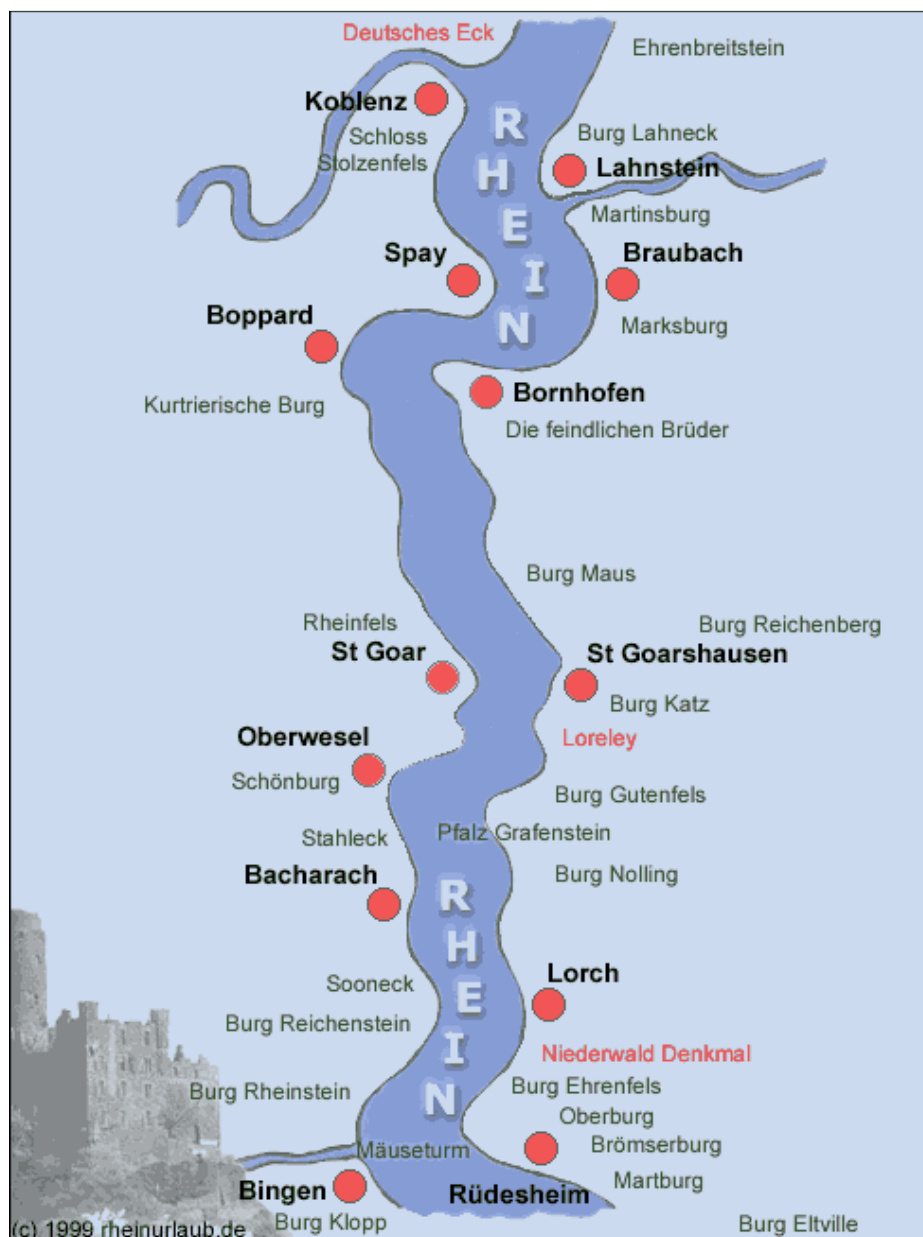


CASTLES ALONG THE RHINE; THE MIDDLE RHINE

The Middle Rhine is between Mainz and Cologne (or Köln) but the section of maximum interest for river cruisers is between Koblenz and Rudesheim. This section is where they keep some of Germany's best kept medieval keeps - 20 of them, some ruins, some preserved, all surrounded by vineyards and with quaint medieval towns. Around every bend another stone edifice stands watch over the endless parade of freight barges and cruise boats. Each castle has its own spot in Germany's medieval past. Your river cruise will spend at least an afternoon cruising this section with everyone on deck with a cup of bullion, tea, coffee or a beverage depending on the weather and the cruise director providing commentary on each castle/town you pass.



