

# Tasting Notes

## *the Jumelage Trip to the Perigord*

**Perigord** – that Department 430 kilometers [or 260 miles] south by south-west of Paris – just east of Bordeaux – the valley of the Dordogne River. This was the locale for the Jumelage trip celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Winchester- St. Germain-en-Laye Jumelage. Thirty-nine folks – including 23 from Winchester – comprised the delegation for a great week in the south of France. Following are some thots, pix, and personal reflections on the venture.

The trip started in Paris at the Paris Montparnasse TVG station on Sunday, September 24. The station is notable as the site of the tallest building in Paris, the *Tour de Montparnasse* – seen here thru the structure of the station itself. The TGV [*tres grande vitesse*] transported us at over 100 miles per hour in just 3 hours in quiet comfort.



Upon arrival we were met by Marie-Noëlle our very capable and personable guide for the week who quickly got us into the task with a quick tour of the community of St. Emilion, home of some very famous Bordeaux wines. From there we proceed to our hotel, just east of the city of Perigueux, which would be our base for the next three nites. Later in the week, we switched to a second hotel, just north west of Perigueux, for the remaining three nites in the area.

Each day started with an informal breakfast at the hotel and then off on the bus to the sites of the day – Oh!! -- what sites they were – chateaux and castles -- villages, valleys, and vineyards – gardens and parks -- history all over the place.



Standing on one of the towers at Castelnaud overlooking the Dordogne valley. The castle dates from the 1200's and 1300's – a few hundred years *before Columbus sailed the ocean blue.*

Lascaux – that site discovered in 1940 by four young boys – determined to be 13,000 years old – now shown in an exact replica in order not to damage to the original because of humidity and germs introduced by tourists – you may be familiar with pictures of these cave paintings – however, being there is breathtaking – the animals are huge – the largest being 12 feet across -- a gee whiz moment.





Le Cloître de Cadouin – with an abbey church from the 12<sup>th</sup> century – the lovely garden of the cloister still reflects a solemnity that is worth a few moments of quiet.

Here is a brief look at the gardens of the Eyrignac Manor. Originally laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, transformed into an English garden in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and restored to original grandeur in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the master’s bedroom looks out over this view – what a scene to wake up to!!



Perigueux, the capital of the Perigord – with tiled roofs viewed down one of the many narrow streets -- shops proliferate devoted to the tourist trade as well as the needs of the local population.

Oh yes – we did taste the local products –but, did not really over emphasize the vineyard visits – the Perigord has so much to offer in addition to the wine – here is a view of the Monbazillac estate viewed through a glass of it’s product -- a light, sweet, before or after dinner treat.



From morning to evening the group traveled, conversed, and ate together – language provided a interesting challenge but not a barrier – indeed, the language challenge served to provide more cohesion – we have already started to plan on a USA trip in 2007 and a return to France in 2008 – any takers?

Credits:

Must acknowledge fellow Jumelagois from St Germain-en-Laye for showing us great friendship and care during this trip – also, must acknowledge the South of France for being there and being so beautiful Stated opinions and errors of fact are solely the fault of the author . . . .

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