

*A Custom Designed Itinerary to
Provence, Lyon, Burgundy & Paris
By*

IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS

Ref: 600102

Day 1: MARSEILLES / AVIGNON. Upon arrival in Marseilles, we meet our English-speaking escort and driver, who will remain with us for the duration of the tour. We travel to Avignon for two nights at **Hotel Cloitre St Louis**, a first class hotel set in a historical building within the walls. It was renovated by Jean Nouvel, the same architect who worked on the Orsay Museum, and here again, modern is skillfully blended with the old architecture. This evening we gather for a welcome dinner at Restaurant Christian Etienne (drinks not included).



Restaurant Christian Etienne, in the old palace of the town principal, is a magical place where the past is visible in the dining room on the painted ceilings and the painted frescoes. Christian Etienne, "Master Chef of France," invites you to taste his specialties. Within the space of a few years, his talent attracted the local folk, as well as connoisseurs passing through. He obtained his first star in the famous Michelin guide, and became a "Maître Cuisinier de France", a select group of recognized French chefs. He installed his new restaurant in a [historic monument](#) next to the famous Palace of the Popes, a palace that had housed many historic personalities, a place of beauty quite fitting to his own warm welcome. D

Day 2: AVIGNON / PERTUIS. After breakfast, a morning guided visit of the city of Avignon, including the Pope's Palace and the Saint-Bénézet Bridge. Unique and seducing, the city first started to change with the arrival of the Pope. The Pope's Palace was rising, meanwhile the Cardinal's Palace was under construction, and the Gothic style was dominating the Romanesque style in the churches. With the new style, new schools were emerging as well as hospitals and religious institutions. In 1355 the construction of the ramparts to protect the city from all sorts of attacks began, and with their perimeter of 4.3 km (today entirely conserved) Avignon became the second important city in France after Paris. Nowadays the heritage of that period provides the largest and the most beautiful ensemble of Gothic art in Europe. Upon divine order a young shepherd, Bénézet, edified the well-known bridge of Avignon according to legend. Finished in 1185, it was the main bridge on the Rhone between Lyon and the sea. Destroyed in 1226, rebuilt several times afterwards, today it is only a ruin with 4 arches and a chapel listed in world patrimony. There is the origin of the famous children song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon". The Pope's Palace was the siege of the pontifical government as well as the home of the Pope. It was edified in two different stages: the austere ancient part was built between 1334 and 1342 by Benoît XII, the latter part edified and decorated between 1342 and 1352 by his successor Clément VI. It has kept a wonderful series of wall frescos dating back to the XIV century.



An afternoon guided visit and wine tasting at Chateau Val Joanis in Pertuis. Visit the cellar and the gardens. Then the sommeliers will introduce us to the AOC Côtes du Luberon wines, Chateau and Reserve. Wine tasting and olive oil tasting included. Transfer back to the hotel – dinner on our own. **B**

DAY 3: AVIGNON / MONTELMAR / LYON. Today we depart Avignon and drive to Lyon, stopping at Montélimar for a visit of the Chaudron d'Or (or Nougathèque). Le Chaudron d'Or is a craft fabric of Nougat de Montélimar, created in 1949 and producing an approximate 50 tons of nougat per annum. After lunch we travel to Lyon, where we enjoy a sightseeing tour of the city including a visit to the Botanical Garden Parc de La Tete. 2,000 years of history have left their mark on the city landscape. Lyon's rich heritage, passed down through the ages, tells the story of a great city. Capital of Gaul under the Roman Empire, major center of culture and trading during the Renaissance, and a strong industrial breeding ground in the nineteenth century, Lyon has become a large European metropolis, benefiting from the influences that have swept across its beautiful landscape. Now included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Lyon is categorized along with prestigious cities such as Venice or Prague. You will pass by the old Roman vestiges, the theatre and the Odeon, Fourvière Basilica, the old city and Bellecour Square... Check in at the four star hotel, the **Radisson Lyon Part Dieu**. Dinner on our own this evening. **B**