The Rhine gorge castles are bracketed by Germanic / Prussian monuments. At the south end is Rudesheim with the **Niederwalddenkmal** monument, commemorating the foundation of the German "Empire" after the Franco-Prussian War. The first stone was laid in 1871, by Wilhelm I. The 38m (123 ft) monument represents the union of all Germans. The central figure is a 10.5 m (34 ft) Germania holding the crown of the emperor in the right hand and in the left the imperial sword. Beneath Germania is a large relief that shows emperor Wilhelm I riding a horse with nobility, the army commanders and soldiers. On the left side of the monument is the peace statue and on the right is the war statue.



At the north end in Koblenz is **Deutsches Eck** (*German Corner*) where the Mosel and Rhine Rivers meet. The tip of the park is shaped like a ship's prow, overlooked by an enormous equestrian statue of Kaiser Wilhelm 1. Deutsches Eck along with the **Festung Ehrenbreitstein** are considered symbols for the "Guard at the Rhein", as in the song "Die Wacht am Rhein". Today there is a gondola (Sesselbahn) that takes you from Deutsches Eck, over the Rhine to Ehrenbreitstein. The ride offers a great panorama of river traffic, the river junction and Koblenz. Ehrenbreitstein is a large, well-preserved fort, said to be the largest in Europe, except for Gibraltar. Today the fortress is home to the administration offices of the body that looks after the castles and antiquities of the Rhineland Palatinate, as well as the regional museum of Koblenz with its collection on the history of technology, a youth hostel and local authority offices.



Distance is measured
north of Rhinefalls and

posted on the river banks

530 km: Ehrenfels Castle (Burg Ehrenfels) is a ruin amid vineyards on the steep eastern bank, near Rudesheim am Rhein - the grape variety Ehrenfelser is named after the castle. The main castle is directly across from Burg Reinstein and Reichenstein. Heavily damaged in the course of the Thirty Years' War, the castle was finally destroyed by French troops during the 1689 Siege of Mainz. The ruin can be reached by hiking through the vineyards: Note: interior can only be visited with a guide by prior appointment.



It was a customs post controlling shipping on the Rhine and was supplemented by the Mouse Tower (Mauseturm) at the river on a small island at the Binger Loch. The Mauseturm has been restored and was used as a navigation marker for a couple of centuries, even visible in heavy fog. It gets its name from the local legend of an oppressive Bishop who tried to escape a mob of mice that swam across the river and gnawed him to death, as he had gnawed the gold from his parishioners.

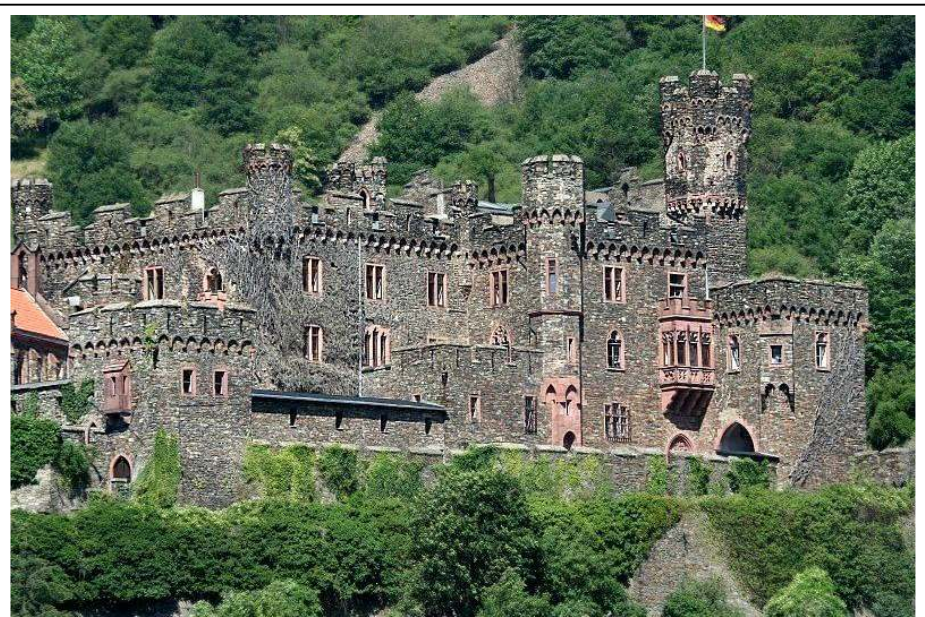
533 km: CASTLE RHEINSTEIN (Burg Reinstein) is one of the first castles you reach traveling north from Bingen along the western shore, perched on a rocky cliff 83m (270 ft) above the river, perfectly suited for its original purpose as a customs post to watch over the traffic traversing up and down the river road. Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph von Hapsburg lived in here from 1282 to 1286 to gain control from the robber knights of the area. Originally called the "Konigstein" (King's Tower) when the Kaiser was in possession, it is well worth a visit for those with a passion for with medieval life and architecture. Crossing the drawbridge gate over the moat and climbing the long way through towers and halls to the Knight's Hall high in the stone structure, looking out the upper residence chamber window to the river far below you get a sense in your



