

***A wine tour
with BKWine***



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Wine and Gastronomy in Champagne

Sparkling Grand Finale with Dinners at a Michelin Star Restaurant

November 12-16, 2008

Champagne... Luxury, celebration and of course excellent wines. But champagne is not just wines. There is also an outstanding gastronomy that we will pay special attention to on this trip.



We will visit some world famous champagne houses and some small high-quality family producers. And we will enjoy the *Champenoise* gastronomy at our dinners (in a one-star restaurant!) and at the lunches, some of which will be with, and as guests of, champagne producers. Is drinking champagne all through a meal a good idea? Decide for yourself!

When the autumn is turning darker and darker put a little sparkle in it by joining us on this trip to indulge in champagne for three days, including some of the gastronomic specialities of the region.

This is your occasion to go into details in understanding champagne. Why is champagne different from other sparkling wines? Where is it grown? On what kind of soil? And how is it made? What about *dégorgement*, *dosage* and *pupitres*? You will go home with the understanding that, well, it might be expensive, but it's well worth the money, considering how it is born. And it's very good practice for the upcoming New Year.



On this trip French gastronomy will be particularly featured. We will stay two night in the auberge/hotel "Aux Armes de Champagne" where we will also have dinner in their Michelin-starred restaurant.

Aux Armes de Champagne is a cosy but refined auberge in the small town l'Epine a little bit to the east of Epernay. It only has some 600 inhabitants but they can boast a splendid basilica that can rival the cathedral in Reims! It is on the UNESCO world heritage list.



We will have a mix of visits to the great (and big) champagne “houses” and smaller family run growers. Some of the lunches will be at wine growers’ where we will have the opportunity to see how you can combine a full meal with drinking “just” champagne.

We begin the first day by meeting in Reims (pronounced rather like “rans”, like in “it rains” but without the “i” if you understand what I mean – not that it will be raining when we’re there) where we will spend the first night in a centrally located hotel. Reims is an hour and a half’s drive straight east of Paris (traffic permitting) or two hours from Calais. This is where you find some of the famous champagne houses with magnificent installations, such as Pommery (with it’s Tudor style winery), Taittinger, Veuve Clicquot, Ruinart, Mumm...

The cathedral in Reims is one of the most beautiful in all of France and it has had its fair share of ordeal over the years. It survived heavy bombing during the first world war but many of the stained glass windows survived (e.g. the famous Rosette). An interesting detail is one latter time stained glass window designed by Marc Chagall.



On Saturday night, the last day together, we will return to Reims for a final evening in Champagne.

Programme

Preliminary program.

For more details, contact BKWine.

Wednesday, November 12

Arrival in Reims. Check in at our hotel, centrally located. Free evening.

Thursday, November 13 – Montagne de Reims

Our buss will pick us up at the hotel and we will head out to discover Champagne (the region) and champagne (the wine).

Just south of the city of Reims we head into the Montagne de Reims, the region famous for its Grand Cru villages, one after the other, making wine primarily from the Pinot Noir grape. We will drive through villages with famous names such as Mailly, Verzenay, Verzy, Bouzy and Aÿ. We will visit one or two Montagne de Reims growers in the morning (Champagne Tarlant, Philipponat, Marc Harbrart, Billecart-Salmon...).



We will have a buffet lunch with one champagne producer.

Late afternoon we will head for our next destination which is Aux Armes de Champagne, the hotel where we will be staying for the following two nights. After check-in and perhaps some time to relax (but we don't recommend the outdoor pool at this time of year) we will meet in the bar for an aperitif. Philippe Zeiger, our chef at the restaurant, has promised a delicious four course dinner – if the market allows, something from the sea. His motto: start with well known raw materials and create something unexpected...



Friday, November 14 – Côtes des Blancs

Today we will head south to visit the Côtes-des-Blancs, where the Chardonnay grape is king.

The region is full of charming little villages with famous Grand Cru names: Mesnil-sur-Ogier, Cramant, Avize,... We will visit producers such as Champagne Duval-Leroy, Champagne Pierre Gimmonet or Champagne Pierre Peters.



We will have lunch at one of the producer's that we visit.

Late afternoon we will return to l'Epine and you will have time for a visit to the basilica, a walk in the town or just some relaxation at the hotel. And soon it is time for dinner where we will present you with a different selection of *chamenois* specialities in modern interpretation.



Saturday, November 15 – The “Big Houses” vs. Small Family Growers

We will check out of the Aux Armes de Champagne in the morning to go and visit one of the “big and famous” champagne houses. Here we will see millions of bottles



and endless underground corridors with wine... All at perfect temperature and humidity.

After a delicious lunch – with champagne – we will head for our next visit that will be a small family grower, making wine from grapes grown organically, fermenting his wines in barrels to achieve added depth and complexity. This is also your chance to ask all the questions that you have not yet had answered!



Late afternoon we will check in to our hotel in Reims and the evening is free to discover a local restaurant or the night life.

Perhaps you will head for the Brasserie Boulingrin next to the old food market halls, a classic amongst Reims restaurant. Beautiful Art Deco interior and very bustling just as it should be in a French brasserie.



