



Catalonia Wine Regions: Priorat Weekend Gourmet wine tour 2008/9 2 Nights / 3 Days

COST PER PERSON IN EUROS GUIDED TOUR	PRIVATE WEEKEND		
	2	4	6
2 NIGHTS/3 DAYS	929.00	639.00	539.00

Barcelona extension on request: see recommendations and details at the end of the itinerary



Priorat Gran Reserva



Mediterranean slow food and wine weekend

Spoil yourself with an immersion in the deep south of Catalunya: The Priorat

Our knowledgeable local guide, is on first name terms with all of the specialist wine-makers of The Priorat.

On this occasion you will be visiting wineries in The Priorat, currently one of the most important wine regions of Spain with high quality and exceptional complex big reds. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn about Catalan wines and the traditional food of this region with Roman, Arab, Jewish and Cristian influences.

You stay in a superb village hotel in the heart of The Priorat, the jewel in the crown of Catalonia situated near The Mediterranean coast. Touring is designed to allow you to absorb the great wines, excellent slow food and unique cultural atmosphere of one very special wine region of Southern Catalunya D.O.Q. Priorat and Montsant.



PRIORAT





THE PRIORAT, A LAND OF WINES

The Priorat county is hidden behind the coastal mountains of southern Catalonia, 150 km southwest of Barcelona, 50 km. from the roman town of Tarragona and only 40 km. from the most famous beach resorts of Costa Daurada. Despite this, it is as remote from bustling city as could be possible.

This region sits in a natural amphitheatre of low mountains that surround it on all sides. The twenty-three towns that form the Priorat are all relatively small (less than 300 citizens) and quite close to each other, the principal one being Falset (2.500 citizens). The Priorat is one of the least densely populated areas in Catalonia.

It is a land with a wealth of character where the beautiful villages and landscape unite to captivate the visitor - a place of contrasts, soaked in calmness, with a countryside that hides its charms among vineyards, olives trees and mountains.

The Priorat is one of the oldest districts in Catalonia. The most notable historic site is the "Cartoixa d'Scala Dei", a monastery dating back to the 12th century. Soon after the Islamic domination, which ended in 1153, a group of Carthusian monks were sent here from France in order to establish their presence in Spain, being the oldest Carthusian monastery in the Iberian Peninsula.

The economy of the Priorat has always relied on agriculture and the production of wine and olive oil, making it **an ideal location for wine tours**. Here they have been exporting wine since the fifteenth century, and wine production remains its most important activity along with the production of olive oil.

The Priorat region has two 'DO' (Denominación de Origen - names guaranteeing the area of origin) and the tradition associated with the cultivation of vines dates back to times immemorial. From its earliest days in the twelfth century, the monks of the Carthusian monastery at Scala Dei encouraged the cultivation of vines. By the eighteenth century, wine production had become an important feature of the region and after a century of silence, these land has become a route for those with a keen interest in wine being its wines appreciated all over the world since mid-nineties.

Due to its geographic position, this beautiful and unique area has an enormous potential for the production of distinctive great wines.

Whilst visiting the Priorat, the pleasure of discovering wine cellars can be combined with the enjoyment of tasting the wines that have been made there.

Starting from certain traditional varieties of grape, which after so many years have become closely identified with the region, new varieties have been added more recently, foreign in style and bearing exotic sounding names. Now, because of the professionalism and skill of specialist winemakers, wines have been created that have conquered the world markets.

This is a unique land. Vineyards and wine cellars await you, where we hope to be able to share with you our great enthusiasm and love for the world of wine.



THE ESSENCE OF OUR WINE

Although the Priorat wines have been produced for centuries, it is only recently, in the past decade or so, that these have taken a quantitative leap in quality that now puts them at the forefront of Spanish wines.

Catalonia is probably best known for its white wines and cava (champagne method), such as Freixenet and Codorniu which mostly emanate from the Penedès region near Barcelona, but the constant increase in production quality from DOQ Priorat wines and DO Montsant wines has put these in the spotlight of wine connoisseurs worldwide. This is what makes this area so interesting for a wine tour in Spain.

