



Grape Escapes

Short breaks and tours
for wine lovers.





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"We would like to thank you very much for your part in our fabulous honeymoon. It was so good that all we had to do was turn up where we were supposed to be and we were expected and well looked after at all times. All in all the holiday was truly perfect- thank you!"

Susannah **Honeymoon**



Holidays and Trips for Wine Lovers

Created in 2004 by wine lovers Mark and Claire Hallett, Grape Escapes is a specialist wine tour operator offering a broad selection of holidays and trips to the premium wine regions, principally in France. From the flagship Premium tours to the popular regions of Champagne, Bordeaux and Burgundy to bespoke self-drive circuits and birthday weekends, our expertise is in creating perfect trips for individuals, groups or companies. Grape Escapes offers you the flexibility to arrange your perfect holiday.

The company has experienced great success over the last few years, which has allowed us to spread our wings and develop our existing products within France and also to start working with new exciting regions, such as La Rioja in Spain and Tuscany in Italy. We are extremely proud to have been nominated by the official French Government Tourist Office in their 2010 French Awards, and we hope that many more nominations will follow.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our existing Grape Escapers, for whom we have been delighted to arrange trips and whose feedback has been invaluable in perfecting the quality of our tours. We have a large number of clients who return to us year on year and many more come through recommendations. The reason we attract such loyalty from customers is that not only do we provide an excellent trip; we also pride ourselves on giving superb customer service.

This brochure is designed to provide you with information regarding the regions that we travel to and the types of tours that we can arrange. Detailed descriptions of the tours themselves, the accommodation options and information about travelling to each region can be found on our web site www.grapeescapes.net. Alternatively, please call us on **08456 430860** or e-mail info@grapeescapes.net. We would be delighted to hear from you and answer any questions.



"Special thanks to Mark Hallett for arranging a booking for us to Moët & Chandon. Mark was extremely helpful throughout the enquiry and booking process, which we greatly appreciate and certainly contributed to an excellent experience. We were fortunate to also have a great travel group and enjoyed meeting them on the tour."

Jessica **Premium Tour**

Why Grape Escapes?

Personal Service

At Grape Escapes, we believe that there is no substitute for individual knowledge and experience which enables us to deliver a truly personal service to all our customers. We specialise in a limited range of destinations so you can be sure that we have a deep and extensive knowledge of your chosen holiday region.

Quality

We believe that our customers deserve the best value and service, irrespective of whether they are spending £200 or £20,000 on a trip. We have personally visited all of the hotels that we recommend and we keep all of our suppliers under constant review to ensure that the quality of service and welcome meet our high standards. As well as monitoring responses from our customer feedback, we ensure that each supplier is assessed regularly

by a Grape Escapes representative to ensure that the establishment is still as we would expect.

Flexibility

We offer a very flexible range of holidays within each of the regions that we visit. On the following pages, you will find details of our 'Premium,' 'Flexible,' and 'Budget' tours that we offer for individuals. In addition, we arrange bespoke vacations for individuals and a large number of trips and events for groups and companies.

Choice

The flexibility offered by Grape Escapes isn't just limited to the tour dates, but also includes the type of accommodation and travel method you prefer. We have visited dozens of hotels in each region to find the right accommodation for our guests and we offer a range to suit all requirements. From friendly family run 2 star hotels

in convenient town centre locations to 5 star luxury hotels and secluded châteaux where both service and presentation are impeccable, we guarantee the most appropriate



accommodation for your requirements and budget. With each of our featured regions / tours, we have also included a section on travel so that you can evaluate the most suitable option for you.

Great wineries and wines

With every Grape Escape, you will have the opportunity to visit a number of vineyards and wine makers. We know from personal experience and consistent customer feedback that the most enjoyable tours are not necessarily given by the big names but often by our carefully selected smaller growers who are passionate about their wines. We therefore organise



visits to a range of wine makers both small and large, to allow you to compare for yourself. On many of our tours, you will have the opportunity to meet the wine makers and learn firsthand about the numerous factors that influence the production of quality wines and of course, no tour would be complete without tasting the wines!

Fine dining

A final essential element in every Grape Escape is the opportunity to enjoy the wines as the makers intended – by sitting down to enjoy them with a good meal. We take the same care in selecting and recommending restaurants and individual menus as we do with the rest of your trip.

We have looked at how we can give prospective customers a better flavour of the type of experience that they can expect on their Grape Escapes trip. To that end, we have produced a few short videos of some of our tours and most popular hotels and placed them on our website. Where applicable, we have included links to these videos on the relevant pages of this brochure.



