



Fall 2026
tour dates
coming
soon



Wine & Chateaux
LUXURY TOURS



“University was never this much fun!”

Join a distinguished, fun-loving food and wine professor on an immersive journey into the French Renaissance to explore how it gave rise to today’s most diverse and exciting French wine region.

Dr. John Volpe PhD is an award-winning food & wine professor from the University of Victoria, Canada who curates exclusive tours tailored to inquisitive travellers seeking more than generic experiences.

Guided by Dr. Volpe's extensive knowledge, you'll explore the vineyards and majestic castles where heritage and innovation converge. Dr. Volpe transforms each visit with a vivid narrative, unraveling the unique interplay between Renaissance influencers and modern oenology and gastronomy.

Transcending conventional sightseeing, you walk in the footsteps of great Renaissance figures, savoring curated tastings amidst iconic architectural wonders and lush landscapes. Dr. Volpe weaves together stories of scientific advancements, cultural shifts, and historical events providing a multidimensional understanding of the region’s evolution and contemporary complexity.



This is a journey of intellectual enrichment and sensory indulgence, where each moment is designed to cater to your refined tastes and curiosities heightened by personalized insights from an internationally recognized scholar.

Over the many years of teaching his university-level *Terroir Field School* in the Loire Valley, Dr. Volpe has developed a wide network of friends and contacts allowing exclusive access to places steeped in history while tasting wines alongside the region’s leading winemakers responsible for putting the Loire Valley on the leading edge of French sustainable winemaking.

Join this transformative journey where wine flows as richly as the history that shaped it, and the science behind the flavour is as intriguing as the culture from which it emerged. Discover the Loire Valley through a unique lens that merges past and present, guided by an unparalleled expert in food and wine traditions. Experience the Loire like never before — with Dr. John Volpe as your guide.



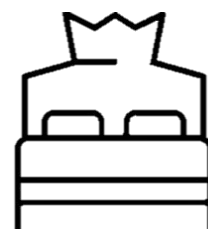
More than a trip to the Loire Valley; This is an odyssey through time and taste



Chateaux



Wine Regions



Accommodation

- Ch. Amboise
- Ch. Chambord
- Ch. Chenonceau
- Ch. Chinon
- Ch. du Clos Lucé

- Cheverny
- Chinon
- Montlouis s/ Loire
- Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil
- Vouvray

Luxurious accommodation at *Le Moulin de la Chevrière* where our group will occupy the entirety of this truly unique property



The Loire Valley is an exceptionally rich cultural landscape of historic towns, architecture, and legendary personalities whose thoughts and designs shaped the Renaissance, through the Age of the Enlightenment, to present day. Among those figuring prominently in our journey include ...