As we have already mentioned, **the Priorat county has two wine denomination areas: DOQ Priorat and DO Montsant, being DOQ Priorat alongside with La Rioja, the only two qualified wine areas in Spain.** Geographically the DO Montsant area has a donut shape and completely encircles the DO Priorat area. They both share the same grape varieties, almost the same climate, and the same sub-soil, however the DOC Priorat region has the hard black slate surface that the vines grow on and that is so characteristic of El Priorat.

With an area of cultivation equal to approximately 3,400 hectares, **the region has many different types of soil**, which produce a great variety of wines. This diversity of soil, together with the variation of altitude, (from 100 to 750 metres), and an unusual combination of climatic conditions, has allowed each of the denominations to produce different types of wine; red, white, rosé, sweet wines and 'ranci'.

The main towns of DO Montsant production are Falset, Marçà, Capçanes, El Masroig, Darmós, and Els Guiamets. The main areas of wine production in the DOC Priorat region are Gratallops, Scala Dei, La Vilella, La Morera de Montsant, Belmunt, Porrera, Poboceda, Torroja, and El Molar. Together they total nearly 400 wine cultivators and 100 wine producers.

One of the advantages of the Priorat region is its **temperate and dry climate with hardly any rain** whatsoever during the summer months. The geographical factor which affects both the price and taste of these wines is the fact that **most vines are on steep slopes of slate of volcanic origin which confer a mineral character to the wines**, and also preclude large automation of the picking process, thus making it a very manual affair. The most interesting wines of the area are the **dry reds**. These are very concentrated, **very high in colour and alcohol content** (14 to 15%), **with great tannins**, and are ready to drink at even a young age.

The **grape varieties** used for most wine production here are:

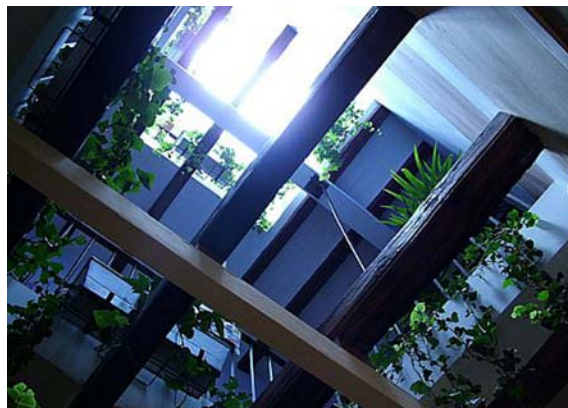
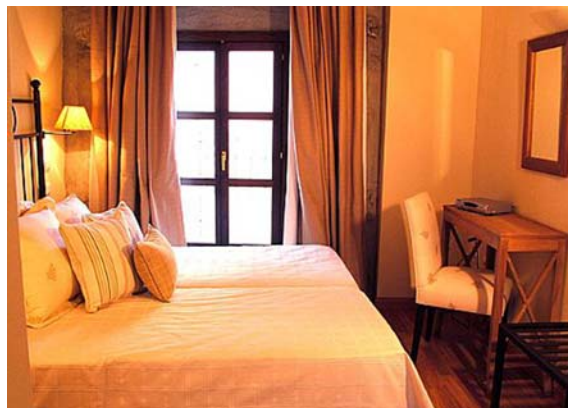
Reds: Red Grenache, Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Merlot

Whites: Macabeo, White Grenache and Pedro Ximénez

Apart from the reds and the whites, there is also a very particular wine made here called Vi Ranci, or "rancid wine" which is used as a dessert wine and in cooking. These are aged in barrels at a higher than normal temperature to allow for a natural oxidation process to take place. Another particular wine (although it doesn't follow a fermentation process) is Mistela, a sweet white wine also used to accompany desserts.



ACCOMMODATION IN PRIORAT





In the center of the Priorato built over the old abbey of Torroja del Priorat, a construction of over 400 years old.