"Thanks to Jenna's very high quality of service (one that is unfortunately rare) we had an incredible weekend. I assure you that I will be recommending Grape Escapes (and Jenna!) to all of my friends, co-workers and family and will definitely look to Grape Escapes for any Champagne/wine tours we want to take in the future (whether we are looking for a low-key less expensive weekend like last year or a much more bank account depleting spoiling weekend like this year!)"

Meredith **Premium Tour**

Regions featured by Grape Escapes

Champagne

The British love affair with Champagne continues and as ever, this delightful region remains our most popular destination. So what makes the Champagne region so popular? In part, it is because the region is so easy to get to. It is situated less than 2½ hour's drive from Calais making it the UK's closest premium wine region. It is also now accessible from central Paris in just 45 minutes on the new high speed rail line linking Paris with eastern France. Charles de Gaulle airport is even closer with a journey time to Champagne of 30 minutes on this line.

Other reasons include the picturesque hillsides and valleys covered in vines and forests and the sense of history associated with the region. The city of Reims is home to no less than four UNESCO World Heritage sites, including



one of the finest gothic cathedrals in northern Europe where 25 kings of France were crowned. It is also where the formal surrender was signed at the end of World War II.

However, all of these reasons tell only part of the story. The main reason remains the wine. Champagne is the most famous of all sparkling wines and is blended from base wines using up to three different grape varieties (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier). It is grown in and around 317 villages within five general areas, and only wines produced in these areas are allowed to bear the name "Champagne". The best Champagne Houses use as many as 100 different base wines to ensure the consistency of their non-vintage Champagne each year. Each of the grape varieties impact on the character of the resultant Champagne; the Blanc de

Blancs Champagnes (made from 100% Chardonnay) are clean and elegant with great ageing potential, while the addition of Pinot Noir adds backbone, body and structure and the Pinot Meunier adds floral overtones and fruitiness thus creating an easier drinking and more approachable Champagne when young.



Out of the 317 villages, 44 are classified as Premier Cru and 17 are classified as Grand Cru. It is these villages that tend to produce the best



grapes and consequently the best wines. The Grand Cru villages are located exclusively in the Côte des Blancs and the Montagne de Reims, while some of the Premier Cru villages are also located in the Vallée de la Marne. It is these three regions that we focus on during our Grape Escapes tours.

Information about the tours that we arrange in Champagne can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/champagne/the-tours



"The trip was very well organised and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The three Champagne Houses we visited were excellent and the lunch was top class."

Stephen **Premium Tour**

Bordeaux

For many people, the very name Bordeaux conjures up images of grand Châteaux and equally grand wines. Whilst wines from around the world have improved in quality over the last 20 or 30 years, it is still the top Châteaux of Bordeaux against which the very best wines are compared. Why does Bordeaux enjoy such a hallowed reputation for its top wines? In part, it is because of its historical pre-eminence. Having been lauded for centuries, the top Châteaux have been able to sell their wines for exalted prices. This has meant that they can be ruthlessly selective when it comes



to choosing the best grapes from which to make their wines and that no expense is spared in the wine making process. In addition, the unique terroir (soil, aspect and microclimate) of each of these estates makes an invaluable contribution to the character of each wine. On a Grape Escape to Bordeaux, you can taste these famous wines and visit these Châteaux; however the region offers much more besides.



At the heart of the region is the vibrant riverside city of Bordeaux. Outside the city, the premium wine regions spread out in almost all directions. Heading north towards the estuary of the Gironde is the Médoc, home to the most famous Châteaux of Bordeaux including Margaux, Lafite, Latour and Mouton Rothschild. To the east, heading upstream along the Dordogne river is the beautiful medieval town of St Emilion, classified as a UNESCO world heritage site and its vineyards and the equally prestigious appellation of Pomerol. To the south of the city are the vineyards of Graves and beyond these, the rolling slopes of Sauternes.

The Bordeaux region produces such a diversity of wines that there is certain to be a wine to suit most drinkers. The majority of Bordeaux wine is red, with red wine production outnumbering white wine production six to one. The main reason for the success of wine making in the Bordeaux region is its excellent environment for growing vines. The limestone foundation of the region leads to a soil structure that is heavy in calcium. The soil of Bordeaux

is composed of gravel, sandstone and clay. The concept of terroir plays a crucial role in the production of wine, especially within the premium estates, who strive to produce terroir driven wines, which reflect the place that they are from. They generally use grapes from a single vineyard.



Information about the tours that we arrange in Bordeaux can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/bordeaux/the-tours

Burgundy

Norman abbeys, Châteaux with their glazed rooftops, ducal towns and charming villages make Burgundy a historic region with a glorious heritage. It is a land of rolling hills, waterways and of course, vineyards. Viticultural Burgundy spans out over a large area of eastern France, comprising of Chablis, the Côte d'Or, the Côte Chalonnaise and the Mâconnais. The top wines of Burgundy come from the Côte d'Or which is subdivided into some 25 different villages or communes. The Côte de Nuits is formed of those comprising the northerly sector from Marsannay to Corgoloin and is based around the town of Nuits-Saint-Georges. The Côte de Beaune is based around the larger town of Beaune, and comprises of southern villages, from Ladoix-Serrigny to Santenay.

