

PRPA/Patrick Roach

Honfleur

Don't let strong tides and busy shipping deter you from a visit to Honfleur – a delightful, picturesque and convenient port from which to take the River Seine up to Rouen and beyond to Paris. Cameron Snell guides us in



Honfleur's harbourside is about as picturesquely French as you can get

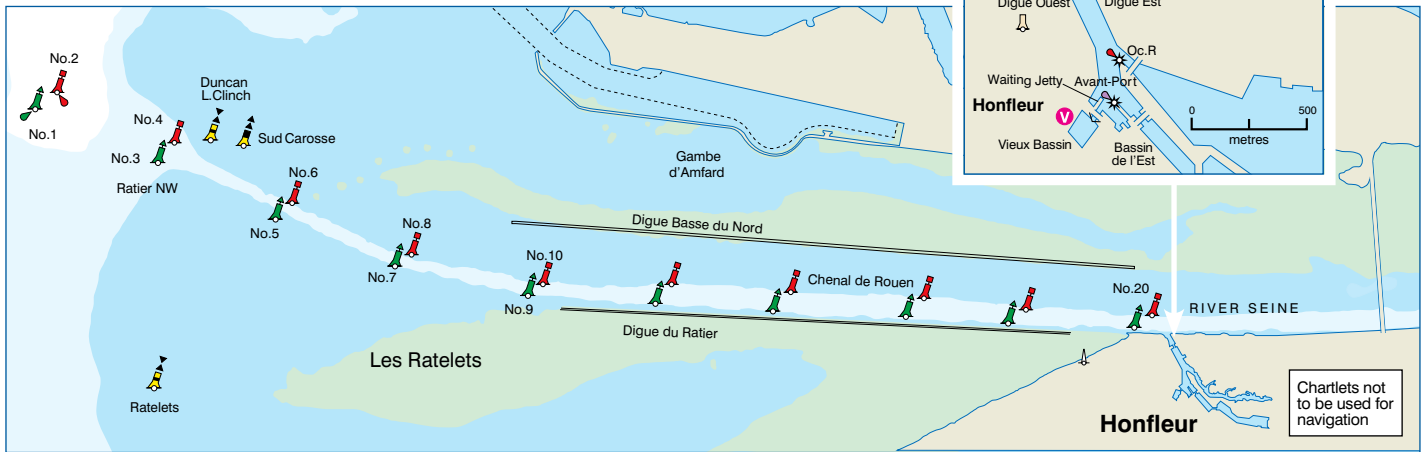
Honfleur should be on the list of every yachtsman cruising France's lower Normandy coast. The preservation of its rich history makes it one of the most visited towns in France, and it is easy to see why.

Authentically narrow, paved streets, tall, timber-framed slate-covered houses, charming hotels and typical French harbourside restaurants help to create a truly nautical experience.

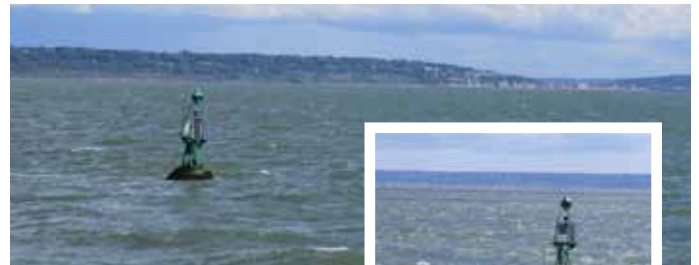
Honfleur has always been a town of artists, inspiring Courbet, Monet, Boudin and many others. A plethora of galleries and studios continue to display a wide variety of classical and modern paintings.

The Sainte-Catherine church, which has a bell tower separate from the principal building, is the largest church made out of wood in France. The famous 'axe masters' of the city's naval yards created this building without using any saws, just like their Norman ancestors and the Vikings before them.