The hotel is located in the Torroja del Priorat, the Priorato's geographical center.

You will have the chance to know the Priorato, a region that will surprise you by its marvelous landscapes, the combination of lush forests with vineyards and olives. You will also find possibilities of enjoying cultural visits, adventure sports as well as a wine and olive region with Priorato qualified Designation of Origin.

Hotel, restaurant and agrobotics.

Our Chef's professional experience in other regions and countries has filled our traditional and typically Priorato cuisine with innovative touches and diverse culinary options.

Rooms: Suites, double rooms, single rooms and rooms suitable for handicapped guests.

Panoramic views, air-conditioning, 24-hour access to internet, background music, hair dryer, 12-hour room service, wine list and coffee service.

The PUB of the hotel is placed in the low part of the abbey where they were finding the guardianships and warehouse of the former abbey.

In this space we will find a cosy place to take a few glasses with good music in a few comfortable sofas.

Hotel Hall: It includes different rooms with coffee service.

Conference Room, Wine-tasting Room, Wine Club, Restaurant, Wine Store





Friday

Arrival in Barcelona airport
(flight to be advised)
Transfer to our selected 4 star hotel in
the heart of the Priorat region.
Transfer time 1 hour and 45 minutes



20.00

Welcome dinner at the hotel- traditional
restaurant sampling local Catalan food
with Priorat wines





Saturday

08.30-09.30

Buffet breakfast

10.00-11.30

Private guided visit to one of the pioneers in the Priorat wine region, having spectacular wines recognised by wine experts all over the world.

Wine tasting

Although the official name of the winery is Costers del Siurana, it is principally known by its famed Priorat wine brand, Clos de l'Obac. Clos de l'Obac is a powerful red wine, made with a blend of five grape varieties, and with grapes from fifty year old Garnacha and Cariñena vines. This leading winery is located in the pretty wine village of Gratallops, right next to Rene Barbier's Clos Mogador. Clos de l'Obac is run by the visionary Carles Pastrana. Carles Pastrana is passionate about his wines and he is one of the most charming wine personalities in Spain. Carles is credited with being one of the first in the region, along with Alvaro Palacios, Rene Barbier and Josep Lluís Perez, to realize the enormous potential of Priorat as a wine region. This was in the 1980's. However, Carles Pastrana's family was already in the region in the '70's, discovering old vines and doing experimental viticulture.

"Recognising an unusual combination of topography, soil and climate, a unique "terroir", and a one thousand year old wine-making tradition, the founding families started a project to re-awaken the spirit of the old Carthusian oenologists, by rebuilding the steep, slatey terraces and replanting the vines. The old vineyard slopes were surveyed, the walls were repaired, the stones were cleared by hand, access paths were built. We resuscitated the old Garnacha, Tempranillo and Cariñena vines, especially the latter, some of which were over fifty years old. We introduced the Cabernet Sauvignon, the Merlot and the Syrah.. The first vintage of Clos de l'Obac was that of 1989. Miserere was born in 1990 and Dolç de l'Obac in 1991. Since then, wine professionals from all over the world have been recognising the greatness of this family of Priorat wines. We shall continue to strive to produce the finest wines from our land; we use only our own grapes. It is





our aim to go on improving our products, to achieve the complexity, the balance, the harmony, the grace which define them and which have earned such international fame for the wines of COSTERS DEL SIURANA- Carles Pastrana" The vineyards of Clos de l'Obac and the other brands, Miserere, Kyrie and the elixir sweet red Dolç de l'Obac, are spread out over various parcels. The beautiful Mas d'En Bruno estate, one of the biggest parcels, boasts a 13th century villa surrounded by land that has had working vineyards for literally hundreds of years. The Mas (Catalan word for big country estate, mansion or villa) is currently being restored by the Pastrana Jarque family. The winery, in Gratallops, is tiny, spotlessly clean and has a lovely tasting room.