Leonardo da Vinci



Francis I



St. Joan of Arc



Catherine de' Medici



Henry II

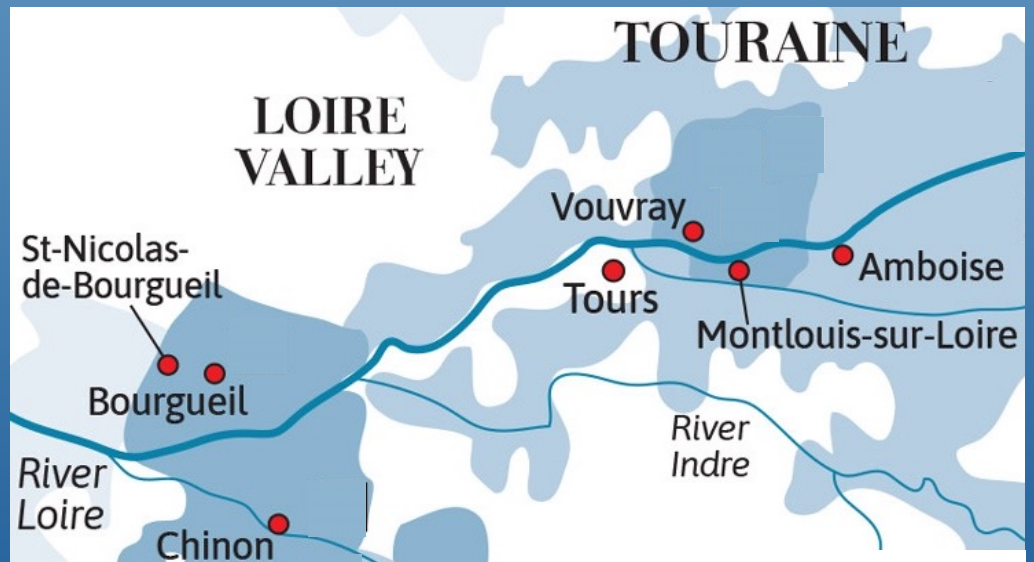


Diane de Poitiers



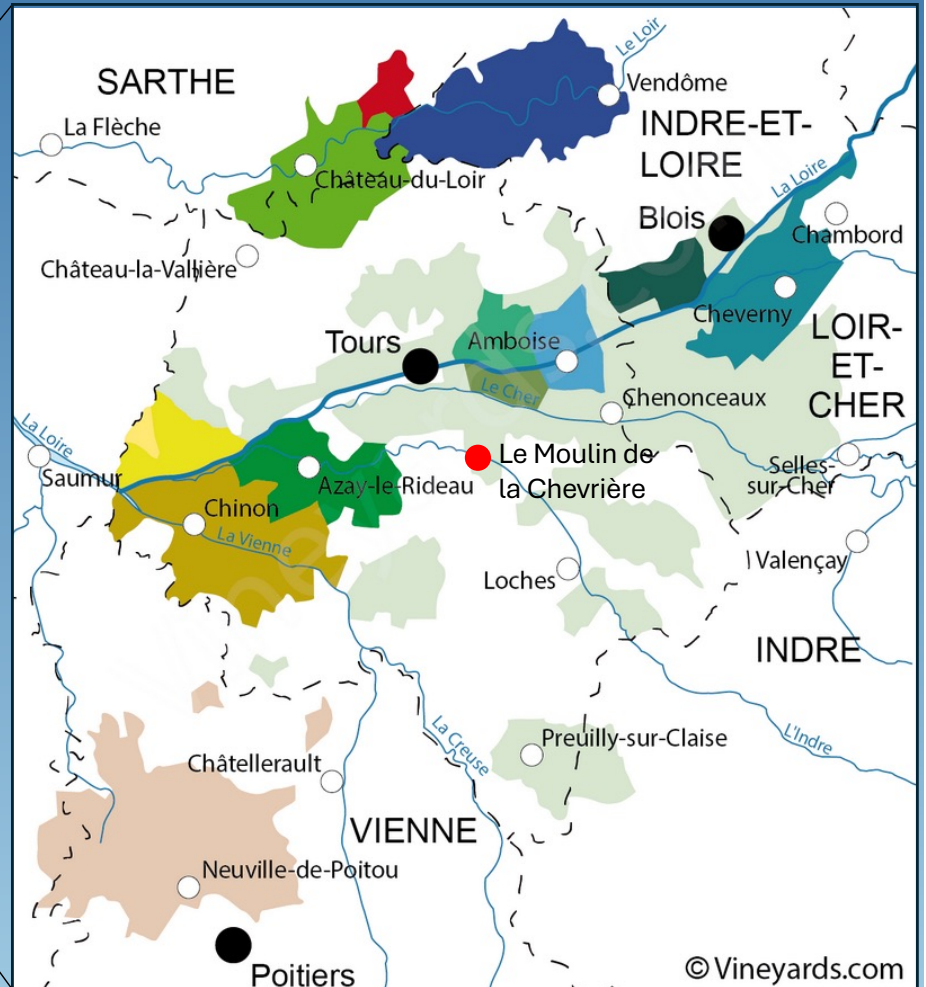
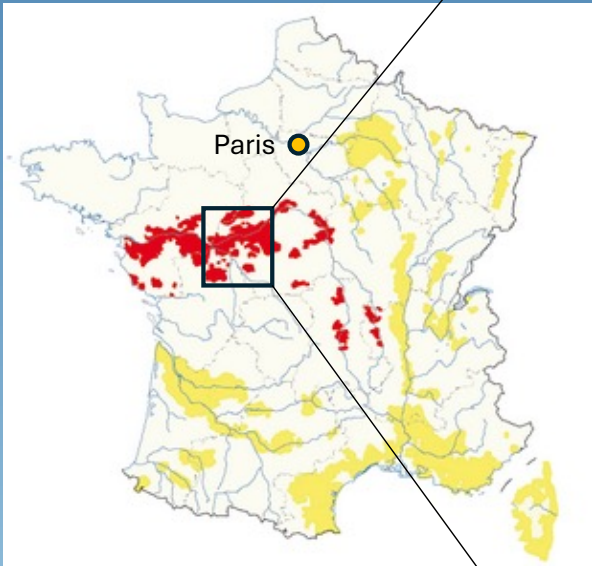
Château Royal d'Amboise overlooking the Loire River

Parallel to its historical cultural significance, the Loire Valley is the birthplace of French viticulture. The cool climate and diverse soils create an extraordinary variety of wines including some of France's most celebrated appellations. We focus on the diverse and exciting Touraine region and the many independent wine makers who will help curate our tasting journey ...



