



Guest Senior Writer Leon P., Reno NV: The Notre-Dame Cathedral of Reims, about two hours from Paris, is one of France's great Gothic masterpieces. The structure was started in 1211, and for many years it was the prime cathedral of Northern France, where French kings were crowned.

It served as a representation of Jerusalem for Middle Age worshipers, and continues to impress today. Inside, the ornate ceiling is over 100 feet high. It still boggles the mind how craftsmen created this masterpiece over 800 years ago with the primitive knowledge and tools. The stained glass windows are spectacular, a combination of ancient windows from the medieval period to modern works of art designed by Marc Chagall. The windows and the colors they display are spectacular. Over 2,000 statues fill both the interior and exterior.

This region of France is called Champagne, and only vintages bottled here should be called champagne. All the large champagne houses in Reims have cellar tours and tasting rooms. Tattinger and Mumm are particularly worth visiting, and both have formal tours and tastings in elegant settings.

Getting to Reims from Paris is 45 minutes by train on the TGV, France's high speed line. Tickets are about \$50 roundtrip, and available online from SNCF, the state rail company. Reims is also on main highways, and easy to reach by car or bus.