

Bordeaux

Architecture, Wine & l'Art de Vivre

May 10–16, 2027

Tour Leader: Curt DiCamillo



Bordeaux

France's legendary wine region is defined by centuries of history, rolling vineyard landscapes, and world-class culinary artistry. Beyond the Neoclassical gates of the city, the region unfolds along the Garonne and Dordogne rivers into a patchwork of historic territories that are fiercely independent from the France of Paris. Every corner reveals complex layers of Roman heritage, English rule, and 18th-century architectural genius. Bordeaux is where prestigious Grand Cru estates and rustic countryside bistros elevate the pairing of history, wine, and food into a delicious *joie de vivre*.

Join us for six glorious days in this sublime part of the world. Based at the 5-star Intercontinental Le Grand, we'll explore the 18th-century glory of a prosperous port city with excursions into her most famous *terroirs*, her coastal cuisine and the incomparable Saint-Émilion. We'll open locked doors, meet aristocrats, winemakers and chefs, and explore markets and grand châteaux as we discover the history of Aquitaine, all while enjoying the best food and wine—of course!



A Bordeaux vineyard. Photo by FreeProd33 / Shutterstock.

Itinerary

Monday, May 10

Arrive in Bordeaux at the Bordeaux–Mérignac Airport (BOD) on May 10, then transfer independently to the city center. Check-in to your premium room at the **InterContinental Le Grand, Bordeaux**, a 5-star, 18th-century landmark situated directly on the iconic Place de la Comédie. After settling in, we'll take to the streets for a leisurely walk through the **Golden Triangle** and **Place de la Bourse**, discovering how 18th-century maritime commerce fueled Bordeaux's monumental golden age and inspired Baron Haussmann's Paris. Weather permitting, we'll then take a water taxi over to one of Bordeaux's most impressive contemporary museums: the **Cité du Vin**, an undulating structure that evokes gnarled vine stock and swirling liquid. Here we'll be introduced to the region's wine culture and explore how history and geography shaped the industry. Our first evening concludes with a private, welcome dinner close to our hotel.

Tuesday, May 11

Today we cross the River Dordogne to explore the historic **Right Bank**, home to some of the most prestigious Merlots in the world. Our destinations reveal Bordeaux during two of her great golden eras—the Enlightenment under French rule, and Medieval Saint-Émilion under the English. In the morning we'll have an exclusive visit to **Château de la Dauphine**, an elegant 18th-century estate in the Fronsac appellation that once hosted the dauphine of France, Maria Josepha of Saxony, mother of Louis XVI. We'll take in the proportions of her Neoclassical architecture, tour the gardens and wine cellars, and enjoy a chef-prepared lunch in the manor house, designed to pair with the estate's complex biodynamic vintages.

In the afternoon we'll travel back in time to the UNESCO-listed medieval town of **Saint-Émilion**, defined by monastic devotion and a lucrative international wine trade. When Eleanor of Aquitaine married the future King Henry II of England in 1152, Bordeaux became a part of England. For the next three centuries, English monarchs happily treated the region as their personal royal wine cellar. King John (of Robin Hood fame) protected Saint-Émilion, by giving it autonomous governance in exchange for a supply of superb wines for the English court, creating one of the earliest wine empires. We'll pass through her fortified walls, tour the steep cobblestone streets lined with boutique wine shops and then descend through locked doors into the underground 12th-century **Monolithic Church**, carved entirely out of a single limestone cliff. Returning to Bordeaux, you are free for dinner on your own.



Place de la Bourse. Photo by Alexander Demyanenko / Shutterstock.



Cité du Vin. Photo by Kirill Neiezhmakov / Shutterstock.



Saint-Émilion.

Wednesday, May 12

This morning we'll stay in the city to enjoy a private tour of the **Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux**, one of France's oldest fine art museums. Housed within the wings of the 18th-century Palais Rohan, the museum contains an exceptional collection of European masterworks. Stepping back out into the city square, we'll be confronted by two Medieval structures that tower above the city—**Cathédrale Saint-André & Tour Pey-Berland** and **Basilique Saint-Michel**. These two soaring structures that reach for the sky were inspired less by devotion than a centuries-old rivalry between the bishops and city merchants.

We'll enjoy a typical lunch in the city, then board our private coach to travel northeast into the iconic Médoc region. In the 17th century innovative Dutch engineers drained what was at that time an impassible swamp along the Garonne River, inadvertently exposing gravel terraces that were ideal for viticulture. The region became a magnet for wealthy nobles who established vast estates, creating the famous *route des Châteaux*, and some of the world's most prestigious wine appellations—Margaux, Pauillac, and Saint-Julien. We'll visit one of the oldest estates, **Château D'Issan**—whose history dates to 1152, when its wine was served at the royal wedding of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The “current” estate features a striking 17th-century moated castle with imposing towers and spires, representing the romantic Renaissance Revival (Neo-Gothic) fashion of that period. We will be given a tour by a family member and taste some of their highly acclaimed red wines. Our day concludes with an exclusive private visit and dinner at the lovely **Château Taillan**. This elegant, family-owned estate in the Médoc region features a grand 18th-century château and unique, registered historic cellars from the 16th century. The estate is passionately run by five sisters who will share their fine food in an intimate château setting.



