



## **SMALLGROUP TRAVEL**

### **French Provincial Tour May 2010**

**Enjoy the ambience of the French Countryside the French way enjoying food, wine and culture**

#### **Why Smallgroup Travel?**

**Smallgroup Travel lives up to its name - a maximum of 16 people enjoying the French Countryside. You get the chance to travel at a leisurely pace, sample the food and wine of France. Imagine fresh baguettes, matured French cheese, and pate with the wine of the region! You don't just visit the Chateaux you stay in one for three nights, dining in the elegant dining room. And you don't have to worry about the tips - it is all included! You just enjoy the tour.**

**This 15 day fully escorted Smallgroup Tour of France immerses you into the French countryside. The tour begins in Paris travelling to amazing Mont St Michel. Spend a leisurely three night stay in the Loire Valley enjoying the stunning gardens and architecture of the Chateaux. You will stay in an authentic French Chateau where you will enjoy fine French provincial cuisine. Then on to Bordeaux sampling the wines and food of this region. After three leisurely nights in Bordeaux, we travel to Dordogne visiting many picturesque villages of the area and finally Burgundy enjoying the delights of Beune. A final stop in Reims to sample champagne on our way back to Paris. Extend your stay in Paris for three nights and if you still haven't had enough join the Style Tour of Paris and New York (please contact Sue Kuti for more details)**

#### **DAY 1            17 May 2010 Paris**

On arrival at Paris Airport you are met by your Tour Manager and transferred to your hotel\*. After checking in to your hotel, you are at leisure to explore Paris. This we have included dinner in a local restaurant. This is an ideal chance to meet your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. (D)

*\*- Arrival transfer is based on a group arrival transfer. Any passengers NOT arriving on the group flight will need to make their own arrangements to get to Paris hotel. Smallgroup Travel can book this for you if you prefer.*

*Accommodation: Marriott Rive Gauche Hotel or similar*

**DAY 2            18 May 2010 St Malo**

Depart Paris and travel to St Malo. We visit the amazing structure of **Mont St Michel**. The abbey is perched atop a rocky outcrop linked to mainland France by a narrow causeway. The giant monastery dominates the tiny village below, and the entire complex has been listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. Dinner tonight is included at your hotel.

Overnight St Malo (B, D)

*Accommodation: Hotel Central St Malo or similar*



**DAY 3            19 May 2010 Loire Valley**

Today we make our way to the verdant Loire Valley where, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the Kings of France and their courtiers had their holiday palaces. Dinner tonight is included at your Chateau. (B, D)

*Accommodation: Chateau de Chissay or similar*

On several occasions over the centuries, History (with a capital H) has had an appointment with Chissay. Situated between Montrichard and Chenonceaux, this former fortress was built under Charles VII for the chancellor of France Pierre Berard, husband of Anne de Ronsard. As many royal acts mention, Charles VII and Louis XI stayed here



**DAY 4            20 May 2010 Loire Valley**

Our first stop will be a visit to **Chateau Chenonceaux**, to enjoy both the interior and the stunning gardens. Possibly one of the most photographed of the Loire Chateaux, and the former home of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medicis, Chenonceaux spans the river Cher on a series of arches. This afternoon enjoy a visit to the magnificent **Chateaux Chambord**. This enormous chateau was created by King Francois I as a hunting lodge within the surrounding grounds, which consisted of over 5,000 wooded hectares. Dinner tonight is included at your Chateau (BD)

*Accommodation: Chateau de Chissay or similar*



**DAY 5            21 May 2010 Loire Valley**

Your morning is spent in Chinon, a picturesque, historical town situated on the banks of the river Vienne. We then visit the charming village of Azay-le-Rideau with its graceful



chateaux, which sits on the lakeside. Later we visit the **gardens of Chateaux Villandry**. Inspired by the classic gardens of the 16th and 18th century, different levels of the gardens include ponds, topiary, ornamental hedges and an extraordinary kitchen garden covering 12,500 square metres.

