

*Thank you
for your inquiry*



Thank you for your inquiry about renting the farmhouse on the Courtomer Estate!

Thank you for the interest you have shown in booking the farmhouse at Chateau de Courtomer. We are often asked what is included in the hire of the Farmhouse and what is there to see and do around so please read on and if you don't find the answers to any questions you may have regarding your stay please give us a call.

SO, WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE FARMHOUSE RENTAL?

Once you have finalised your booking, Heather, our on-site manager, will answer all the questions you have on the lead up to your trip. A few days before you arrive Heather will contact you to explain check-in procedures. Please note that check in is 16:00 or later. **Please note that when you rent the farmhouse, independently of the Chateau, we ask you to respect the privacy of the Chateau guests. Farmhouse guests only have access to the farm yard and the farmhouse and not the Chateau grounds.**

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BRING WITH YOU?

The farmhouse bedrooms are made up with fine quality bed linen and fluffy towels. The farmhouse kitchen is well equipped with all you need for a comfortable stay. The kitchen is also stocked with basic cleaning products, bin liners etc. The fridge will be on, just waiting for you to stock it and if it is chilly the central heating will be on too. The nearest supermarket is 20 minutes away but we have very good local stores in the village and the local markets are wonderful. A list of stores and markets is available in our "Guide to life at the Farmhouse" brochure, a hard copy is on the dining room table in the house for your reference. We will also send you a digital copy a few days prior to your arrival date.

There is an onsite security and maintenance crew. You will often see them working in the grounds during your stay. A blocked drain, a faulty showerhead and Monsieur Lecul, our Head of Maintenance, will be there to sort it out for you. His contact details are in our "Guide to life at the Farmhouse" brochure.

Your rental covers all electricity and gas. We also provide wood so you can enjoy an open fire or a wood barbeque during your stay. Alfresco eating is one of the great pleasures of country life and in addition to the barbeque we also provide patio dining furniture and parasols.



How should you leave the Farmhouse when you leave?

- » Check out is at 11.00, so please organise your departure to take this into account and brief your guests accordingly.

- » The cleaning fee that we charge only covers laundry, making up the bedrooms and cleaning the bedrooms and bathrooms. It does not cover moving furniture back into place, washing up or rubbish removal. Full details of check out procedure will be sent to you before your arrival.

- » We ask all guests to leave the Farmhouse in good order at the time of checkout, and to treat it as they would their own home, throughout their stay. Please leave the kitchen clean and tidy - this includes doing the washing up, putting away all tableware and emptying the fridges. Please remove sheets from beds and fold them up. Towels should be left in the bath/shower.

- » At the end of your stay we will check the property to make sure that all is in good order so that we can return your security deposit promptly.

OUR COVID-19 CANCELLATION POLICY

To reassure our customers regarding future bookings we have updated our cancellation policy until further notice. In the event that travelling is impossible due to Coronavirus (flights cancelled or travel restrictions imposed, to or from your home country or to or from France), we will refund the totality of your rental payment including the reservation deposit if you are obliged to cancel your trip to Normandy.

OUR GENERAL CANCELLATION POLICY IS AS FOLLOWS

If you have to cancel your trip to the Farmhouse up to one month prior to your arrival, we will reimburse the total amount of your rental. After one month, we will reimburse your payment except for the deposit of 500€.

Prices for 2023 and 2024

Our minimum stay in the Farmhouse is three nights. The prices below are for three nights. We are happy to offer two-night stays during November-March inclusive, excluding Xmas, New Year and Easter. The cost for two-night stays will be pro rata of the prices quoted below.

FARMHOUSE 2023

Three nights: 850€ plus a cleaning fee of 150€, each additional night costs 250€/night

FARMHOUSE 2024

Three nights: 900€ plus a cleaning fee of 175€, each additional night costs 275€/night

Discounts and longer stays

A 10% discount is given to returning guests of either the Farmhouse or the Chateau for stays of any length. For stays of more than seven nights please contact Heather for a quote.

PAYMENT METHODS, DEPOSITS AND PAYMENT TERMS

We accept payment by Pay Pal or direct transfer. Please note that we do not accept credit card payments.

