

Announcing FTLOP's 2015 Tours



With a decade of experience guiding captivating oeno-tours in Northern Portugal and the island of Madeira, it is time to broaden our horizons.

Having developed a loyal following amongst our guests and extraordinary relationships with the Port, Vinho Verde and Madeira trade ... in 2015 we will offer new itineraries to explore a variety of wine regions throughout Central Portugal as well.

JOIN US FOR A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXPERIENCE!

A brief bio on your two hosts:



Mario Ferreira: Mario is from Alcobaça, Portugal and majored in Social Communication and Marketing. From 1998-2004 he worked for the Port wine industry while living in the USA: having spent one year as “Sandeman Port Wine Ambassador” and followed by five years in the marketing department of the Port Wine Institute (IVP/IVDP).

In 2005, Mario decided to further explore adventures on the African continent and seek out business opportunities there as well. Nowadays, he spends most of his time traveling throughout a variety of countries in Africa, while consulting for a Spanish-based company (non-wine/beverage related). Also in 2005, Mario partnered with Roy to develop and co-host bespoke Port, Douro and Madeira wine and food explore-vacations that have begun to branch out to other regions of Portugal. Mario remains committed to FTLOP’s oenotourism program and together, he and Roy have brought nearly two dozen groups to visit his country.



Roy Hersh: Roy's experience in food and wine industry management has spanned more than three decades and includes consulting for restaurants, country clubs, casinos, and a variety of wine-related ventures. Since 1999, he has worked as a professional judge at prestigious wine competitions throughout North America and in Europe. Roy started drinking Vintage Port in 1983, and finally realized his dream to visit Portugal in 1994, after which he started writing articles about it. Considered a leading authority and journalist on Port wine and Madeira; in June 2003, Roy was one of just two Americans selected for induction into the *Confraria do Vinho do Porto* (Port Wine Brotherhood). To honor his oath to the Confraria, Roy quit his day job and began writing FTLOP's newsletter in February 2004 and mid-2005 the website was born. Today, opt-in newsletter recipients and subscribers hail from 76 countries.

Roy is a passionate student of wines from around the globe. He has taught classes and written hundreds of articles on Port and Madeira for FTLOP, other websites and wine magazines such as *Sommelier Journal* and *The World of Fine Wine*. He travels extensively throughout North America to promote the wines of Portugal, presenting educational wine tasting seminars to consumers, private organizations and members of the wine trade. Roy and Mario's annual adventures guiding small groups on exclusive *once-in-a-lifetime* "insider's tours" to discover the authentic food and wine culture of the Douro Valley, island of Madeira and other Portuguese wine regions has gained media attention and a loyal following. When not involved in vinous escapades, Roy relaxes at home with his wife Dorene and daughter, Taylor.

Our Tours

The FTLOP group tours which began in 2005 typically range in size from 10 – 14 guests, plus **Mario Ferreira** and **Roy Hersh** are involved in guiding every tour. Our long established connections within the Port, Douro, Vinho Verde and Madeira wine trade enable us to present singular and exclusive “insider’s” adventures for our guests. Every single fun filled vacation provides different wine and dine destinations surrounded by the awe-inspiring natural beauty and serenity of the Douro River Valley, the historic sibling cities of Vila Nova de Gaia and Oporto, and the volcanic mountainous terrain and sub-tropical warmth of Madeira, as well as the Vinho Verde region to the north of Porto.

We are thrilled to combine a handful of **new** wine regions to our repertoire in Central Portugal this year. It will enable us to provide a fresh realm of possibilities for first time guests, as well as the ability to offer innovative itineraries for our many repeat clients who would like to discover more of Portugal’s wine and food cultural experiences. This year we will add two new tours; dates and details below.

Our unique point of difference is not only the high caliber of wines or educational aspect of these bespoke week-long explorations, but stems from the pride we take in researching a wide range of authentic regional cuisine, top chefs and restaurants to delight the palates of the most discerning gastronomes. Additionally, we introduce our guests to the esteemed individuals from the wine trade who greet us with a warm welcome and wisdom at every destination. The result is magical.





It is our mission to exceed the grand expectations of our guest's year in and year out. We shall explore small new upstart producers that show great promise, charming mid-sized properties that are gaining market share by producing fantastic quality Port and non-fortified wine, as well as the large and renowned stalwarts that have been around for centuries. In Madeira, we know and virtually have visited every producer left on the island and also share some "off the radar" family-owned hidden gems whose wines typically remain in cask or demijohn and are not commercially released.

