



VinExpo Part 2: The Chateau Visits, Parties, and the Wine Journeyman's Pursuit by Collin Williams

I always find it amusing the comments we receive when returning from a work trip to another country or to the wine regions in California. Comments like "Must be nice!" or "How was your vacation?" are common occurrences that we frequently hear from our co-workers, friends, and family. Unknown to them is the actual amount of work that is done on these trips not forgetting the political "face-time" that is an important aspect in our industry.

While our involvement in VinExpo is important as it relates to the business and supply chain management of the wine/liquor industry, we also use this opportunity to visit some of our partners, meet with friends, and see a few sites along the way. During this most recent trip to the famous wine area of France, we had the wonderful opportunity to visit Chateaux on both sides of the river.

Also, our days during VinExpo are long – really long! We set a standard of being one of the first people at the show and one of the last to leave, fully appreciating the time spent with our business associates. What's more, our days do not end there. Immediately following our last meeting of the day (usually around 6pm) we head directly for one of the many social events being held in the region. These are generally held at a Chateau and consist of business people from around the world. These types of events (while exhausting) are a great way to reconnect with those folks that you can't get to see on a normal basis or meet new friends/associates. Plus, the food is always outstanding and the wines live up to their fame.

For us, wine is a passion and something that we love to "do" constantly. Whether this entails tasting wine, visiting barrel rooms and wine-making facilities, or simply talking wine with another fellow oenophile, we truly enjoy all aspects of this business. And as they say, "If you love what you do, you'll never have to work a day in your life."

Chateau La Couspaude (St. Emilion)

During the second night of the trip, we visited a grand party at Chateau La Couspaude. The night began with a mixer of many professionals throughout the industry in a lovely field just outside the Chateau. A perfect evening served with Champagne and wines from many of the famous Chateaus of Bordeaux. This was a fantastic way to start off the trip.

Chateau Pichon Lougueville Baron (Pauillac)

The third night, after a full day at VinExpo, we headed to one of our favorite Chateaus for a nice, easy evening. Here, the night began in the backyard (very large and well-manicured) under a tent with walk around appetizers and a live Jazz Band. Dinner then proceeded into the massive barrel cellar of the Chateau where we were served an exquisite meal complimented by older vintages from the winery.

Chateau Pichon Baron 2005 - \$190.99

Chateau Giscours (Margaux)

What an exciting event! On the last day of the show, we took a helicopter flight to a nearby Chateau (which I understand is standard for many of the Chateau owners). Once we landed at Chateau Giscours, we took a quick tour, tasted some of the new vintages, and then had a very relaxed lunch with old vintages of Bordeaux going back to the 70's!


Chateau Giscours 2006 - \$65.33

Fete de la Fleur (The Grand Event) at Chateau Lascombes (Margaux)

Fete de la Fleur is always the biggest, most elaborate party of the show. Being held on the last night of VinExpo, the hosting winery always pulls out the stops. This year, the event was held at Chateau Lascombes. Everyone donned tuxes and dresses and we were treated to a 5 course meal complimented by wines the likes of Chateau D'Yquem and of the wonderful Chateau Lascombes.

Chateau Lascombes 2006 - \$59.80

Chateau Rollan de By

Rollan de By was a lot of fun because it was such a change of pace for the trip. We tasted through a whole flight of wines made by the winery only to be seated (poolside) and served a great oven cooked chicken with wines like Chateau Mouton Rothschild 2002 in a blind tasting next to the wines from the Chateau. 



Wonderful event held at Chateau la Couspaude



Please email me at collinwilliams@specsonline.com with feedback.