11.45-12.30

Private guided visit to Riera Ceramica, admiring the work of one of the best pottery artist in Catalonia

Lluís Riera has lived in the Priorat now for over 15 years. He speaks fluent English and is always happy to show people around his workshop which is in Gratallops' old olive oil mill. He has worked on many projects with his friend and winery owner, Carles Pastrana (Costers de Siurana/Clos de l'Obac) and you will see much of his work during the tour around Carles' winery (ceramic details on barrels, tiled ceilings, mosaic tiled tables etc..). He owns a small shop beside the church in Gratallops where he sells much of his pottery. He has exhibited in many international shows and has appeared in specialist pottery magazines around the world.





12.45-13.45

Guided visit to a small private cellar

This cellar is a small, family-run winery in the heart of Priorat wine country in the village of Gratallops. August Vicent's father, Cecilio set up this winery after having moved to the Priorat from his native region of València after the Spanish Civil War. It was the first winery registered by the Priorat wine appellation when it was created in the Fifties. August is assisted by his daughter, Raquel and his son-in-law, Blai Ferré who helps him in both the winery and the vineyards. This is a good example of the typical "garage" wineries of the Priorat.



14.00-16.00

Gourmet lunch with pairing wines

Perched at the top of the village of Gratallops, this restaurant was opened a few years ago by Cristina and Waldo, who came to the Priorat from Madrid. Àngel Bellota is in charge of this superb restaurant. He likes to base his cuisine on traditional Spanish meals especially rice dishes from his native València. Two rooms, in what was once the stables and wine cellar of three old village houses. It also has a summer terrace with wonderful views.





16.30-17.30

Private guided visit of one of the most reputable Cooperatives in the Priorat.

A small village and its cooperative, hidden high up in the mountains, gets emancipated through the elaboration of a kosher wine, leaving behind his past as a bulk wine and grape producer. Twenty miles inland from the Mediterranean sea, is the source of a long wine growing history dated back to the middle age.

This tiny mountainous subzone of less than 2000 ha succeeded in 2001 getting it's own D.O. – Montsant. Nowadays the political District of Priorat has two recognized wine regions: D.O.Montsant and D.O.Priorato, both wellknown for it's powerful Red Wines.

The vineyards range in altitude from 150 meters at the bottom of the valley to nearly 600 metres for the highest terraces where the oldest Garnacha vines, some planted at the start of the last century, and some rather younger Merlot grow. Soil in the lower vineyards is deep rich and fertile while the higher vineyards and all terraces and slopes are on poor, mineral, stony soil based with some granit, and slate.

Each vineyard parcel is harvested separately at its precise moment of optimum ripeness and given the development of the winery each parcel can be vinified separately as well. This has allowed the winemakers to produce small batches of individual vineyard site wines giving them the opportunity to achieve higher quality blends or on occasion single vineyard wines.

Wine tasting and 4x4 visit to the vineyards.





Sunday

08.30-09.30

Buffet breakfast

10.00-11.30

Private guided visit of one of the current leaders
Wine estates in the Priorat.

Wine tasting and extra virgin olive oil tasting

BUIL & GINÉ

In the winter of 1996, the Buil & Giné family decided to return to wine elaboration in the Priorat region.

Our family has been recently active in the food retail business and, before that, both our grand and great-grand parents had been wine makers and merchants. Bringing this tradition back to life, the present generation is dedicated to growing grapes and producing wine in each of the two areas of 'Denominations d'Origen' of the region, Priorat and Tarragona-Falset.

This dream started to materialize during the spring of 1998 when we introduced our first wine, Giné Giné 1997. The wine name consists of our Grandfather two last names; he was a wine grower and was twice elected President of the Cooperative Agrícola Falsetenca.

We present these wines to you with pleasure and pride. Enjoy them and thus participate in the development of this long family history.





12.00-13.00

Private guided visit to the Carthusian Priory of Scala Dei.

