

# Club Culinary Abroad or (Road Trip??-1m)

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## 2004 Culinary Olympics & Intrax Education Abroad Food & Wine Tour [www.studytheworld.com](http://www.studytheworld.com)

*Erfurt Germany October 2004*

Hello Friends,-

Happy New Year to you and yours! I would like to share a glimpse of the recent trip I took to the [Culinary Olympics](#) with you. There was a group of forty-five students and teachers from the [Art Institute of Los Angeles](#). The hosts of the group Chef Instructor Daniel Drumlake, CEC, AAC and Wine Professor Dr. Joel Fisher were nice enough to include my family and I on the trip! [Intrax](#) did a great job packing the trip full of informational tours and exciting sightseeing locations. If your [ACF](#) or [CMAA](#) chapter ever thought of collectively sending your chefs and/or managers on this level of culinary learning adventure, I would recommend Intrax (formerly passages) to put together a specialized experience based on your wants and needs! Their contact information is at the end of this article.

Enjoy the read!



Instructors & Students on the Tour from the Art Institute of Los Angeles

### **Day 1-Saturday**

Land in Frankfurt; drive about three hours to our hotel in Eisenbach. After check-in I find a local hole in the wall and try the bratwurst and sauerkraut for a late lunch while the rest of the family sleeps. Later that night the group arranged a welcome dinner at the hotel – sauerbraten – not very good, served with a giant ball of potato dumpling (knudel?) equally as throw away so I was glad to have found the brat!

### **Day 2-Sunday**

We are off to the first day of the Culinary Olympics, a forty-five minute drive to the city of Erfurt, - host to the Culinary Olympics. Six giant halls full of food exhibits, one with the hot food competition – lunches are served – we will try to purchase a lunch on Monday if able to arrange for late bus pick up.



We return to the bus for the ride back to the hotel in Eisenbach. My wife and son are suffering from jet lag and motion sickness (long bus ride). They sleep all night while I have dinner at the hotel and bring up some soup for my wife and son. While I'm having cocktails at the bar I meet two very nice formerly East Germans at hotel restaurant/bar Alexander and Volker. I was hoping to meet some locals to take us to the hot spot for German food in the area and promptly befriended them with a few drinks on me! This libation plan works well as they promise to return tomorrow to take us out to dinner at the local castle!



Stone and Volker in one of Volker's Big Rigs!

### **Day 3-Monday**

It's the second day of the Olympics and we're up and out in the morning to head for Erfurt. As we make our way to the hot food arena we see an amazing array of displayed food, some so intricate you can't believe it was once a natural food source. We see Ferdinand Metz, CMC and past President of the [CIA](#) and he informs us that the [US team](#) will not compete in the hot food competition until Wednesday and we will be on our way to France by then so we decide to stay and try to purchase tickets anyway. Finland's sample dish looks the best of the day so we rush to purchase tickets. Just as we get to the front of the line they sell out! Oh well, we quickly look at the sample dishes again and pick Slovenia. After a few hours and seventy pictures of mind blowing entries we arrive back at the hot food arena where we find out that in addition to purchasing tickets you must make a reservation for a table! It seems they oversell seats on purpose to ensure a full house. Needless to say we are disappointed, so after we barely get our money back (at first they refused) we rush back to make the bus and return to Eisenbach to shop (otherwise we would be waiting around for three hours). A good thing to remember if you head out to the Olympics in 2008!



This All Woman Team from Sweden is Smiling for a Good Reason – Gold!

In Eisenbach, we end up at [Wartburg Castle](#) for dinner. A site we never would have seen if Volker hadn't returned to the hotel restaurant/bar to find me to show us a night out German style! As we walk up a super steep-cobblestone hill for ten minutes with Stone in the baby stroller my legs are burning as the stroller bumps up the path. Tiring? Yes, but well worth the effort. At the top of the hill we come to an amazing "Frankenstein" scene complete with cobwebs, bats and who knows what else lurking in the dark! Then, we start down another cobblestone path to the [Hotel Auf De Wartburg](#). We are in for what is going to be our best dinner yet and in true German game style (hunting season has just opened). We start with the specialty of the house, a German style tapas plate with smoked venison, fresh cheese & olive spread, blood sausage salad and more yummy bites. Thanks to Volker, a memorable experience and a perfect last night in Germany.



#### **Day 4 Tuesday**

It's the last day of the Olympics and once again hundreds of beautiful entries, [Chef Rudy Garcia](#), CEC a member of our ACF Los Angeles chapter has an individual entry – great job Rudy!

After the show we head out of Germany towards France. The first stop is a concentration camp. This is one of the most horrific sights a person can see. Needless to say I have no pictures. We then move on to Weimar where [Oktoberfest](#) is still in full force, luckily Stone falls asleep during our Chinese food lunch (we were originally looking for an Asian restaurant for Stone – being half Korean he often won't eat anything other than rice, tofu & seaweed) so we escape having to pull him away from the rides to catch the bus. We make it to Karlsruhe, Germany where we will stay for the night. We have great food at the [Karlsruhe Renaissance Hotel](#), however no chance to see the city because we are to head out early for France.

#### **Day 5-Wendsday**

Upon arrival in Beaune at noon we stop for lunch at a local hot spot and have the regional dishes – escargot and coq au vin (which was definitely a “coq”, a far cry from our tender American chicks, but delicious nonetheless. After lunch we are off to the Marche aux Vin Winery to taste Bordeaux's. The winery is housed in a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Church, as most wineries are, having been started by monks. We taste some good pinots as we tour the catacombs of the church/winery. My favorite was a Gevrey Chambertin, 1998. As we exit I happily purchase half a case of the Chambertin, splitting it with Dr. Joel Fisher and Daniel Drumlake, CEC, the hosts of the tour.

