

WineTravelGuides

Rhône Valley Personal Itinerary

Prepared for Mr & Mrs (based in California USA)

Dates in October 2009

Sources of Information:

Wine Travel Guides by Elizabeth Gabay MW, Liz Berry MW and John Wheeldon, supplemented with information from Brett Jones and Wink Lorch.

Resources:

www.winetravelguides.com

www.vins-rhones.com (Rhône Valley wine organisation)

www.hachette-vins.com (French buying/visiting information)

www.drinkrhone.com (Rhône specialist writer; tasting notes by subscription only)

www.wine-searcher.com (for USA stockists)

Main Wine Appellations

2nd October – Les Baux de Provence and Châteauneuf-du-Pape

3rd October – Côtes du Rhône Villages, Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Beaumes-de-Venise

4th October – Sunday day off!

5th October – Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage, Cornas

6th October – St-Péray, Cornas, Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage

WineTravelGuides

NOTES TO THE ITINERARY

Friday 2 October

As you have so little time in the real heart of inland Provence, a couple of hours visiting the beautiful medieval hilltop town of Les Baux will give you some of the true flavour. Later, in the afternoon after your visits if you have the energy, you might also enjoy a short walk in Châteauneuf-du-Pape – you can drive up to the ruined château for a view point.

Mas de la Dame

No appointment required, but I'd suggest sending them an email. This is quite widely sold in the USA.

Les Baux de Provence

The village is known partly for its gastronomic restaurants, but a visit to one of these would take several hours. I think you will find somewhere more modest to eat very easily here.

Château de Beaucastel

I would suggest sending them an email perhaps directly through their website or even better, obtaining an introduction from one of your wine merchant contacts. By the way, their sister winery in California is Tablas Creek in Paso Robles – I had a great visit there last year, so if you know them, they should help too.

Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe

A classic Châteauneuf domaine that welcomes visitors without an appointment Monday – Friday (afternoon hours are 1.30pm – 5.30pm). Widely distributed in the USA so an introduction would always be useful.

WineTravelGuides

NOTES TO THE ITINERARY

Saturday 3 October

The area around Vacqueyras and other Côtes du Rhone villages is simply gorgeous to cruise around with spectacular rocky mountain views, especially the views of the distinctive Dentelles de Montmirail range. From many places, you can also see the legendary Mont Ventoux (and even drive up there if you want). This is an area where many producers (who are much more low-key than in Châteauneuf) welcome visitors on a Saturday, so you are spoilt for choice. We've selected a few from the guides which are all quite close together and should give you a good overview of the area.

Domaine Richaud

They are open to the public but you need ideally to make an appointment (some English is spoken) but there is no email address only a phone number – you could leave this till the last minute and call from one of your hotels. The wine appears to be sold in CA by the San Francisco Trading Company so you might get an introduction through them.

Domaine de Piaugier

Open for visits, but you might like to contact K & L to make an appointment for you as I think they import the wine into CA.

La Table du Comtat

I chose this restaurant as a lunch suggestion because of its location though you should get a decent, light lunch too. I stayed years ago at the hotel and ate there too. Séguret is an extraordinary village.

Domaine la Fourmone

A good chance to taste a big range of wines from both Vacqueyras and Gigondas here. Appointment not required, but an email would be a good idea.

Domaine de Coyeux

A chance to finish your day with some more good reds, but delicious Muscat too. No appointment required, but I'd suggest sending them an email.

WineTravelGuides

NOTES TO THE ITINERARY

Sunday 4 October

It's hard but not impossible to arrange visits on a Sunday if you want. However, producers tend to like this as a family/work catch-up day, so we have not included any in the itinerary. As you are staying so close to Avignon, you may wish to explore this famous city in the morning. As you will be staying at Pic for three nights and may not want a gastronomic meal each night, you might enjoy a good lunch instead en route.

La Beaugravière

Recommended by both Liz Berry and John Wheeldon, this restaurant is known for good food but particularly for its spectacular list of Rhône wines through the ages!

WineTravelGuides

NOTES TO THE ITINERARY

Monday 5 October

In the heart of Hermitage country, your visits are to some of the 'big boys' and it should be fascinating to compare their wines. The last visit is to a smaller domaine in St-Péray, where they also produce Cornas.

Paul Jaboulet Aîné, Vineum

Be warned, it looks like you might be transported back to CA for this visit, but the wines are good. An appointment might give you a better tasting.

Domaine Philippe and Vincent Jaboulet

Could be very interesting – I've heard mainly very good reports of this. No appointment required, but I'd suggest sending them an email.

Lycée Hotelier de l'Hermitage

It's Monday and most restaurants are closed, however the Rochat restaurant at the local hotel and catering college will give you a simple meal, served by students, which could be interesting. You should book a table in advance.

Delas

Open in the afternoons from 2.30pm with no appointment needed, but you may wish to contact them in advance through the website especially if you'd like to taste some mature vintages or indeed tour the cellars.

Domaine Laurent Combier

It may be that no-one speaks English here, but should be well worth dropping in for a tasting en route back to Valence. They are widely imported into the USA (in CA, San Francisco Wine Trading company sells them). Could be very interesting to make an advance appointment.

WineTravelGuides

NOTES TO THE ITINERARY

Tuesday 6 October

This day can easily be kept flexible apart from the appointment at Chapoutier. Depending on the weather, it would be ideal to fit in a driving or part walking-tour of the amazing vineyards of the hill of Hermitage including the famous chapel.

Domaine du Tunnel

In theory this is open without appointment, but I would suggest asking your hotel to give them a call to make an appointment (no email) and see if someone who speaks English can give you a tour and take you through a tasting.

Cave Cooperative de Tain l'Hermitage

I can vouch for the fact that this is one of France's very best wine cooperatives with a huge range of wines to taste in their tasting room. I would just show up here.

Bistrot a Vins Le Mangevins

You do need to book, but it should be ideal for a light lunch and if you enjoy a glass of something unusual from the region at lunchtime, this seems like the place.

Maison M. Chapoutier

No appointment is needed, but for a special tasting, which would be well worth it here, I would recommend an advanced appointment if possible with an introduction from someone in the USA.