While the focus of our tours has always been Northern Portugal and Madeira, we began discussing expansion into other regions several years ago. During recent tours and email surveys, we asked some of our guests if they would consider joining us to explore wine regions in other parts of Portugal. The feedback was quite positive and we set the plan in motion for 2015.

Remaining flexible right up to show time, we literally tailor our itineraries to the wish list of our clientele. This is just one of the many reasons we've developed such a loyal following. We are honored to have these guests join us on their annual vacation and we take this responsibility very seriously, trying to raise the bar each and every year. Finding great new epicurean experiences and changing up our hotel selections on occasion, delivering some "off-itinerary" surprises on each excursion, planning deep horizontal and/or vertically themed tutored wine tastings and maintaining very small guide-to-guest ratios enables us to consistently deliver memorable experiences for guests whether they're joining us for their first time or eighth.

2015 FORTIFICATION TOUR

May 17th – 24th

LISBOA – SETUBAL – MADEIRA – PORTO SANTO

Our **FORTIFICATION TOUR** is a completely new adventure this year. We change the scope, nature and venues of this tour every year, but the itinerary always includes Madeira, (e.g. in 2014 we ONLY visited Madeira and spent an entire week there, and on our prior Fortification Tour we divided the itinerary between Gaia/Porto/Douro and Madeira). And now for something completely different!



In 2015, for the first time, we will instead meet in Lisbon and explore some of the more interesting landmarks in Portugal's capital city. We follow this up with a visit to the fortified wine region of Setúbal. If you're unfamiliar with Setúbal, it is set on the beautiful Setúbal peninsula an hour's drive outside of Lisbon. We will visit the two best quinta properties in the quaint hamlet of Vila Nogueira de Azeitão that produce some of the world's greatest Muscat wine; in this case a Portuguese wood-aged fortified wine called *Moscatel de Setúbal*. Those who know of this extraordinary nectar are reading this and cheering. ☺ The Moscatel producers in this area also vinify still wines and one of the quintas we will be visiting is known as the oldest table wine company in the entire country, established back in 1834. It is not only a historic property, but one of the more beautiful wineries in Central Portugal.

The following day, we will fly from Lisbon to Funchal and upon arrival; you will be met at Madeira's Funchal International airport and brought directly to the luxurious property where we'll be spending the next five nights in this tropical paradise. Enveloped by the warmth of the oceanfront breeze and striking natural beauty, the attentive hospitality of your two hosts will ensure your comfort during your whole stay. Madeira will exceed your expectations and deliver extraordinary opportunities to spend time with and learn from the heads of Madeira's wine trade.



Madeira is located slightly less than 600 miles Southwest off the coast of Morocco, in the Atlantic Ocean. It's a striking archipelago that I fondly refer to as, "The Hawaii of the Atlantic". Our guests have truly enjoyed their experiences when joining us to discover Portugal's other fortified wine region, Madeira. Steeped in tradition and surrounded by ocean, Madeira provides a combination of rugged terrain and some of the most long lived wines on the planet. Whether it is your 1st time joining us, or you've been on our tour(s) in the past, we change up the venues we visit, as well as the wines, restaurants etc. You will never forget this vacation unless you simply don't like to drink Moscatel, Madeira or enjoy fantastic food!



We spend the rest of our vacation focused on learning about and tasting sensational Madeira wines of all types and ages, on the most captivating wine producing island on the planet. You are guaranteed to enjoy bottles even older than your parents ... in all seriousness ... we will taste some oldies from the 19th century.



There will also be a full-day excursion to the adjoining island of Porto Santo which is about 42 miles from Madeira's coastline. The ocean going boat ride will be a memorable one, so bring sunscreen for this adventure! Once on Porto Santo, we'll check out the pristine 9 km long beach, discover some local hidden gems, a museum and two specific ultra-rare grapes: Listrão (which some of you may know from our visit to the Olim Brothers) but also the little known grape, Caracol. Afterwards we will visit a vineyard or two, taste some wine of course and then will be joined by a well-known local expert on Porto Santo that will provide great insight. That night we'll return back to our hotel in Funchal in time for a well-deserved sleep.