bones of what a knight's life must have been like: the romance of chivalry and a lonely watchful vigilance in your great high tower waiting for the attack of your enemies.

Rheinstein was restored by Prince Frederick of Prussia in 1823 and rechristened with its new name meaning "Rhine Stone". Several European crowned heads of the time were guests at the castle, including England's Queen Victoria and Empress Alexandra of Russia. The castle was decorated with stained glass, frescoes and a collection of art and furniture, and now contains a selection of armor pieces and an array of antlers on its walls. The apartments are restored in detail, giving a view of its royal residents, rather than the medieval austerity of its early existence. Rheinstein Castle was a possession of the Hohezollerns until the mid-1970 when it was bought by the German Opera singer Hermann Hecher. The castle still managed by the Hecher family. Romantic Evening Tours with a torch lit climb to the castle and drinks in the garden are offered from March to November two or three days per month. The walk to the castle is a steep but brief uphill hike. The Little Wine Prince Restaurant at the castle with views down to the Rhine River

534 km: Burg Reichenstein Castle is for you, if you like castles where headless apparitions clank down the halls in the dead of night and one that has been on an episode of the television series "Ghost Hunters". It was originally built in the 12th century by a family of robber knights. Eventually, their annoyed neighbours and Hapsburg Prince Rudolf in the next castle down the river, Burg Rheinstein captured it. The father of the "robber baron" clan asked that his 10 sons be spared. Rudolf generously offered that he would spare all of the sons the father could walk past, AFTER his head was cut off. According to legend the knight's will was so strong that when his head was lopped off, his headless body's powerful legs strode past nine of his sons before finally toppling to the ground. Burg Reichenstein is well preserved, with the interior reconstructed in the 1800's in a gothic style and has a nice collection of medieval armor on display throughout its many floors. The castle also has a small hotel and restaurant in a former hunter's lodge.



538 km: Burg Sooneck (Schloss Sonneck) is near the village of Niederheimbach. It was built sometime before 1271 by the Lords of Hohenfels as bailiffs for Kornelimünster Abbey. In 1282 it was besieged by King Rudolph I and destroyed. In 1346 it was given in fief to Johann, Knight Marshall of Waldeck, who subsequently had a new castle built on the site. After his death it passed jointly to four of his heirs. The branches of the family quarreled over their share of the inheritances but all was settled when in the course of the War of the Palatine Succession - like all the castles on the left bank of the Rhine – it was destroyed by troops of King Louis XIV of France. In 1834, the then crown prince of Prussia, Frederick William IV, and his 3 brothers bought the completely derelict castle and had it rebuilt as a hunting castle. After World War I aristocratic properties were nationalized and Burg Sooneck became a possession of the state. The residential areas of the castle are furnished predominantly with items in the neo-gothic and Biedermeier styles. The interiors are enriched by paintings owned by the Hohenzollern family.