The Carthusian Priory of Scala Dei, founded in the 12th-century by Alfonso the Chaste, is a key site that visitors should not miss. Situated at the foot of the Montsant Sierra, in an incomparable natural setting, it was the first of its order on the Iberian Peninsula and the origin of the historic Priorat Name because the area was under the dominion of the Priory. Nowadays this historic area is reflected by the world-renowned DOQ Priorat wine region, which forms the central part of the present "comarca" or council district of the same name.

The monks instigated the growing of vines on the Harsh slopes of slate rock which gives the local wine its distinctive quality. The Priory, which had three cloisters and a total of 30 cells, was abandoned in 1835 in accordance with the law of disentitlement of Church property by the minister Mendizábal. Today you can visit the ruins and visit a restored cell, and see for yourself what was an incredible priory.



13.30-16.00

Fabulous lunch based on traditional local cooking. Great traditional restaurant. The best of its kind in the Priorat. Owner and chef Maria Victoria Masip has appeared on regional television explaining her recipes. She uses extra virgin olive oil and cooks on an open olive wood fire.

Great grilled meats, stews and Canelones.





16.00-17.30

Return transfer to Barcelona or Reus



PRICE INCLUDES

- Transport throughout the weekend
- Transfers from and to Barcelona or Reus
- Personalised English/Spanish speaking expert guide throughout the tour
- Two nights Accommodation based on double occupancy with private bath
- Two full breakfasts
- Four private wine estate visits.
- Four wine tasting in the wineries, one olive oil tasting and one 4x4 trip to the vineyards
- Two gourmet lunches (one of them with pairing wines) and one welcome dinner including wine
- Private visit to a pottery expert and his workshop
- Private guided visit to The Chartusian Priory of Scala Dei in the Priorat
- All taxes and surcharges

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Meals not specified
- Personal expenses



Barcelona extensión: Accommodation and activities recommended, on request

E-mail us for more details on info@theuniquetraveller.com





Panoramic tour of the main attractions of Barcelona including the unique cathedral: La Sagrada Familia, The Gothic quarter, Plaza de Espana, Montjuic, Olympic area, La Pedrera, Casa Batllo and Park Guell admiring the architecture of Gaudi in Barcelona





Dali and Girona FD Private Tour to Girona and Dali Triangle

**A full day private tour to Girona and the Dali triangle.
Includes a private car and a English speaking guide**

Trip to discover two of Catalunya's most important cities: Figueras, where you will visit the Dali's Theatre-Museum; and Girona, where you will visit one of the best conserved jewish quarters in the whole Europe.

Dali's triangle (Figueras-Pubol-Portlligat)

Mediaeval castle of Púbol – during the 1970s the residence of the painter's wife and at the beginning of the 1980s his own. It has, since 1996, been the Gala Dalí Castle museum-house. And The Salvador Dalí Museum-House in Portlligat is an essential visiting place to get to know the painter's universe, which Gala and Dalí structured in the form of a labyrinth and decorated over the course of forty years, from 1930 through to the 1970s.





ACCOMMODATION BARCELONA

4 STAR





Come and discover a 4 star hotel that will surprise you, a new meeting point in Barcelona where you can experience a truly cosmopolitan atmosphere.

This Hotel, built in 2006 and located in the historic quarter of the city of Barcelona, constitutes an oasis within one of the busiest areas of the city.

The decoration project sought concepts, elements and materials that blended comfort and modernity, through an elegant chromatic harmony of noble materials: natural stone on the facade, grey mirrors, IP Wood terraces, Oakwood in noble areas and rooms. The furnishings have been specially created for this exclusive property. In the different spaces we can find unique elements that project the distinctive personality of this hotel.

The rooms are decorated in white, silver and natural wood, together with textiles in warm tones and elegant textures. Oakwood, vinyl and lighting elements complement the decoration and blend perfectly with details such as the sliding door in the bathroom, translucent and lilac, an example of the post-modern nature of the project.

The terrace restaurant is divided into a surprising diversity of spaces, from its interior decorated with contemporary sumptuousness to the exterior (terrace, bar, chill out), with natural elements (river stones, plants) and application of iron oxide decorating techniques (finishes and sculptures).