Deposit: 500€ to hold your dates. This deposit is refundable for up to one month, from the date of receipt, in case you change your plans.

Full payment: One month before your trip. A refundable security deposit of 500€ will be added to your final invoice. It will be returned to you within 15 days of your departure, provided that the Farmhouse is left in the good order in which you found it.

What is there to see and do locally?

HISTORIC TOWNS, MUSEUMS AND MARKETS

Not all of Normandy's battles took place on the beaches. Just 35 minutes from Courtomer, in the exact location occupied by the [Memorial of Mont Ormel](#), one of the deciding battles of WWII took place. [The Civilian museum](#) and [William the Conqueror's castle](#) in Falaise are just nearby.

[Mortagne-au-Perche](#) hosts one of the best markets in the area every Saturday morning. If you love [organic produce](#) this is the place to go! The town is the gateway to the Perche which is rapidly gaining a reputation for it's local produce. To understand more about the area, its history and producers take a visit to the [Maison du Parc](#). The information centre explains the history, way of life in the area and gives details of local producers that you can visit.

The lovely old town of [Bellême](#) (market day Thursday) lies at the centre of the Perche and is home to a range of craft and antique shops. Next door to Bellême is [La Perrière](#) and its elegant antique shop which also serves delicious meals, [Maison D'Horbe](#).

A FEAST FOR YOUR SENSES

Just north of the Chateau lies the Pays D'Auge an area of France famous for its cheeses, cider, Calvados and half-timbered houses.

The village of [Camembert](#) has a museum that explains the history of the cheese and from here you can drive on to Livarot and stop off at the [Graindorge Cheese Village](#) which has an excellent visitors centre and runs guided tours and tastings.

[The Cider Route](#) is a well-marked trail that leads you around the Normandy countryside passed producers which welcome visits from the public. We recommend [Maison Huet](#), they run tours in English and are very friendly.

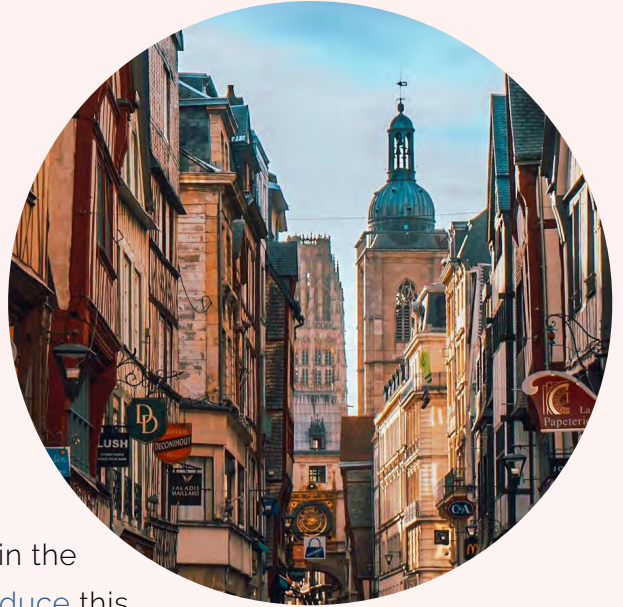
[Beuvron-en-Auge](#) is justifiably classified as one of France's most beautiful villages. It's a great place to shop, and of course, eat.

THRILLS AND SPILLS

The [Le Mans 24 Hour circuit](#) is a short drive from the Chateau and 2023 marks the Centenary of the race. If you like motor sports the Chateau is an ideal base and the circuit also hosts a number of other races throughout the year.

Step inside the world of Porsche at [Porsche Experience Centre](#).

Go Karting at [Ouest Karting](#), next door to the Chateau. When International competitions aren't being staged there, you can take to the track yourself.





GREAT GARDENS OF NORMANDY

[Normandy is a haven for gardens](#) from classical and grand to intimate and surprising. Most gardens are open weekdays between May and September. [Saint-Céneri-le-Gérei](#) is classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France and is well worth a visit. Just next door is the acclaimed garden "[Les Jardins de la Mansonnière](#)". [Les Jardins de Pays D'Auge](#) in Cambremer is classified as one of France's "Jardin Remarquable".