Grape Escapes guests usually stay in Dijon or Beaune. Dijon is the historical capital of Burgundy, which began as a Roman settlement. It was home to the Dukes of Burgundy from the early eleventh Century until the late 1400s and was a place of great wealth and power during this time. Beaune, the wine capital of Burgundy is one of France's principal wine centres- the primary wine auction in France



takes place at this ancient town's famous Hospices.

The most famous Burgundy wines are red wines made from Pinot Noir grapes and white wines made from Chardonnay grapes. The Côte de Nuits is home to the majority of Burgundy's red Grand Crus and the wines here are majestic, intense and firm. The Côte de Beaune is where most of Burgundy's white Grand Crus can be found. The wines produced here are some of the world's longest lived, most complex and stylish white wines. Burgundy wines are highly acclaimed, and the region is home to some of the most expensive wines in the world. The sensuousness and power of these wines have beguiled wine lovers for centuries and are what make them so special and sought-after today. Wine merchant Harry Waugh once famously said, "The first duty of wine is to be red... the second is to be a Burgundy," and we could not agree more!

Information about the tours that we arrange in Burgundy can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/burgundy/the-tours



"We have already recommended Grape Escapes to friends. We had a superb weekend, which went without a hitch. Our fellow companions on the trip were very pleasant, like-minded people and we all enjoyed the experience."

Julie **Premium Tour**

The Loire Valley

The Loire Valley is a lush green land on gently undulating countryside with rich vineyards interspersed with charming towns and magnificent Châteaux.

The region boasts some of the most famous Châteaux in France: Amboise, Chambord, Azay-le-Rideau, Villandry and Chenonceau to name but a few. Known as the Garden of France,



the region's Châteaux and cultural monuments illustrate exceptionally well the ideals of the Renaissance and of the Age of Enlightenment. The rivers Loire, Cher, Indre and Vienne meander gracefully through the region and offer a delightful backdrop to many of the region's Châteaux and towns.



The Loire Valley is a huge region, with over seventy appellations. However, Grape Escapes tours tend to focus on the principal sub regions, such



as Savennières, the historic town of Saumur, Vouvray, which is well-known for its sparkling wines, Montlouis and Chinon, whose magnificent castle was a favourite residence of King Henry II. Tours, the capital of Touraine is the largest city in central France. An

old but lively university city, it is the original home of the French language. Among its many delights is a stunning Cathedral, dating back almost 900 years. Famous for its medieval district, there are weekly markets and fairs, as well as plenty of traditional bars and restaurants. We also arrange tours to the famed sub regions of Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé and Muscadet.



The Loire Valley offers a broader range of wines than any other wine-growing region. It is the home of Chenin Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc, the only region in the world to specialise in Cabernet Franc and also makes superb botrytised dessert wines.

Information about the tours that we arrange in the Loire Valley can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/the-loire-valley/the-tours

The Rhône

The Rhône Valley became a prestigious wine region upon arrival of the Romans in 125BC, when it is said that the Syrah and Viognier grapes were introduced to the region and are still widely planted throughout the region to this day.

The history of the Southern Rhône is rich and varied. The towns of Orange and Vaison-la-Romaine have significant Roman heritage. Once outside the towns, the region boasts some spectacular scenery and attractive villages. The Dentelles rise up behind the villages of Gigondas, Vacqueyras and Beaumes de Venise, while the Mont Ventoux provides an even more spectacular backdrop to the region. The capital of the department is Avignon and whilst this city was important in Roman times, it is the structures of the 12th-14th Centuries for which it is justifiably famous. The southern part of the region, where the river Rhône meanders into the beautiful countryside of Provence, enjoys an enviable 2600 hours of Mediterranean sunshine per year.

The Northern Rhône's climate is controlled by the mistral wind which defines its harsh winters and warm summers and the region boasts many prestigious wine-making villages such as Hérimitage and Condrieu. Lyon, the second biggest metropolis in France is the capital of the region. A major centre of business with a reputation as the French capital of gastronomy, the city is famed for its historical and architectural landmarks and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The Southern Rhône is most famous for its big red wines; in particular



the wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape can be superb. However, the villages surrounding the Dentelles offer some very attractive less famous wines at a fraction of the price. In particular, some of the wine-makers in the villages of Gigondas, Vacqueyras and Rasteau are producing some excellent wines.