543 km: Stahleck Castle (Burg Stahleck) is a 12th-century fortified castle on a crag approximately 160 metres (520 ft) above sea level on the left bank of the river at the mouth of the Steeg valley, approximately 50 kilometres (31 mi) south of Koblenz, and offers a commanding view of the Lorelei valley. Its name means "impregnable castle on a crag". It has a water-filled partial moat, a rarity in Germany. It was destroyed in the late 17th century but rebuilt in the 20th and is now a hostel.

The Archbishops of Cologne had the castle built, perhaps as a southern outpost to guard the far-flung archbishopric. The castle today is a 20th-century reconstruction, primarily based on the results of excavation and a 1646 engraving. For example, the almost rectangular shape of the castle, measuring approximately 55 by 24 m, shows the typical regular layout and clear divisions of a castle of the Hohenstaufen period. The size of the modern buildings approximates that of those in the original castle; the oldest portions are the foundations of the keep, parts of the cellar under the palas and sections of the curtain wall. Bergfried (Keep) could be dated to the 12th century. The keep is a round tower 7.5 m in diameter which stands on bedrock in the centre of the inner courtyard. It has walls 2 metres thick and is topped by a 16 m cone-shaped roof. The top floor, 4 m high, was added later, which can be seen from the different colour of the stone.



- Counts Palatine by Rhine: They developed Bacharach into a trading town for the wine trade, and the castle was used to enforce payment of duties. Otto II in 1243 received Fürstenberg and Stahlberg Castles as additional fiefs and was overseen by counts, who called themselves "Ritter (Knight) von Stahleck". In 1353, the Palatinate was divided and the castle incorporated into the fortifications of Bacharach. During the 15th and 16th centuries the castle sank into insignificance.
- Destruction in the 17th century - the castle was besieged, conquered, and sacked a total of eight times during the Thirty Years' War. During the War of the Palatine Succession, the castle was decisively destroyed, like most of the fortifications in the area. French troops blew it up, completely destroying both the ring wall and the keep, the residential buildings burned out in the resulting fire, and debris from the explosion destroyed the Gothic Werner Chapel at the foot of the castle hill.
- 20th-century rebuilding began in 1909; first stabilizing and rebuilding the ring and shield walls. Work was interrupted by World War I. In 1925 it was decided to construct a youth hostel in the ruin, in the spirit of the old buildings and making use of the old walls which would fit into the landscape. The official dedication took place in 1926.
- Under the Nazis Stahleck became one of 27 Jugendburgen (youth castles) used for indoctrination of teenagers and young adults. From 1940 to 1942 it served as a military hospital. In 1943, the castle was used as an internment camp for disloyal German youth.
- After the war the Castle was used to billet French soldiers, before returning to use as a youth hostel in 1947. The castle is still used as a hostel with 42,000 overnights per year. It is almost always booked up.

546 km: Pfalzgrafenstein Castle (Burg Pfalzgrafenstein) was described by Victor Hugo as "A ship of stone, eternally afloat upon the Rhine and eternally lying at anchor..." It is located on tiny Falkenau Island just off Kaub Germany. Built in the 1300s, this unique castle was used to collect tolls from ships sailing on the river. Known as "the Pfalz," (Die Pflaz) is famous for its picturesque and unique setting. The keep is a pentagonal tower with its point upstream, was erected by King Ludwig the Bavarian. Around the tower, a defensive hexagonal wall was built. Later additions were made in 1607 and 1755, consisting of corner turrets, the gun bastion pointing upstream, and the



characteristic baroque tower cap. The castle functioned as a toll-collecting station that was not to be ignored, as it worked in concert with Gutenfels Castle and the fortified town of Kaub on the right side of the river. A chain across the river forced ships to submit. Unlike the vast majority of Rhine castles, "the Pfalz" was never conquered or destroyed, withstanding not only wars, but also the natural onslaughts of ice and floods by the river. Its Spartan quarters held about twenty men.

Toll collections ceased in 1867. It continued to be used as a signal station for the river boat traffic for about another century. The State eventually turned "the Pfalz" into a museum and restored the color scheme of the baroque period. The museum reflects the conditions of the 14th century, and the visitor will not find modern amenities such as electricity or a lavatory. It is accessible to the public via a ferry service from nearby Kaub as long as river conditions permit.

