

# *International Culinary Studies Program France*



*A Taste of France*

with Chef Michel Bouit & The World of MBI

*Toulouse ~ Carcassonne ~ Albi ~ Roquefort ~ Millau ~ Rodez ~ Yssingeaux ~ Lyon*

May 11-23

**Tuesday, May 11** ~ Departure for France

**Wednesday, May 12** ~ Arrival in Toulouse. We transfer to Carcassonne by deluxe motor coach with our favorite chauffeur Andre. Check-in for 2 nights at the magnificent Best Western Le Donjon located in the heart of the old city & guided visit of the Chateau Comtal. Tonight we enjoy a welcome gastronomic dinner at Restaurant Le Parc with Chef/proprietor Franck Putelat, a friend and Silver Bocuse d'Or medallist in 2003. The restaurant is located just outside the ramparts - walls - of the medieval city.

*Carcassonne's history dates back to Romans. There are parts of the city's fortifications that date back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. It came under the control of the French crown in 1247. King Louis IX and his successor Philip III further strengthened the fortifications of Carcassonne castle and built the "new town" outside the ramparts.*

**Thursday, May 13** ~ After breakfast we depart for Limoux for a visit of the cellars Les Sieurs d'Arques. They produce the famous Blanquette de Limoux under 4 Appellations d'Origine Controlee (AOC) Blanquette de Limoux, Blanquette Methode Ancestrale, Cremant de Limoux and Limoux. The first 3 are sparkling wines that dominate the production around Limoux. The main grape of the region is Mauzac locally known as Blanquette, followed by the Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc. Our next stop is Chateau de Saint-Martin for a cooking demonstration on the art of cassoulet with the "Pope of Cassoulet", Master Chef Rodriguez. A wine tasting will precede our lunch with the famous cassoulet as our main course. We return to Carcassonne for an evening at leisure to discover this medieval city.

**Friday, May 14** ~ After breakfast we depart for Albi. In route, we visit the giant gouffre of Cabrespine. The "gouffre" discovered only in the 1970's is a natural cave almost 200 meters deep. Its large room with floor surface of 80 meters and height of 220 meters makes it one of the largest in the world. Next, we discover the Cathar Chateaux of Lastours. Since the height of the middle ages, Lastours has been a spectacular sight with its four castles each perched 300 meters high on mountaintops. Cabaret, Surdespine, Quertineux and Tour Regine overlook the Orbiel Stream and the Grezilhou River. Today, we enjoy our lunch at Brasserie Puits du Tresor at the foot of the castles. Then on to Albi to check in for 2 nights at Hotel Ibis Albi Centre. Our Welcome Dinner with a cooking demonstration is at Restaurant L'Epicurean, a unique trendy restaurant run by a Swedish chef.

**Saturday, May 15** ~ After breakfast we depart for Marssac-surTarn for a visit of Chocolaterie Yves Thuries. Our next stop is La Cave de Tecou for a visit of their facilities and a wine tasting. A casual lunch will be enjoyed at Restaurant l'Ispien Port in Les Brisses Gaillac. Chef/proprietor Revallier is a former rugby player, a very popular sport in this region. After lunch we return to Albi for a guided visit of the Vieux Albi that includes the cathedral and cloister, followed by a boat ride "Gabarre" on the River Tarn. The evening is at leisure with dinner is on own.

*Albi is a medieval city located 50 miles northeast of Toulouse, known for its Toulouse Lautrec Museum and spectacular Cathedral Sainte-Cecile. The Gothic cathedral, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the heart of Cathar country, is the largest brick building in the world. Perched high on a hill above the River Tarn, it looks more like a fortress than a cathedral.*

**Sunday, May 16** ~ After breakfast we depart for Rodez. In route, we visit the Roquefort cheese cellars in Roquefort-sur-Soulzon and enjoy lunch at Restaurant La Pourtanelle in Saint Jean d'Alcas. In the afternoon we visit the famous viaduct, Pont de Millau. Located 5 km from Millau in the Aveyron region the bridge allows the A75 highway to fly over the Tarn Valley at a height of 270 meters. Our hotel for 2 nights is Hotel Le Midi, a Logis de France in Rodez. Dinner is at the hotel.

