



LUXURY WINE TOUR OF THE RHÔNE VALLEY

MAY 12TH – 16TH, 2025

— *Hosted by Rod Smith MW* —

US \$4,995 *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, Delas, Stéphane Ogier,** and **Jaboulet.**

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

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

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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 \$4,995

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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ITINERARY | DAY 1

MONDAY, MAY 12TH – CÔTE-RÔTIE & CONDRIEU

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

Meet with Rod 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

DOMAINE STEPHANE OGIER

Stéphane Ogier is the driving force behind this dynamic, 7th generation family domaine. We will visit the new winery and taste some of his top-flight Condrieu and Côte-Rôtie as well as the Syrah from the re-established Seyssuel vineyard on the other side of the Rhone. www.stephaneogier.fr

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 Henriroux, 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

DELAS FRÈRES

This exceptional producer, which was founded in 1835, joined the illustrious Roederer Group in 1993 and since then there has been a long-term plan of continuous improvement. Delas own wonderful vineyards in Hermitage and Crozes-Hermitage; vineyards whose ancient stone walls have been upgraded and breathe new life. The elegant architecture of the new is replete with smaller, modern concrete vats that allow for each vineyard plot to be vinified separately for maximum terroir expression. Delas is now back on top-form with their top wines rivaling the very best in the region and that can age marvelously in bottle. www.delas.com

JABOULET

With more than 170 years of grape-growing and winemaking, Paul Jaboulet Aîné (a.k.a. Jaboulet) is one of the Rhone Valley's most iconic producers. Now in the second-generation of ownership by the Frey family, owner and winemaker Caroline Frey adheres to a policy that great wines must come from great grapes. The estate vineyards have been certified organic since 2013 and the company invests in regional bio-diversity. The wines are masterful blends, whether it be the entry-level Parellele 45 (arguably the world's top-selling Côtes du Rhône) up through to the red Hermitage *La Chapelle* – arguably one of France's greatest Syrahs. In between are excellent wines, both red and white, from different Northern and Southern Rhône *crus*. www.jaboulet.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. We recommend making reservations ahead of time for 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 Beaugues 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 Beaugues de Venise that is their signature style. Elegant and perfumed, Muscat de Beaugues 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

Following lunch we will take a short drive for a hilltop panoramic view of Châteauneuf-du-Pape at the foot of the Pope's former summer palace. From there, we will have some free time to wander the shop- and café-lined lanes of the village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape itself.

5:15 PM – Tour Ends

We will depart Châteauneuf-du-Pape at 4:30pm to take you to Avignon TGV station by 5:15 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: \$4,995 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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