



LUXURY WINE TOUR OF THE THE BEST OF THE RHÔNE VALLEY

MAY 12TH – 16TH, 2025

— *Hosted by Rod Smith MW* —

US \$4,495 *per person*

From Lyon, the food capital of France, to the former papal residence of Avignon, gateway to Provence, a chance to taste some of the world’s finest Syrah from Côte-Rôtie and Hermitage; marvel at the nearly lost cradle of Viognier at Condrieu and delight in the warm-hearted, multi-varietal blends of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Follow the mighty Rhône River and meet and taste with some of the leading producers of the Northern and Southern Rhône as well as appeasing your gourmet palates along the way.

Each day includes visits and tastings at some of the most famous names in the Rhône Valley that have a long and notable history. We will have an insight into each property dealing with viticulture, winemaking and the untranslatable word “terroir.”

COME AND DISCOVER

SYRAH & VIOGNIER EXTRAVAGANZA with private visits to **E.Guigal**, **M. Chapoutier**, **Cave Yves Cuilleron** and **Cave de Tain**.

AN INSIDER’S LOOK at Châteauneuf-du-Pape with visits at **Domaine du Pégaü** and **Domaine la Barroche**, a welcome lunch at **Vignobles Alain Jaume** and a blow out final lunch and visit to the icon **Château la Nerthe**.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WINES of the Southern Rhône with visits to **Domaine des Bernardins** in **Beaumes de Venise** and **Château d’Aqueria** in **Tavel**.

SELECT ACCOMMODATION at Relais & Châteaux 4-star **La Pyramide** in Vienne and 5-star **Hotel d’Europe** in Avignon.

MICHELIN-STARRED DINING at **La Pyramide** (2-stars) in Vienne and **La Mirande** (1-star) in Avignon well as local fare, flavour, and wines hosted by our winery partners.



FINE VINTAGE
BY JAMES CLUER MW

www.FineVintageLtd.com

THE BEST OF THE RHÔNE VALLEY

YOUR HOST

ROD SMITH MW



Rod is currently the Vice-Chair of the Institute of Masters of Wine, and is a wine educator, marketer, and journalist based in the South of France. With a client list that includes some of the wealthiest, most discerning and demanding customers, Rod is the owner/director of the Riviera Wine Academy.

Prior to this, Rod worked for *Vins Sans Frontières* – the leading wine supplier to the superyacht industry in the South of France. He has also worked for a variety of wine importers and retailers in the UK and is an established WSET educator. Rod has been extensively involved in judging wine competitions in such countries as the UK, the USA, China, and Australia.

With a deep knowledge and passion for wines, Rod is an expert on the Rhône Valley and is the perfect gentleman and host for your tour.

PRICE

US \$4,495

This price includes accommodation, local transport, all tastings, all meals included in the itinerary, and all applicable taxes and gratuities. Flights and travel arrangements to Lyon, return journey from Avignon, items of a personal nature, and travel insurance are not included. We recommend that you contact your travel agent to arrange travel insurance.

There is a US \$650 supplement if you are travelling by yourself. This cost is to cover the cost of single-room occupancy at each of our hotels.

Deposit at booking: \$250 non-refundable administration booking fee
120 days from start: Remaining deposit (plus single supplement if applicable)



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This is a sample itinerary. The final itinerary should be almost identical once the last wineries confirm.

ITINERARY | DAY 1

MONDAY, MAY 12TH – CÔTE-RÔTIE & CONDRIEU

10:00 am - Depart for Ampuis in The Northern Rhône

Meet with James at Hotel Le Royal Lyon and depart for Ampuis in the Northern Rhône. Place Bellecour is located in central Lyon and is the city's largest square.

