BORDEAUX, RIOJA & THE BASQUE COUNTRY
Wine and Food of France and Northern Spain
August 31 – September 9, 2024
ITINERARY

Saturday, August 31
U.S. to France
Depart the U.S. on flights to France. (A group airport transfer is provided from the Bordeaux airport tomorrow.)

Sunday, September 1
Bordeaux, France
Arrive to Bordeaux and check in to our centrally located hotel. In the late afternoon, we depart for a walking tour of the historic center of Bordeaux with a local guide. Return to the hotel for an introductory presentation and tasting of the wines of Bordeaux hosted by James Lawther, Master of Wine. Afterwards, enjoy a classic dinner at the hotel. Hotel de Seze (D)

Monday, September 2
Médoc / Bordeaux
Today we drive north to the Médoc region, traveling along the left bank of the Gironde. Our first stop is at Pichon Baron, a picture postcard second-growth château in Pauillac. Enjoy the wines and lovely setting during our visit and lunch at the winery. Then continue to the remarkable new winery at Château Lynch Bages in the heart of the Haut Médoc on the Pauillac Plateau. Both of these wineries were featured in the Wine Spectator Top 10 wines of the year for 2023. Return to Bordeaux for a free evening. Hotel de Seze (B,L)

Tuesday, September 3
Saint-Émilion / Bordeaux
Today we visit the historic medieval town of Saint-Émilion (1-hour drive), a world heritage site and perhaps the world’s most beautiful wine village. Stroll the cobbled streets leading to a guided tour of the stunning Monolithic Church, followed by lunch at Château Tour St Christophe, a Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé, owned by the Kwok family. This afternoon experience Beau-Séjour Bécot, one of the elite properties of Saint-Émilion. Tonight dinner is a casual affair, at the delightful Baud et Millet bistro which specializes in a vast range of French cheeses. Hotel de Seze (B,L,D)

Wednesday, September 4
Sauternes / San Sebastián, Spain
We head south this morning, stopping in Sauternes where we visit Château Climens to savour the tranquility of the region and the noble rot wines before lunch in the excellent Le Cercle Giraud in the village of Sauternes, a fitting conclusion to the Bordeaux part of our journey. We then have a 3-hour drive to the Basque country. Arrive late this afternoon and check-in to our lovely hotel, overlooking La Concha beach in San Sebastian. In the evening we enjoy a walk with our local guides, leading to a gourmet pintxos (tapas) tour of the old town, visiting a few bars and restaurants to savor modern and traditional style tapas and wines to match. Londres y Inglaterra Hotel (B,L,D)

Thursday, September 5
San Sebastián, Spain
This morning we visit a top txakoli producer, Talai Berri in the lovely Basque coastal town of Zarautz. Txakoli is the most Basque of wines, a light spritzy white produced from local grapes grown on hillsides overlooking the Cantabrian Sea. Try some of the local tuna at the tasting. We also walk about 45 minutes on the Camino de Santiago to the winery on the way to the tasting. (A ride can be arranged
for those not interested in the walk.) Return to San Sebastian for a fine wine lunch at Rekondo, which has Spain’s most extensive and best-known wine cellar and was named as one of the world’s top five restaurant wine cellars by Wine Enthusiast. We match some stunning wines from Bordeaux and Rioja to a sumptuous Basque menu. We return to the hotel in the late afternoon and enjoy a free evening. Londres y Inglaterra Hotel (B,L)

Friday, September 6

Rioja Region, Spain / Villabuena de Alava

Leave San Sebastian, for a drive south to Haro, the capital of the Rioja wine region. We start with a visit to Roda, a recent Riojan icon that showcases the modern style of wine that challenges the traditional styles epitomized by its neighbors in the Barrio de la Estacion. We follow Roda with a visit to the old school at Muga, one of the very few wineries to retain its own cooperage. Enjoy a traditional roast lamb lunch at the winery, accompanied by a range of fine Muga wines. Then head into the Basque part of Rioja to the village that has the most wineries in Spain (45), Villabuena de Alava. Tonight we enjoy a simple tapas dinner with wines from the village. Viura Hotel (B,L,D)

Saturday, September 7

Rioja Region, Spain / Villabuena de Alava

This morning, take an optional walk through the vineyards leading to Luis Canas, a family-owned winery in the village, and the house wine in many 3-star Michelin restaurants across Spain. We then make a short drive to the next village to visit Marques de Riscal for a tasting in the Gehry designed city of wine. We then enjoy an extended lunch at Ventamonaival, in the smallest village in the world to have two Michelin stars. Savor sophisticated modern Riojan cuisine that accentuates local seasonal ingredients with imaginative wine pairings. In the late afternoon we return to the hotel for a free evening. Viura Hotel (B,L)

Sunday, September 8

Bilbao

Depart Rioja and travel north to Bilbao, the final stop on our journey. Drop off our bags at the Guggenheim Museum. Enjoy a farewell lunch at the Michelin star Ola de Martin Berasategui in the old town. Vincci Consulado Hotel (B,L)

Monday, September 9

Bilbao

Transfer to Bilbao Airport for flights home.

TOUR LEADER

JEREMY SHAW, the managing director of Iberian Wine Tours, splits his year between a family dairy farm in the hills near Saintfield in County Down, Northern Ireland and a home in the Spanish student city of Salamanca. He studied at the Sorbonne, put up by his aunt and French uncle from Bordeaux, which provoked an interest in good wine. This was stimulated further when Jeremy worked as a stagiaire at Steven Spurrier’s much renowned Académie du Vin in Paris followed by several jobs in the wine industry. He received a distinction in the WSET Advanced Certificate in Wines and Spirits, achieving the highest score in Northern Ireland in 2005. Today he leads wine tours all over the world, with a particular focus on France, Spain and Portugal.