ALL THINGS EQUINE

Normandy is one of the main horse breeding areas of France, so if you love horses there are a variety of options. If you fancy a flutter the local racecourses run regular events throughout the year.

[Carriage](#) driving in the Perche... What better way to explore the forests or local villages than in a horse drawn carriage?

The renowned stud, [Le Haras du Pin](#) was built on the orders of The Sun King and now houses a permanent exhibition which explains the role that horses have played in French life through the ages. The stud also hosts international competitions throughout the year.

GOLF COURSES GALORE!

The course at Étretat is very beautiful and the one at Bellême is very near. Whatever your level, Normandy has 26 [golf courses](#) to choose from.

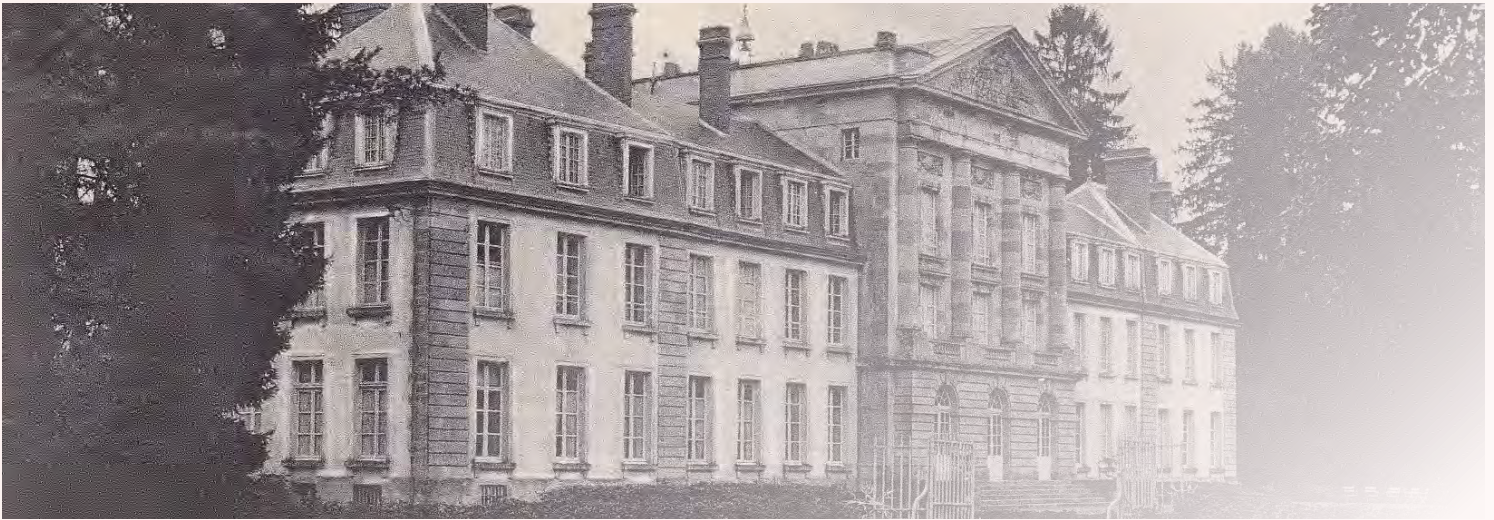
FAMILY FUN AROUND THE CHATEAU

The swimming lake at [Soligny-La-Trappe](#) is just 20 minutes from the Chateau in the heart of an ancient pine forest.

[What to do in the Orne...](#) A good website which gives details of all activities and attractions in the area. Regularly updated and accurate.

FURTHER A FIELD, BUT AT LESS THAN TWO HOURS FROM THE CHATEAU

If you would like to plan day trips to the sites which Normandy is famous for; the WWII landing beaches, Mont Saint Michel, Monet's garden at Giverny, Bayeux and Lisieux are all within easy reach of the Chateau. If you prefer guided tours we recommend that you contact [Dominique Eudier](#). Dominique is based locally and her knowledge of Normandy is encyclopaedic. Dominique is very popular, so we recommend that you contact her well in advance.



History of the Chateau

Chateau de Courtomer, seen above in an engraving of 1861, is set in a gentle valley amid the green hills of the Orne, a department of Normandy in western France. This was the seat of a powerful family of Norman noblemen from the 11th century until the beginning of the 20th century – almost a thousand years of stability amid the centuries of creative destruction that shaped modern France, through social and economic upheaval and transformation, revolution and war.

