

## *Champagne/Burgundy*

### ***BASIC TRAVEL INFORMATION***

*Champagne and Burgundy are regions in France. Champagne is a short 1.25 hour drive from Paris (due east) and the Burgundy region called the Cote de Beaune is about a 3 hour drive from Champagne. I love the wine villages there called Meursault, Volnay, and Pommard.*

*The white wine Village Chablis is a part of Burgundy, and I always prefer to go to Chablis from the Cote de Beaune, as it is on the way back toward Paris. The drive to Chablis from there is less than two hours. And, then back to Paris is less than two hours.*

### ***THE GRAPES***

*In both Champagne and Burgundy, the “noble” white wine grape for white wine is Chardonnay, and the “noble” black grape for red wine is Pinot Noir.*

*In Champagne there is another black grape called Pinot Meunier. In Burgundy there is another white grape called Aligote, and well as another black grape called Gamay.*

*The important thing to remember is that the notable, important grapes in both regions are Chardonnay (white wine) and Pinot Noir (red wine).*

## ***HOW WINE IS MADE***

***Wine is made by a fermentation process. Yeast consumes the sugar from the grapes and makes two products, alcohol, and carbon dioxide gas. The fermentation takes place in stainless steel containers, ceramic containers, or in a wood barrel or larger wood structure. In all these cases, the carbon dioxide gas dissipates, and the product is a still wine.***

***In Burgundy, the still wine is then either bottled, or is placed into wood barrels for a maturation process of 4-18 months. The ordinary wines are the ones bottled quickly. The better wines see time in wood barrels. Now, the object of barrel aging is very much different in Burgundy than other wine making areas of the world. The goal is not to make the wine taste like the oak barrels. Rather, the goal is to allow a rich air-exchange of the wine via the barrel aging. Indeed, the barrels are old oak barrels, as Burgundy wine-makers do not want their wine to taste like oak.***

***In Champagne, the still wine from the first fermentation is placed into sturdy bottles, and then a second fermentation takes place in the bottle. This time the carbon dioxide gas is captured inside the bottles, making it a sparkling wine.***