



# REFLECTIONS

## KOBLENZ, GERMANY



### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

#### KOBLENZ: ITS TRIUMPHS AND TRIBULATIONS

Located near the French border just a short distance from Cologne and Bonn, Koblenz traces its roots back over 2000 years to the first Roman emperor Augustus Caesar. It was during his reign in 9 BC that the much-heralded Roman general Nero Claudius Drusus built a fort to protect the bridges over the Rhine River. The fortress was positioned strategically at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers, and eventually became known as *Confluentes*. *Confluentes* of course means confluence or 'merging of rivers' — aka Koblenz in German.

The first two bridges were built by Julius Caesar and his legionaries in 55 and 53 BC during the Gallic Wars. Leave it to the Romans to turn a military defense strategy into an architectural highlight. Caesar completed the first bridge in only ten days, and both are considered masterpieces of military engineering, although few traces remain today.

The city's location in the mid-Rhine region has proven to be both its strong suit and its undoing. The bridges helped the town become a prosperous center of the wine trade. But over the centuries, Koblenz, with its strategic location, was coveted by a succession of invaders, bouncing back and forth among marauding states like a ping pong ball. With the fall of the Western Roman Empire, it was conquered by the Franks, and later by the Swedish Invasion of the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War. It was occupied by the French during the Revolutionary War, by the Russians during the Napoleonic Wars, and then turned over to Prussia in 1822 — only to be bombed into a state of abject submission during World War II. In fact, the town changed hands so often that some generations changed their nationality multiple times.

### THE VINTAGE ROOM

A unique concept in wining and dining.

Located forward by the Palm Court, The Vintage Room was created to promote wine education and the vast range of fine wine selections offered onboard.

In addition to occasional daytime wine tastings and discussions, guests may experience a variety of wine "themed" lunches and dinners during the cruise.

By special arrangement with the Sommelier, private parties of up to 10 can be arranged for an exclusive Vintage Room lunch or dinner. Crystal Executive Chef pairs a selection of special culinary creations along with specially selected wines. During the meal, our expert Sommelier shares his knowledge and explains the unique properties of the vintages with the various food courses presented.

If you wish to enjoy Vintage Room experience, please contact our Restaurant Manager or Sommelier who are happy to assist you.

### BARS & LOUNGES

Children under the age of 18 years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian when attending public bars on board Crystal.

Guests must be at least 18 years old to be served wine and beer, and at least 21 years old to be served spirits.

### WATERSIDE RESTAURANT

Waterside, Crystal main restaurant, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and is inspired by the latest innovations in food science and the local places we visit.

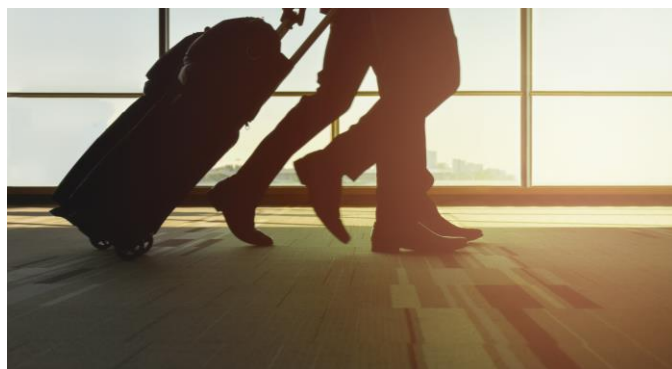
## ROMANTIC LANES, PICTURESQUE COURTYARDS, COZY SQUARES

The old town has much to offer anyone who is interested in culture and history. Its charming alleys and squares with their historic monuments and buildings beg to be explored, and in the wine tasting rooms of restaurants, varied vintages can be tasted from the vineyards along the Moselle and Rhine rivers.

History buffs should begin at Münzplatz Square, where the Romans first founded their castellum apud confluentes (fort at the confluence). From there, you can stroll through the atmospheric streets between the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) and the St. Castor Basilica — and make sure you don't miss the charming Schängelbrunnen fountain in the Town Square. The bronze statue of a small boy spitting at intervals is the icon of Koblenz. The boy stands on a column in an octagonal fountain basin with reliefs of playing boys and mischievous young rascals: a boy smoking, firing peashooters at birds or thumbing his nose at an old lady and her dog, for example. The term "schängel" is rooted during the years of French occupation and was primarily used to indicate children with a German mother and a French father. Back then in France, the most common name for a boy was 'Jean,' which was difficult to pronounce in German, thus ending up as 'Schäng' in the local dialect, which morphed into Schängel (initially considered as an insult). However, nowadays it's become an honorific title, and every person born in Koblenz is proud to call him- or herself a Schängel.

For a more elevated view of the city, you can hover over the Rhine River in a cable car on your way up to the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, where the views are even more fantastic. The second largest preserved fortress in Europe, Ehrenbreitstein, at 400 feet above the Rhine River, proved indestructible to all but Napoleonic troops, who levelled it in 1801 (although the Prussians rebuilt it a few years later).

Another celestial spectacle is the annual **Rhein in Flammen** (Rhine in Flames) festival in August, a firework bonanza when a kaleidoscope of lights erupts above the river and lights up the entire Rhine Valley in a magical glow. Or if you're lucky enough to visit Koblenz around the holidays, you can stroll through the Christmas Market, one of the largest in the Rhineland, where well over a hundred festive wooden stalls display an extensive choice of hand-made goods, Christmas decorations and seasonal gifts.



## MAY WE HELP YOU WITH YOUR BAGS?

Are you dreaming of a day when you can travel to the far corners of the world... without your luggage? Dream no more! Crystal Cruises has an exclusive alliance with Luggage Concierge, offering easy door-to-door baggage service between your home and Crystal's exotic ports of call around the world.

Luggage Concierge has established a dedicated phone line for Crystal guests, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Arrangements for luggage shipment can be made by calling 877-231-6408 or registering at [www.luggageconcierge.com/crystal](http://www.luggageconcierge.com/crystal). Crystal also provides a link at [crystalcruises.com](http://crystalcruises.com), which will direct you to the Luggage Concierge online booking engine.

"Baggage-free travel offers guests a level of comfort, ease and convenience by avoiding long lines and annoying waits at airport check-in counters, baggage security, and baggage claim areas after long, tiring flights," says John Stoll, Crystal's director of land programs. "This service offers the ultimate luxury: less time tangled up at the airport which translates to more time relaxing aboard the ship and exploring the world's exciting cities."

As an added benefit, Crystal Society members receive a 20% discount on luggage shipments to and from their Crystal voyage, as well as a 10% discount on luggage shipments for other non-cruise-related leisure travel if they book directly through Luggage Concierge.

Also included in the door-to-door round-trip service is an automatic insurance coverage of up to \$5,000 for all luggage shipments. In addition, Crystal guests utilizing the Luggage Concierge service receive personalized tracking and delivery notification of their baggage through their preferred choice of phone, fax or e-mail.

Please see our Reception Desk for further details.