*Rodez is a beautiful and rather ignored medieval town located in the Midi-Pyrenees Aveyron region in Southwestern France. The two main town squares, Place de la Cite and Place du Bourg are linked by a network of medieval streets lined with stoned buildings, historical alleyways and masterpieces of Gothic wall art dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

**Monday, May 17** ~ After breakfast we depart for the charming village of Laguiole, perched at an altitude of 1,000 meters. Here we visit Fromagerie Jeune Montagne, producers of the famous Fromage de Laguiole AOC and l'Aligot de l'Aubrac with a tasting and La Coutellerie de Laguiole, the first artisan manufacturer of Laguiole knives to see the production and have the opportunity to purchase a personally engraved knife. A typically regional lunch is enjoyed at Bar Hotel Restaurant l'Aubrac. We return to Rodez for a guided visit of the Vieux Rodez and its cathedral. The evening is at leisure and dinner is on own.

**Tuesday, May 18** ~ After breakfast we depart for Yssingeaux. Our first stop is in Le Puy en Velay for a visit of the distillery Pages-Verveine. Here we discover the secrets for making Pages Verveine du Velay, Green and Yellow Verveine liquors and Verveine du Velay Extra. Lunch is enjoyed at Restaurant Vidal in Saint-Julien-Chapteuil. Chef/proprietor Jean-Pierre Vidal, a French master chef and Toques d'Auvergne, prepares authentic cuisine with light and creative touches. After lunch we visit of a trout farm in Fay sur Lignon. We then travel to Yssingeaux, the location of l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Pâtisserie, our residence for 2 nights. Dinner is at the school.

**Wednesday, May 19** ~ The entire day is spent at l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Pâtisserie with hands-on classes and demonstrations on the subjects of cooking and pastry. Breakfast and lunch are also at the school. A dinner of regional cuisine will be enjoyed at Restaurant Le Bourbon with Chef Perrier.

**Thursday, May 20** ~ We enjoy a typical regional breakfast hosted by Chef Perrier at Restaurant Le Bourbon followed by a visit of the local market of Yssingeaux. Then we visit a pig farm owned by Monsieur Chalendar who presents regional products for our tasting pleasure. On the route to Lyon we visit La Maison de l'Escargot at Grazac. Upon arrival in Lyon, we have a guided visit of the Vieux Lyon (old quarter) that includes the Traboules (ancient passages), Painted Walls - the kingdom of trompe l'oeil, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Basilica of Fourvière situated on a hill overlooking the city and La Maison des Canuts silk museum. Our hotel for the next 3 nights is the Hotel Mercure Lyon Beaux Arts in the heart of the city. Dinner of Lyonnaise cuisine at Brasserie Francotte.

**Friday, May 21** ~ Today we visit the Institut Paul Bocuse, the famous cooking school of Maitre Paul Bocuse in Ecully and partake in a demonstration of regional cuisine. Lunch is in the institute's Restaurant Seasons. In the afternoon we partake in a wine tasting and cheese presentation. Evening is at leisure.

**Saturday, May 22** ~ This morning we visit the indoor market La Halle de Lyon to see an incredible array of meat, poultry, fish, cheese, fruit, vegetables and so much more. Breakfast will be enjoyed at the market. Following the market we visit family-owned Chocolatier Bernachon. They roast their own cocoa beans and use the finest ingredients to create an exquisite array of chocolates, confections and pastries. Lunch is on own with the remainder of the afternoon at leisure for sightseeing or shopping. Our farewell dinner is at Restaurant Atelier d'Yvonne, a popular Lyonnaise bouchon.

**Sunday, May 23** ~ After breakfast, we depart for the airport for return flights.

### ***Trip Cost***

\_\_\_ \$3,995.00 per person, double occupancy \_\_\_ \$700.00 single occupancy

\_\_\_ \$990.00 round-trip airfare from Chicago (also available from other U.S. cities)

Program includes: 11 nights hotel accommodations with daily breakfast, point to point ground transportation by deluxe motor coach & airport transfers, unique gastronomic dining experiences, professional & cultural visits as per the itinerary, all taxes & tips, 1 full day of education at ENSP, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Pâtisserie and 1 full day of education at the Institute Paul Bocuse, recipes, certificate of participation & a commemorative chef coat.