Cathédrale Saint-André. Photo by ABB Photo / Shutterstock.



Château D'Issan. Photo by E. Cowez / Shutterstock.

Thursday, May 13

Today we'll take a break from the vineyards and grand estates of Bordeaux with an excursion west to the Aquitaine coast. Our destination is the lovely **Arcachon Bay**, a dazzling tidal lagoon steeped in maritime history. Fishermen here have been cultivating oysters and shellfish since Roman times. During the reign of Napoleon III the industry evolved into Europe's first official “breeding bay” and wove a rich legacy of seafood into the cuisine of the Bordeaux region. We will begin with a gentle **boat ride across the bay** sampling freshly shucked oysters paired with a crisp Bordeaux white wine.

Arriving on the **Cap Ferret Peninsula**, we'll wander through the charming *cabanes ostréicoles*—traditional stilted wooden oyster-farming shacks painted in bright, candy-striped colors—before sitting down at a local eatery to feast on pristine seafood, local pâté, and regional wine. Enroute back to the city, we'll visit the **Dune of Pilat**, Europe's tallest sand formation, which offers breathtaking panoramic views of the bay, the Atlantic Ocean, and dense pine forests originally planted by royal decree to stabilize the shifting coastline. We'll return to Bordeaux this evening for an independent dinner.



Cap Ferret Peninsula. Photo by Theo Turtaut / Shutterstock.

Friday, May 14

We'll begin with a guided morning visit to **Marché des Capucins**, an indoor market that has served as the culinary heart of Bordeaux since 1749. Here we'll sample seasonal treasures like Blaye white asparagus, artisanal terrines, and local Cèpes de Bordeaux mushrooms.

Later in the morning we'll assemble at the hotel and embark on an excursion south to the rolling hills of Sauternes. Our first destination is **Château de Malle**. Built in the early 17th century, this magnificent estate features imposing corner towers topped with imperial style roofs. Its crown jewel is the 15-acre Italianate garden with terraces populated by 18th-century statues representing mythological figures and comedic actors from the Commedia dell'Arte. We'll be greeted by the owners, Luc and Clémence Planty, take a historical tour, followed by a wine tasting, and then have a simple picnic lunch on the grounds.

Heading back north, we'll make a stop in the village of **Bommes**, take a postprandial walk around the 12th-century Romanesque church and saunter along the River Ciron, before heading to the most significant Château in the Sauternes region—**Château d'Yquem**. This legendary estate has roots that go back to the Middle Ages and features a fortified, crenellated castle surrounded by ancient stone walls that reflect centuries of French and English history. Revered as the world's premier sweet wine producer, it stands alone as the only vineyard that has been designated a Premier Cru Supérieur in the historic 1855 classification. We'll be taken through the estate for a private tour and enjoy an unforgettable custom tasting of their legendary liquid gold.

Returning to our hotel, the evening is left open, for you to enjoy an independent dinner, or possibly a performance at the Opera House (opposite our hotel).



Vineyard and Château d'Yquem. Photo by FreeProd33 / Shutterstock.



A wine tasting. Photo by barmalini / Shutterstock.



Opera House. Photo by trabantos / Shutterstock.

Saturday, May 15

This morning we'll travel a short distance south to the birthplace of Bordeaux wines—the **Graves region of Pessac-Léognan**. Here Cabernet Sauvignon reigns supreme. Grown on deep gravel beds, the wine has historically been made into heavy English claret. We'll visit **Château Carbonnieux**, a fortified estate dating back to the 13th century, and meet the owner, Eric Perrin. The château was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson, who famously admired and collected the château's white wines and planted pecan trees on the estate as a gesture of thanks. Eric will regale us with the history of the château and the region's ties to the young American colonies. After showing us around the estate (which includes a collection of unique automobiles) he'll give us a taste of their wine inventory.

Our private coach will return us to Bordeaux by midday, arriving in time for an independent lunch. The entire afternoon is left open for you to enjoy at leisure, offering the ideal window for gallery-strolling, historical exploration, or luxury shopping along the elegant Promenade Sainte-Catherine and the Cours de l'Intendance.

Then join us to celebrate our final evening in spectacular fashion at the **Petit Hôtel Labottière**, an 18th-century Neoclassical hôtel particulier that is classified as a historic monument. Our hosts, Louis and Marin, will treat us to an ultra-exclusive private catered grand dinner inside the estate's historic art gallery, which opens directly onto a manicured secret courtyard garden. Here we will toast our wonderful journey through Aquitaine's history with some of the best wines in the world.

Sunday, May 16

After breakfast at the Intercontinental each participant will transfer independently to Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport (BOD) for the journey home.