Our Fortification Tour package includes everything ... except airfare:

- Renowned Port and Madeira expert Roy Hersh is joined by Mario Ferreira to personally customize and host your luxurious weeklong vacation to Lisbon and Madeira
- Transfers to/from Lisbon International Airport and (Funchal) Madeira Airport and Transportation throughout your stay with us in Lisbon, Setubal, Madeira and Porto Santo
- 8 nights' accommodations at an impeccably chosen luxury property in Lisbon & Funchal
- 21 Meals include all breakfasts (8), lunches (6) and dinners (7) ... w/ the exception of one lunch *on your own* (the first Sunday)
- All tips & taxes; there are never any hidden or added fees such as “single supplements”
- Inclusion of all wine during our VIP tastings and throughout lunch/dinner
- Introduction to the key players within the Moscatel & Madeira trade at every stop!



FIVE REGION DIVERSITY TOUR

(Central Portugal)

June 14th – 21st

ALENTEJO – BAIRRADA – LISBOA – SETUBAL – TEJO

Our **FIVE REGION DIVERSITY TOUR** is a completely new adventure for us this year. For the first time we will be exploring a handful of wine regions in the center of Portugal. We have very solid contacts here too, and it is time to introduce first time guests and those who've traveled with us in the past, to something completely different. This trip is not only for lovers of Portuguese wine, but we've been doing our homework on the great chefs and restaurants in these wine regions too! Designed to be less intense than some of our other tours, yet the priority remains quite focused on oeno-tourism and fine dining, but will also provide the flavor and diversity of these five regions by offering distinctive cultural experiences along the way.

Although Mario and I have been to these wine regions, separately, we have been in contact with the owners of quintas that we've either been to before, or one's that have great reputations for both the quality of their wines, as well as extraordinary hospitality. Next year when we do this 5 Region Diversity Tour, we will explore other new properties, and I will be able to use my own photos both here and on FB for promotion. There are "stock" photos that could be used, but the photographer in me will not allow that to happen! 😊

Mario and I realize this would be a *leap of faith* on your part, but anyone who has ever joined us for a wine excursion knows, "we always have under-promised and exceeded expectations." The same will be true on this particular oeno-vacation. How can we be so sure? It is very simple, unless we deliver a remarkable tour the first time ... we can destroy our impeccable reputations built over the past decade. Since Mario and I are fully committed to success in expanding our coverage of Portugal's wine regions; we can assure you, this first tour is going to be exceptional. If you do take that leap and are willing to trust us this year and come along for an exceptional tour, (*help create our success*) we will ensure that there will be great perks for doing so!

What our clients have said about their excursions with us:

"The tour was top notch and Roy and Mario provided an experience that was far above what I had expected. This is a trip you do not want to miss. I plan to go again as this was the trip of a lifetime."

"Every day was an incredible learning experience and the things I learned about Port and Madeira will never be forgotten. I have already decided to start planning to go on the trip next year."

"I try to temper my expectations so as not to be disappointed, but this was hard not to describe as 'over the top'. At one point Roy said, 'We try to under promise & over deliver'. If that is your goal, I thought this tour was a tremendous success."

"Roy and Mario provided us with the opportunity to meet people, see places and taste wines that independent travelers and other wine tour companies simply do not have access to. If you are passionate about Port and Madeira, put your trust in these guys to give you an experience you will never forget."

"I learned more in one week than the last several years combined. Truly an educational experience that even a knowledgeable Port or Madeira drinker would love, yet perfect for a novice at the same time."

"The producers and shippers treated us as honored guests. It was a Port and Madeira-lover's dream!"

"I think a lot of people might shy away from these tours if they think they are not 'into' Port or Madeira enough. I definitely found myself questioning whether I was 'ready' for such an immersion (literally), but in the end I am very glad I did."

"Your generosity and the quality of care from both of you were excellent. It was obvious that you were entirely at our service, and that you had done everything in your power to provide us with peak experiences. I can't imagine kinder and more professional tour guides."

Our Five Region Tour package includes everything ... except airfare:

- Renowned Port and Madeira expert Roy Hersh is joined by Mario Ferreira to personally customize and host your luxurious weeklong vacation to experience five distinct wine regions.
- Transfers to/from Lisbon International Airport and transportation throughout your stay with us
- 8 nights' accommodations at an impeccably chosen and centrally located luxury property
- 21 Meals include all breakfasts (8), lunches (6) and dinners (7) ... w/ the exception of one lunch *on your own* (the first Sunday)
- All tips & taxes; there are never any hidden or added fees such as “single supplements”
- Inclusion of all wine during our VIP tastings and throughout lunch/dinner
- Introduction to the key players within the Portuguese wine trade at every stop
- A keepsake gift for every individual who puts their faith in us this year!



