



PROVENCE: THE RHONE WINE TOUR 2011

Oct. 30th to Nov. 4th, 2011

**TOUR BEGINS WITH PICK UP AT THE AVIGNON TRAIN STATION
TOUR ENDS WITH DROP OFF AT THE AVIGNON TRAIN STATION**

(NOTE: WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE ANY CHANGES TO THIS ITINERARY AND WILL INFORM GUESTS OF ANY CHANGES MADE PRIOR TO DEPARTURE)

TOUR DESCRIPTION

The Rhône Valley's rich history, its diverse geography and various grape varieties all contribute to making Côtes du Rhône wines so unique. From Vienne to Avignon, the banks of the Rhône River have been home to vines and winemakers for some 2000 years producing exceptional Crus, village wines or Côtes du Rhône AOCs. In fact, the Rhône is not one wine region but two. The vineyards of the southern Rhône spread across large swaths South Eastern France, while the narrow band that makes up the northern Rhône vineyards is concentrated near the banks of the Rhône River, some 50 miles long but never more than a few miles across. The two areas are separated by about 45 miles of farmland where few grapes are grown. Wine has been made here since at least Roman times, and if modern drinkers are coming to appreciate the Rhône again, we are hardly the first. As vintner Yves Cuilleron puts it, "The vineyards of the northern Rhône Valley were very famous a century ago. It was more expensive than Bordeaux and Champagne. Thus a trip through the Rhône is a chance to see a land that lives and breathes wine both exalted and humble.

As our Burgundy guests have come to expect, another First-class hotel and more sumptuous gourmet restaurants await us. Once again we'll be joined by wine importer Peter Weygandt and Todd Ross, proprietors of Weygandt Wines of Washington DC, Laurence Minard-Amalou a French Government licensed guide with an art history degree from the Ecole du Louvre, and internationally award winning photojournalist Peter Martin, Managing Director of Martin & Keegan LLC, a tour company specializing in small boutique tours around the world.

We'll spend 5 nights at the **Hotel d'Europe** in Avignon. This Deluxe Hotel, in operation since 1799 is entered by a vine-covered doorway through a courtyard, which holds tables in the warmer months. The grand hall and salons contain antiques, and the good-size guest rooms have handsome decor and period furnishings. The spacious bathrooms are handsomely equipped, and each has a combination tub/shower. The restaurant, La Vieille Fontaine, which specializes in traditional French and Provençal cuisine, is one of the best in Avignon. <http://www.heurope.com>

DAY ONE-ARRIVAL (SUNDAY)

Guests will be picked up from the Avignon train station in the early afternoon (time to be determined). Direct TGV trains from Gare de Lyon to Avignon take about 2 hours 40 minutes. TGV trains from Charles De Gaulle Airport direct to Avignon take about 3 hours and 10 minutes. Specific schedules are published 2 months before date of travel.

[http://www.voyages-sncf.com/dynamic/ SvHomePage? CMD=cmdHomepageUK](http://www.voyages-sncf.com/dynamic/SvHomePage?CMD=cmdHomepageUK)

After guests are comfortably checked in, we'll enjoy a private walking tour of Avignon with our guide, followed by a wine-tasting and a review of our itinerary for the week.

Dinner tonight is at **Le Moutardier**. A setting to die for: on the square of the Palais du Papes. The Perrin family keeps a firm hand on this establishment, which doesn't rest on the charms of its location but is distinguished by the quality of its cuisine. They are ferocious about product freshness.

<http://www.restaurant-moutardier.fr>

DAY TWO (MONDAY)

After breakfast our first tasting will be just a short drive north to the heart of Chateauneuf-du-Pape and Domaine Raymond Usseglio. Usseglio produces wonderful Chateauneuf-du-Pape rouge and blanc, and their flagship wine, Chateauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Imperiale.

<http://www.domaine-usseglio.fr/fr/index.php>

Lunch today is at the celebrated **La Mere Germaine**. Nothing sums up the food and wine experience at La Mere Germaine in the centre of the lovely village of Chateauneuf-du-Pape more than the availability of one of our favourite white wines of the region - the wonderful Font de Michelle Blanc de Blanc. This is one of the best white wines of the region. One that we seek out whenever we are in the area. We can assure you that it is the perfect accompaniment to many of the entrees served in Provence. La Mere Germaine is a friendly and sunny place. The main dining room opens out towards the vineyards beyond.

<http://www.lameregermaine.com>

After lunch our second tasting is also in the town of Chateauneuf-du-Pape at Domaine Clos Saint Jean. Their impressive array of wines include a Chateauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, and three reds including their Villages Vieilles Vignes, heralded Combe de Fous and Deus Ex Machina wines.

Dinner tonight is at **Hiély-Lucullus** in Avignon.