Dinner tonight is included at your Chateau (BD)

*Accommodation: Chateau de Chissay or similar*

**DAY 6            22 May 2010   Bordeaux**

Arriving on the coast, our lunch time stop will be in arguably the most attractive and unspoiled town on France's Atlantic seaboard - the delightful port of La Rochelle. Later we make a stop in the town of Cognac to enjoy a **tour though the famous Remy Martin Distillery, including a mini train ride and tasting**. On arrival into Bordeaux city we enjoy an orientation tour before settling in to your hotel, where you stay for the next three nights. (B, D)

*Accommodation: Hotel Majestic or similar*

**DAY 7            23 May 2010   Bordeaux**

This morning we visit the steep, narrow, hilly streets of St Emilion with its medieval ramparts, the ruins of the Cloître des Cordeliers and the unusual 14th century underground church. In the afternoon we drive to visit the Medoc, which is possibly the most famous, high quality wine producing region in the world. As a finale we have arranged a **wine tasting** in one of the superb local vineyards. (B)

*Accommodation: Hotel Majestic or similar*



**DAY 8            24 May 2010   Bordeaux**

Your day is entirely free to explore Bordeaux at leisure. The city's waterfront on the River Garonne makes an attractive spectacle and there is a stately 18th century town centre with its Place du Parlement, Place de la Bourse and medieval quarter. The perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy a baguette and a glass of wine in a sidewalk café! (B)

*Accommodation: Hotel Majestic or similar*

**DAY 9            25 May 2010   Sarlat la Caneda in the Dordogne**

Heading east we spend the morning in Perigueux, on the River L'Isle, with its Cathédrale St Front looming large over the red roofs of the medieval market town. Later we reach the Dordogne region with its sleepy villages, medieval chateaux, meandering rivers and lush landscape that so epitomises French rural life. Enroute to Sarlat we stop at Les Ezyies-de-Tayac which was made famous by the local discovery of 20,000 year old Cro-Magnon skeletons and the pre-historic Lascaux cave paintings. Here we **visit the fascinating National Museum of Prehistory** located in the chateau which is embedded in the cliffs. The views from the terrace across town are excellent. Later we arrive at perfectly preserved Sarlat la Caneda, one of the most stunning towns in France, where we stay for the next two nights. Dinner tonight is included in a local restaurant. (B, D)

*Accommodation Hotel Le Renior or similar*



**DAY 10          26 May 2010   Sarlat la Caneda in the Dordogne**

Your morning is completely free to explore the old town centre. In the afternoon we will take a leisurely drive down the Dordogne river road past lush countryside, medieval castles and the incredibly picturesque villages including Bezenac, Beynac, La Roc Gageac and



Domme. (B)

*Accommodation Hotel Le Renior or similar*

**DAY 11**      **27 May 2010**      **Lyon**



Crossing the 'Massif Central' we arrive into Lyon mid afternoon and enjoy an orientation tour. Lyon is the gastronomic, as well as the commercial, heart of south central France. There are more restaurants, and more Michelin stars, per square kilometre in the Lyon area than anywhere else in Europe. We have left this evening free for you to dine out in one of the "Bouchons" - small restaurants where you can enjoy excellent brasserie style food. (B)

*Accommodation Hotel Lyon Metropole or similar*

**DAY 12**      **28 May 2010**      **Beaune in Burgundy**

This morning we have arranged a visit to one of the silk factories located in the amazing quarter of Croix Rousse. The rest of the morning is at leisure to enjoy Lyon. Make sure you visit the Presqu'île, the narrow strip of land between the River Saône and the River Rhône, with its outstanding buildings and museums. In the early afternoon we drive north and stop in the village of Solutre-Pouilly to visit L' Atrium Cellar. Located on the village square, we will enjoy a wine tasting and sample the local Pouilly Fuisse wines.



Later we continue to the old town of Beaune, capital of the Burgundian wine industry, where we visit the fascinating Hospices de Beaune. Covered with multicoloured glazed roof tiles the 'Hotel Dieu' was built over 550 years ago to help the town's folk in a time of poverty and famine. (B, D)

*Accommodation Best Western Hotel HenryII or similar*

**DAY 13**      **29 May 2010**      **Beaune in Burgundy**

Your morning will be spent in nearby Dijon. Capital of the grand Dukes of Burgundy in the 14th century, the town boasts many elegant buildings, embellished with statues and fine carvings. At the heart of Dijon lies the Palais des Ducs, once the home of the 17th century Burgundian court. In the early afternoon we drive through the golden hills and make a stop at the vineyard of **Morin Pere et Fils for tasting of Nuits St George wines**. The rest of your afternoon will be free in Beaune's old town. This evening we have included a special Burgundian dinner in a local restaurant. (B, D)