- Directly up the hill from the Pfalz is the **Gutenfels Castle** (also known as castle Caub). It is 110m above the town of Kaub. It was built in 1220 and was with Pfalzgrafenstein Castle and the fortified city of Kaub on the far side to provide an impenetrable toll zone for the Holy Roman Emperor until Prussia purchased the area (1866) and ended this toll in 1867.

Schönburg Castle sits above the medieval town of Oberwesel and is sometimes referred to as "the most beautiful refuge of the Rhine romanticism". Today it is a well known hotel. It was built around 911 and from the 12th century, the Dukes of Schönburg ruled over the town of Oberwesel and had also the right to levy customs on the Rhine River. Like its neighbours, it was burned down in 1689 by French soldiers during the Palatinate wars. The castle remained in ruins for 200 years until it was bought by a German-American Rhinelander family who bought the castle from the town of Oberwesel and restored it bit by bit into its current condition. The powerful shield wall is one of the most important of its kind. Oberwesel re-acquired the castle from the Rhinelander family and since 1957 the Hüttl family has been operating a hotel and restaurant.



557 km: Rheinfels Castle (Burg Rheinfels) is a ruin on the left (East) bank in Sankt Goar. It was started in 1245 by Count Diether V of Katzenelnbogen. After expansions, it was the largest fortress in the Middle Rhein Valley and once covered



five times its current area. While much of the castle is a ruin, some of the outer buildings are now a luxury hotel, "wellness" centre and restaurant. There is also a museum within some of the better preserved structures. It withstood a siege of 28,000 French troops in 1692; but in 1797, the French did destroy it. The castle was used for ages as a quarry, and today — while still mighty — it's only a small fraction of its original size. Highlights are:

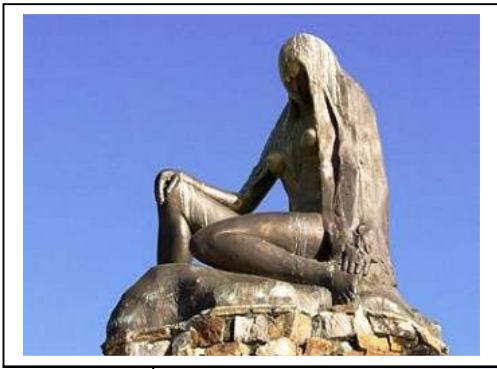
- Museum and Castle Model: The seven-foot-tall carved stone immediately inside the door (marked Keltische Säule von Pfalzfeld) — a tombstone from a nearby Celtic grave — is from 400 years before Christ. There is a model reconstruction of the castle - find where you are (hint: look for the tall tower). This was the living quarters of the original castle, which was only the smallest ring of buildings around the tiny central courtyard. The ramparts were added in the 14th century. By 1650, the fortress was largely complete. The basement of the museum shows the castle pharmacy and an exhibit on Rhine region odds and ends, including photos of ice-breaking on the Rhine — which, thanks to global warming, hasn't been necessary since 1963.
- Medieval Castle Courtyard: Five hundred years ago, the entire castle circled this courtyard. The place was self-sufficient and ready for a siege with a bakery, pharmacy, herb garden, animals, brewery, well and livestock. During peacetime, 300 to 600 people lived here; during a siege, there would be as many as 4,500.
- Castle Garden: has a pyramid of stone catapult balls which were recycled due to their cost — they'd be retrieved after any battle. The old posts are for the ceremonial baptizing of new members of the local trading league. While this guild goes back centuries, it's now a social club that fills this court with a huge wine party the third weekend of each September.
- Highest Castle Tower Lookout: Enjoy a great view of the river, castle, and the forest that was once all part of this castle.
- Prison: There were six dungeons. Prisoners came and went through the little square hole in the ceiling. The holes in the walls supported timbers that thoughtfully gave as many as 15 residents something to sit on to keep them out of the filthy slop that gathered on the floor. Twice a day, they were given bread and water. Some prisoners actually survived longer than two years. While the town could torture and execute, the castle only had permission to imprison criminals in these dungeons. Consider this: According to town records, the two men who spent the most time down here — 2.5 years each — died within three weeks of regaining their freedom. Perhaps after a diet of bread and water, feasting on meat and wine was simply too much.
- Big Cellar: This Grosser Keller was a big pantry. Part of a soldier's pay was table wine, kept in a single 180,000-liter stone barrel (47,550 gallons), which generally lasted about 18 months. Farmers got to keep 20% of their production. Later, in more liberal feudal times, the nobility let them keep 40 %. Today, the German government leaves the workers with 60 %...and provides a few more services.