PORT HARVEST TOUR “1”

September 20th – 27th 2015

VILA NOVA DE GAIA – VINHO VERDE – PORTO – DOURO



The 2015 **PORT HARVEST TOUR “1”** represents our 1st time creating this once-in-a-lifetime bespoke Port excursion for those who are seeking a **LESS** intensive and fun experience revolving around Port and the Douro during the frenzy of the harvest. How does this differ from the PHT “2”, which is the type of tour we’ve successfully delivered for the past decade? Well, the PHT “1” is designed to be an actual oeno-tourism vacation for those travelers who would like to join us for the very first time, or would prefer a far more relaxed, less harried experience. This tour provides our first time guests the same quality of Ports and table wines, and visitations ... *in moderation*. There will be a few less visits and a couple of meals where you will be able to dine (or not) at your own discretion during the week, and enjoy some scheduled down time. Not everyone enjoys or wants to “handle” the type of long hours and sheer quantity of Port and Douro wines that *assault* guests on our other PHT. Here you will feel like you’re on a relaxed vacation; with more time to sleep in and later start times for our visits. You’ll also have time to exercise, “smell the coffee” and further enjoy the beauty that surrounds you.

Beyond the aforementioned differences, virtually everything else is the same, except we stay in excellent “tried and true” 3 and/or 4 star hotels in Porto and Douro region. That along with a few less overall visits during the tour will also make the Port Harvest Tour “1” more appealing for those looking to have a very similar experience as PHT “2” at a more affordable price. Relaxation has its benefits!

Another advantage to choosing PHT #1 is that you’re virtually guaranteed the harvest will still be in progress and you will be able to tread on grapes, pretty much regardless of weather conditions. So, if this sounds like it is more in your wheelhouse, (or a better fit for your budget) please read the rest of the story on the following pages, that will provide greater detail. This type of tour will work for either singles or couples and we assure you that you will be drinking the same quality level and age of Ports that we deliver on the other tour, as well as restaurants you’ve read about here over the years.

The 2015 Port Harvest Tour “1” includes everything except airfare:

- **Renowned Port expert Roy Hersh is joined by Mario Ferreira to personally customize and host your exclusive weeklong Port and Douro wine immersion**
- **Transfers to/from Porto International Airport**
- **8 nights’ accommodations at impeccably chosen Porto/Douro luxury properties**
- **19 Meals include all breakfasts (8), lunches (5) and dinners (6) explained when booking**
- **All tips & taxes; there are never any hidden fees such as “single supplements”**
- **Transportation throughout your stay with us in Northern Portugal**
- **Inclusion of all wine during our VIP tastings and throughout our scheduled lunch/dinner**
- **Introduction to the key players within the Port and Douro wine trade at their lodges, Quintas & homes**



11th Annual **PORT HARVEST TOUR “2”**

September 27th – October 4th 2015

VILA NOVA DE GAIA – VINHO VERDE – PORTO – DOURO



Our 2015 **PORT HARVEST TOUR “2” (PHT “2”)** represents our 11th consecutive year of creating once-in-a-lifetime bespoke Port excursions for those who are seeking an intensive yet fun experience revolving around Port and the Douro (and Vinho Verde) during the frenzy of the harvest. From learning the history to tasting nearly every category of Port, we gain loads of satisfaction in planning the itineraries for these extraordinary annual trips. You will encounter wood-aged Colheitas spanning decades (even centuries on some tours), to unparalleled horizontal and vertical tastings of Vintage Ports, LBV's, Aged White Ports and more. This is our 11th harvest season of hosting guests from around the globe and introducing them to Gaia/Porto, Vinho Verde and the Douro, one of the greatest wine regions in the world; and we plan to do so in grand style. Come join our harvest adventure!

