

Cruise West Announces New Taste of Pacific Northwest Cruise and Return of California Wine Country Cruises

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Leading Small Ship Company Sets Standard with Culinary and Wine-Focused Itineraries

Cruise West, America's leading small-ship cruise line, has announced its inaugural Taste of the Pacific Northwest itinerary, which will highlight for the first time in the company's history the rich culinary traditions and distinctive wines of Oregon and Washington. The Taste of the Pacific Northwest, the third epicurean-inspired voyage for Cruise West, will join the popular Culture of the Vine and Vintner's Choice cruises in 2008, both featuring the California wine region.

The 2008 Taste of Pacific Northwest cruise, with departures on September 28, October 5, 12 and 19, will sail on the 84-guest Spirit of Discovery. The 8-day/7-night itinerary will explore the Columbia River through Washington's Wine Country round trip from Portland, OR. Ports of call will include: The Columbia River Gorge, Walla Walla, WA, Hanford Reach National Monument, Horse Heaven Hills & Red Mountain, Hood River, Astoria, and Portland, OR. Prices begin at \$3,149 per person, round trip.

Each day offers guests varied adventures, from culinary to oenophilic to scenic: visits to family-owned wineries and vineyards set amidst stunning rivers and mountains, floating the route pioneers used for barges loaded with covered wagons, intimate tastings and meals with owners and growers, and strolls along cobbled walkways and tours through winery cave systems.

Other activities include: a tractor tour through the Hood River Valley's renowned family-run Fruit Company, plucking pears and apples along the route, approaching the spillway of the Bonneville Dam and passing through the intricate locks structure, private motorcoach tour with a local farmer through the Hanford Reach National Monument's towering bluffs and expansive vistas, and participation in a cooking demonstration at the Seafood Consumer Center in the historic maritime town of Astoria, OR.

The California Wine Country Cruises (Culture of the Vine and Vintner's Choice) are designed for both wine novices and connoisseurs who seek a personalized wine country experience that will include learning about "hand riddling" and other secrets of making fine champagne, sipping sparkling wine on the terrace of a French-inspired chateau, and touring a mountainside vineyard by a tractor-pulled tram. Guests will admire dramatic scenery, including San Francisco's dazzling evening lights, Alcatraz and Angel Island, and will indulge in frequent tastings and interactive discussions onboard and off. Visits ashore will explore areas of distinctive estates in Napa Valley, Sonoma and Carneros that are typically off-limits to the casual drop-in visitor. Participants will soak in the wide variety of architectural styles of the estates, including French chateaux, mission-style, and Victorian, and will benefit from guest speakers including winemakers and hospitality directors.

The 5-day/4-night Vintner's Choice cruise departs on the 138-guest Spirit of Yorktown from San Francisco in September and October 2008 and begins at \$2,049 per person, round trip. The 4-day/3-night Culture of the Vine itinerary, also on the Spirit of Yorktown, departs September and October 2008 and begins at \$1,349 per person, round trip.

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