WHAT TO EXPECT

To enjoy this program travelers must be in overall good health and able to walk 1-2 miles a day (on average) and be able to stand for several hours during touring. Participants should be comfortable walking on uneven surfaces such as cobblestone streets, and getting on and off tour buses without assistance. Drive times are 1½ to 3 hours on days we move hotels. Dinners in Spain and France are usually served late and are lively affairs.

DETAILS

DATES: August 31 - September 9, 2024

GROUP SIZE: Minimum 10, Maximum 20

COST: $7,395 per person, double occupancy

INCLUDED:
- Tour leader and food and wine expert Jeremy Shaw; activities as specified; airport transfers on designated group dates and time; transportation throughout; accommodations as specified (or similar); meals (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner, T=tapas) per itinerary; wine at lunches and dinners; bottled water on buses and during tours; special guest speakers; local guides; gratuities to local guides, driver, and for included group activities; pre-departure materials.

NOT INCLUDED:
- International air;
- Meals not specified as included;
- Optional outings and gratuities for those outings;
- Alcoholic beverages beyond wine at lunches and dinner;
- Travel insurance (recommended, information will be sent upon registration);
- Items of a purely personal nature.

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RESERVATION FORM  AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

BORDEAUX, RIOJA & THE BASQUE COUNTRY
Wine and Food of France and Northern Spain

Name 1
__________________________
Address _______________________________
Home Phone ___________________________
E-mail Address ________________________

Name 2
__________________________
City / State / Zip _______________________
Cell Phone ____________________________

SINGLE TRAVELERS ONLY: If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:
  ___ I plan to share accommodations with _______________________________
  OR  ___ I wish to have single accommodations.
  OR  ___ I’d like to know about possible roommates.
  I am a ___ smoker / ___ nonsmoker.

PAYMENT:
Here is my deposit of $__________ ($1,000 per person) for ____ place(s).
___ Enclosed is my check (payable to Commonwealth Club World Affairs).  OR  ___ Charge to my ____ Visa ____ MasterCard ____ American Express

Card Number ____________
Expires ________________
Security Code __________
Date ________________

Authorized Cardholder Signature ____________________________

We require membership in the Commonwealth Club World Affairs to travel with us. Please check one of the following options:
  ___ I am a current member of the Commonwealth Club World Affairs.
  ___ Please use the credit card information below to sign me up or renew my membership.
  ___ I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership.

Mail completed form to: Commonwealth Club Travel, 101 The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94105, or fax to (415) 597-6729.
For questions or to reserve by phone call (415) 597-6720.

___ I / We have read the Terms and Conditions for this program and agree to them.

Signature ____________________________

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Commonwealth Club World Affairs (CCWA) has contracted with Iberian Wine Tours (IWT) to organize this tour.

Reservations: A $1,000 per person deposit, along with a completed and signed Reservation Form, will reserve a place for participants on this program. The balance of the trip is due 90 days prior to departure and must be paid by check.

Cancellation and Refund Policy: Notification of cancellation must be received in writing. At the time we receive your written cancellation, the following penalties will apply:
  • 91 days or more prior to departure: 25% of the total
  • 90-60 days to departure: 1,000 deposit
  • 59-1 days prior to departure: 100% fare

Tour can also be cancelled due to low enrollment. Neither CCWA nor IWT accepts liability for cancellation penalties related to domestic or international airline tickets purchased in conjunction with the tour.

Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance: We strongly advise that all travelers purchase trip cancellation and interruption insurance as coverage against a covered unforeseen emergency that may force you to cancel or leave trip while it is in progress. A brochure describing coverage will be sent to you upon receipt of your reservation.

Medical Information: Participation in this program requires that you be in good health. It is essential that persons with any medical problems and related dietary restrictions make them known to us well before departure.

Itinerary Changes & Trip Delay: Itinerary is based on information available at the time of printing and is subject to change. We reserve the right to change a program’s dates, staff, itineraries, or accommodations as conditions warrant. If a trip must be delayed, or the itinerary changed, due to bad weather, road conditions, transportation delays, air-line schedules, government intervention, sickness or other contingency for which CCWA or IWT or its agents cannot make provision, the cost of delays or changes is not included.

Limitations of Liability: CCWA and IWT its Owners, Agents, and Employees act only as the agent for any transportation carrier, hotel, ground operator, or other suppliers of services connected with this program (“other providers”), and the other providers are solely responsible and liable for providing their respective services. CCWA and IWT shall not be held liable for (A) any damage to, or loss of, property or injury to, or death of, persons occasioned directly or indirectly by an act or omission of any other provider, including but not limited to any defect in any aircraft, or vehicle operated or provided by such other provider, and (B) any loss or damage due to delay, cancellation, or disruption in any manner caused by the laws, regulations, acts or failures to act, demands, orders, or interpositions of any government or any subdivision or agent thereof, or by acts of God, strikes, fire, flood, war, rebellion, terrorism, insurrection, sickness, quarantine, epidemics, pandemics, theft, or any other cause(s) beyond their control. The participant waives any claim against CCWA/IWT for any such loss, damage, injury, or death. By registering for the trip, the participant certifies that he/she does not have any mental, physical, or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other participants. CCWA/IWT shall not be liable for any air carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket to or from the departure city. Baggage and personal effects are at all times the sole responsibility of the traveler. Reasonable changes in the itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well-being of the passengers.

CST# 2096889-40