

# Booked for Travel

Edited by David Butwin



—Courtesy The French Government Tourist Office.

Rouen's seventeenth-century face—an electronic shortcut through the ages.

## Farewell to a Norman Spring

I'VE BEEN GOING on about spring for so long that the faithful must by now be sinking in a sea of azalea and dogwood, but I am not quite through. Having seen the waning spring of Normandy, I shouldn't allow that rare experience to become overgrown and forgotten in the tangle of summer. Never mind that the solstice arrives with the date of this issue. Summer waits.

Those masters of the open road—the Germans who beat their Mercedes-Benzes down the *Autobahn* like a summer cyclone, the Americans who whip all 360 horses along the endless freeways—often shrink from driving the notoriously narrow and circuitous French roadways such as those that wind and bend through the province of Normandy, northwest of Paris. To some would-be motorists, driving in France seems as senseless as riding railroad trains in the United States.

Henri, my Gallic sidekick during a four-day swing through Normandy, ex-

plained it thus: "We have a very poor primary network of roads. Too much traffic, too many accidents. Only now we are getting a decent highway system. You see, for a long time the Government has concentrated on making the railroads good enough so that people would be discouraged from driving. The driver is penalized with high taxes and very expensive gas, about 90 cents a gallon. But our secondary routes, they are well taken care of."

We followed mostly secondary roads (those designated with yellow lines on Michelin maps), and sometimes we branched off onto country lanes, the better to appreciate spring. We rode a frisky little colt of a car, one that might have been blown off the Hollywood Freeway, but which rose to the conquest of the meandering Norman roads.

Most of Normandy is blanketed by rolling grassland, where graze four-and-a-half million Norman cattle. These healthy specimens are responsible for one-quarter of France's meat, milk,

and butter, as well as such universally cherished cheeses as Camembert and Pont-l'Évêque. In spring, the broad green fields are dusted white with apple blossoms and yellow with a plant called colza. I found the apple orchards in the last glory of bloom, about to pass from the "floreale" phase (named for the former eighth month of the First Republic), which runs from April 20 to May 19. Apple blossoms in Normandy evidently come and go as predictably as the tides.

Rouen, a half-morning's drive northwest from Paris, is the capital of upper Normandy. Although the city took a fearful pounding in World War II, its vast art treasures—churches, museums, monuments, and ancient half-timbered buildings—have been well tended. To take it all in is to trace the development of architectural styles from the fourth century. Henri and I executed a series of shortcuts through the ages with the assistance of a curious electronic transmitter rented for 3 francs from the local tourist office. The device, resembling an elephant's tusk, bursts forth with English, French, or German descriptions of Rouen's important sights as the bearer draws within electronic range.

I felt a bit ridiculous standing in the Place du Vieux-Marché holding the white tusk to my ear and listening to a purplish oration on the life and death of Joan of Arc, who was burned there in 1431. But the Rouennais passing nonchalantly through the square obviously were used to the sight. The voice in my ear spoke in the melodramatic tones of a movie-serial narrator. It was as though he were describing not the perils of Joan but of Pauline. "She could have been anyone's daughter . . . the girl next door."

Transfixed, I let the broadcast play through twice. Then as I lowered the transmitter and walked away to seek out the next lecture, a ragged old man, a *clochard*, stepped in my path and began to address me in toothless French. I explained to him, haltingly, that I was eleven years removed from my last French lesson, but he slogged on. Henri bid the man *adieu* and tugged at my arm, but I thought a rapid exit impolite. So I stood in the square and heard what seemed to be an even purpler account of Joan's demise. When he had finished, ending as abruptly as the transmitter but without a musical accompaniment, he held out his left hand and made an eating motion with the right. Now he was talking my language. I gave him a franc. Walking off, I asked Henri if he'd benefited culturally from the spiel. "He talked a lot," said Henri, whose English occasionally slips out of gear, "not to say much."

From Rouen, we struck westward,

twisting in and out of the Seine River Valley toward the English Channel, past herds of cows fat with *contentement*. Henri recalled the campaign launched some time back by Pierre Mendès-France, who was then a representative from the Norman *département* Eure, to encourage all of France to drink more milk and less wine. Mendès-France was not trying to build healthy French bodies twelve ways, according to Henri, he was seeking an outlet for the surplus of milk Normandy had been producing. "I think if he had been from Bordeaux," said Henri, "he would have asked to drink more wine."