The earliest remains of human occupation found in the area date back about 100 000 years. Celtic tribes settled, the Romans conquered, the barbarian Franks swept through...and they all left their mark in this fertile, outwardly peaceful area. Before it was Normandy, the region was part of the vast Roman province of Gallia Lugdunensis. When Rome fell and the Franks conquered Gaul, Normandy became part of the Kingdom of the West Franks. When the Merovingian kings, descendants of King Clovis of the Franks, gave way to the new dynasty of Charlemagne, it merged into the new Carolingian kingdom of France.

VIKING RAIDERS

The first Chateau de Courtomer was a fortress, a stronghold in a countryside that had suffered from civil war between rival factions of Frankish noblemen and 200 years of Viking raids. These fierce men from the North spent the summers sailing back and forth between the English and French coasts, looting abbeys and pillaging rich farms. But when they had rowed up the Seine and besieged Paris once too often, the French king Charles the Simple made a deal. In return for peace, he gave them land. That was in 911. The Norsemen soon settled in France where they intermarried with local families, converted to Christianity and founded new aristocratic dynasties. They gave their name to Normandy.

By the year 1050, the Norman seigneurs of Courtomer had made a name for themselves in local lore. They had allied themselves closely with their powerful neighbors, the dukes of Alençon. They had fought in the crusades. And one of them married a daughter of the Count of Tancarville -- from whom my husband William Bonner and our children are descended! (Today, the only reminder of the Tancarville name in France is a ruined fortress and a bridge over the Seine River. The family followed William the Conqueror to England in 1066. Their descendants today are the Tankervilles in England and the United States.)

Of course, placating the Normans only worked for a short time. The duchy of Normandy became a center of conflict as soon as its duke conquered England in 1066. At one time, the new English kings actually held more territory in France than their French rivals. The 100 Years War spanned the mid-14th and 15th centuries, as the kings of France and the Norman kings of England fought for control. Not far from Courtomer, in Moulins le Marche, you can still see traces of the immense "Fossés le Roi" an earthwork wall and ditch separating the duchy of Normandy and the comté de Perche, whose counts were loyal to the king of France.

WAR OR RELIGION

The Chateau de Courtomer would remain an important defensive center until the end of the 100 Years War and the beginning of a period of peace and growth. That is, until the Protestant Reform ushered in another period of violent conflict. Protestantism was widespread in Normandy by the 1530s, protected by the king's sister, Marguerite of Angouleme. This fascinating woman of letters -- "heart of a man in a woman's body, with the face of an angel" as a contemporary put it, held court in her husband's duchy of Alençon. The barons of Courtomer, like many independent-minded noblemen, converted to Protestantism. In the temple on their lands, the family was baptized, married, and buried. "Paris is worth a mass."

The Protestant king converted to Roman Catholicism, ending the war and instituting a long period of civil peace and enforced religious tolerance. The nobles who had supported the new Henri IV found their fortunes greatly enhanced. The baron of Courtomer, Artus de Saint-Simon, was granted a marquisate. The title was recognition not only of important military service, but also of large territorial holdings. When you look out from the windows of Courtomer, all the land you see today was once Courtomer land. By the 1600s, the medieval chateau was beginning to crumble. Times had changed. It was no longer necessary to maintain thick walls and towers to fend off robbers and invading armies.

LANDED WEALTH AND POWER

Land was the source of the Marquis de Courtomer's wealth and power. He held thousands of acres of farmland, owned monopolies on mills and communal ovens, controlled and enforced justice in the jurisdiction of his domains. The seigneurs of Courtomer ran a school and took a prominent role in church affairs. And there were a multitude of sources of income connected to ownership of the land besides rents. By the "droit de massacre," for instance, the Marquis de Courtomer had a right to the tongues of all the sheep and cattle butchered during a certain period of the year. And what the family could not eat, they sold! Then as now, tongue is a delicacy in France.

