



## **Wine tour operator boasts maturity in 2011 thanks to new tours and AITO membership**

**March 21 2011:** Specialist wine tour operator Grape Escapes is celebrating a vintage start to the year with a new brochure, brand new tours and membership into the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO).

The company, founded in 2004 by wine lovers Mark and Claire Hallett, offers a broad selection of holidays and tours to premium wine regions, principally in France, but also in Spain and Italy. New tours for 2011 include a Premium Loire Valley weekender in late June and two to three night itineraries to Epernay and Burgundy with flexible departure dates.

Also new for 2011 is the gourmet two-night Provence tour, which includes accommodation in the 18th century Château de Berne. The trip includes wine tastings at the Château, a quad biking tour of the 1,500-acre estate, a gourmet cookery course and a gastronomic dinner.

Tour prices start from as little as £185 per person for a Budget Champagne Break, or from £625 per person for the two-night Provence weekend.

Carefully blending just enough technical information with top class restaurants, detailed itineraries, amiable tour guides and the company of like-minded travelers, Grape Escapes offers a more flexible approach to traditional wine tours. It is because of this attention to detail and customer service that the company was recently awarded membership to AITO.

Mark Hallett, managing director of Grape Escapes comments: "When we first started the company back in 2004 we were keen to create wine tours which were suitable for both the amateur and the connoisseur. We've now been lucky enough to expand both our range of tours and our destinations on offer.

"Becoming a member of AITO is particularly beneficial to our customers who are now assured financial security whenever they book a tour with us, as well as the same first class personal service and expert knowledge that they have come to expect."

**Ends**

### **About Grape Escapes**

Grape Escapes is a specialist in travel to the French wine regions offering a selection of gourmet wine-tasting weekends in Champagne, Burgundy, Bordeaux, the Loire and the Rhone. Catering for all food and wine lovers from the serious connoisseur to enthusiastic beginner, Grape Escapes' small group tours average just 12 guests and blend tastings at prestigious chateaux and Champagne houses with more intimate invitations as the guests of smaller family-run estates. Grape Escapes also offers longer tailor-made self-drive itineraries, private group tours for friends or social groups such as hen weekends and weddings.

## **Media Information**

For more details, please visit: [www.grapeescapes.net](http://www.grapeescapes.net) or call 08456 430 860

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