Norman weather that afternoon behaved exactly as foretold—fickle, fitful, brooding. One moment the broad sky was hung with a billowing gray canopy, the next moment we were sailing past a sunlit meadow. Just as quickly the canopy would close, then rain in brief torrents. One could sympathize with General Eisenhower and the other architects of Operation Overlord, who had been struggling to plumb this capricious weather exactly twenty-five years before in hopes of invading Hitler's Fortress Europe at the calmest hour.

By now the mass media have saturated us all with coverage of the silver anniversary of D-Day; I've found most of the material simple-minded and trite. Perhaps it has detracted from the meaning of what was performed in Normandy. No matter, I think an American can not visit Normandy without somehow recognizing the awesome feat of the invasion and the tremendous sacrifice of lives—on both sides. Doubtless it is harder for today's young to appreciate it all. I, for example, was about to enter kindergarten in the autumn of 1944. Now, I am something of a World War II buff, but I admit that last month in Normandy, it was difficult for me to grasp the enormity of the event.

One reason, I think, is that the industrious Normands have patched up the damage and desolation so thoroughly that a traveler is hard put to locate the remnants of war. Darryl Zanuck, in a banal televised revisit to Normandy, pointed to some bomb craters still discernible in the Norman landscape, but the fields, the thatched stone houses, and the *bocage* — the thick hedgerows through which the Allies struggled—all look perfectly intact. On velvety green hillsides overlooking the D-Day landing beaches, cows heavy with milk repose in a lush pastoral serenity that appears immemorial.

Most of the stuff that's been turned out on the 25th anniversary would have one believe that a 1969 American



JACK DANIEL'S MILLER checks the grain as it comes to the Hollow, just to make sure he's buying the best.



Our miller meets each grain truck and inspects it by sticking a grain thief deep into the load. If there's any damp grain, he's sure to hit it. Then he checks sample kernels for quality. But he seldom has cause to turn

back a load. The folks we buy from know how particular he is, and so they bring only their best. After a sip of Jack Daniel's, we believe, you'll be glad we have such good friends.

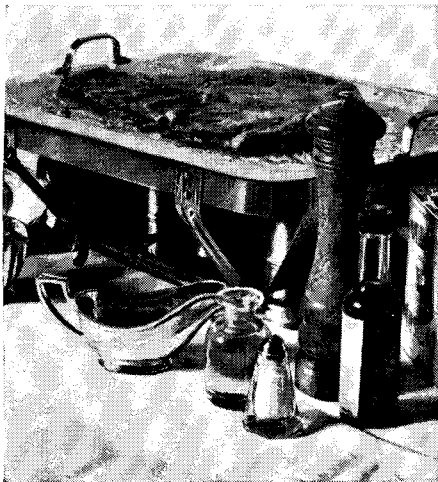


CHARCOAL  
MELLOWED

DROP

BY DROP

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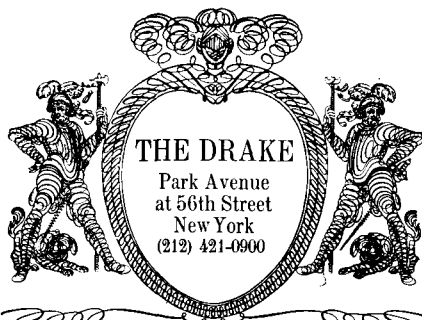
## We serve a very special dish at New York's Drake Hotel.

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It's called Steak Nino and it's one of the many delights served at the Hotel's Drake Room, long one of New York's favorite restaurants.

The Drake Hotel, which has been newly refurbished, centrally air conditioned and completely modernized, is as renowned for the Drake Room and Steak Nino as it is for its new velvet-walled lobby, its big, high-ceilinged rooms, its warmth and personal attention, and its telephone ladies who worry about your messages.

There's never been a secret about the Drake Hotel's fascination for the world's most discriminating travelers. But, until now, our maitre d' would never part with his special steak recipe. We've finally persuaded him to share it. So come to the Drake and try it first hand, and if you like it, we'll tell you how to make it at home.



