

**Reims: crossroads of Champagne**

*- Jean-Louis Carbonnier*

The Streets of Reims

On Place du Forum, you will discover a Roman underground market place, as well as possibly the best food shops in Reims: butchers, cheesemongers, fishmongers, wine in Les Caves du Forum - located in underground galleries - and fruit and vegetable shops. Here also stands the house where Joan of Arc stayed when she escorted the future Charles VII to his crowning.

On a Saturday, walk to the Boulingrin to take a look at the 1930's vaulted Halles - a unique early concrete structure which barely survived destruction a few years ago and has not yet been renovated - and to amble among the street merchants who display their wares here once a week. Among my favorites are the cheesemonger Bruck in his mobile shop, the local goat farmers who offer fresh yogurt and cheeses, the florists and the artisanal honey producers, the maraichers from the nearby Ardennes countryside, the oyster seller from Calais and the Arabic stalls for spices, dates and bric-à-brac. From the marketplace, you can admire another of Reims' striking Roman vestiges, the Porte Mars. The richly decorated gate was built at the end of the second century and comprises three arcades, a large one for chariots and carts in the middle, and smaller ones for pedestrians on each side.