Meet at:

Hotel Le Royal Lyon

20 Place Bellecour, Lyon

Tel: +33 (0)4 78 37 57 31

www.lyonhotel-leroyal.com

E. GUIGAL

The house of Guigal needs little introduction – the largest producer of Condrieu and Côte-Rôtie, famous for the La La single vineyard wines (La Mouline, La Landonne and La Turque) and a major player in both the Northern and Southern Rhône. Get set for a major tasting and visit followed by a light buffet lunch hosted by Guigal. www.guigal.com

CAVE YVES CUILLERON

In their third generation of winemaking, the Cuilleron family are the largest landowners in the Northern Rhône. Their 75 hectares in the main *crus* of the region provide them with a portfolio that encompasses the length of the valley with a specialty in the Côte Rôtie and Condrieu. Another great tasting – and the day isn't over yet! www.cuilleron.com

LA PYRAMIDE

In the early evening, we will check into our Relais & Châteaux hotel in the town of Vienne, our home for the first 2 nights. La Pyramide is a temple of French gastronomy, the first establishment ever to obtain 3 Michelin stars under chef/owner Fernand Point in the 1930s. Alain Chapel, Paul Bocuse and the Troisgros brothers all trained here. We will celebrate the start of our tour with a gourmet dinner prepared by chef-owner Patrick Henrion, holder of 2 Michelin stars since 1992. www.lapyramide.com



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ITINERARY | DAY 2

TUESDAY, MAY 13TH – HERMITAGE

10:00 am - Depart hotel

M. CHAPOUTIER

What a way to start the day! The Tain l'Hermitage-based producer is the largest landowner on the hill of Hermitage, with other vineyards in a number of Northern and Southern Rhône appellations. And they are all cultivated biodynamically. Chapoutier is a serious player where quality is of an essence. We'll visit the famous hill and learn about the different sites and biodynamics before tasting a range of spectacular wines, including both red and the rare white Hermitage. We'll then complete the visit with lunch at the estate. www.chapoutier.com

CAVE DE TAIN

Just a short distance away within the town of Tain-l'Hermitage, our next visit is at one of the highest quality co-operatives in not just the Rhône Valley but in all of France: the Cave de Tain. Established in 1933, the wines of Cave de Tain are sourced from expert growers based in 5 different Northern Rhône *crus*: Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage, St.-Joseph, Cornas, and St.-Péray. The Cave de Tain has developed a great new centre to showcase their magnificent wines which highlight sustainable viticulture and are often vinified plot by plot. Our visit here will be a journey through these diverse styles of wines as we enjoy a tasting of five different appellations from select plots. www.cavedetain.com

FREE EVENING IN VIENNE

After a great day in Tain l'Hermitage we will return to La Pyramide at around 6:30pm. This is a free evening to explore Vienne or rest at the hotel and have a light dinner at their bistro, l'Espace PH3.



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ITINERARY | DAY 3

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH - CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

9:30 am – Check out and depart hotel

VIGNOBLES ALAIN JAUME

Our first stop in the Southern Rhône is Alain Jaume's Châteauneuf-du-Pape property, Domaine Grand Veneur. The family have been growing grapes in the area for nearly 200 years and today they favour organic wine production to protect the soil and the environment. A convivial lunch at the estate's Table de Alain Jaume awaits with a welcome meal based around local produce paired with 9 different Rhône wines. www.vignobles-alain-jaume.com

DOMAINE DES BERNARDINS

After lunch we head to the appellation of Beaumes de Venise where we visit with one of the appellation's leading producers, Domaine des Bernardins. Originally owned by Bernardin monks, the estate was purchased and developed by the Castaud family who are now in their 5th generation of ownership. They employ sustainable grape-growing methods with most vineyard activity being done by hand to ensure the highest quality of grapes possible. Their reds and whites are classic Southern Rhône blends based on Grenache Noir or Grenache Blanc, but it is their Muscat de Beaumes de Venise that is their signature style. Elegant and perfumed, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise rank among the very best of France's traditional fortified wines, and Domaine des Bernardins is widely recognized as the leader in this style of wine. www.domaine-des-bernardins.com