The result is a consistent, modern and attractive project that invites one to stay, live and form part of it.

At this Hotel we've selected everything that represents comfort in terms of access, services and basic elements: king-sized bed with quilted mattress, white goose feather and down duvets with anti-mite fibre... Our rooms are fully fitted with all the necessary accessories of the highest quality.

Breakfast by the pool, free Internet access from the chill out area, professional attention, efficiency, friendliness and a long etcetera because, for us, your comfort comes first.

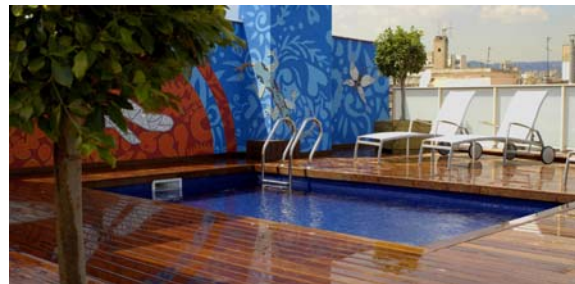
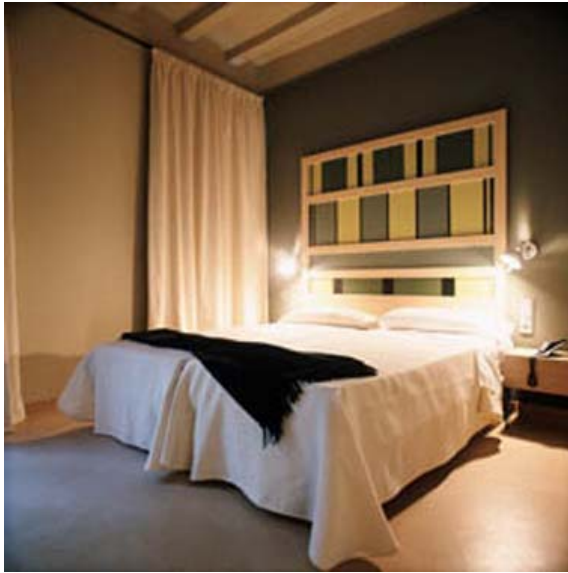
Modern and comfortable facilities The Hotel's 80 rooms are soundproof and constitute warm, open spaces where glass, mirrors and oakwood furnishings stand out. The designers of this 4 star hotel transmit their taste for detail and luminous, cosy atmospheres.

Mediterranean cuisine of the highest quality, with gastronomic proposals that combine pleasure with healthy eating. Fruit, vegetables, meat and fish accompanied by olive oil are the main ingredients of our exquisite culinary creations. Our wine list will seduce even the most refined palates.

The 4 Capellans Terrace Restaurant, located in the hotel lobby, has a dining facility on the terrace, next to the bar and chill out area.



3 STAR SUPERIOR





Location:

This brand new comfortable, modern hotel is located in the heart of the Gothic Area, on the border between the Barrio Gótico and the Barrio del Borne and guests have extremely easy access on foot to the many attractions in the area, including the Picasso Museum (1 minute away), Barcelona Cathedral (2 minutes away), Las Ramblas (5 minutes away) and Plaza Cataluna (10 minutes from the hotel.)

The rooms:

The rooms are all decorated in a modern style, with free ADSL Internet connection. Each comes with an en suite bathroom with hairdryer, as well as a direct dial telephone, a TV, a double bed, centrally regulated air conditioning, central heating and a safe.

General facilities:

Built in 2006, this air-conditioned city hotel has 78 fully equipped rooms. The hotel offers to their guests an internet and photo-shop corner without additional charge. Water on the room floors with no charge. Facilities on offer here include an entrance hall with 24-hour reception, a hotel safe, lift access, and a restaurant, as well as a magnificent outdoor pool located in the top terrace.

Selling points:

Value for money, trendy hotel, good rates and availability. Excellent location.