Before the arrival of Christian Etienne, this Relais Gourmand property reigned supreme in Avignon. Today it is still formidable competition. The Belle Epoque decor enhances the grand cuisine. Market-fresh products go into innovative dishes. The restaurant, run by Richard Vinatier—offers fabulous cuisine with an emphasis on luxury ingredients. The menu combines a mix of modern touches and Provençal traditions. Expect dishes such as seared perch served with potato gnocchi and truffle oil.

<http://www.hiely-lucullus.com/>

DAY THREE (TUESDAY)

After breakfast we will travel northeast of Avignon to the villages of Cairanne for two tastings this morning. The first at **Domaine Alary**, and then on to Saint-Cecile-Les-Vignes for a tasting with **Domaine Les Grands Bois**.

Lunch today will be at **La Fourchette** in Avignon.

This is a place that cares about food and cares about its customers (as also evidenced by the number of locals that seem to dine here very regularly). This is one of those great places where you can come to relax as well as to experience some of the finest examples of Provençal cuisine that you will find in the region.

After lunch guests will spend the afternoon and evening on their own to take in Avignon's many shopping and sightseeing opportunities. Guests will be on their own for dinner tonight to discover one of this city's many wonderful restaurants with our recommendations.

Avignon, a Unesco World Heritage Site is ancient, full of history, life, youth, art, music and activity. Just to "see" the town itself, you could wander the narrow streets inside the fortified walls for days without tiring of them.

DAY FOUR (WEDNESDAY)

After a leisurely breakfast, guests will have time to explore Avignon on their own. Before departure, we will prepare a detailed outline of all the highlights of the city with suggestions and guidelines not to be missed.

Guests will enjoy lunch on their own today with our recommendations.

We'll meet back at the hotel at 2pm and drive from Avignon to Gigondas for a tasting visit at Domaine Saint Damien. Afterwards a short drive to the nearby village of Vacqueyras for a tasting at Colline de Saint Jean.

Dinner tonight is at the Chef's Table in the elegant Hotel Mirande. Maximum of 14 guests sit around a large wooden table and watch The Master Chef prepare our meal before our eyes on the old wood-stove.

The menu is selected on the same day, depending on the products of the market.

http://www.la-mirande.fr/la-mirande-english/overview_guest.html

DAY FIVE (THURSDAY)

After breakfast, our first wine tasting will find us in the vicinity of Orange for a visit at the highly acclaimed Domaine Charvin. We'll then enjoy lunch in Orange at the Restaurant Le Parvis.

After lunch our second visit will be at Domaine de Ferrand

Dinner tonight is at the Michelin-starred **La Vieille Fontaine**, which specializes in traditional French and Provençal cuisine and is one of the best in Avignon. The restaurant, expertly run by Chef Bruno d'Angelis, has over the years received many excellent write-ups in the best known guide books. Chef d'Angelis uses only the best quality products and combines his creativity and innovation with many Mediterranean influences.

http://www.heurope.com/index_fr.php?page=restaurant

DAY SIX (FRIDAY)

After breakfast we'll provide a transfer back to the Avignon train station for connections back to Paris and beyond. (Times to be confirmed)

SUMMARY OF WHAT'S INCLUDED

Full information and welcome package.

Welcome reception with local wine.

5 Night's Luxury accommodation in '**Superior**' guestrooms at the Hotel d'Europe

Pick up and drop off at the Avignon train station and all transfers during the tour.

Private walking tour of Avignon

A Wine expert and a Professional Guide

5 breakfasts.

3 lunches; 4 dinners

Ample red and white wines, still and sparkling bottled water, and coffee or tea with all meals

Entries to all private wine tastings throughout the region.

All beverages during the seven meals are provided in the price of the tour.

What this means is that ample red and white wines, still and sparkling bottled water, and coffee or tea will be served along with all seven meals provided as part of this tour.

Additional cocktails, aperitifs or digestives will be the responsibility of individuals.

Price Per Person - \$4149.00 (Price does not include airfare)

Single Supplement - \$625.00

(note: single guests may request to be paired to avoid the single supplement fee)

Martin&Keegan LLC cannot be held responsible for any personal expenses incurred due to changes in itinerary or trip cancellation.

- To make a reservation we require a \$750 deposit per person. You may pay with personal check made payable to Martin & Keegan LLC, or credit card via our website at www.martinkeegan.com
- The balance of your trip is due 60 days before trip departure. Refunds of deposits will be sent less a 10% cancellation fee provided that written cancellation is received at least 60 days prior to departure date. After that time any monies paid are forfeited. There is no refund for arriving late or leaving a trip early.
- Martin&Keegan LLC reserves the right to make changes to itineraries due to unforeseen circumstances. In the unlikely event that Martin&Keegan LLC has to cancel a tour, you will receive a full refund.
- Travel insurance is highly recommended and can be purchased at an additional charge through Access America. Please call us for information.
- Martin & Keegan LLC cannot assume responsibility for any fees relating to the cancellation of air tickets.
- Please do not purchase airfare or make travel plans until confirming we have at least 8 guests on our tour.

Maximum 14 guests; minimum 6 guests.



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