DAY 4: LYON / ECULLY / BEAUJOLAIS / LYON. Today will be dedicated to a full day guided excursion to Ecully and the Beaujolais region, starting with a cooking demonstration, followed by lunch, at the Culinary School operating under the patronage of Paul Bocuse in Ecully...*The Château du Vivier, home of the Paul Bocuse Ecole des Arts Culinaires, stands in a park in Lyon's suburb of Ecully. The culinary school is adjoining the chateau. The culinary academy has designed a special program for cooking enthusiasts who want to learn about traditions and techniques of French cuisine.* In the afternoon drive on the picturesque road of the Beaujolais region vineyards. We will enjoy a wine tasting and a wine cellar visit at the Chateau de Rochebonne. We return to Lyon for an evening at leisure. **B, L**



DAY 5: LYON / BEAUNE. After a morning guided visit to a production site of the local candy specialty 'Lyonnais Cocoons', we depart for Beaune, the wine capital of the Burgundy region. We enjoy a city tour of Beaune including a visit of the Hospice de Beaune and the unique Hôtel Dieu. Beaune was for a short period the capital of the Dukes of Burgundy, then a busy commercial centre for cloth and wine industries. Hotel Dieu, with its magnificent multicolored roof, dates back to the period of the Valois Dukes and bears witness to the munificence of the



period: this jewel of Gothic art, center of medieval city, and former hospital, houses the precious Last Judgment altar. After the death of the last Valois Duke, Beaune reintegrated the French kingdom, the town thus sharing the history of France. It became the centre for commerce of Burgundy's fine wines. We check into our hotel, **Le Cep**, for the next two nights. This four star hotel owes its charm and

warm atmosphere to the union of many old homes built between the 14th and 18th centuries. Each of the 57 rooms is unique and furnished with antiques. Le Cep is in the historic heart of the town. This evening we will be on our own. **B**

DAY 6: BEAUNE / WINE ROAD. This morning we travel through the Burgundy vineyards, to



Clos de Vougeot for a visit of the famous headquarters of the wine-brotherhood... As early as the XII century the monks of Cîteaux had begun cultivating vineyards, selecting varieties and continually improving ways of pruning and growing them. They had to erect the kind of building that the huge extent of their lands required. The first buildings were a place to house the vats with four monumental winepresses, and the partly underground storeroom.

In 1551, Dom Loisier, the 48th Abbot of Cîteaux decided to add to the existing buildings a large country house, a chateau amid the vines, whose splendor would be in tune with the sobriety of the original buildings. Since 1949, the Chateau of the Clos Vougeot has been a listed monument. We drive along the wine road of the 'Côte d'Or' region, passing by famous places such as Gevrey-Chambertin, Chambolle-Musigny, Nuits Saint-Georges, and tasting at a local cellar. We return to Beaune for an evening at leisure. **B**

DAY 7: BEAUNE / DIJON / VEZELAY / PARIS. Departure to Dijon for a visit of the capital of the Dukes of Burgundy...

The city, which long ago outgrew its early Roman walls, is filled with architectural styles and art representing ages past. In the third century the Romans erected a wall, which was to become the heart of the ancient city around which the suburbs and abbeys developed until the great fire of 1137. In the 14th and 15th centuries the Valois Dukes gave their dwellings its present aspect. Around the palace, prominent people in the city built elegant residences for themselves, such as the Hôtel Chambellan or the Hôtel Morel on Rue des Forges. Dijon became the capital of the most powerful dukes of the Middle



Ages in Western Europe. When King Francis 1st first came to Dijon he is said to have exclaimed: "What an extraordinary city with its one hundred church towers!" From 1700 the city became a provincial capital with its university, its bishopric, and its art and music school. The creation of the Academy of Arts and Literature and the botanical garden play a great part in giving the city a modern image around the Palace of the Dukes. Another stop will be made at Jardin de L'Arquebuse. Used since the 16th-century by the Harquebusiers, the gardens were bequeathed to the city on 1808. Located in the city centre and covering some 5.5 hectares, the gardens are divided into three parts: the central part (botanical gardens) allows the study of the Burgundian flora; the eastern part contains the Natural History Museum and a space composed of lawns and flower-beds, ending with an outdoor theatre; and the Southern part, which is used for recreational activities (aviary, games, etc.) A rose garden, created in 2004, presents over 200 varieties of roses. The garden is crossed by the Raines, a stream on which various kinds of ducks can be seen. Various architectural elements enhance the gardens: small loggias, temple d'amour, statues, etc. We continue to Paris, with a stop in the town of Vezelay...