Our journey starts & ends at St-Pierre-des-Corps (Tours) train station
- Multiple daily direct and indirect trains from metro Paris and Charles de Gaul airport

Loire Valley
Wine Appellations



Our journey focusses on the most oenologically, culturally, and historically diverse region of the Loire Valley – the Touraine

Overview

General

Pick-up & Drop-off from St-Pierre-des-Corps (Tours) train station

7 nights / 8 days (Thur. May 21 – Thur. May 28 2026)

Maximum 12-person group size

5-Star accommodation on private island – *Le Moulin de la Chevrière*

Price is double occupancy w/ private toilet & WC

Two 9-person passenger vans w/ AC

Two introductory Loire wine seminars

4 restaurant / bistro lunches incl.

Complimentary Apero most evenings

Three-course catered dinners @ Moulin

5 chateaux - admission and private tour

12 wine experiences (vineyard & cellar tours, tastings, educational experiences)

incl Tasting event with local wine expert and historian Daniel Gatay

incl Evening wine tasting and cruise on traditional Loire River boat

Wine Experiences

Intro to Loire Wines (JPV)

Wine tasting w Daniel Gatay - @ Ch Amboise

Maison des Vins - Cheverny

Caves Ambacia - Amboise

Le Clos de la Meslerie - Vouvray

Domaine Mosney - Montlouis s/ Loire

Intro Wine Saumur and Chinon (JPV)

Amirault Vigerons - Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil

Domaine Bernard Boudry - Chinon

Domaine L'R - Chinon

Domaine Grosbois - Chinon

Dinner Cruise - wine overview and wrap-up

~~\$3800~~
~~May 21-28 2026~~
Sold Out

Lunch Restaurants

La Cour des Rois - Cheverny

Bistro l'Oppidum - Amboise

Table du Pressoir - Panzoult

Vouvray - TBD

Tentative Schedule

(subject to change)

TIME		Thursday May 21	Friday May 22	Saturday May 23	Sunday May 24	Monday May 25	Tuesday May 26	Wed May 27	Thursday May 28	
7h	0	[Grey]	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	Breakfast at Moulin	
	30		7 - 8:30h	7 - 8:30h	7 - 9:00h	7 - 9:00h	7 - 9:00h	7 - 9:00h	7 - 9:00h	
8h	0		Transit to Ch. Chambord	Transit to Ch. Chenonceau	Transit to Ch. Chenonceau	Transit to Amboise	Transit to Vouvray	Transit to Chinon	Transit Cravat	Pack
	30									
9h	0		Chateau Chambord Tour	Lady's Palace	Amboise Sunday Market Tour	Le Clos de la Meslerie	Power Fortress	Domaine Bernard Baudry & Domaine L'R	Transit to Tours Train Stations @ 10h	
	30									
10h	0		Hunting Palace	Transit	Lunch OYO @ Market	Lunch (venue TBD)	Walking Tour of Chinon	Free time in Chinon	Transit to Domaine Grosbois	
	30									
11h	0		Transit to Cheverny	Caves Ambacia	Walk to Ch. Amboise	Chateau Amboise Tour	Domaine Mosney	Lunch OYO in Chinon	Lunch	
	30									
12h	0		Lunch	Caves Ambacia	Chateau Amboise Tour	Domaine Mosney	Lunch OYO in Chinon	Lunch	Lunch	
	30									
13h	0		La Cour des Rois	Tasting historical wines of the Loire	Chateau Amboise Tour	Domaine Mosney	Lunch OYO in Chinon	Lunch	Lunch	
	30									
14h	0		Pick up in Tours Gare de St Pierre des Corps (TGV) 14h	Maison des Vins Cheverny	Walk to Ch. C Luce	To assembly point in Chateau	Transit to Moulin	Transit to SNdBourgueil	Domaine Grosbois	
	30									
15h	0		Gare de Tours (SNCF) 14:30h	Transit to Moulin	Chateau Clos de Luce Tour	Unicorn Wines in Ch. Amboise	Free Time @ Moulin	Amirault Vignirons	Domaine Grosbois	
	30									
16h	0		Moulin Check-in & Free Time	Transit to Moulin	Leonardo da Vinci's Palace	w/ Daniel Gatay	Free Time @ Moulin	Tour and Tasting	Transit to Chinon	
	30									
17h	0	Intro: Wines of the Loire Valley w JPV	Free Time @ Moulin	Free Time in Amboise	Transit to Moulin	Wines of the Chinon & Saumur regions w JPV	Free Time @ Moulin	Free Time in Chinon		
	30									
18h	0	Apero @ Moulin	Apero @ Moulin	Dinner OYO in Amboise	Apero @ Moulin	Apero @ Moulin	Apero @ Moulin	Farewell Dinner		
	30									
19h	0	Tomorrow's Highlights	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Return to Moulin 21:00h	Tomorrow's Highlights	Tomorrow's Highlights	Tomorrow's Highlights	Cruise on traditional flat-bottom Loire boat on River Vienne		
	30									
20h	0	Welcome Dinner	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Market Dinner group collaboration @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin		
	30									
20h	0	Catered @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Market Dinner group collaboration @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin	Catered Dinner @ Moulin		
	30									

