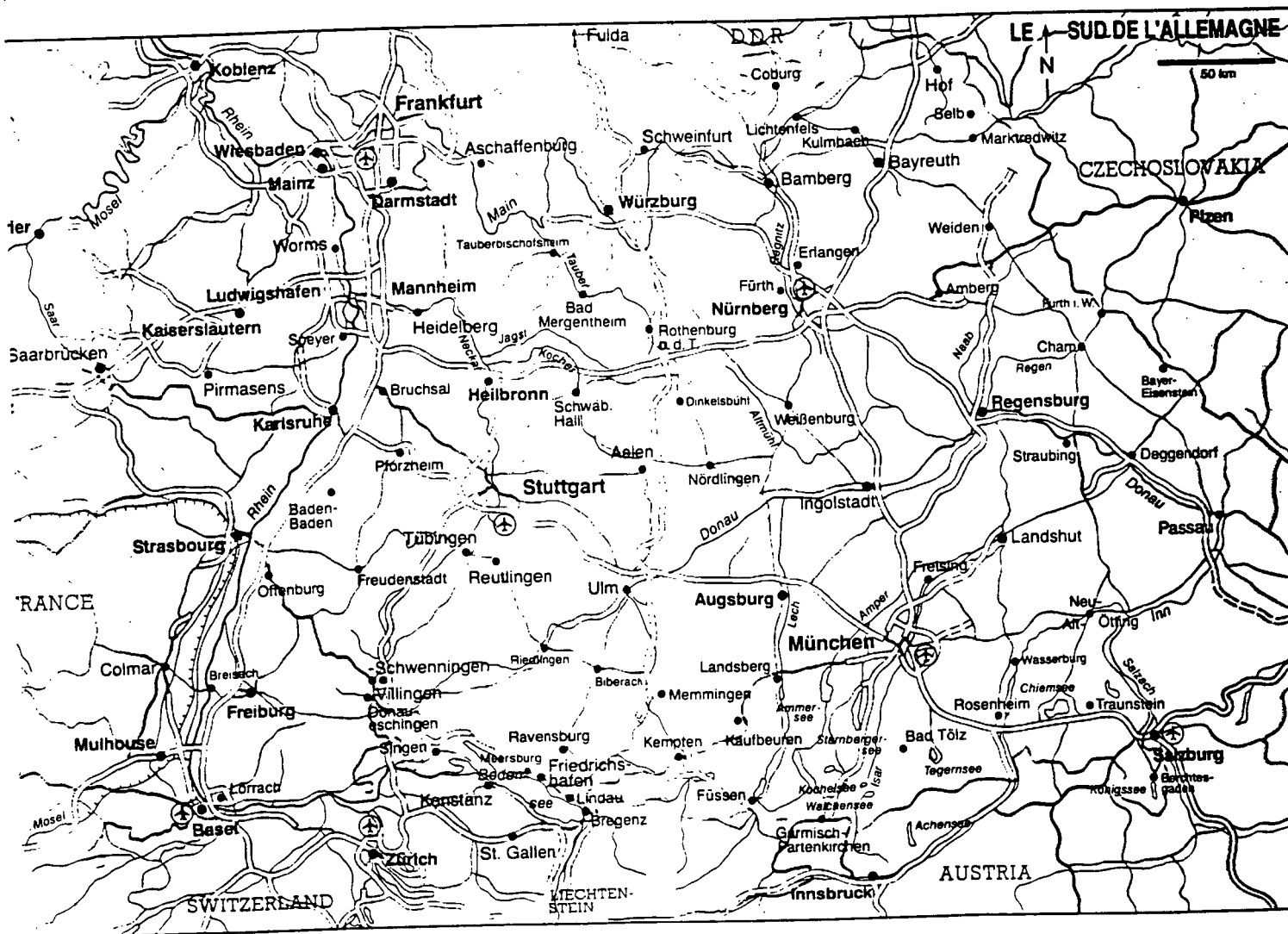


Figure 16 : Southern Germany

Before exploring this splendid region, however, you are strongly advised to make a detour along the Main towards Würzburg, a well-known Baroque city which is still known as the town of bishops and wine. A trip on one of the Neckar company's boats will take you to small picturesque towns, mysterious castles high above the river and a host of artistic and architectural jewels. In the Mittelfranken region in which Würzburg is situated, wonderful wooden buildings are to be found in the small towns perched on the banks of the Neckar and the Main, not yet, overrun by tourists.