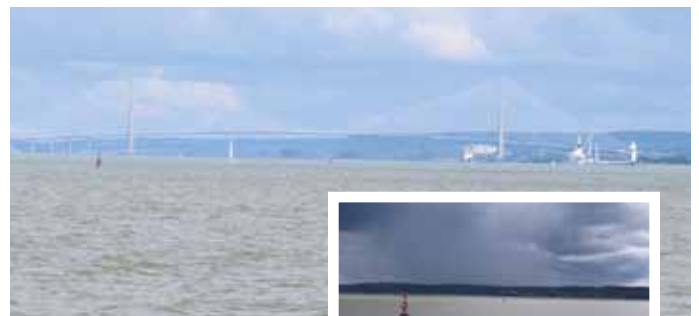
1 The approach to Honfleur must always be made with the flood and in daylight. Yachts are not permitted to navigate the Seine in darkness. The distinctive pillars of the Pont de Normandie bridge spanning the Seine can be identified from as far away as the red No2 buoy.



2 Ensure you are well south of the first green buoy before you approach. The tide runs strongly from south to north across the entrance here on the flood: you will need to approach from the south to allow the tide to set you to the north of the channel. It is recommended that you enter the Seine channel HW Honfleur minus 1½ hours.



3 The No2 buoy with the 'Duncan L Clinch' west cardinal and the container port cranes of Le Havre in the background. If you see this view, you are too far north at this point and will be fighting the set as you travel in. If traffic allows, try to begin your approach across the channel at the 'Ratier NW' green buoy, enabling the tide to set you north, and inbound so that you can begin your inbound approach from the No4 red buoy.



4 Pleasure craft must follow a route approximately 20m north of the port side of the channel, inward and outward bound, to avoid the commercial shipping. Keep the red buoys to starboard as you continue inbound.



5 At No9 green and No10 red buoys, a tide gauge indicates the beginning of the training wall. This is built on both sides of the channel. From this point the northerly set of the tide weakens.



6 Continue to follow the buoys until you reach No20. The tall white radar station indicates the location of the lock. Remain outside of the channel on the northern side until it is clear to cross, and the lights on the lock entrance are green. Cross the channel at right angles from No20. Contact the lock-keeper on VHF Ch17.



7 The lock gates operate 24 hours on the hour for arrivals, and on the half-hour for departures. To catch the Honfleur lock gates during the HW free-flow period you need to arrive at the No4 Buoy at around HW -3½ Le Havre. This should allow you enough time to travel the 7 miles inbound to No20. Free flow operates -1½ Honfleur to HW.



8 Once through the lock, the channel forks. Take the right-hand fork, keeping the red-topped lighthouse on your port side.



9 Directly ahead on the end of the commercial quay is a large sign directing you to the 'Bassin De Plaisance – Visitors.'



10 Tucked away in the corner is the entrance to the Vieux Bassin (Old Basin). This is accessed by a swing bridge (the Lieutenant's Bridge). Outbound yachts have priority and all vessels should be standing off the bridge 5 minutes prior to entry or exit.

The Vieux Bassin

Vieux Bassin opening times during the high season (May-Aug) are 0830, 0930, 1030 and 1130, then 1630, 1730, 1830 and 1930. Over the winter, times are 0830, 1130, 1430 then 1730. Other times may be arranged by special request.

The marina is administered by the Cercle Nautique de Honfleur (CNH) who will accommodate you either in the outer port or in the Vieux Bassin. Berths are assigned by CNH dory, which will direct you on arrival. There is no VHF channel for CNH. The dory operates from May to August every day, 0900 to 1200



Vessels must raft alongside each other on the visitors' pontoon



Honfleur's Vieux Bassin is surrounded by shops, restaurants and bars

then 1500 to 2000, and then from September to May, 0900 to 1200 and 1400 to 1800.

Before entering the Vieux Bassin you can moor on the Quai de la Lieutenant in front of the bridge until the next opening. Boats 14m (46ft) or more in length are not admitted to the Old Basin and are invited to moor up 200m beyond the lock entrance, alongside the quay or on the pontoons. Water and electricity are available here.

Once inside, vessels must raft alongside each other on the visitors' pontoon on the right-hand side of the Vieux Bassin.

Water and electricity are available on the pontoon. Facilities are limited: a new toilet and shower block is located 200m from the Vieux Bassin, in the car park. The code to enter is available from the CNH office, 8 Rue Saint Antoine – but the office is not easy to find, so make sure you get it from the dory operator.