Vineyard in the Graves region of Pessac-Léognan. Photo by Anita Santacreu / Shutterstock.



Cours de l'Intendance. Photo by Kirill Neiezhmakov / Shutterstock.



Place de la Bourse, Bordeaux city. Photo by Xiquinho Silva / Flickr.



Accommodation

The **InterContinental Le Grand Hotel** in Bordeaux is a five-star luxury property housed within an 18th-century mansion designed by architect Louis Victor on the Place de la Concorde. With the grand Neoclassical opera house across the square, this landmark destination forms the heart of Bordeaux's UNESCO-listed Golden Triangle. Inside, designer Jacques Garcia has transformed the historic spaces into a visual masterpiece of 19th-century luxury, layering rooms with rich velvet tones, fine marble, and opulent French Empire style. The hotel has two fine restaurants, including Le Pressoir d'Argent Gordon Ramsay, which holds two Michelin stars, and a roof-top bar overlooking the city. All the charm of historic Bordeaux is within easy walking distance: the grand 18th-century architecture, fine shops, and atmospheric allées and squares.



Intercontinental Bordeaux. Courtesy of International Seminar Design.

Tour Leader



Curt DiCamillo is the curator of fine art at American Ancestors. Before he came to American Ancestors he worked for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Trust for Scotland. Curt is a noted historian and a recognized authority on the British country house, about which he has written, lectured, and taught in the U.S. and abroad. Since 1999 he has maintained an award-winning database on the web, TheDiCamillo.com, which seeks to document every English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish country house ever built, standing or demolished. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, and is a member of the Council of the American Museum in Britain.



**For more information, and to register for the tour,
please call Mike McCartt at 202-244-1448, ext. 1.**



American Ancestors is America's founding genealogical organization, the most respected name in family history, and one of the leading non-profit organizations in the field. We create enriching opportunities for members and the public to research their family history, attend educational programs and tours, exhibitions, and other inspirational experiences that communicate the power and importance of family history.

AmericanAncestors.org

Terms & Conditions

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TOUR COST

Land Package: \$9,995

Single Supplement: \$2,495

Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 15 paying participants.

Deposit & Final Payment: A deposit of \$2,000 per person is required to reserve space on the tour. Deposits are payable by calling International Seminar Design and giving your credit card number over the phone to a staff member. MasterCard, Visa, and American Express are accepted. Final balance will be invoiced and is due by January 6, 2027. Final balance is payable by check, bank wire, or ACH transfer to International Seminar Design, Inc. Credit cards are not accepted for final balance. Registrations will be accepted beyond this date on a space-available basis.

Activity Level: Moderate to strenuous; good walking ability is advised. Many visits require the use of staircases and a moderate amount of walking on uneven ground. Comfortable shoes are recommended.

Flights: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for all aspects of their round-trip air arrangements to Bordeaux–Mérignac Airport. Please do not purchase airline tickets until the operation of the tour is confirmed.

Terms & Conditions: Upon receipt of registration, ISDI will send registrant a Participant Tour Agreement that details the full terms and conditions for this tour. This document must be signed and returned to ISDI before participant's registration is considered complete and any arrangements can be confirmed. ISDI will send all documents pertaining to the tour by email unless specifically requested otherwise.

Travel Insurance: Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan in conjunction with this tour, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, American Ancestors and ISDI must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration.

Tour Price Inclusions: Six nights' accommodation at the Intercontinental Le Grand Bordeaux; breakfast daily at the hotel, four lunches, three dinners, four wine tastings; water, non-alcoholic beverages, and wine with all included lunches and dinners; land transportation by private coach; entrance fees to sites and visits listed in the itinerary; leadership of Curt DiCamillo for the duration of the tour; expert local guides for all touring; gratuities for guides and drivers and at included meals; handling of two pieces of luggage per person upon arrival and departure from the hotels; bottled water on coach; service charges and taxes.

Tour Price Exclusions: Airline tickets, airline taxes, surcharges, and baggage fees; airport portorage; airport arrival transfer from Bordeaux–Mérignac Airport to hotel; airport departure transfer hotel to airport; passport, visa, or ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System) fees; meals, other than those specified in the itinerary; gratuities for hotel housekeeping; personal items such as telephone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations; entry or departure fees levied by local governments; travel insurance; any other items not specifically included in the itinerary.

Cancellations & Refunds: Cancellation by participant must be made in writing to ISDI and is effective only upon acknowledged receipt by ISDI. There is a non-refundable registration and planning fee of \$1,000 per person, regardless of cancellation date. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or before January 6, 2027: refund of all monies paid, minus \$1,000 per person registration and planning fee. Written cancellation received by American Ancestors between January 7 and March 26, 2027: refund of all monies paid, minus \$5,000 per person cancellation fee. Written cancellations received by American Ancestors on or after March 27, 2027: no refund.

**For more information, and to register for the tour,
please call Mike McCartt at 202-244-1448, ext. 1.**

This tour is operated by International Seminar Design, Inc. for American Ancestors.