

# FOOD N WINE VACATIONS

## Authentic getaways off the beaten track.

By Edwin Childs

If you've ever dreamed of visiting a vineyard in a rolling European hillscape, touring Rome in a super-charged sportscar, cooking with a real Tuscan chef in Italy, or barge-navigating the canals of France; then you should speak with Smadar Palace. Her company—Atlanta, Georgia-based Food N Wine Vacations—designs customized vacation packages for high-end clientele seeking authentic experiences, often with a focus on gastronomy and gourmet cooking.

"My focus and philosophy has always been that 'connection between people makes all the difference,'" says Palace. "We're doing something very different—we have a passion for exploring destinations. What sets us apart is the fact that our years of exploring allow us to handpick each hotel and tour. Thanks to local contacts, we tailor our trips to suit any client's particular desires."

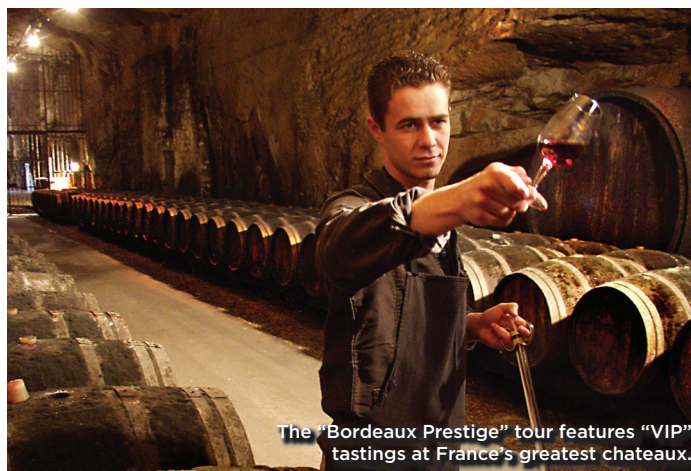
Food N Wine Vacations specializes in luxury wine tours in France and Italy; and it offers cooking trips such as "Cooking under the Tuscan Sun," where clients accompany a chef to gather ingredients from local produce markets. Additionally, the company has a "Bordeaux Prestige" tour, which features "VIP" tastings at France's greatest chateaux—

including all five First Growth locations and Chateau d'Yquem, along with chateaux in Pomerol and Saint Emilion.

Among other things, Palace says she can also arrange hot air balloon trips in Loire Valley, vintage car excursions in Tuscany, Ferrari joyrides or tickets to the opera. "Travelers today are more sophisticated than ever," says Palace. "My company offers a particular lifestyle for them—luxury accommodations in elegant castles, palaces, villas and boutique hotels with Michelin star-quality restaurants. They're looking to add value to their trips and more determined to connect with other cultures, pursue special interests or simply realize their dreams."

In particular, connecting with these cultures seems to be the primary highlight of what Food N Wine Vacations offers. For those who care to venture "off the beaten track" with her, Palace says a whole world without pretense awaits them.

"In these places, it's not uncommon for the chef or proprietor to come and sit with you while you eat and make a nice evening of it," says Palace. "That's what I like about these trips—the people you meet are simple, and they treat you like family."



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Above all else, however, Palace explains her own journeys to such places have shaped her vision for the company and its mission. Overall, she says these travels have left a lasting impression upon her that she'd like to share with her clientele.

"I'd like to pass on the good experiences I've had with these cultures and the local people I've met," says Palace. "I'll look back on these travels for the rest of my life. That's what I want my clients to experience, because they'll remember these things forever." ➔

For more information, visit [www.foodnwinevacations.com](http://www.foodnwinevacations.com) or call 770-457-3177.



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According to Palace, the locals are without pretense—they treat you like family.