Returning to Mainz, you have two options: you can take the steamer down the Rhine to Cologne or the B42 road. The road, runs alongside the Rhine and the terraced vineyards which rise to the foothills of the Taunus.

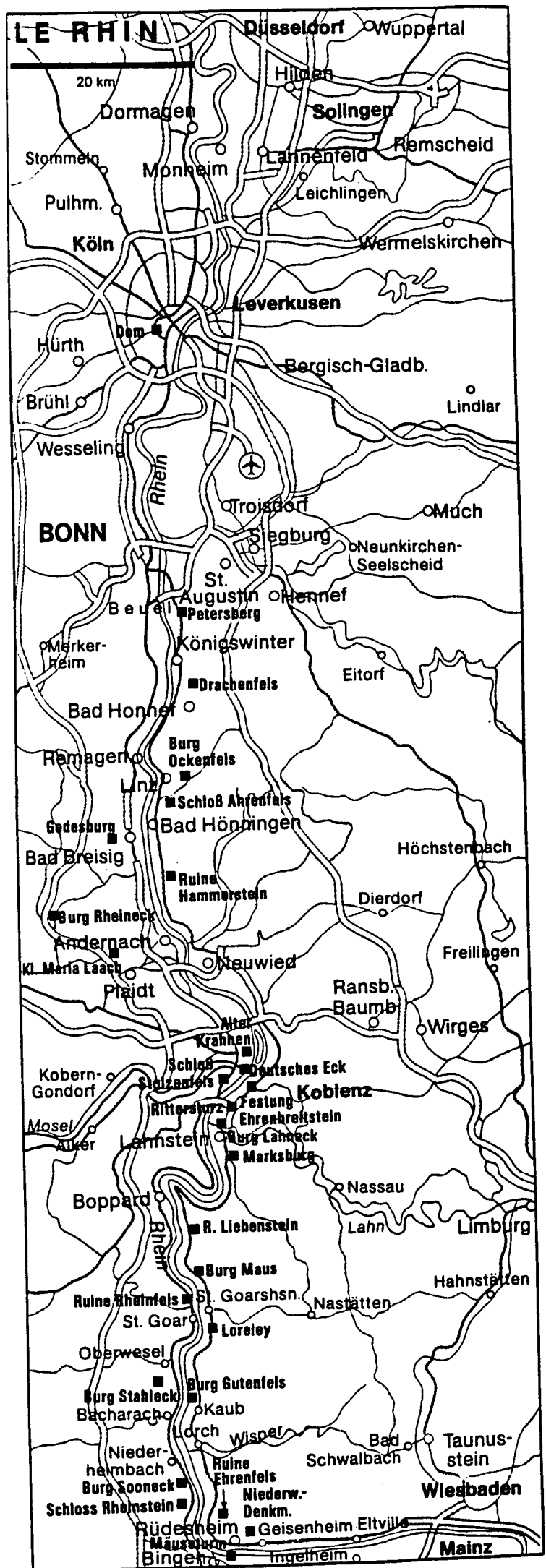
The first stop is Ettville, which has one of the most beautiful walks along the banks of the Rhine, without any roads or railways to cross. North of Ettville, a road branching off from the B42 takes you to the village of Kiedrich, where you will find the ruins of Scharfenstein castle and the old Eberbach monastery. Founded in 1116 for the Augustine community, the monastery stands on a wooded hill high above the Rhine valley. The monks had a large number of farms and vineyards, cultivated their own vines and produced their own wine, which was then taken to Cologne on boats owned by the community.

In Rüdesheim, you can take a funicular to the hills above the sunlit vineyards, where you can visit the Niederwald Memorial (completed in 1883). The statue of Germania symbolizes the unified Germany of Bismarck. The huge Valkyrie brandishes her sword, representing an era when the clash of arms drowned the voices of the muses in the land of poets and philosophers.

Returning to Rüdesheim, and crossing by ferry to Bingen, you can go to the restaurant in Klopp castle and look out at the Mäuseturm on a rock in the middle of the Rhine.

Going along the next 25 km of the river, you will discover a unique landscape, in which the broad Rhine flows peacefully between steep hills, wooded cliffs, vineyards, ruins and castles.

