

AMELIA DALTON^{LTD}

TRAVEL



NORTHERN & SOUTHERN RHÔNE

A specialist WINE TOUR with James Price & Amelia Dalton

Are there wines to rival the greatest First Growths of Bordeaux and the Grand Crus of Burgundy?

Robert Parker's answer is a resounding

"YES! They are found among the finest wines of the Rhône Valley."

"The Rhône Valley is one of the greatest wine regions of the world, producing wines of depth and complexity, power and grace. The principle red grapes used are the bastions of the Rhône: Grenache in the south, giving the wines power, juiciness and the 'garrigue' herb flavours so synonymous with Châteauneuf du Pape. In the north Syrah, which also gives the wines power, together with grace, finesse and the classic pepper and smokey flavours best known in the Côte Rôtie and Hermitage". James Price

**We will be tasting wines from the greatest producers.
Château de Beaucastel, Maison Chapoutier and
Domaine René Rostaing.**

**Dine in Michelin starred restaurants and have a
vineyard picnic.**

The Rhône Valley was the gateway to France for the Phoenicians, Greeks and the Romans, who introduced vines: whether they came from Shiraz in Persia or Syracuse in Sicily is still disputed. This river route resulted in the founding of churches and abbeys to control this lucrative trade, which increased dramatically when the Pope moved to Avignon in the 13th century. During Napoleonic times the area flourished and the reputation of the wine grew, both for their quality and supposed medicinal qualities.

The area also has a superb gastronomic tradition being influenced by the cuisines of Burgundy, Provence, Savoy and the Auvergne.



This will be a wine trip to savour and remember.

Day 1: Wednesday 11th June 2014: Marseille – Orange

After meeting at Marseille airport we transfer (approx. 1.5 hours) to **Orange** with its famous Roman theatre and triumphal arch to stay two nights at the simple, 3 star **Hôtel Arene Kúlme**, with indoor and outdoor pool, gym and small terrace. After an introduction to the Rhône area and its wines by James, we walk through the town to restaurant **Le Parvis** for a seasonal June dinner of local specialities.

Day 2: Thursday 12th June: Our visits and tastings with growers will begin at **Château de Beaucastel** with 'A *Geographical Tour of the Southern Rhône*'. The Perrin family are well known for their controversial vinification 'à chaud' as well as for producing an impressive portfolio of top-end world classics: a selection of which will accompany our lunch in nearby **Gigondas** at the Beaucastel family restaurant. In the afternoon we stay in **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** to visit **Domaine de la Vieille Julienne** where the grapes are picked by hand and sorted in the vineyard: some of their Grenache vines are over 100 years old. Returning to the beautiful town of **Orange**, the evening will be free to explore and dine where you wish, with perhaps a visit to the Roman Theatre.

Day 3: Friday 13th June: This morning we drive north along the ancient trade route of the Rhône, moving from the Midi-influenced south to the cooler vineyards of **Condrieu** to the south of the **Côte Rôtie**, one of France's smallest appellations. We visit **Domaine Réne Rostaing** producing elegant wines with real depth and then lunch in a simple vigneron restaurant in **Ampuis**, famous for their local dishes and cellar, with perhaps time for an afternoon stroll in the vineyards of **Condrieu**. Tonight we stay in **Valence**, situated on a terrace overlooking the Rhône, where the museum houses remarkable mosaics in the former bishop's palace. From the **Hôtel Les Négociants**, close to the museum and cathedral, we can wander the medieval streets to choose where to dine from amongst the many small bars and restaurants.

Day 4: Saturday 14th June: Leaving Valence after breakfast, we drive the short distance to **Tain l'Hermitage** for a splendid morning at long-established **Maison Chapoutier**. Quality has soared since **Michel Chapoutier** took control in 1988. Once criticised for the length of time the wine spent in old wood, wines now have a maximum of eighteen months in small oak casks and all are *unfined* and *unfiltered*, "Filtering a wine is like making love with a condom" says **Michel**. We stay at Chapoutier for lunch to enjoy wines from their **Sélections Parcellaires** - some of the most celebrated and complex wines in the entire Rhône Valley. Tonight we dine at **Maison Pic** where Anne-Sophie Pic has followed in the family's gastronomic traditions. After working in Japan and America, she has achieved three Michelin stars in her much acclaimed restaurant with dishes bursting with local flavours.

Day 5: Sunday 15th June: By contrast this morning we visit a new rising star – **Natacha Chave**. In 2007 she acquired a plot of old vines in **Crozes-Hermitage**, to which she has added some new plantings. Her wines, sold under the name **Domaine Aléofane**, are known for their gorgeous violet scent and excellent structure. A simple picnic, organised by Natacha in the vineyards nearby will provide a memorable finish to our visit to experience the great wines of the Rhône.



JAMES PRICE: James has been in the wine trade for 30 years. He was the founder and co-owner of one of London's leading wine merchants and responsible for the company's buying. He has worked with many of the most famous wine growers, domaines and châteaux from all over the world and has a wealth of experience working with both private and corporate clients. James is now the owner of *Professional Wine Services* which provides tailor-made wine advice and purchasing consultancy for private clients, restaurants and smaller wine merchants. If pushed he will say that his favourite wine regions are the Rhône and Burgundy.



Wednesday 11th – Sunday 15th June 2014

£1,495 per person *

Sole occupancy room supplement £135

Deposit £350 per person (non-refundable)

The Cost includes:

- accommodation in hotels as mentioned (or of a similar quality) including breakfast, taxes and service charges
- meals as mentioned (3 Lunches, 1 picnic, 2 Dinners,) with wine chosen by James.
- visits and tastings as described (or of a similar quality should a grower make an alteration)
- transfers from/to Marseille airport connecting only with the flights suggested
- private vehicle transport throughout as mentioned above
- gratuities to restaurants and drivers
- services of wine expert and tour leader throughout



Cost does NOT include:

- arrival at and departure from Marseille airport
- items of a personal nature, e.g. excess luggage / phone calls / laundry.
- travel insurance.
- meals and transport unless specified in the itinerary
- government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme

FLIGHTS: the tour cost does not include flights, but I am happy to help. The transfers at the start and finish of the tour will connect only with the flights below. Alternatively you are welcome to join the party in Orange.

11th June BA 368 ETD LHR **Terminal 1** 13.15 / ETA Marseille 16.10

15th June BA 369 ETD 17.00 Marseille / ETA 18.00 LHR **Terminal 1**



* the cost for this tour is based on exchange rates published in the Financial Times on 12/09/2014, namely £1 = €1.185