Vezelay stands frozen in time. On a hill 360 feet above the surrounding countryside its ramparts and old houses, with sculptured doors, corbelled staircases and windows, characterize the town. Main place of interest for Christendom and major spot for history and history of the arts, the Vezelay St Mary Magdalene Basilica, is listed as one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites. Shortly after its foundation in the 9th century, the Benedictine abbey of Vézelay acquired the relics of St Mary Magdalene and since then it has been an important place of pilgrimage. St Bernard preached the Second Crusade there in 1146 and Richard the Lion Heart and Philip II Augustus met here to leave for the Third Crusade in 1190.

With its sculpted capitals and portal, the Madeleine of Vézelay, a 12th-century monastic church, is a masterpiece of Burgundian Romanesque art and architecture. Lunch at the gastronomic restaurant L'Espérance of Marc Meneau. *L'Espérance, in the lovely countryside of Burgundy, is the restaurant of one of France's most creative and innovative chefs, Marc Meneau. In other words, a haute cuisine restaurant. The main and original building is an old mill with two millstreams, providing a charming watery ambiance, allowing half a dozen white painted Japanese style bridges, heavy with wild roses and climbing vines. One of the most celebrated restaurants in Burgundy, with three stars in the Michelin guide.* Upon arrival in Paris we check into the **Sofitel Le Parc**, a moderate deluxe property located close to the Eiffel Tower. Three nights included here. **B, L**

DAY 8: PARIS. This morning we enjoy an orientation tour of the capital, passing by the major monuments and sights such as the Arch of Triumph, the Champs-Élysées Avenue, Concorde Square, Eiffel Tower, Invalides, Opera Garnier Palace, Sacred Heart, Louvre and Notre-Dame Cathedral. Late this morning we have a visit of the Christofle Museum, dedicated to fine silverware. *The Christofle firm was founded by Charles Bouilhet-Christofle, supplier of King Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. You will find contemporary pieces as well as work from the Art Nouveau and Art Deco periods.* Time for lunch on our own and this afternoon a visit to Parc de Bagatelle, known for its rose garden and the international rose contest every year in June; you will be surprised to discover its theme gardens, the iris garden, the flowered kitchen garden, and the garden of perennials. Return to our hotel for an evening on our own. **B**



DAY 9: PARIS. This morning we attend a cooking demonstration with sampling of the dishes and a glass of champagne in the famous cooking school, Ritz Escoffier, at the distinguished Ritz Hotel.... Auguste Escoffier, *the first chef at the Ritz Paris and friend of the hotel's founder, Cesar Ritz, is largely responsible for developing haute gastronomy, a high style of cooking: elegantly prepared and served. Here he created some of the most legendary dishes of all time, including the dessert Peach Melba, created to honor the great soprano, Nellie Melba. The Ritz Paris tradition of service is known worldwide as a symbol of perfection.* This afternoon a visit to Giverny, where Impressionist painter, Claude Monet, lived from 1883 to 1926. Here he created a garden that became his favorite subject to paint. The water garden has been immortalized in his many paintings of the Water Lilies - which can be seen at the Orangerie Museum in Paris. Spring or summer is the best time to visit the gardens. Monet's house can also be seen, as well as the American Impressionist Museum. Americans were the ones who re-planted the garden the way it had been created by Monet, after it had been abandoned for years. (Closed on Mondays.) Late this afternoon return to the city for a farewell dinner in a typical Parisian restaurant (wine included). **B, D**



DAY 10: DEPART. After breakfast, we are transferred to the airport in time for our flight home. **B**

Note: This is a sample itinerary

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