Figure 17 : North of Mainz.



Just before the town of Assmannshausen, famous for its red wine, you catch sight of the ruins of Ehrenfels, formerly home to the relics and ornaments of Mainz Cathedral. On the river bank opposite the town of Assmannshausen is the Rheinstein. From the left bank the traveller can see the Drachenfels and the outline of Sooneck castle.

There is a ferry which lands near these three castles, from which you can return to Assmannshausen along the right bank, passing through Lorch, which is famous for its wines. If, instead, you go on along the left bank, you come to Bacharach, a very old wine-growing town.

The main monuments in Bacharach are Stahleck castle and, further south, the ruins of the Fürstenberg. The oldest established wine festival on the Rhine takes place here early in October. Further north, the mighty ruin of the Schönbürg (14th century) stands on the left bank above the small town of Oberwesel, the "town of the towers". Oberwesel has managed to preserve fifteen watch towers and its town wall, all medieval.

Not far past Oberwesel, the water flows past seven rocks as the Seven Virgins (Sieben Jungfrauen), transformed into stone to punish them for their prudishness. Surely the most beautiful of them all was the Loreley, a siren seated 132 meters up on her high rock about fifteen kilometers from Kaub.

After the Loreley, the journey along the romantic Rhine continues towards Sankt Goarshausen and, on the opposite bank, Sankt-Goar. You will see three castles: Burg Katz and Burg Maus on the right bank, and Burg Rheinfels on the other side, above Sankt-Goar. A show called "Rhein in Flammen" (The Rhine in Flames) takes place between the two towns every September. Thousands of torches light up the slopes, the castles are floodlit and a large firework display rounds off this spectacular evening, a realization of Appollinaire's lines : "the Rhine is intoxicated where the vines are reflected in it. Flickering, all the gold of the night descends and is mirrored in the water...".

From castle to castle, the journey goes on.

In the town of Boppard, there is a 2.5 km long promenade alongside the Rhine, and it is this area that there are the largest numbers of vineyards in the Rhine valley : the Bopparder Hamm area.

The Rhine starts to meander at Boppard initially by flowing north-west, and then turning first northwards and then eastward at the foot of the mountains of Schistose rock, eventually resuming its northward course just before Braubach. The Marksburg (12th century), which looks like a fairytale castle, towers over this "town of rose wine".

Further on along the right bank stands the famous inn, the "Wirtshaus an der Lahn", which Goethe used to frequent. There is a magnificent view from Lahneck castle (12th century) of the Lahn, Rhine and the castle of Stolzenfels, built between 1836 and 1846 on a 95-meter high rock.

Taking the funicular from Koblenz to Ehrenbreitstein, you can see the Deutsches Eck, where the Rhine meets the Moselle. There are several museums in the former fortress, the most interesting one being of which is the Rhine museum. Returning to the B42, you will find above Pfaffendorf bridge the famous wine-growing village, built in 1925, with its vineyards and half-timbered houses.

From Koblenz you can, if you wish, explore the meanders of the Moselle. Tourist offices, village authorities and vineyard and tavern owners hold a good many events on the wine theme. There are eight different trails for exploring the vineyards; seminars are held for connoisseurs. There is a wine festival almost every Sunday from April to November. You can even spend your holidays in a wine grower's house.

Following the Rhine again after our trip into the Moselle valley, we head for Cologne. The landscape changes drastically at Neuwied, where we enter the world of the Siegfried legend and the dragon's lair.

After Neuwied, the visitor should stop at Leutesdorf, a fine wine-growing village on the other bank of the Rhine, towards Andernach. If you walk among the old half-timbered houses surrounding the 14th century parish church, you will come across one of the taverns known as "Strausswirtschaften", where you can try the owner's wine and learn something about the origins of wine.

Before exploring the Siebengebirge massif (an area which holds a Council of Europe diploma and is worth visiting) the visitor should stop at Andernach, known to the Romans as Autunnacum, and, further on, at Maria Laach abbey, one of the best-known monuments in the Rhineland, up in the Eifel hills, a highly impressive volcanic area. The austere beauty of this chain of hills, the highest of which reach about 600 meters, draws tourists from throughout the world. The Benedictine monastery built around the abbey church (1093-1220) is one of the best-known Romanesque buildings in Germany, and the monks will give you an exceptionally warm welcome. Above the village of Hammerstein you can see the ruins of Hammerstein Ley, a 10th century castle.