- Mine Tunnels: The castle was cleverly booby-trapped just outside their walls by building tunnels topped with thin slate roofs and packed with explosives. By detonating the explosives when under attack, they could kill hundreds of invaders. In 1626, a handful of underground Protestant Germans blew 300 Catholic Spaniards to — they figured — hell. You're welcome to wander through a set of never-blown-up tunnels. But be warned: it's 600 feet long, assuming you make no wrong turns; it's pitch-dark, muddy, and claustrophobic, with confusing dead-ends; and you'll never get higher than a deep crouch. It cannot be done without a light (bring a flashlight; otherwise, candles and matches available at entry).

556 km: Lorelei (Loreley) is on the eastern bank of the Rhine near St. Goarshausen at the foot of the Niederwald; it is the name given to the slate rock, rising almost vertically 132m (435 ft) above the Rhine. It is one of Germany's biggest tourist attractions. It is the narrowest part (72 ft / 22m) of the Rhine between Switzerland and the North Sea. A very strong current and rocks below the waterline have caused many boat accidents there; even today with clearly marked with buoys the reefs and rapids made it extremely dangerous for ships to pass this point

Lorelei is also the name of a feminine water spirit, similar to mermaids often associated with this rock in popular folklore. The name comes from the old German words "lureln" (murmuring) and the Celtic term "ley" (rock). The translation of the name would therefore be: "murmuring rock". The heavy currents, and a small waterfall in the area (still visible in the early 19th century) created a murmuring sound, and this combined with the special echo the rock produces to act as a sort of amplifier, giving the rock its name. Other theories attribute the name to the many accidents, by combining the German verb "lauern" (to lurk, lie in wait) with the same "ley" ending, with the translation "lurking rock". The rock and the murmur it creates have inspired various tales and legends.

It first told the story of an enchanting female associated with the rock. In the poem, the beautiful Lore Lay, betrayed by her sweetheart, is accused of bewitching men and causing their death. Rather than sentence her to death, the bishop consigns her to a nunnery. On the way thereto, accompanied by three knights, she comes to the Lorelei rock. She asks permission to climb it and view the Rhine once again. She does so and falls to her death; the rock still retained an echo of her name afterwards.



The poem *Die Lorelei* by Heinrich Heine describes the eponymous female as a sort of siren who, sitting on the cliff above the Rhine and combing her golden hair, unwittingly distracted shipmen with her beauty and song, causing them to crash on the rocks. In 1837 Heine's lyrics were set to music by Friedrich Silcher. Lorelei (www.loreley-rhine.com)

556 km: Katz Castle (Burg Katz) is at the town of St. Goarshausen. This magnificent castle stands on a ledge looking downstream at St. Goar. It was first built around 1371. Napoleon blew up the castle in 1806. In 1896 it was reconstructed, as close as possible to the original design. From 1946 till 1951 Katz Castle served as a boarding school. It is now owned by Japanese and is the hotel Katz Castle. Though commonly known as Katz, this is actually a contraction of Neukatzenelnbogen after the original Castle of Katzenelnbogen (Burg Katzenelnbogen). The name roughly translates into English as Cat's Elbow Castle, and so is popularly linked with that of the nearby Burg Maus, or "Mouse Castle".

- The castle is of compact layout, consisting mainly of a great hall and a massive bergfried (keep), originally 40 meters tall, subsequently raised to approx. 197 feet to ensure eye contact with Reichenstein Castle which is approx 1.9 miles away.