A Loew's Hotel • Preston Robert Tisch, President

visitor would be welcomed like a returning hero. No doubt the Normands remain grateful for the liberation, but it's also important to remember that the 1944 campaign cost the French many lives and untold property, of which the Normands are so traditionally jealous, and that much of the damage was inflicted by the Allies, who were charged with uprooting the Nazis from positions they had occupied for four years.

Normands, at any rate, are a people not given to emotional demonstration. They are stolid, diligent—a far cry from the gay Parisians. This portrait is evident on the broad, florid faces particularly in Calvados, the seacoast region where much of the heavy fighting took place a quarter of a century ago.

We stopped one morning in Ville-dieu-les-Poêles, a town that got its name in the seventeenth century from the fine copper *poêles*, cooking ware, that the local craftsmen fashioned. It was market day, and the villagers—nearly all of them bearing straw baskets—were swarming in the narrow streets. Many of the shopfronts were festooned with shiny copper pots and pans, and not a few souvenir trinkets. Henri, who had been trying to delineate for me the Norman—or, more particularly, the Calvados—personality, pointed at an old man passing by on the sidewalk. He was wearing the Norman cloth *casquette* on his head and carrying a fat gray rabbit in his basket. "That's the Calvados look, that's it," said Henri, gleeful with his find. "Look now. He will never look you straight

in the eye." True enough, the man went by, his head inclined slightly, his eyes screwed to their corners to catch a glimpse of us as we passed. We waited to catch the Calvados look a half-dozen times before Henri had convinced me it was a life pattern. "The Norman," Henri told me on the way out of town, "will not trust you, unless you prove yourself. And he never shows his sentiment. You will not hear him say yes or no. Only maybe."

I made a special point of getting to Omaha Beach, scene of the costliest D-Day battle. Nearing the beach on a typical in-and-out Norman afternoon, Henri stopped the car at a house to ask directions of a man in the front yard. "*C'est par la?*" I asked, pointing up the road. "*Oui,*" said the man, "thataway." Evidently, I wasn't the first American he'd advised.

There is a sterile stone statue dedicated to the U.S. First Division on the approach to the beach, but no other immediate signs of the Longest Day. The tide was out, the sea flat and purple beneath a bleak sky. The only sounds came from the dull, distant roar of the surf and the chirp of swallows wheeling above the shore. I walked for a while on the broad, deserted beach trying to imagine the havoc of June 6, 1944. Several hundred yards back from the shoreline, a green cliff rises out of the beach. Once it bristled with German bunkers, now it is gently overgrown with grass. I could recall the pictures in the magazines and remember the word impressions by men who had been there, but none of it seemed to fit. —D. B.



"It's just another one of the summer people swinging on our gate."