- TRANSIT
- CHATEAU TOUR
- CATERED DINNER
- FREE TIME
- APERO
- OTHER MEALS
- WINE EVENT
- WALKING TOUR
- FAREWELL DINNER

Le Moulin de la Chevrière



- 17th century mill on its own island in the the River Indre
- Entirely restored to a luxuriously chic standard in 2016
- The property is the setting of Balzac's 1835 *Le Lys dans la Vallée*
- Our group will occupy the entirety of this charismatic property
- Hot tub, hammocks, terraces and gardens on 4-hectares
- Direct access to water sports including swimming and boating
- Amenities include a bar, restaurant, common areas, laundry, complimentary wifi, characterfully decorated rooms
- Musée Balzac is a leisurely 20 min walk away



Le Moulin de la Chevrière
<https://www.moulindechevriere.com/fr>



Accommodation Pricing

Double Rooms

Pricing is based on double occupancy* in one of four double rooms within Moulin de la Chevrière;



Arabelle (left) and Henriette (right) feature frescoes evoking the romantic classical period

Félix (left) and Laure (right) are decorated in contemporary French style



All four rooms are ~25m² with river views and include large bathroom with 6m² bathtub and private toilet. Laure and Henriette are on the first floor, Félix and Arabelle the second

<https://www.moulindechevriere.com/fr/chambre/chambre-double>

La Roulette (+C\$400 pp total for tour)

Somewhat larger and private, the double occupancy La Roulette is located adjacent to the Moulin. It has its own private terrace with deck chairs and river view, a small kitchen with adjacent shower and toilet. Breakfasts are served in the caravan or on the main terrace, as you wish.

<https://www.moulindechevriere.com/fr/chambre/la-roulotte>



Chambre du Meunier (-C\$400 pp total for tour)

At 16m² this double occupancy room in the Moulin is a more modest size with simpler decor but enjoys all the same accoutrements as the double rooms.



* Single supplement – C\$1006 double rooms, C\$1406 La Roulette, C\$606 Chambre du Meunier

Les Châteaux



Château de Chambord

The hunting palace



In 1519 Francois I undertook construction of the worlds most extravagant hunting lodge. A manifestation of Renaissance ideals and a political manifesto featuring the central Leonardo-designed double helix staircase.

The skyline of Château de Chambord was designed to replicate that of contemporary Constantinople (Istanbul) ... for reasons we will explore.



440 rooms, 365 fireplaces, 73 staircases set within 14,000 acres of gardens and game reserve, all surrounded by a continuous 32 km wall—the longest wall in all of France.

Château Royal d'Amboise

The power fortress



The chateau dates to the 9th century with much of French history unfolding within its walls, including its most notorious period during the “Amboise Conspiracy” (1560) when the bodies of +1200 Huguenots (Protestants) hung from its ramparts, sending a clear message of “rebellion will not be tolerated”.

Henry II and wife Catherine de' Medici, raised their children here including future king Francois II with his future bride Mary Stuart, the child Queen of Scotland, eventually making Francis II the King of France and King Consort of Scotland.