Sunday, November 16

The trip has come to an end and you will return home at your leisure.

About the wine estates we visit

We want you to experience the best and the most interesting estates. Therefore, we put a lot of effort into finding really good producers to visit. Contrary to what one might think, the most exciting wine producers are not always the "famous names". Often the passionately engaging visits happen when you meet the winemaker or the owner himself (or quite often herself) and his family.



Frequently detailed discussions get underway where a true understanding of how things really “work” develops, we may even stay and have lunch at the winery (unlike in the US many of these do not have purpose-built restaurants). This is also why our trips do not have large numbers of visits on the programme. Even so, we regularly run short of time due to conversations lasting a lot longer than intended and where more and more wines are brought out to taste, somehow time flies.

Our trips are usually a mixture of small family producers and larger, well known wine estates - carefully selected to give you the unique wine experience.

What will you remember the most: the charming winery staff guide with perfect English, or the passionate winemaker who won't let you go until you've tasted yet another of his wines?

Facts

Dates: November 12-16, 2008

Price: 1050 euro

Single room supplement: 150 euro

Included in the price:

- 2 nights in double occupancy in hotel (***) in Reims, centrally located, including breakfast
- 2 nights at the hotel Aux Armes de Champagne (****) in l'Epine, including breakfast
- Meals:
 - three gastronomic lunches including champagne/wine at a regional restaurant or at a wine producer's
 - two gastronomic dinners including wine/champagne at the one-star restaurant Aux Armes de Champagne
- Bus transportation in on location
- All vineyard visits including private wine tastings at the wineries (ca. 3 per day)
- Interpretation from French, as needed (many visits will be in English on this trip)
- Wine and tourism guiding by your BKWine guide

(This trip is also open to Swedish wine enthusiasts.)

Not included:

- Air (or other) travel to Reims

You go to Reims on your own (we are happy to give you advice on how to get there) and you arrive in the evening of November 12, at the latest.

Tour organiser: Britt Karlsson of BKWine

Britt is of Swedish origin and based in Paris. Since 15 years she works with wine, wine education, wine journalism and organises wine tours. She has over the years arranged a large number of wine tours (a couple of hundreds actually) and has an extensive network of contacts in the wine regions and a deep knowledge of recent developments to make sure that our visits are exceptional. She visits some 200 wineries every year and is frequently called on to participate as a wine judge in international wine competitions.



Our wine guides: Many of our tours are led by Britt herself, with fifteen years experience of wine travel, wine tasting and wine writing, and living in France

since 1990. Some tours are led by our highly skilled collaborators. Our wine guides are enthusiastic wine people with a thorough knowledge of both wine and local culture and gastronomy. Plus, of course, language since some of the visits often are in the local language (those visits are often the most interesting ones actually!) and we will then translate to English.

Our wine cellar tours are usually planned around a long weekend (Wednesday evening to Sunday morning) so that you can plan your holiday to also include other activities, such as visiting cultural sites, play golf – or why not drop in to a few more wineries while in the region (we'll be glad to give you a few names to our preferred vineyards!).

From a gastronomic standpoint, our tours always include some gourmet highlights with local culinary specialities – we often plan at least one gourmet lunch at a winery or vineyard together with the winemaker.

Plan your wine country vacation with BKWine and we can guarantee you an unforgettable wine experience.

Book this trip

Please register for this trip not later than **August 1, 2008**

You book by contacting Britt Karlsson, BKWine:

- phone: +33 1 58 88 04 66 or +33 6 80 45 35 70 (+33 is the country code for France)
- email: info@bkwine.com
- skype: bkwine

Registration is confirmed by paying the registration fee of €200. Full payment should be received at the latest one month before the departure date. Payments should be made by bank transfer to BKWine's bank in Sweden. Details will be sent to you when you register.

Important

We always travel in small groups. The maximum group is usually around 20. This is to ensure that our visits are of high quality and that we receive a personal welcome.



For this trip to take place we must have 10 participant registered at the date of book-no-later-than.

You organise your travel independently to the destination but on location we take care of everything.

BKWine is a Swedish registered travel organiser. BKWine has a bonded travel guarantee deposit so that you can feel safe booking with us. We comply

fully with European and Swedish travel guarantee regulations. British travellers may be familiar with the **ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents)** protection scheme which is a similar model. BKWine follows the code of conduct and financial safeguards defined by the Swedish **Consumer Agency** and **The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency** ("Kammarkollegiet", with a history dating back to 1539). Read more about this in our Booking Terms and Conditions.

Read the BKWine Booking Terms and Conditions here:
http://www.bkwine.com/wine_tours/bkwine-booking-terms.htm

For more inspiration

Pictures from previous trips:
http://www.bkwine.com/wine_pictures/photo_galleries.htm

Some wine videos from previous wine tours with BKWine:
<http://www.youtube.com/bkwine>

What do customers say?:
http://www.bkwine.com/wine_tours/what_customers_say.htm

Newsletter on wine

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Subscribe here:
http://www.bkwine.com/bkwine_brief/bkwine_brief.htm

Custom Tours

PS: We also do custom tours if you want to choose different dates or want something different.

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