*Accommodation Best Western Hotel HenryII or similar*

**DAY 14**      **30 May 2010**      **Bergeres Les Vertus - Champagne region**

Mid morning we stop in the historic town of Troyes. Originally settled on the junction of several Roman roads, Troyes became an important religious and cultural regional centre. Nowadays the old town, set near the ornate façade of Cathédrale St Pierre et St Paul, is an architectural time capsule. The pedestrianised Rue Roger Salengro is lined with fine 16th century timber and brick houses, jutting out over the street, and on Rue Champeaux, the

houses facing each other in the narrow alleyways virtually touch at the top. Later we enter the rolling limestone hills of the central Champagne Region where we take the famous Champagne Road to visit the wine 'caves' of Mercier, the largest champagne producers in the world. We stay the night in the nearby village of Bergeres Les Vertus, where we enjoy a farewell meal in our hotel. (B, D)

*Accommodation Hostellerie de Mont Amie/ Bergeres Les Vertus or similar*

**DAY 15**                      **31 May 2010**                      **1 June 2010**                      **Paris**

This morning we visit nearby Reims, capital of the Champagne region, and the cathedral city where France crowned so many of her kings. There will be time at leisure before we depart for nearby Paris, where your tour ends on arrival. Drop off points will be Gare du Nord station and a city centre hotel. (B)



### **Features and Inclusions**

- True Small group size - maximum 16 passengers
- No optional excursion lists or hidden, later charged extras
- All the sightseeing, scenic drives and excursions described in the itinerary
- Fully escorted by Sue Kuti experienced Travel Manager
- Experienced French Tour Manager
- First Class air-conditioned touring coach with plenty of room to spread out!
- End of Tour tips to Tour Manager, drivers and guides - no need to think about this on the tour
- 14 nights selected accommodation as described
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- Welcome dinner in Paris
- Breakfasts daily
- 10 dinners including Welcome and Farewell dinners, authentic French dinner at the Chateau de Chissay and special Burgundian dinner in Beaune.
- Tours and tastings through vineyards as described in the itinerary and Remy Martin Cognac tour
- Entrances: Mont St Michelle, Chenonceau Chateau and Gardens, Chateau Villandry Gardens, National Museum of Prehistory in Les Eyzies, Lyon silk factory, Hospices de Beaune
- Please note that hotels are subject to change

### **Exclusions**

- International airfare , airport taxes/security charges ( Sue Kuti can help you with this)
- Excess baggage
- Meals & beverages not specifically identified in the itinerary.
- Entrances not specifically identified in the itinerary

- Items of a personal nature or personal expenses
- Travel insurance ( Sue Kuti will offer 25% off the insurance rate as a member of a Smallgroup Travel Tour)
- Passport and visa costs

### COST

**Based on a minimum of 15 people travelling together**

**\$6999.00**

#### **Documentation:**

For all international travel you must be in possession of a passport with at least 6 months validity remaining. You should also have ALL of the visas required for the countries you will be travelling to. Please check with us regarding which visas you will require.

#### **Travel Insurance:**

It is a condition of travel that all travellers are adequately insured and that insurance details are advised at time of deposit. We can offer a group insurance with 25% discount off the premium. Please contact Sue.

#### **Price Increases:**

Prior to full payment being made and air tickets issued, tour prices can increase due to reasons beyond the control of Smallgroup Travel: currency fluctuations, variation of hotel contract rates or airline price increases. It is therefore in your interest to protect against such increases by paying in full at your earliest possible convenience. Once you have paid in full, your tour price is 'locked-in'.

#### ***How to Reserve Your Tour:***

- Please contact Sue Kuti at [sue.kuti@smallgrouptravel.com.au](mailto:sue.kuti@smallgrouptravel.com.au) or [suek@travelmanagers.com.au](mailto:suek@travelmanagers.com.au) or
- Tel: 02) 93988558 or Mobile: 0414598157 to reserve your place on the tour.
- We will then send you our official booking form and booking conditions for the tour. Please complete this form and return it with your deposit of 10% of the tour cost per person.
- On receipt of your deposit and booking form, we will then forward additional pre-departure information regarding visas, medical requirements, weather and much more.
- Payment of your tour balance is then required 60 days before your departure.

***Thank you for choosing Smallgroup Travel and "bon voyage"!***

**TravelManagers Australia - trading as Small Group Travel".**

***To live is to travel.....share the experience***

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