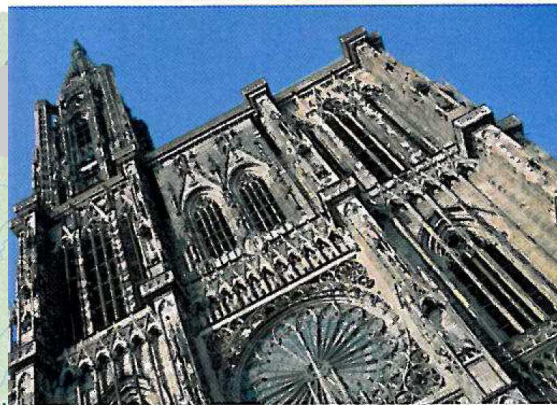
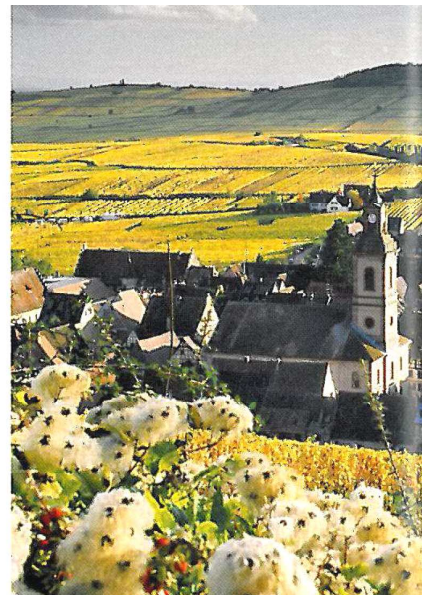


AUTUMN PARADISE

One of *Lonely Planet's* top 10 destinations for 2010, Alsace is a wine lover's idyll. With walking trails set out among the vines, there's no better time to go than during harvest, says **SUE STYLE**



Above: Strasbourg's magnificent, single-spired, pink sandstone Gothic cathedral

d'Or, a golden crown of vineyards west of the city, pausing for a final visit to Domaine Pfister in Dahlenheim, where Melanie Pfister makes award-winning Rieslings and a fragrant, glass-stoppered blend of four noble varieties called Cuvée 8 – she's the eighth generation to make wine at the family domaine.

This approach from the west would deliver you almost to the door of the delicious Hotel-Restaurant Chut in Strasbourg's Petite France quarter – except that driving anywhere in the medieval centre is a lost cause. Abandon the car in the Petite France car park (near the glass/granite Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain) and take instructions from the hotel staff, well used to ushering bewildered visitors to their door.

At this southwestern corner of the city, the river Ill opens up two arms that encircle and embrace the old town. This is the Grande-Ile, the medieval heart of the city, inscribed in its entirety on the UNESCO World Heritage list as a unique example of domestic Rhenish

architecture. You can glide around the island inside a Bateau-Mouche excursion boat with headphones over your ears, but it's a lot more fun to walk the quays that encircle the city at your own pace. That way you can marvel at the town houses that line the river bank, visit the tiny Musée Alsacien on the Quai St-Nicolas and stock up on take-home goodies at the Saturday morning farmer's market on the Place du Marché aux Poissons.

After the press of people milling in and around the magnificent, single-spired, pink sandstone Gothic cathedral, it's good to catch your breath and still your soul in the tiny medieval garden of the Musée de l'Oeuvre next door. And if you've time for one more church, it should be St-Pierre-le-Jeune at the top end of the island, for its fading frescoes and Romanesque cloister.

When you've pounded cobbled streets and overdosed on great museums, exuberant cathedral sculptures and intricately carved timber-framed houses, settle down at L'Atelier du Goût on the rue des Tonneliers. Here, Esther Morabito's dazzling smile and pertinent wine advice together with her husband's sunny cuisine will soon soothe any aches and pains. Sign off with dinner back at Chut, where the chef's great little menu breaks resolutely with the über-touristy Petite France's customary *choucroute/tarte flambée* model and sets off in its own deliciously quirky Mediterranean/Latin American/Asian direction. **D**

Alsace-based Sue Style is a wine, travel and food writer. Her most recent book on the region is Alsace Gastronomique (Conran Octopus)

Strasbourg

After viticulture and vineyard trails, the urban culture of Strasbourg beckons. Forget the motorway, and take the country road through the Couronne

SLEEP, EAT, TASTE

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