Francois I played a key role in transforming the medieval fortress into a royal residence and Renaissance palace. His personal emblem, a fire-breathing salamander (yes, this will be explained), is adorned throughout the chateau and the town of Amboise.

Château de Chenonceau

The Palace of Queens



The gallery was first an open, arched bridge over the River Cher built by its owner Diane de Poiteirs, mistress of Henry II in 1555. Upon Henry's death his wife, Catherine de' Medici, evicted Diane, moved in and constructed the 2-story covered gallery, which during WWII marked the border of occupied and free France. The gallery was a major throughfare for spies, resistance fighters, arms etc.

"The Green Room" from which Catherine de' Medici ruled all of France and shaped Renaissance Europe, a legacy that lives on to the present day



Graffiti in the chapel attributed to the bored bodyguards of Mary Queen of Scots in 1543.

Forteresse Royale de Chinon

The medieval power centre



Among Europe's most sensational betrayals, Philip IV imprisoned the Knights Templar leadership here under contrived charges of heresy. Their carvings remain on the chateau's keep walls 720 years after being burned at the stake.

In 1429, Joan of Arc met King Charles VII here convinced him to give her an army to drive the English out of Orléans and then France



Despite so many centuries of dynamic history packed into such a small and charming town, modern Chinon is ruled today by its exceptionally popular Cabernet Franc reds and Chenin Blanc whites.

Château du Clos Lucé

Leonardo's sanctuary



At risk of imprisonment by the Pope for exhuming bodies to study, Leonardo accepted an invitation from France's "Renaissance King" Francois I to live under his protection at Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise in 1516.

Arriving with only three paintings (including Mona Lisa), Leonardo was enthusiastic and productive. The château has been maintained as it was in his time such as his study (above), kitchen, dining room and bed chamber.



The chateau sits on a 7-hectare park that includes Leonardo's gardens and 40 models of his inventions constructed from his original sketches and drawings.


Loire Wine Overview

53 appellations spread across 56,000 hectares under vine

Major varieties: Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Melon

3700 individual producers, 21 co-ops, 450 négociants

~320 million bottles annually, 75% consumed domestically



Route des Vignobles
Touraine-Val de Loire

You will have the opportunity to enjoy wines from across the Loire, from Nantes to Auvergne. Producers from five of the Loire's most celebrated appellations will introduce you to their vines and wines while sharing the secrets of their terroir.

Appellation Exploration



CHEVERNY

MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE

VOUVRAY

CHINON

SAINT-NICOLAS-DE-BOURGUEIL

CHEVERNY

Key Facts

700 hectares; 3.9 million bottles

White 65%, Red 28%, Rosé 7%

Permitted grapes

White: Sauvignons Gris and/or Blanc 60-85%; balance can be Chardonnay, Chenin, Menu Pineau

Red & Rosé: Pinot Noir 60-95% plus Gamay and/or Côt (Malbec)

Soils: sand & clay dominant with some flint and limestone with gravel terraces

Francois I came close to building Chambord here (but was put off by a local plague). However, he did introduce the Romorantin grape here in 1519. Grown nowhere else in the world but the Cour-Cheverny sub-appellation, Romorantin wines are not for the faint of heart with searing acidity. Drinking this wine, in this place, brings you in direct communion with the Renaissance King



With 100 AOC Cheverny and AOC Cour Cheverny wines available to sample together with interactive exhibits, the Maison des Vins de Cheverny our visit will offer an unprecedented oenological experience, an immersive opportunity to explore the exceptional terroir of this region

CHINON

Key Facts

2354 hectares; 12 million bottles

White 5%, Red 86%, Rosé 9%

Permitted grapes

White: Chenin Blanc

Red & Rosé: Cabernet Franc (up to 10% Cabernet Sauvignon allowed, but rarely used)

Soils: Three distinct types

i) sand & gravel alluvial terraces close to the river

ii) Turonian yellow limestone & clay on slopes

iii) siliceous clay, silt & sand over Senonian limestone on plateaus.



Rabelais, France's most famed satirist (which is saying something) wrote while also being a physician, scholar, diplomat and Catholic priest. His hometown wines feature prominently in his fiction, wines that have changed little over the intervening 500 years

Chinon has the warmest and driest climate of all Touraine, resulting in the most structured and age-worthy *succulent* wines of the Loire. Limestone slopes over the River Vienne yield bold, dense wines while the alluvial sands of the valley provide aromatically complex floral wines (and protected some vines from the devastating 1800s phylloxera plague such as these +120 yr old vines at Domaine de L'R)



Cabernet Franc is the Loire's most popular black grape and France's most ancient variety; it *is* Chinon. Often overshadowed by its more extroverted offspring Cabernet Sauvignon, the wiser parent speaks a more nuanced and evocative language of place when cultivated by knowing and experienced hands such as those we will visit.