The wines of the Northern Rhône are slightly different to those of the Southern Rhône because the climates differ slightly, with the Northern Rhône being cooler. The red wines produced here can be identified by green olive and smoky bacon aromas and the Syrah grape is the only red grape variety that is permitted in red AOC wines from the Northern Rhône. The AOC rules permit the blending of Syrah grapes with the white grapes of Viognier, Marsanne and Rousanne, however this is only practised widely in the Côte-Rôtie appellation. The white wines of the Northern Rhône are generally blends of Marsanne and Rousanne or pure Viognier.

Information about the tours that we arrange in the Rhône can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/the-rhone/the-tours



"Thank you for arranging our trips. We have been recommending you to friends and hope to book some white wine tasting in the future."

Laura **Flexible Tour**

Alsace

Alsace is the smallest region in metropolitan France, however it is a region packed tightly with culture, gastronomic delights and of course vineyards. Located on France's eastern border and on the west bank of the upper Rhine, it is situated adjacent to Germany and Switzerland. In the 17th Century, the region was gradually annexed by France and has changed hands between France and Germany four times in 75 years! This has resulted in a cultural blend of modern French institutions and traditional Germanic cuisine and architecture.

Alsatian cuisine, marked by the use of pork in various forms evokes conviviality and dishes are served with generous portions. Foie gras has been produced in the region since the 17th Century, however Sauerkraut is its gastronomic symbol.

The region is famous in particular for its picturesque villages and its large number of churches and castles, which have miraculously survived five Centuries of wars between France



and Germany. It is also famous for wine-making, with 170km of vineyards spanning the Route des Vins d'Alsace and the stunning forests and lakes of the Vosges Mountains are a sight to behold. Strasbourg is the region's capital and the seat of several prestigious European institutions. Its historic centre is a classified UNESCO World Heritage Site. Alsace's semi-continental climate typically brings cold and dry winters and hot summers to the region.

The wines of Alsace are mostly white and display strong Germanic influences- it is the only region in France to produce mostly single varietal wines, typically from similar grapes as those used in German wines. Other wines, made from the Pinot Noir grape are pale red and occasionally rosé. Sparkling wines, known as Crémant d'Alsace are also produced in the region. Some of the world's most highly-regarded dry Rieslings are produced here, but Alsace is also noted for its production of the highly aromatic Gewürztraminer wines. The region is famed for its Late Harvest wines, made from grapes which have been left on the vine longer than usual, and its botrytised dessert wines. Almost all production in Alsace is of AOC wine, as Alsace is not covered by a Vin de Pays region.



Information about the tours that we arrange in Alsace can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/alsace/the-tours-2

Ribera del Duero

Located in Spain's northern plateau, Ribera del Duero is approximately ninety minutes from Madrid by road. Over the last few decades, the region has become a premier source of world-class red wine. The region is characterised by its flat, rocky terrain, and its most famous vineyards can be found around Peñafiel and Aranda del Duero. It benefits greatly from soils deposited by the river Duero and the terrain provides ideal growing conditions for the Tempranillo grape, known locally as "Tinto Fino".

Ribera del Duero was officially designated a D.O region in 1982, by an organisation of wine growers who aspired to promote their wines. Since then, the area has been transformed through the replanting of vineyards and the investment in modern winemaking techniques by both small, family-run wineries and large corporations. The region's 240 vineyards occupy around 120 square kilometres, and Ribera del Duero is also home to arguably Spain's



most prestigious wine, Vega Sicilia. With its Romanesque architecture and natural beauty, the region has become increasingly popular as an oenotouristic destination. There is even a museum dedicated to Spanish winemaking in the impressive Moorish castle in Peñafiel.



The appellation's terroir and the native Tempranillo grape are combined to create bold and expressive red wines that are characterised by their complexity, intensity and powerful fruit flavours. The Albillo grape is the only white variety that can be found in the region, but this wine is primarily distributed locally. Wines from Ribera del Duero are delicious when they are young, but in common with the wines of La Rioja, they also have the capacity to age magnificently. Ribera del Duero wines are becoming increasingly popular, producing 60 million litres of wine annually.

Information about the tours that we arrange in Ribera del Duero can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/ribera-del-duero



"Our guide was a fountain of knowledge- excellent!"

Adele **Premium Tour**

La Rioja

La Rioja, located in northern Spain is a wine-making province which is bordered by the Basque country, Navarre, Aragón, and finally, Castilla y León. It is named after the river Oja, which flows through the region with the river Ebro. Formerly known as Logroño, due to the fortified site around which it was developed, it is the second smallest autonomous community in Spain and has the smallest population. Although the region has changed its name, the capital is still known as Logroño. The Mediterranean climate provides hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Like its wine, the gastronomy of La Rioja makes it a notable Spanish region. Riojan cuisine is characterised by the astonishing abundance of local produce. The higher areas produce primarily pork products such as chorizo, black pudding and cured Serrano ham and dishes such as chuletillas al sarmiento (lamb chops on vine cuttings) and freshwater Riojan trout can be tasted in the region's traditional restaurants.



