

TRAVEL Q&A

The Pinot Gallery

By ANDREA SACHS
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Q My wife and I are traveling to Burgundy, France, for pinot tasting. Any recommendations on how to visit the vineyards?

Matt O'Brien
Alexandria

In Burgundy, 4,500 wine producers cover 60,000 acres, so you can't go far without bumping into a great grape. "Burgundy is the preeminent region in the world for pinot noir," says Lauriann Greene-Sollin, a sommelier and founder of French Wine Explorers (877-261-1500, www.wine-tours-france.com), a Florida company that specializes in wine tours of France.

The hilly region, about 190 miles southwest of Paris, is striped with vineyards large and small, artisanal and modern. The adventurous oenophile can explore the region solo; the Burgundy Regional Office of Tourism's Web site (www.burgundy-tourism.com) supplies information on wineries and festivals and suggests four wine routes (e.g., the Grand Crus, along the "Champs-Elysees of Burgundy"). However, you might hit some obstacles if you're not familiar with the area or the language. Greene-Sollin says many wineries are hard to find — "The better places aren't advertised" — and most vineyards require reservations, which can be tough to book if you failed high school French. (English is not as widely spoken here as in, say, Paris.) Also, drinking and driving is always a bad combo.

To better understand pinot and other Burgundy grapes, find a tour company that has guides who are trained in French wine and familiar with the terrain. Aim for two to four vineyards a day; any more and your reds will start to blur. You'll also want to mix it up with visits to abbeys, museums and any of the area's esteemed restaurants, so make sure the tour incorporates other attractions or schedules free time.

For instance, French Wine Explorers' Great Estates of Burgundy Tour (Sept. 10-14, 2007; \$3,995 per person double) winery-hops around the Grand Cru estates of the Cote de Nuits and Cote de Beaune, and it stops at Hospices de Beaune and Clos de Vougeot. Other wine tour groups include Burgundy Discovery (011-33-3-8549-5134, www.burgundydiscovery.com) and Fugues in France (011-33-3-8021-7118, www.bonappetit-france.com), both based in France.

I read that camouflage clothing is considered offensive in Argentina. Are there other rules of etiquette I should know?

Terri Schaffer
Nokesville, Va.

As a whole, Argentina is pretty laid-back and accepting, even of Americans dressed in military garb. "It is not easy to offend Argentines," says Maria Reynolds, who co-owns JR Reynolds Propiedades, a Buenos Aires company that assists expatriates in Argentina. "Here, if people don't like something, they'll tell you."

Reynolds says camouflage clothing might bring undue attention, but it won't offend. She notes, however, that Argentines dress more formally during the week and wear long pants even in the summer. Dinner attire also may be more conservative than you're accustomed to. One rule of thumb: If a reservation is required, go business casual. On a similar note, Argentines are late eaters, usually sitting down for dinner between 9:30 and 11 p.m. For tipping, give the waiter 10 to 15 percent. However, Carlos Mascias, a counselor at the Embassy of Argentina in Washington, says you don't need to tip cab drivers. (Mascias also instructs visitors to avoid hailing cabs from the street; instead, have the hotel or restaurant call for a lift. At airports, hire a cab from the booths at the terminal or take the hotel van.)

One of the biggest cultural differences may be the greeting. Argentines cheek-kiss each other hello, even if they've never met before.

Are there any hotels at JFK Airport in New York that have day rates? If not, does JFK still have luggage lockers?

Ann Martin
Washington

A host of JFK hotels allow travelers to catch a nap between morning and evening flights. In many cases, the properties let fliers reserve a room during the day only if they have low to medium occupancy. Therefore, visitors can book only on the day of their arrival.

The Best Western JFK Airport, for example, has \$89 day-stay rooms with a 7 a.m. check-in and a 4 p.m. check-out, but you must call the day of. Ditto for Courtyard by Marriott JFK Airport (\$125, rooms usable between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.), the Holiday Inn JFK Airport (\$100, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.) and the Crowne Plaza Hotel JFK Airport (\$99, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.). For a list of airport hotels and contact numbers, see the Port Authority Web page www.panynj.gov/aviation/jfkhotelsframe.htm.

Unfortunately, if a day room is not available, you'll be stuck lugging your bags: The airport removed its lockers years ago.

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