SAINT-NICOLAS-DE-BOURGUEIL

Key Facts

1059 hectares; 7.5 million bottles

White 0%, Red 99%, Rosé 1%

Permitted grapes

Red: Cabernet Franc (up to 10% Cabernet Sauvignon allowed, but rarely used)

Soils: Two thirds of the appellation is deep sand & gravel alluvial terraces; the remainder is sand over tuffeau on the higher slopes



France's only single commune appellation was established more than 1000 years ago by the monks of Bourgueil Abbey

The Loire Valley leads France in sustainable viticulture and thus is also the least corporatized region, where independent spirits reign and playful innovation is the name of the game, as evidenced by Xavier Amirault's primary fermentation tanks. Every one of Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil's 96 producers is an independent resulting in one of France's most dynamic wine regions



MONTLOUIS-SUR-LOIRE

Key Facts

430 hectares; 2.4 million bottles

White 100%

Permitted grapes

White: Chenin Blanc

Styles: 67% Sparkling, 33% Still

Soils: Flinty clay, silty sand and silty clay over limestone

While Cabernet Franc reigns supreme in our other visits, here and in big-brother Vouvray, Chenin Blanc is the only permitted grape. While still wines are a major draw, we will pay particular attention to the Champagne-rivalling sparklers of Montlouis-sur-Loire.



Feeling overshadowed by the much larger and more famous appellation across the river in Vouvray, the producers here regrouped and upped their production and oenological game to maximize quality as a means of competing. The consensus is that it worked ... very well. You will be judge.



VOUVRAY

Key Facts

2212 hectares; 14.3 million bottles

White 100%

Permitted grapes

White: Chenin Blanc (up to 5% Orbois permitted)

Styles: 52% Sparkling, 48% Still

Soils: Sand, clay or flint over limestone



Sommelier favorite Chenin Blanc reaches its greatest heights here on its home soil of Vouvray. Sparkling or still, sweet or savory, dry or fruity, all are here and why Vouvray is a wine lover's dream

Visiting historic troglodyte caves used for aging and cellaring provides an immersive historical and geological insight that will enhance your understanding of the wine's character



TOUR INCLUDES

- ✓ 7 nights and 8 days
- ✓ 7 nights at Le Moulin de la Chevrière
- ✓ 7 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches and 5 Dinners as per itinerary
- ✓ Admission and private guided tours of 5 chateaux
- ✓ Wine makers meetings, tastings and tours in 5 appellations
- ✓ Nightly apero as per itinerary
- ✓ All visits guided by JPV and on-site experts
- ✓ Introductory wine seminars as per itinerary
- ✓ All ground transportation during tour
- ✓ Fun and informative talks about local lands, people and culture
- ✓ Pre-trip on-line preparatory educational materials (optional)
- ✓ Dr. Volpe leading / accompanying all activities each day

NOT INCLUDED

- ✗ Travel costs to/from St-Pierre-des-Corps Station (Tours)
- ✗ Visas and other travel documents
- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Discretionary gratuities

● A non-refundable deposit of 20% of the total tour price is due on or before January 30 2026 . Full payment is required by February 21 2026.

● The tour may be cancelled if the minimum number of participants required for a trip is not met by the deposit deadline of January 30 2026. In this unlikely event you will receive full refund of all funds paid

● All guests are strongly encouraged to have travel / trip cancellation and medical insurance

● Due to the intricate logistics of this tour, itinerary changes are sometimes unavoidable

● Any goods or services not mentioned here are not included in the tour price

● Any part of the program missed due to late arrival or early departure, for any reason, is non-refundable

● Guest cancellation conditions:

3 calendar months or more prior to start: 80% refund

From 2 to 3 calendar months minus a day prior to start: 50% refund

From 1 to 2 calendar months minus a day prior to start: 20% refund

10 and less days prior to start: 10% refund

Next Tour

C\$3800pp

May 21-28 2026

*based on double Moulin room



Wine & Chateaux
LUXURY TOURS

SOLD OUT

For questions and
information trip dates, pricing, etc.
please contact Dr. John at
jpv.volpe@gmail.com