The region is well-known for its hilltop medieval towns, impressive mountains and huge monasteries. The capital, Logroño was an old Roman settlement and was the main seat of the Basque witch trials, part of the Spanish Inquisition in 1609. It is filled with beautiful plazas and parks, such as Carmen Park, which possesses a large quantity of flora and fauna and the Town Square, which has hosted numerous public events and concerts over the years. The town of Haro is extremely important in terms of the region's viniculture, as the coveted Haro Wine festival is held here each year. It is home to many of La Rioja's great bodegas (wineries) and is known in particular for its fine red wines.

DOC Rioja wines are made from grapes grown in parts of Navarre and the Basque province of Álava, as well as in La Rioja itself. The three wine regions of Rioja are Rioja Alta, known for its "old world" style of wine, Rioja Alavesa, producing wines with a fuller body and higher acidity and Rioja Baja, whose wines are deeply coloured and often

highly alcoholic. La Rioja produces red, white and rosé wines which are usually a blend of various grape varieties. The most widely-used grape variety in La Rioja's red wines is Tempranillo, which contributes the main flavours and ageing potential. Other popular grape varieties include Garnacha Tinta, Graciano and Mazuelo. For the region's white wines, Viura is the most prominent grape and is typically blended with Malvasía and Garnacha Blanca.



Information about the tours that we arrange in La Rioja can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/rioja-2/the-tours

Tuscany

Located in central Italy, Tuscany is widely considered to be the true birthplace of the Italian Renaissance. Home to some of the world's most influential and artistic minds such as Da Vinci, Botticelli and Dante, not only is the region famed for its superb wines, Tuscany also boasts beautiful landscapes, a prestigious artistic and academic culture and unique gastronomic traditions. The fascinating museums, impressive number of World Heritage Sites and magnificent nature reserves make it an extremely popular tourist destination, attracting millions of tourists each year. Tuscany has an immense cultural and artistic heritage, which is expressed in the region's numerous churches, palaces, art galleries, museums, villages and piazzas. Some of the world's most precious works of art, such as Botticelli's Birth of Venus, Michelangelo's David and the Pitti Palace can be found here.

Tuscan cuisine is reputed worldwide for its delicious simplicity. Florentine steak, made from the highest quality Chianina beef is produced here, as well as regional delicacies such as Olive Oil made from Moraiolo, Leccino and Frantoiano olives and white truffles from San Miniato. Tuscany's capital, Florence lies on the river Arno and was one of the wealthiest cities in medieval times. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with its elegant piazzas, Renaissance palaces, academies, parks, churches and monasteries. Our guests will, without a doubt, want to join our tour to visit the prestigious wine area of Chianti, near the villages of Gaiole, Castellina and



Radda. The area has been producing wine since the 13th Century and is often referred to as the "Bordeaux of Italy."

Tuscany is Italy's third most vine-planted region, however the soil is poor here and producers emphasise low yields and higher quality levels in their wine. It is home to some of the world's most notable wine regions and 80% of the wine produced here is red. The Sangiovese grape is Tuscany's most prominent grape, used in Chianti, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Other widely planted red grape varieties are Canaiolo, Colorino, Malvasia Nera and Mammolo. For white wines, the Trebbiano grape is the most prominent, followed by Malvasia, Vermentino and Vernaccia. Tuscany is also famed for its sweet dessert wine, Vin Santo (meaning Holy Wine), which is made from a variety of the region's grapes.

Grape Escapes will also soon be offering tours in Piedmont to taste Barolo, one of Italy's greatest wines as well as Barbaresco and Asti.

Information about the tours that we arrange in Tuscany can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/destinations/tuscany-2/the-tours



"Thanks for your help - it was a very enjoyable weekend."

Eb Stag Weekend

Types of Tours

Premium Tours

Since our first tour in 2005, we have created our Premium tours with the same philosophy. Firstly, we carefully select three or four wine / Champagne makers to visit each day. These will be chosen to offer a cross section of winery sizes and wine styles from across the region to best illustrate its characteristics. We then select somewhere for a top quality lunch. This may be as the guests of one of the wineries that we are visiting or at a premium restaurant where you can enjoy a gourmet lunch accompanied with a selection of fine wines. Finally, we arrange for one of our English-speaking local guides to accompany you on the tour. By using locals, we find that they add a personal touch to each tour with their own anecdotes from their home region.