From the Kaisersberg, in Linz, there is a magnificent view over the river, the Eifel hills and the Ahr valley, but also to be discovered are the watch towers, the late Gothic town hall and, in particular, the excellent local wines.

Then the main road continues northwards across the Siebengebirge massif (the Seven Hills), the most famous part of which is the Drachenfels (the Dragon's Rock), a 12th century ruin at an altitude of 315 meters. This is where Siegfried, the hero of the Nibelungen legend, is said to have killed the dragon and bathed in its blood, making him invulnerable. According to another legend, the Seven Hills were created by seven giants who were digging a channel for the Rhine, and who, when they had finished their work, left behind seven piles of earth.

The city of Bonn, where Beethoven was born, is worth a visit, taking you back to olden times as you walk through the old city, and you can also visit Beethoven's house, which was made into a museum in 1889 and is now the largest Beethoven museum in the world.

The most spectacular approach to the episcopal city of Cologne is by rail. The train crosses the impressive Hohenzollern bridge, giving a grandiose view of the banks of the Rhine, lined with colorful houses with high, pointed gables, and above them the spires of the cathedral.

When the train stops, you are barely 200 meters from the cathedral's main door. The cathedral is built in most perfect Gothic style and contain one of the world's richest collections of relics, bishops' vestments, ivory ornaments and manuscripts.

After Cologne, the Rhine flows on to the Netherlands, but through a landscape which is no longer the same. This is the Ruhr region, famous for the quality of its beer, but even more so for being the most extensive industrialized region of Europe.

It would be worth creating a route through the Ruhr region centered on the theme of "industry and environment", involving industrialists.

3. Partners

At this stage of the project, it is difficult to identify future partners. However, it can be said that the individuals and bodies so far asked to help with the project have all given positive replies.

A provisional list is given below of partners likely to co-operate on this plan for a "Vineyards and Rivers" route:

- town councils,
- departmental councils,
- regional councils,
- tourist offices,
- chambers of agriculture,
- motorway operators,
- museums and ecomuseums,
- associations of wine growers, cellar operators,
- the Alsace wine information center,
- tourist information offices,
- associations,
- the Mutualité Sociale Agricole and Crédit Agricole,
- Gîtes de France, hotel chains,
- nature parks, regional parks, national parks,
- the areas through which the route runs which hold Council of Europe diplomas,
- the French Rambling Federation (FFRP),
- European Communities ...

In Germany, the same kind of partners will also be involved: tourist offices, the German Länder, town councils, etc.

4. Notes:

1. The route described above could, of course, be expanded to include many other trails, sites, monuments, localities, etc. These are so numerous that we could not have described and listed them all. If this theme is selected, it will be possible to add to the route in this way in conjunction with the local partners at the stage preceding the actual creation of the route. However, an effort must always be made to highlight local assets, existing trails and present infrastructure, and to use the human potential available on the ground.
2. While this example of a route was being prepared, a questionnaire covering, inter alia, the selection of routes to be created was drawn up and sent to the institutions involved, associations and all those individuals likely to be interested in a project of this kind and to give it their support. The findings of this survey will be communicated to the Steering Committee (CDPE).

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL ROUTES

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROUTE : "Discovering the environment along the waterways : from the Mediterranean to the North Sea".
(Rhine - Doubs - Saône - Rhône)

- ① : Provence route.
- ② : Route in the southern Côtes du Rhône area.
- ③ : From Grignan to Chateau-neuf-du-Pape.
- ④ : Route in the northern Côtes du Rhône area.
- ⑤ : Côte Rôtie and Chateau-Grillet.
- ⑥ : Route in the Beaujolais area.
- ⑦ : The Maconnais area.
- ⑧ : Route in the Chalonnais area.
- ⑨ : Route in the Côte-d'Or area.
- ⑩ : Route in Alsace : The Upper Rhine.
- ⑪ : Route in Alsace : The Lower Rhine.
- ⑫ : From Marlenheim to Wissembourg.
- ⑬ : Route in the Jura.
- ⑭ : Southern Germany
- ⑮ : North of Mainz.