As French nobles, the seigneurs of Courtomer were exempt from most taxes. But they owed the "tax of blood." They paid heavily during the wars of the 17th century, serving Henri IV's son, Louis XIII, in Germany, Italy, and Spain. They fought, too, with Henri's grandson Louis XIV the Sun King. It was during Louis XIV's reign that the modern-day borders of France were established, pushing the kingdom north into the former Spanish Netherlands, east into Germany and the Alps, and south to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean.

It was also during the reign of Louis XIV that the seigneurs of Courtomer abandoned their Protestant faith. Louis the Sun King, and many Frenchmen tired of civil war, held to the theory of the absolute power of kings. That power was based on the concept of an inherited, divinely appointed right. And it meant France must have "one king, one law, one faith" (un roi, une loi, une foi). There was no room in France for two forms of Christian worship. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had granted religious tolerance and protected Protestants, sent thousands of Huguenots fleeing across the borders of France. High position or wealth was no protection.

The marquis of Courtomer's Protestant uncle, the powerful Duc de La Force, went to prison. His wife was forced into a convent. The Courtomer family quickly converted back to Roman Catholicism. The temple became a dairy. It is one of the rare Protestant temples to have survived the king's vigorous imposition of Roman Catholicism. Most Protestant temples were razed to the ground. But the seigneurs of Courtomer had served the ancestors of Louis XIV well. The temple was also a place of burial for warriors who fallen in battles for the king – war with Spain under Louis XIII, war with the Netherlands under Louis XIV had taken their toll. By the end of the 17th century, in fact, not a single adult male was left alive.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAL

The medieval Chateau was finally torn down in the 18th century. (Although the Protestant temple still stands.) The family, in a new period of prosperity brought about by the good sense and economical management of the widowed Marquise de Courtomer, began anew. The vaulted cellars in the present Chateau are all that remain intact from the medieval foundations. In place of the tough medieval defensive fortress, the new Chateau de Courtomer rose as a superb example of 18th century ideals expressed in building. Its classical style and symmetry represent harmony and balance. The chateau is grand, but simple in its form, typical of the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment's admiration for the pure ideals of the early Roman republic. The Chateau celebrates light, which pours into its windows on every side.

As you may know, Chateau de Courtomer was one of the last grand French Chateaux built in the 18th century. It was constructed from 1787 to 1789, the eve of the French Revolution. Although it represents the Enlightenment ideals that formed the ideological basis of the Revolution, Courtomer is also a monument to the Ancien Régime, a way of life and a system of privilege that ended conclusively with the execution of the French king Louis XVI in 1793.

The Marquis and his wife and mother-in-law almost met the same fate during the Great Terror and its wave of executions. But after several months in prison, they survived to return to Courtomer – and to take part in rebuilding post-Revolutionary France. With the end of the revolutionary period and the rise of Napoleon after 1800, the family was once again firmly established in the corridors of power. The Marquis became chamberlain to the Empress Marie-Louise, Napoleon's second wife. It was an honorary position meant valuable access to the powerful political figures of the day.



WORDS NOT WAR

The course of the 19th-century saw the Saint Simon family turn from war to literature...in a manner of speaking! The orphaned Leontine de Saint Simon, heir to the last Marquis of Courtomer, married Astolphe, Marquis de Custine. His mother Delphine de Custine was a famous beauty whose father-in-law and husband had been guillotined during the Terror. Francois-René de Chateaubriand, man of letters, novelist, critic of the Revolution, was her lover. Some said he was Astolphe's father. Be that as it may, he was the godfather of Leontine and Astolphe's son Enguerrand.

This last direct descendent of the Saint Simon family died at the age of three, and is buried between his mother and grandmother. Courtomer was inherited by the next heir, who married into the family of the Turenne d'Aynac. In 1905, the Chateau was sold. It was purchased by a neighbor and distant relative, the vicomtesse de Brimont and her husband, the comte de Pelet.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER...

The Bonner family purchased the Chateau de Courtomer in 2005. It serves again as a family gathering place- and also as an annual conference center for the Bonner publishing company.

FOR MORE QUESTIONS PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL OUR TEAM AT

info@chateaucourtomer.com

+33 (0)6 49 12 87 98

OUR WEBSITE IS FULL OF INFORMATION AS WELL AT

www.chateaucourtomer.com