To give you a better idea, please see our video of our flagship premium tour in Champagne at www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeKY0XQvwdE



To ensure that the quality of your Grape Escapes Premium tour is of the highest standard, we strictly limit the number of guests on each tour. Unlike other operators who often take groups of 30 or more people in a coach, Grape Escapes Premium tours operate with a typical group size of between 10 and 16 guests. Even our most popular tours are capped at a modest 20 people. This has a number of benefits including access to the broadest range of wine makers and restaurants, better service, less time waiting and a more social and intimate atmosphere on the tour.

Arriving in your chosen region on day one at a time of your preference, the remainder of the day and the evening would be free for you to do as you please. Day two (and three if you are booked onto one of our three night tours) would begin between 9 and 9.30 am, with collection from your

hotel by a luxury chauffeured mini-coach and a Grape Escapes guide followed by a full day of visits and tastings including lunch. You would select your own travel time on your last day, giving you as much time as you would like to further explore the region before heading home.

With all of our Premium tours we are happy to arrange additional nights in the region (or another region if you would like a longer vacation) and can arrange further winery visits and activities to complement the tour. For customers booked onto a premium tour, we will gladly reserve a table for your party at any of the restaurants on our recommended restaurant list (in advance of departure).

Please see www.grapeescapes.net/tour_type/premium for further information about our Premium Tours and the Premium Tour dates and itineraries.

Superlative Tours

For the superlative experience, we offer a maximum of twelve very fortunate guests the opportunity to visit some of the world's top wineries. These would typically include the most exclusive Champagne Houses or classed growth Châteaux who do not usually receive visitors. Accommodation is generally in one of the best hotels in the region. For example, you would be staying at the Regent Grand Hotel as part of the Bordeaux Superlative tour, and the tour will include unrivalled dining experiences at selected wineries and at multiple Michelin-starred restaurants. Both lunch and dinner on each day of your trip will be catered for, and this would take the form of a gourmet lunch or dinner at a prestigious winery or restaurant. The other meal of the day will be a lighter meal.

Each tour day will be transported in a luxury vehicle, and you will be accompanied by a Grape Escapes Tour



Director, who will enrich your knowledge of the region and wines, as well as ensure that the tour runs smoothly.

Due to agreements with the individual Champagne Houses and wineries, we are unable to widely publicise details of these tours and include them on our web site; however if you would like to receive more information about these trips as they are finalised, please contact us on **08456 430 860 (+44 1920 46 86 66)** from outside the UK or e-mail info@grapeescapes.net.

Our Exclusive Breaks are ideal for couples and small groups, who are looking for a superlative experience. Details and prices can be found at www.grapeescapes.net/tour_type/exclusive



"I would like to take this opportunity to say what a fantastic time we all had. The gîte and restaurants were perfect for the occasion. The first wine tasting - with the abseiling - was so much fun that it lasted three and a half hours! And the Hen decided to buy the Champagne for the toasts on her wedding day. Thanks so much for all your work and advice in planning in our trip."

Adele **Hen Weekend**

Flexible Tours

For our customers who are not able to travel at weekends when our Premium tours take place, we have introduced Flexible tours in many of the regions. These tours generally offer a far wider range of available dates than our Premium tours, with trips offered throughout the year and with departures on mid week and weekend days.

In general, we work with carefully selected local partners for some or all of the tour elements. This will usually mean that the parts of the tour that are transported may well have a central departure point (as opposed to our Premium tours, where all guests are met at and returned to their hotels). Non transported parts of the tour may require you to walk a short distance to tasting venues or restaurants. In addition, seasoned Grape Escapes clients may find that the number of wines tasted at each winery / Champagne House with our partner agencies will often be less than the extensive tastings / best wines that are included on all of our Premium tours.

The various elements of these tours do not necessarily need to take place over one day. You can spread your tour out over a few days to give yourself a more relaxed holiday. For guests wishing to stay longer in their chosen region, we are happy to arrange additional nights and to customise the itinerary by adding further visits / tours as required.

Please see www.grapeescapes.net/tour_type/essential for further information about our Flexible Tours.



Budget Tours

Introduced in January 2009 in response to the effects of the Credit Crunch, our budget tours have proved very popular. These packages don't offer the incredible dining experiences, the fantastic personalities of the Champagne and wine makers and

run and a prestigious Champagne House / winery together with a wine / Champagne tasting lunch or dinner. In order to keep the costs low on these tours, part of the trip will usually include walking to some of the local visits and a pick up from a central location for the transported part of the tour.

Please see www.grapeescapes.net/tour_type/simple for further information about our Budget Tours.



the very wide range of Champagnes and wines that we taste on our other tours. However, they do include the opportunity to visit both a family-

Bespoke Independent Trips

In addition to the scheduled tours that we organise, we assist individual travellers to plan independent trips, such as honeymoons, wedding anniversary tours, birthday celebrations, or other special holidays.