554 km: Maus Castle (Mouse Castle) is above the village of Wellmich on the east side of the Rhine and opposite Rheinfels Castle. Construction was begun in 1356 by Archbishop-Elector of Trier and continued for the next 30 years. Burg Maus was to enforce Trier's Rhine River toll rights and borders against the Counts of Katzenelnbogen (who had Burgs Katz and Rheinfels). Burg Maus was never destroyed, though it fell into disrepair in the 16th and 17th centuries. Restoration was undertaken between 1900 and 1906 and today hosts an aviary that is home to falcons, owls and eagles, and flight demonstrations are staged for visitors from late March to early October. Locals had the impression that the castles spied on each other like cat and mouse. So both bastions got their nicknames, under which they are known until today. Mouse Castle is open to visitors.



567 km: Sterrenberg and Liebenstein Castles: "The Hostile Brothers" name comes probably from the disputes of the different owners of the castles that inspired the legend around the hostile brothers, first told in 1587.

In reality Liebenstein Castle, built in the 13th Century and therefore the younger one, was the forecastle of Sterrenberg Castle. The two shield walls serve as improved defence of Sterrenberg. There is no historic evidence that they were meant against Liebenstein Castle. It is taken for granted that there never has been an armed conflict between the castles. Today Sterrenberg Castle is owned by the state and is open to visitors with a restaurant and views from its terrace.

- Sterrenberg, the castle that is more to the north, was first mentioned in 1034 and is the oldest Rhine castle still preserved today. Built on top of a rock, the mighty, square keep stands as far as possible from the curtain wall. Within this 12th century part of the castle, and below the keep, stands a more recent building resembling a great hall with a circular stair tower. Presumably, Coryn von Nassau was the castle's last warden before it was declared as uninhabitable in 1568.
- Liebenstein Castle only 150 metres further south was built in the 13th century, although it is not known whether it was meant to lay siege to or protect Sterrenberg Castle. The square-shaped keep stands on a base of rock and is almost entirely dilapidated today. Several residential towers were integrated into the ring wall, the oldest of which is still preserved. At the ditch, it is possible to see the remains of the castle gate, including the drawbridge. Since 1592, the castle has been declared uninhabitable.



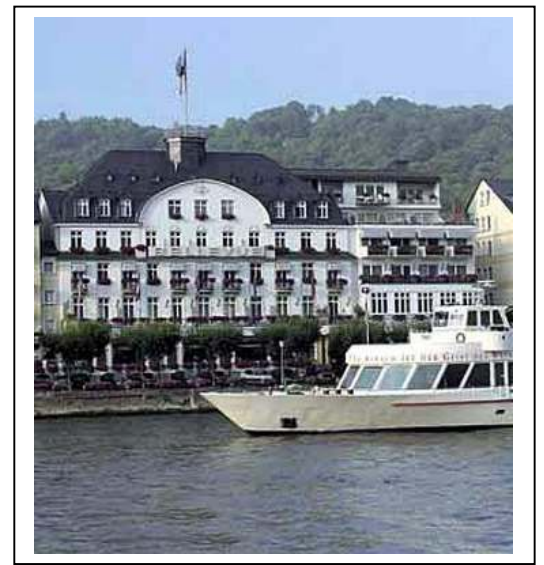
The tale of how they got that name dates back to the Crusades. Actually, there are several variant stories explaining how the two brothers came to hate each other, but the legends more or less agree that there was no love lost between them. The gist of it is that one of the brothers went off to fight in the Middle East while the other brother remained behind. It is suggested that they became enemies over the relationship that formed between the brother who remained at home and the other's fiancée. Following the warrior's return, they are said to have shot at each other across the saddle in the ridge until they finally resolved their differences. They even went hunting together... until one met his death in a mysterious accident.

570 km: Boppard is on the left (west) bank of the Rhine, approx. 25 km south of Koblenz at the top of the largest loop (Bopparder Hamm) of the Rhine. A 17 km stretch of the Rhine forms the town's eastern limit. Along this part of the river is the town's centre. The best known lookout point over this bow in the Rhine is the Vierseenblick, or "Four-Lake View". This vista gets its name from the way in which the Rhine can be seen from here, or rather the way in which it cannot be seen: hills block out most of the view of the river itself so that visitors can only see four apparently separate patches of water, rather like four lakes. The Vierseenblick can be reached by chairlift.