# The Theater

Henry Hewes

## Summer Repertory Schedule, 1969

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE Geary and Marines' Memorial Theatres, San Francisco, California	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> <i>A Flea in Her Ear</i> <i>The Three Sisters</i> <i>Glory! Hallelujah!</i> <i>The Hostage</i> <i>Little Murders</i> <i>The Promise</i> <i>The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria</i> <i>Room Service</i> <i>In White America</i>	June 1-Aug. 10 in daily rotation Eves. except Mon. Mats.: Thurs., Sun.
AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL THEATRE & ACADEMY Stratford, Connecticut	<i>Henry V</i> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <i>Hamlet</i> (June 17) <i>The Three Sisters</i> (July 11)	June 17-Sept. 14 in daily rotation Eves.: Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat. Mats.: Wed., Thurs., Sat., Sun.
ASOLO STATE THEATER COMPANY Sarasota, Florida	<i>The Lion in Winter</i> <i>Oh, What a Lovely War!</i> <i>Two Gents</i> <i>You Can't Take It With You</i> <i>The Lark</i> (June 20) <i>The Hostage</i> (July 11) <i>Uncle Vanya</i> (Aug. 1)	May 30-Sept. 7 in daily rotation Eves. except Mon. Mats.: Wed., Sat., (Tues. mats added Aug. 5-Sept. 2).
CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Los Gatos, California	<i>Twelfth Night</i> <i>Richard III</i> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>King Lear</i> (July 25) <i>The Vindication of Richard III</i> (Aug. 29)	June 13-Sept. 28 in daily rotation Eves. except Mon. Mats.: Sat., Sun.
CHAMPLAIN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Burlington, Vermont	<i>The Winter's Tale</i> <i>Othello</i> <i>Richard III</i>	July 22-Aug. 30 in daily rotation Eves. except Sun. Mats.: Sat.
COLORADO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Boulder, Colorado	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>Henry VI, Part 3</i>	Aug. 1-Aug. 17 in daily rotation Every evening.
MINNESOTA THEATRE COMPANY Minneapolis, Minnesota	<i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>The Beauty Part</i> (June 27) <i>The Homecoming</i> (July 8) <i>Mourning Becomes Electra</i> (Aug. 19) <i>Uncle Vanya</i> (Oct. 8)	June 26-Dec. 20 in daily rotation Eves. except Sun. Mats.: Wed., Sat.
NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL New York, New York	<i>Peer Gynt</i> <i>Twelfth Night</i>	PG: July 8-Aug. 2 TN: Aug. 6-Aug. 30 Eves. except Mon.
OREGON SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL Ashland, Oregon	<i>The Tempest</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>Twelfth Night</i> <i>King John</i> <i>Virtue in Danger</i> (Aug. 12)	July 19-Sept. 7 in daily rotation Every evening VID: mats. only.
SAN DIEGO NATIONAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL San Diego, California	<i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>A Comedy of Errors</i> <i>Macbeth</i> (July 10)	June 10-Sept. 14 in daily rotation Eves. except Mon. Mats.: Wed., Sat., Sun.
STRATFORD SHAKESPEAREAN FESTIVAL OF CANADA Stratford, Ontario	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>The Alchemist</i> (till Aug. 9) <i>Measure for Measure</i> <i>Tartuffe</i> (July 3)	June 9-Oct. 11 in daily rotation Eves. except Sun. Mats.: Wed., Sat.
STRATFORD FESTIVAL COMPANY (at Avon Theatre) Stratford, Ontario	<i>Satyricon</i> <i>Hadrian VII</i>	S: July 4-Aug. 2 H: Aug. 5-Aug. 30
VICTORIA FAIR Victoria, British Columbia	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>Merchant of Venice</i> <i>Tartuffe</i> (Aug. 5)	July 11-Aug. 30 in daily rotation Eves. except Sun.

## Expansiveness vs. Expensiveness

WHILE THERE WILL be more repertory theaters and festivals than ever this summer, some of these organizations are finding themselves obliged to cut back their programs.

For instance, in New York City the reduction of the city budget necessitated by the failure of the state of New York to appropriate the needed funds will in turn force Joseph Papp to reduce his Central Park productions from the usual three to just two. And he will shorten the playing schedule of the New York Shakespeare Festival's Mobile Theater's African version of Sophocles' *Electra*, which will tour the five boroughs of the city (July 29-Aug. 23, evenings except Monday).

At Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, the unavailability of the required subsidy may force cancellation of Brandeis Interact II, the second international experimental theater festival. Tentatively scheduled from July 16 through August 31 were such groups as Prague's Cinoherni Klub, Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, Minneapolis's Firehouse Theater, and La Mama Plexus from New York.

At Waterford, Connecticut, the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Foundation will retreat to a policy of readings and staged readings of the fourteen new works it will unveil (July 6-Aug. 3).

Finally, the APA (Association of Producing Artists) will have no specific summer residency this summer. Instead Ellis Rabb and key members of his company will be working with the San Diego Shakespeare Festival.

However, the chart on the left does include a new festival commencing at Victoria, British Columbia, this year. Furthermore, young repertory companies are flourishing at Harvard (July 16-Aug. 23), Dartmouth (July 17-Aug. 31), and Cornell (June 26-Aug. 9).

At Lakewood, Ohio (near Cleveland), the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival will start its repertory season on June 27 with *The Would-Be Gentleman* and then add *As You Like It* (July 3), *Macbeth* (July 17), *Candida* (July 31), and *Troilus and Cressida* (Aug. 14). The productions will play in rotation until September 13 every evening except Monday and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons as well.

The Shaw Festival at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (just across the border from Buffalo), will present *The Doctor's Dilemma* (June 23-July 20), *Back to Methuselah-Part 1*, and *Musical Mems by Corno di Bassetto* (July 23-Aug. 3), and *The Guardsman* (Aug. 7-Aug. 31), with performances every evening except Sunday and Monday, plus Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday matinees.