We have assessed many of the hotels, restaurants, wineries and other activity



providers in the regions and have selected only the best so you can be certain that there will not be any nasty surprises when you arrive. If you want to have your ideal trip without any stress, talk to us. We can prepare private, bespoke itineraries for any budget from £800 to £20,000 per trip. We will discuss your requirements with you in detail and send you a draft proposal and can then arrange

everything including booking your hotel and travel, sending you maps, city plans, restaurant and vineyard recommendations and an itinerary so that your trip goes smoothly.

To discuss your private trip, please call us on 08456 460 860 or e-mail us at info@grapeescapes.net. Information about our bespoke tours can be found on our web site at www.grapeescapes.net/tailor-made or please see page 22 for an example bespoke itinerary.

Bespoke Group Trips

If you want to have an unforgettable trip for your group but don't want the hassle of organising it, then why not let us help? At Grape Escapes, we specialise in creating the ideal tour to match your group's requirements and budget.



"Excellent value for money and good accomodation choices."

Lisa **Premium Tour**





We have organised birthday trips, hen and stag weekends and trips for many other groups. From wine clubs to rotary clubs, from sports and social clubs to car clubs, we can create a bespoke programme to suit your requirements. Anything from a classic car rally in Champagne to a week touring the best wineries in several wine regions in France, we have the contacts to ensure that the whole of your group have an enjoyable break.

For a quotation for your group or a copy of our group trips brochure, please call us on 08456 430860 or e-mail us at info@grapeescapes.net.

Example group itineraries can be found on our web site at www.grapeescapes.net/groups-tours

Corporate Wine Trips and Events

Grape Escapes have over five years experience in arranging corporate events in the premium wine regions and we are able to cater for all of your professional needs including conferences, incentives and prizes, team building, corporate hospitality, product launches and gifts. We have a reputation for providing excellent and memorable company events, and many of our clients return to us again and again. Please see our Corporate Wine Tours website www.grapeescapescorporate.com for further information. For a quotation for your company event or for a copy of our corporate trips brochure, please call us on 08456 430860 or e-mail us at info@grapeescapescorporate.com. An example bespoke itinerary can be found on page 24 or on the Grape Escapes Corporate web site.

"This trip was designed for us to spend quality time with our VIP clients and to thank them for their business. Grape Escape delivered an event that surpassed our expectations. Every client had a fabulous time and I certainly expect a good year with them now!"

Andrew **Corporate Trip**

Recently Arranged Trips

Private tour in Ribera del Duero

We recently arranged a bespoke trip to the Ribera Del Duero for Jane and Tony, a couple who wanted to taste some Spanish wine. Here is what they did:

Upon arrival at Valladolid airport, a chauffeur escorted them to a 5* spa hotel in Quintanilla de Onesimo, where they checked into a luxurious Junior Suite. After settling in at the hotel and freshening up, they were taken on a tour of the hotel's winery, where they tasted several Ribera Del Duero wines. A relaxing vinotherapy spa treatment was then arranged for them in the hotel's spa, before a gourmet five course dinner was served at the hotel's restaurant, accompanied by more wines from the region.

On day two, after a Mediterranean breakfast, Jane and Tony were met

at the hotel by a knowledgeable local guide, who accompanied them on a tour of the region in her luxury mpv. First stop was a new, modern winery that has been designed as a "monastery of science and technology." Here, our guests were given a full tour, and saw for themselves the full winemaking process, including the malolactical fermentation process and the ageing of the wine in French, Hungarian or American oak barrels in a stunning barrel room which holds 4000 barrels. The tour concluded with tastings of the bodega's wines.

The tour continued with a second visit to a different style of winery. Here, they began their tour in the vineyard, where they studied in depth the vines. In this unique tour, our guests had the opportunity to look inside a sliced barrel to learn about the importance of oxygen and the pore size of the



wood, as well as how the wine ages and develops. Another exclusive feature of this winery is the spectacular light show that is projected through the cellars. After discovering the winemaking techniques that produce





the bodega's premium smooth, fruity wines, they tasted three wines, which differed from those tasted earlier.

A gourmet three course lunch in a top restaurant in Peñafiel was then served. Each course was accompanied by a local wine, and our guests had the opportunity to taste the region's speciality, "lechazo asada." This leg of suckling lamb is roasted in a traditional stone oven until deliciously crispy.

