

THE WALKING PARTY

TREADING THE GRAPE

Price: 2890 euros per person Single supplement : 360 euros



Your chateau



Welcoming grape pickers

Day 1 You will be met at Toulouse airport by James and driven to your chateau. This is a beautiful and very comfortable eighteenth century private chateau. It sits within the chestnut woods of the lovely lush Dordogne. Its rooms are full of character. Dinner will be with James and Diana and cooked by Sylvie and washed down with a well aged Bordeaux. All wines at the chateau have been carefully selected from James and Diana's cellar.

Day 2 Your first French breakfast at the table laden with croissants and fruit and hot coffee before we set off for the morning market in the small medieval town of Issigeac. From there we will go by car to the appellation of Saussignac. A short walk to the chateau of Richard Doughty for a picnic. It is thanks really to Richard's efforts that Saussignac exists as an appellation. His '*Coup de Coeur*' has been compared by Robert Parker to 75% d'Yquem and 25% Climens! From here we walk to Saussignac where the vehicles will be waiting to take us to Chateau Monbazillac – a huge historical chateau that sits above the Bergerac plain. A brief visit inside before returning to the chateau for tea. Dinner at the chateau. *Walk: 7km*

Day 3 In the morning we start off by car towards the vineyards of Cahors and the Quercy Blanc. Drop off for a walk to the beautiful bastide of Monpazier where we will have lunch in the Place des Cornières. Monpazier is probably the most perfect bastide existing and was founded in 1282 by Edward 1st. After lunch we shall continue by car to the small Domaine d'Ardailoux in the Bouriane. A charming domaine of rolling vineyards where, in the sideritic soil, we see Burgundian grape types being planted. As well as Gamay and his award winning Chardonnay, an interesting sweet white wine from late picked Sauvignon grapes is produced here. We continue by car to your charming restored manor house where we will have tea on the terrace. You spend the next two nights here. All bedrooms are extremely comfortable and have bathrooms en suite. *Walk: 8km*

Day 4 We set off by car towards the terraces of vineyards. A leisurely walk through the vines where the famous black wine of Cahors is produced. We will pass by several of the more important Cahors chateaux today visiting in particular Chateau du Cèdre and Clos Triguédina. Here you will see and taste wines of great variety and incredible *umppf*: Pascale Verhaege's 'GC' and Jean Luc Baldès' 'Vin de Lune Moelleux' and 'New Black Wine' in particular. We lunch in the delightful 'La Terrasse' at Grezels where Monsieur Pignières pours out the wine in plenty insisting that it is much better for you than water! We carry on by foot for a walk to Saint Matré via Domaine du Garinet. (Those who would like can be driven back to the manor house). This indeed is producing one of the best Cahors. Outrageously well priced. The cars will be at Saint Matré to take us back to your manor house for tea. *Walk: 7km.*

Day 5 After a delicious breakfast we move off by car to Saint Matré. Our morning walk will take us through the gentle slopes of the Quercy Blanc before we arrive at Chateau Figeac for our wine tasting session with Minette Constant, MW. Minette is a great friend and also a great connoisseur; a Master of Wine who will be able to talk to us about the finer points and differences of tasting wines from South West France in particular. One of Diana's picnic lunches follows with a table laden with local produce. After lunch we will take the long drive back to the Dordogne. Time to relax in a hot bath before dinner and wine. *Walk: 11km.*

Day 6 Another large French breakfast before we set off for Chateau Tour des Gendres whose 'Anthologia' has been described by Clive Coates MW as one of the best Sauvignon Blancs in the world. We will discuss the use of wider shorter vats and 'pigeage' before a tasting and moving on in the vehicles towards Chateau Grande Maison. This is run by Thierry Desprès who produces one of the most succulent Monbazillac wines you could imagine. A short 'before lunch' walk up hill through the vineyards for another of one of Diana's delicious picnic lunches at this lovely fortified château. We will drink some of the wonderful reds and whites that Thierry produces with the picnic and then continue by foot to the extraordinary Chateau Bridoire once owned by Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic who gave diamonds to Giscard d'Estaing and was later accused of cannibalism. This is under restoration so we cannot visit it but is extraordinary also from the outside! Return by car to your chateau before a *sortie* into Bergerac for an excellent dinner at 'L'Imparfait' – the best restaurant in town with wonderful fish and of course excellent wines. *Walk: 6km.*

Day 7 We leave after breakfast in the vehicles for Chateau Puypezat-Rosette. Rosette is the smallest appellation near Bergerac and we will learn of the difficulties of standing up for oneself against the south bank appellations. It goes back to the Catholics and the Protestants! A tasting of this delicious light sweet white wine (an excellent aperitif) before setting off by car to Chateau Tiregand of the famous de Saint Exupery family. This is a big affair and they lay claim to being in the top three Pécharmants of the area. The Count speaks very lucidly of winemaking in general and this is therefore an excellent way to round the week off. A tasting of the great Pécharmant reds he produces before we return to the chateau for the last of Diana's picnic lunches. In the afternoon an optional walk down to the pretty village of St Georges du Monclard. Otherwise an afternoon to relax, swim, read, paint etc. *Walk: optional 6km*

Day 8 Return to Toulouse airport. We drive back through the famous and pretty village of Saint Emilion where we stop for lunch before leaving to catch the mid afternoon flight back home.



Chateau Richard, Saussignac



The effects of wine

NOTE: Itinerary subject to change according to local conditions. All mileages shown are approximate.

Please note also that it is very advisable to come down by car as you can take cases of wine home with you. You will not regret it! It is exceptionally good value. Bottles that may be costing you 8 euros taste like double the price. Also some rare presentation wines that would be delicious for connoisseurs.n