We present the best of the established Douro producers and also focus on acquainting guests with some of the up and coming stars of Douro wine production, (and Port, of course). We then pursue innovative culinary artists in Porto, Gaia and the Douro Valley in order to pair both food and wine to create to create sumptuous meals. Our guests stay in first class accommodations which provide respite after long days-into-night of sheer hedonistic pleasure. Have you ever tread on just picked grapes in a stone lagar? Not just a photo opportunity, it's actually a time-honored tradition and there's nothing like feeling grapes squishing between your toes and beneath your feet. Pictured below, is For the Love of Port's most recent experience during the 2014 Port Harvest. You will never forget your first time!



PHT “2” proviso: Port Harvest Tour “1” explains some of the basic differences in these two tours. In order to “qualify” to come on PHT “2” guests (A.) will have either joined us on a prior tour, where they fully understand the rigors of what is going to come at them in terms of the number of hours per day. This is not for “casual” oeno-tourism vacationers, it is far more like a fun but intensive Port and Douro wine seminar for serious and hearty enthusiasts, or (B.) guests who work in the wine biz / foodservice trade as a Sommelier, where the guest would have no issue with the quantity of Ports and non-fortified wines per day and night. We typically do not return to the hotel for 14 hours (+/- 90 mins.). I am NOT trying to discourage potential guests from joining us, but I do want to make sure everyone knows what to expect, in advance of coming to Portugal!! Also there is a LOT of food that comes our way and of course you control what you put in your mouth. There is a 3rd option, if A & B above do not apply to you. You can choose (C.) which would allow you to join PHT “2”, but ONLY if you have a personal phone screening with me, so we can both be on the same page re: expectations of the tour



During the harvest of 2014, six of our 13 guests had previously joined us for at least one other Port Harvest Tour. As we strive to satisfy the needs and desires of first time guests every bit as much as our “frequent fliers” the bar must be continuously raised to keep these tours fresh for our guests and the two hosts. Delivering new and unique oeno-touristic experiences for all, this is a great challenge, and a dynamic that we thrive on. After all, necessity is the mother of invention. I believe all of the six veterans on the 2014, would say that this year was the best ever, as they did last year too. I am not sure how long we can continue to raise the bar, but that’s what makes the tours so much fun!



Our guests loved their 2014 vacation and enjoyed dining at several new eateries and discovering a number of Port and Douro wine producers for the first time. Some of the producers we visited (for our 1st time with a group, have been around for many years, while others were growers-turned-producers and are amongst the ongoing renaissance in the Douro. We remain committed to try as many of the brand new and highly regarded 2011 Vintage Ports as possible and they were eye opening in contrast with a number of old Ports we tasted, even a couple from the 19th century.

Like all of our Portuguese wine travel, the *Port Harvest Tour* is an all-inclusive vacation and once you've disembarked from the airplane, you will not touch your wallet/purse again unless buying wine or gifts. We ensure every detail of your experience is well considered and maintain small group sizes, as well as providing our guests with singular opportunities to meet the winemakers, owners and/or Managing Directors of every Port house we visit. Besides being remarkably fun, you will learn a ton!





Whether you're joining us to learn about Port and/or Douro wines for the first time or are seriously involved in consuming and collecting these incredible wines, we can promise that you'll exponentially expand your knowledge and tasting experience. You'll learn the viticulture and the difference between vineyards situated with old socalcos terracing, vinha ao alto, patamares plus vineyards planted to old vine field blends and some that are block planted. If you arrive not knowing the difference between pipes of Port, or toneis or balseiros, we can assure all of these things will be clarified for you. That's just the beginning, as you will depart with a deep understanding of both viti and viniculture as well as the various categories of Port and all shades of fantastic Douro wines. Nobody does it better!





Our 2015 Port Harvest Tour “2” includes everything except airfare:

- Renowned Port expert Roy Hersh is joined by Mario Ferreira to personally customize and host your exclusive weeklong Port and Douro wine immersion
- Transfers to/from Porto International Airport
- 8 nights’ accommodations at impeccably chosen Porto/Douro luxury properties
- 21 Meals including all breakfasts (8), lunches (6) and dinners (7) w/ the exception of one lunch *on your own* (the first Sunday)
- All tips & taxes; there are never any hidden fees such as “single supplements”
- Transportation throughout your stay with us in Northern Portugal
- Inclusion of all wine during our VIP tastings and throughout lunch and dinner
- Introduction to the key players within the Port, Douro and Vinho Verde wine trade at their lodges, Quintas & homes



THE ULTIMATE PORT EXPERIENCE!

For more information or reservations by email: roy@fortheloveofport.com