The town has been a cross roads for travelers along the river for 2,000 years. The Romans built a fort in 360 AD to guard the trade route to their Germania territories. King Richard I of England built a tower to control his claims to Germany, before finding himself captured and held for ransom. King Richard's tower is gone, but the Roman Fort remains, one of Boppard's most noted sights in the center of town next to the train station. The Elector's medieval fortress was mostly destroyed but the castle tower remains as the city's museum. Climb the winding stairs to the top of the tower for a fortress-eye view out the narrow windows to the river's the Bopparder Hamm. Also notable is the two-towered 12th Century church of Saint Severus with Romanesque period wall paintings.

The quaint old town has many small tourist hotels and restaurants along the river front, like the grand 19th Century art nouveau Bellevue Rheinhôtel. For wine touring, Weinguts and Weinstubs (Wine Sellers



and Wine Taverns) for tasting both Rhine and Moselle Wines are sprinkled all over town, along the narrow streets lined with beautiful half-timbered buildings. The town lights up at night in sparkling reflections on the flowing currents of the river. There are no bridges across the Rhine between Mainz and Koblenz, so crossing in this area known as the Middle-Rhine is by ferry. Boppard like St. Goar to the south is a ferry crossing, with the ferry boats droning all day long from one side to the other, with about 20 minutes between each crossing.

Cross the Rhein by ferry at Boppard to the east bank and about 4 kilometers north to Braubach where you'll find Marksburg Castle, one of the best preserved medieval forts on the Rhine or if a real aficionado, stop at the Castle Institute library at Phillipsburg Castle in the Braubach old village directly below Marksburg. Phillipsburg is a short walk from the on-off cruise dock at Braubach, just cross under the railroad track to the old town street and turn right, follow the signs.

Boppard is a popular tourism town stop for many of the Rhine cruises because they use it to assure a daytime passage through "castle alley" of the Rhine Gorge between Boppard and Rudesheim. Local cruise boats depart every hour for sightseeing cruises past the Loreley and back, making circle tours taking about 2 hours.

580 km: CASTLE MARKSBURG is the Rhine's best original Knight's Castle and is the only one to have survived completely intact since its medieval past. Its position high on a promontory made it difficult to attack from any side. It is above the town of Braubach on the east shore of the river, the castle is reached by a steep five minute walk from the car parking area. The castle is just "outside of castle alley" so is often offered as an optional half day excursion from Koblenz



Built in the 13th century the property passed from the Palatinate to the Landgraves of Hesse in the 1400's. The name is from St. Mark's Chapel (Markuskapelle) on the first floor of the chapel tower, one of the earliest parts of the castle. There are four gates approaching the castle starting with the drawbridge gate then passing through a 25 meter tunnel fortified with seven guns. Continuing across a wooden bridge which could be withdrawn there was a pit fall, then a staircase carved in the stone abutment leading to the battery yard, then finally through an iron gate into the inner castle yard. Once serving as a fortress for enforcing tax levies, it later served as a prison under the Hesse Landgraves. Since the middle ages prisoners were thrown into the dungeon through the "Angstloch" the Hole of Fear. Today there is a display of

medieval torture instruments in the torture chamber cellar. The castle also has a small restaurant above the drawbridge gate (Burgschänke) with a nice terrace

EUROPEAN CASTLES INSTITUTE: Philippsburg Castle - Braubach

Where better to have a library about all things castles except in a castle. The European Castles Institute (EBI) for the study and preservation of castles is housed in the renovated Philippsburg Castle along the Rhine River in the town of Braubach. Philippsburg Castle was built by Landgrave Philipp II of Hessen-Rheinfels in 1568 who felt the main fortress castle of Marksburg, constructed high on a hill above the town, though perfect for defenses of the middle-ages was too spare for the living comfort for a regal Renaissance man.

It is now the repository of a unique library of more than 25,000 volumes about every castle or palace in Europe, one of the most extensive of its kind anywhere. The Institute also maintains a collection of castle and palace building plans, graphics, photographs and post cards, videos and CD's. There are also books on medieval history, art history, landscape gardening, castle renovation and preservation, descriptions of journeys, myths and legends. Most of the collection is in German. It collects historic records and resources regarding castles, organizes academic conferences, seminars, study trips and publishes a specialist's journal "Burgen und Schlösser" four times a year.