Late afternoon we end up at [Moutarderie Fallot](#), in Dijon, to see how Dijon mustard is made. This is a nice break from wine tasting, we make mustard by hand and taste the complete line of flavored mustards available for sale. Moutarderie Fallot is the last family owned moutarderie in Dijon (all others have moved into large factories on the outskirts of town). Besides the Fallot label Le Moutarderie Fallot creates private labels for the likes of Thomas Keller of The French Laundry and Paul Bocuse to name a few.

### **Day 6-Thursday**

We depart Dijon and head for Vézelay. In Vézelay we visit a 12<sup>th</sup> century church and then head to Chablis for a tour and tasting of [Domaine Larouche](#), a cooperative, where we taste the wine in each of the fermentation stages from giant stainless steel vats made in Germany. Stone loves the second stage, tries to drink an entire glass we do let him have a sip then he promptly falls asleep! Could this be legal to sell for kids? If anyone would/could they would make a fortune!

We leave the co-op and head back to Beaune where half of the group will visit a famous hospice and the other half headed by Doc and Daniel will go to Domaine Drouhin for a special lunch, tour and tasting of this family owned winery in the center of Beaune. Domaine Drouhin is housed in a beautiful, what was once the local church stone building. We make our way once again through the catacombs of the church/winery and end up in a large wine tasting cellar. Our host, [Jean-Pierre Cropsal](#) has us taste a few whites and then a few great reds including my favorite “Chambertin!” For more information on Joseph Drouhin wines visit [www.drouhin.com](http://www.drouhin.com).

After a great day of wine tasting we return to the bus and head to Paris, the most romantic city in the world!

### **Day 7-Friday**

It’s now 3:00 in the morning and Daniel, Doc and I are off to a private tour of the [Rungis Market](#), the largest outdoor market in the world. It was moved from the streets of Paris in the eighties to the outskirts and increased in size to fifteen hundred square feet. Warehouse after warehouse of whole animals and parts including many exotic goods you seldom see. Details on Rungis market in next issue.

The afternoon is spent at the [Palace of Versailles](#). Being my first trip to the old world, I had never seen anything like it – the gardens and hedge mazes are endless. A must see when visiting Paris.



The Palace of Versailles

### **Day 8-Saturday**

Saturday we have two great tours of the finest Champagne houses in France. We travel to the Champagne-Ardenne region and visit [Taittinger](#) and [Moët & Chandon](#). I had no idea that Moët only makes Dom Pérignon every other year or less depending on the grapes. It must be a year with an abundance of “Grand Cru” or top quality grapes. Now I see what the big fuss is about Dom!

We stop for lunch in Reims and found a local bistro by accident. While the rest of the group visits a cathedral, my family of three immediately head out to look for a gastronomique experience skipping the cathedral knowing we would need the extra time. We come to a quaint little spot, Le St. Julien. We walk in to an empty room, set what looks like for dinner service, so I wonder if it is closed for lunch. Luck is with us and we are greeted and shown to our table while the Madame suffers through my Franglish to rush a pasta to the table for Stone. We look at the menu and within a few minutes it’s packed with locals – a very good sign! This is a true “mom and pop” operation, owned and operated by husband and wife team Mr. & Mme Despaquis. I have the foie gras terrine with fresh currants and quince preserves and tête de veau (veal head) and my wife has pâté de champagne (country pâté) with pickled yellow cherries and cornichons and turbot au beurre blanc, are most exquisite meal thus far. If you are visiting France and the Champagne or Reims region in particular, you must visit this local eatery, 47, rue Eugene Desteuque – 5100 Reims, Tél 03 26 88 32 38 and tell Madame Despaquis Whitney sent you!

### **Day 9-Sunday**

We walk the streets of Notre Dame and purchase a few trinkets in the afternoon and stop for a light lunch because we have a grand night ahead of us, the highlight of the trips gastronomique adventure - [The Ritz](#). I agree with Ernest Hemmingway when he said, “When I think of an afterlife in heaven, the actions always happen at the Ritz.” The Ritz was opened in 1898 by Caesar Ritz and [Auguste Escoffier](#), the “father of cooking” as we know it in Europe and America today. We toured the kitchen lead by Chef de Cuisine

Dominique Fonseca who treated us like royalty! Still cooking in the traditional fashion of Escoffier and with impeccable attention to detail, Dominique tops our highest expectations with course after course of masterpieces. The first amuse bouche was a cepe soup with poached quail egg, milk froth and truffle oil, next to me was sautéed foie gras with mushroom tart and I had lobster salad and the sweetbreads with artichokes. When finished with savory, we received an amuse bouche of fresh cheese ice cream over cassis poached pears with was an amazing prelude to what I had ordered for dessert, oven roasted figs with olive oil ice cream! It was a truly memorable meal and a perfect finish to an amazing Culinary Olympics Tour.

Ritz Hotel  
Paris



(Lt-R)-Dr. Joel Fisher, Dominique Fonseca, Ritz, Whitney Werner, Daniel Drumlake

To create you own tour for the 2008 Culinary Olympics or another type of culinary tour contact:

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I hope to see you at IKA in 2008!

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