

Bordeaux Harvest Festival Itinerary

September 13-21, 2009

Day 1 Sunday, September 13

Médoc D

Pick up mid-afternoon from the airport, rail station or your hotel in Bordeaux, then drive to our exclusive accommodation at Chateau Giscours. This chateau, one of the Grand Crus Classées of the Médoc, has guest rooms for special visitors which we are able to use. After unpacking we will have a short orientation on the Bordeaux region. There will be some free time this afternoon to relax or take a stroll through the vineyards and the Polo field which is attached to this beautiful property. In the late afternoon we meet and enjoy a visit to **Chateau Giscours**, followed by dinner at the fine table of Le St. Julien, just a few minutes away.

Day 2 Monday, September 14

Médoc BLD

Start this morning with a visit to **Chateau Margaux** at 09:45, where we meet with Tina Bizard for a taste of this historic chateau's winemaking. We continue to **Chateau Du Tertre** at 11:00 with David Fennelly, the talented and very humble winemaker of the chateau, which has just finished a complete renovation and is making wine better than ever. Then on to **Chateau Maucaillou** at 12:30 for a visit of the chais and their wine wonderful museum followed by lunch in the owner's private dining room next to the winery. We visit the exotic buildings of **Chateau Cos d'Estournel** at 16:30, where we have a tasting of this famous top growth of St. Estèphe. After this day of winetasting you will need a little rest before dinner, which is in the dining room of the hotel Pavillon de Margaux overlooking the vineyards of Chateau Margaux.

Day 3 Tuesday, September 15

Médoc BLD

We start the day with a visit to **Chateau Beychevelle** in St. Julien at 10:00, one of the few underground cellars in the Médoc and one of the most beautiful chateaux also. We continue to **Chateau Lynch-Bages** for an 11:30 visit, a property that needs no introduction to Bordeaux lovers. After lunch we visit **Chateau Mouton Rothschild** at 14:30, then end the day with a visit to **Chateau Pichon Longueville** at 16:30. Tonight we dine at the table of Jean-Paul Barbier, a now world-famous chef in whose restaurant the *Lion d'Or* close to Margaux we often eat with some of the Médoc's best winemakers.

Day 4 Wednesday, September 16

Sauternes BLD

Check out of our accommodations and drive into the Pessac-Leognan region of Graves to visit **Domaine du Chevalier** at 10:30. This chateau produces wonderful red wines as well as possibly the best dry whites in Bordeaux. After what is often hailed as the best visit of the tour with Remi Edange, the estate's manager, he hosts us for an excellent lunch at our favorite restaurant just down the road. We drive on to visit **Chateau Haut-Brion** at 16:00, the only First Growth located in the Graves region and a classic property – one of Thomas Jefferson's favorites! We continue through the beautiful rolling countryside of Sauternes to Chateau d'Arche where we enjoy a wonderful stay, which includes dining amongst the vineyards of Sauternes.

Day 5 Thursday, September 17

St. Emilion BLD

We take our leave of Chateau d'Arche after a leisurely breakfast, and stop at **Chateau Suduiraut** at 10:00 for a taste of one of Sauternes' top producers. We continue with a visit to **Chateau d'Yquem**, dependant on whether they are closed for the harvest. Our gourmet lunch is in the village of Sauternes, featuring of course the wines of Sauternes. After lunch we head to St. Emilion, where at 15:30 we visit **Chateau Angélu**s, one of St. Emilion's finest Premier Grand Crus Classé estates. The rest of the afternoon is free to settle into your hotel and start to discover St. Emilion's rich cultural heritage. We stay tonight at the Hostellerie de Plaisance, right in the heart of town, and eat in their gourmet restaurant overlooking the rooftops of the village.

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Day 6 Friday, September 18

St. Emilion BLD

This morning we start out with a visit to the Premier Grand Crus Classé estate of **Chateau Figeac** at 10:00. Here we taste, talk and enjoy the St. Emilion countryside as we visit at one of the highest rated properties in St. Emilion. Just down the road in Pomerol we visit Nicolas de Baillencourt at **Chateau Gazin**, one of this tiny appellation's leading wineries. We will lunch in the square of St. Emilion and then at 14:30 take a short drive, or walk if you prefer, to **Canon la Gafelliere**. This is one of St. Emilion's star performers and also the home of *La Mondotte*, a wine which has received uncommon attention in the last two years. We continue with a visit to **Chateau Pavie** at 16:00, a 1st Growth of St. Emilion which has just undergone a total 2-year renovation, and now boasts a completely new winery. Dinner this evening is at the gourmet restaurant of le Clos du Roi right in the heart of the village.

Day 7 Saturday, September 19

St. Emilion BD

This morning we start out with a visit at **Chateau Quinault** at 10:00. The owner of this estate, Alain Raynaud, was for several years the president of the Union des Grands Crus of Bordeaux, but is more famous in the wine world for **his Quinault L'Enclos**, one of the top-selling micro-cuvées of Bordeaux. After this we leave you free to lunch on your own in the village and enjoy St. Emilion's many points of interest, not least the historic monolithic church and of course the many shops. If you prefer, we can opt to take a drive to see more of the surrounding vineyards this afternoon. We dine quite lightly this evening at a local bistro, as we don't want to miss the festivities of the street party which occupies the entire village tonight. Dancing, theatre, and a horse-drawn cart dispensing free wine through the streets attract most of the surrounding neighborhood to make St. Emilion "the" place to be on this occasion!

Day 8 Sunday, September 20

St. Emilion BL

Today is devoted to the Fete de Vendanges. We start with a buffet breakfast with the *Jurade* (the Confrérie of winemakers of St. Emilion) as they muster to don their ceremonial robes for their procession to the church for mass. During the mass and the investiture ceremonies which follow you are free to attend or find your own diversion for a while if you prefer, (sometimes we slip off to Libourne for a look at the open market). We meet again at about 12:30 to join the Jurade for lunch. Lunch occupies the rest of the afternoon, beginning with a champagne reception and followed by many courses and about a dozen of St. Emilion's finest wines. At the end of this marathon you will be glad of the chance to stretch your legs, as we walk out to the ramparts of the village to our vantage point to watch the Jurade make the proclamation of the harvest from the top of the *Tour du Roi*, the tall tower of the keep of the village. Needless to say, we leave dinner open tonight for those who still have an appetite!

Day 9 Monday, September 21

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Transfer to the airport or rail station for your connection to Paris or other destination.

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Price (double occupancy):

\$6395.00 per person

Single Supplement: \$980.00

Included:

8 nights Accommodation

8 Breakfasts

6 Lunches with fine wines, including the banquet of the Fete des Vendanges

7 Dinners with fine wines

Transportation by road during tour by air-conditioned minivan

Services of bi-lingual chauffeur/wine expert

All visits as outlined in itinerary

Note: Final itinerary may vary according to our guests' preferences, producers' schedules and other factors outside our control. However, the program will be essentially as outlined above. *Please tell us which chateaux you would like to add to the program if you do not see them here.*

To see photos from a similar trip, go to: www.avalon-tours.com/images/pixindex.html