Ending the day in style, the final visit was to the impressive Portia winery,

which was designed by the famous British architects, Foster and Partners. This is the only winery that is above ground level, where tractors can drive up to the roof to deposit the grapes from the top. The winery's transparent features include large windows and a glass-encased viewing deck, which allow visitors to see as much as possible. After a full tour of this unique establishment, Jane and Tony tasted all three of Portia's wines, and a selection of other wines from the Faustino group, which are popular choices from the wine lists of Spain's Michelin starred restaurants.

After returning to the hotel, our guests enjoyed dinner at another highly regarded restaurant.

The next day, after a leisurely breakfast, Jane and Tony checked out of their hotel and explored the quaint town of Peñafiel before being escorted back to Valladolid airport.

For a quotation for your bespoke trip, please call us on 08456 430860 or e-mail us at info@grapeescapes.net.



"All in all – SUPERB and amazing value for money. I will most definitely be recommending you to others and using you again myself!!!"

Russell **Bespoke**
Independent Trip

Premium Bespoke Group Trip to Champagne

Recruitment Consultant Fraser wanted to take his employees to Champagne on a team-building event. We were delighted to assist him in arranging a unique trip.

The party travelled from London to Reims on the Eurostar and French TGV train, travelling Standard Premier and First Class. Upon arrival at Reims station, they were met by a luxury chauffeured coach, which escorted them to their first activity. Arriving at a great indoor karting circuit, everyone enjoyed a ten minute qualifying session to establish grid positions, followed by a twenty minute race. Medals were awarded to the top three placed drivers and afterwards, everyone enjoyed a celebratory flute of Champagne.



After checking into the centrally-located Hotel de la Paix and enjoying the superb facilities, the group was then escorted to Champagne Mumm, where a guide took them on a tour of some of their 18km of cellars, where they hold 18 million bottles of Champagne during the maturing process.



For dinner, Fraser and his group were taken to one of the most unusual landmarks out in the vineyards- a windmill owned by one of the top Champagne Houses. Here, they enjoyed a sumptuous five course gala dinner complete with a selection of Champagnes, water, tea and coffee.

After breakfast at the hotel on day two, the luxury coach returned to pick the group up along with a Grape Escapes Tour Director for a tour of the region.

The group firstly visited a medium-sized Champagne House where they started by abseiling 100 feet into their cellars and enjoying a tour of the cellars and estate before tasting several Champagnes.

The coach then took them to a small Grand Cru Champagne House in the heart of the region. After a tour to show them the House, each guest was introduced to the Napoleonic art of Sabrage – where the Champagne bottle is opened with a sabre instead of by gently prising out the cork. A leisurely luncheon was then served at

this house to provide time to sample the Champagnes in the 16 bottles that were opened.

Fraser and his team were then taken back to the station for the return train journey to Paris, then onwards with the Eurostar to London.

For a quotation for your group or a copy of our group trips or corporate brochure, please call us on 08456 430860 or e-mail us at info@grapeescapes.net.



Grape Escapes Gifts

What can you buy for the person who has everything? A Grape Escape could be just the thing! We are pleased to offer a range of gift voucher solutions as detailed below.

Option 1 : Monetary voucher - At the simplest level, we can create a monetary gift voucher for any amount from £100 to £1000 or more. The recipient is then free to choose any of our tours to the region of their choice and can add additional monies to it as they wish.

Option 2 : A gift voucher for a specific type of tour but with unspecified dates. For example, a Prestige Champagne tour staying in Elegant grade accommodation valid for any Prestige tour in the next 2 years.

Option 3 : A gift voucher for a particular tour on a specific date. If, upon receipt, the recipient needs to change this date, it is usually possible provided sufficient notice is given.

Details of all of the public tours that we offer can be found on our website.



Alternatively, we also create bespoke private tours for those who would prefer a more individual approach to their trip.

All of our gift vouchers are customised to include details of exactly what has been selected and include your own personal greeting together with a selection of images pertinent to the gift. The voucher is then mounted in a handmade gift card and is sent, together with a copy of any relevant brochures in time to be presented to the recipient on their big day. For a really special present, why not attach the gift card to a bottle of Champagne?

Contact Us!

We have a reputation for providing excellent and memorable wine tasting tours, and many of our guests return to us again and again. For more information on any of our Tours please contact us at:

Grape Escapes Ltd, 27C High Street, Ware, Herts, SG19 9BA

Tel: 08456 43 08 60/ +44 1920 46 86 66

Fax: 01920 44 41 69/ +44 1920 44 41 69

info@grapeescapes.net

www.grapeescapes.net

"Guys, What a fantastic trip and I will highly recommend it to all I speak to. Not more to say than that really. All parts of the trip were exceptional especially the gala dinner. Great location!"

Fraser **Corporate Trip**

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All information contained within this brochure is correct at the time of printing. However, we cannot guarantee that the information contained within will not change at a later date.