HOTEL D'EUROPE

We check into what is historically one of the oldest hotels in France (1799), Hotel d'Europe in Avignon. The 5-star hotel is ideally located in the centre of the city just two steps from the Palais des Papes and offers all the amenities and service of a luxury modern hotel. After a day of travel to the southern Rhône and tasting we'll have a free night to let you relax and/or explore Avignon. www.heurope.com



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ITINERARY | DAY 4

THURSDAY, MAY 15TH – TAVEL & CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

After three days of outstanding estates, wines, and dinners, today is a late start. Enjoy the morning to sleep in, wander the streets and boutiques of Avignon, or visit the famed *Palais des Papes* or *Pont d'Avignon*, each within a short walking distance from your hotel.

At 12:00, we will meet in the courtyard of the Hotel d'Europe for a light charcuterie lunch paired with refreshing wines before heading out for our 1:00 pm departure.

1:15 pm – Depart hotel

CHÂTEAU D'AQUERIA

Tavel is considered a serious rosé, one that can hold its own with the local cuisine, and Château d'Aqueria is one of the leading producers. The immense estate dates to the 18th century and is unique in the region for its classic design. The Olivier family owned the property since 1919 and are now in their 3rd generation of producing classic Tavel as well as fresh, stylish reds and whites from nearby Lirac. Sit back and enjoy a multi-coloured tasting where the skill of the vigneron really shows through. www.aqueria.com

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

The Barrot family like to say that Grenache flows in their veins, which might actually be the case as they have been cultivating grapes for 320 years and began producing their own wines in the mid-19th century. Today, brother and sister team Julien and Laetitia are at the helm with a focus on terroir-driven cuvées from their 15-hectare vineyard. Here, Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah are the main varieties but planted among them are the rare Terret Noir and Clairette Rose. Some of the vines date back to the mid-19th century, a rarity in Europe to have such a concentration of century-old vines. Along with a tasting of different vintages of their vines, this will be an informative journey into the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. www.domainelabarroche.com

LA MIRANDE

After a brief rest back at the hotel, we will walk a few blocks for our final gourmet dinner. Restaurant La Mirande is a Michelin-starred restaurant located opposite the Palais des Papes. Our 4-course dinner will highlight the best of seasonal fare but don't worry, the wines will do justice to the food. www.la-mirande.fr



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ITINERARY | DAY 5

FRIDAY, MAY 16TH – GIGONDAS & CAIRANNE

11:00 am – Check-out and depart hotel

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Château la Nerthe is the oldest and one of the largest domaines in Châteauneuf. Its history can be traced back to the 12th century with a reputation that has been recognized since the 16th. After phylloxera, the then owner, Commandant Joseph Ducos, introduced the idea of planting multiple grape varieties which was later taken up by the authorities when the AOC was created. In 1985 it was bought by the Richard family who have invested and upgraded the estate. Our visit will begin with a jaw-dropping tasting of their reds and whites followed by a blow-out celebration lunch hosted by La Nerthe. www.chateaulanerthe.fr

DOMAINE DU PÉGAÛ

The original 22ha property dates back to the early 17th century and began selling under the Pégau label in 1987. Within 5 short years, the Domaine du Pégau red Châteauneuf-du-Pape was rated among the top wines in the world. Today, with more than 70 hectares shared between the original estate and the 2012-acquired Château Pégau property, the wines of Pégau continue to be among the regions most highly regarded reds and white blends. www.pegau.com

5:30 PM – Tour Ends

From Domaine du Pégau, we will take you to Avignon Gare TGV by 5:30 pm for guests who wish to catch a TGV back to Lyon or Paris. The bus will then make a final stop in Avignon city centre at the Hotel d'Europe for those staying on.

Price: \$4,495 US per person based on double occupancy.

There is a \$650 US per person single supplement.

Space is limited to 20.

It will be a great trip with lots of fine wine, great food, amazing estates, two luxury hotels, a nice amount of wine education and many, many laughs. Should you have any questions please info@finevintageltd.com.

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