



SPANISH
JOURNEYS

805 Long Pond Road, Wellfleet, MA 02667 USA

Tel: 508.349.9769

Fax: 508.349.9765

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Sophisticated Taste of Spain's Gay Scene

Wellfleet, Mass., November 29, 2006. The Catalans' response to Spain's same-sex marriage law, approved last year, has been low-key, according to Teresa Parker, a travel adviser who specializes in the region.

"Gay marriage is quite well accepted here, and yet this is a place where everyday gay life can still seem somewhat hidden," Parker says. "There is a thriving gay community here, particularly in Barcelona's *Eixample* neighborhood, which has been dubbed the '*gay-xample*,' but in most places, you still don't see couples holding hands on the street."

Parker designs high end travel experiences in Catalonia, in the northeast corner of Spain. One of her favorite collaborators in this work is Michael Cleaver, a respected luxury hotel manager who is now at the helm of Barcelona's new gay-owned Hotel Axel.

"We say the hotel is 'hetero-friendly,'" says Cleaver, "because while we cater to gay travelers, we also welcome their families and straight friends." (For more information on the Hotel Axel see www.axelhotels.com.)

Barcelona has always been Spain's most cosmopolitan city, a place where avant-garde artists, designers, and, more recently, chefs famously flourish. Yet the Catalans also cultivate an image of seriousness, proudly removed, it would seem, from the emotion of *flamenco* or the frivolity of *zarzuela*. The gay scene is both sophisticated and easy-going.

"One thing that surprises travelers," says Cleaver, "is that gay venues here tend to be very open, with *chicos* and *chicas* enjoying not such completely separate worlds."

Parker, whose Spanish Journeys tours always focus on authentic food and culture, has, with assistance from the tastemakers at the Axel, designed a spring trip especially for gay men, from May 14 to 20, 2007 (see <http://www.spanishjourneys.com/gay.htm>). The "Gay Getaway" includes a stay at the Axel, as well as in a resort hotel in Sitges, which Parker describes as "Barcelona's Provincetown, a welcoming, arts-oriented beachfront enclave."

"Most gay packages tend to be college spring break?like cruises or large-scale tours," Parker says. "I wanted this one to appeal to renaissance men who appreciate great food and wine, want to spend some time in the kitchen, and enjoy a good drag show."

Intimate neighborhood walks, tastings of local specialties, a hands-on cooking class, a winery visit, and an excursion on a private yacht are some of the luxuries included:

- 6 days, 3 nights in a stylish gay-owned Barcelona hotel, 2 in a gay-friendly beach resort;
- All breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 3 dinners—showing off a delicious range of Catalan cuisine;
- Selected wines paired with every meal;
- A vineyard visit and wine tasting in the Penedés;
- A hands-on private cooking lesson with a Catalan chef;
- An excursion on a private yacht;
- A drag show, a nightclub tour, an evening at an historic dance hall;
- Museums and tours as indicated in the itinerary;
- Spanish Journeys' personal, low-key, experienced guides;
- All gratuities;
- All ground transportation (except the short taxi ride to the hotel upon arrival);
- Travel medical insurance MedEx TravMed Abroad.

The trip price is \$2995 per person; the single supplement is \$575. The group is limited to 16 participants. Travelers must book and pay for their own air tickets.



WWW.SPANISHJOURNEYS.COM

CONTACT:

Teresa Parker
Director, Spanish Journeys
teresa@spanishjourneys.com
t: 508-349-9769
m: 917-363-0339
www.spanishjourneys.com

Spanish Journeys offers intimate culinary tours in Catalonia and Barcelona. Trips are led by company director Teresa Parker, who trained as a chef in Barcelona. Parker also offers custom travel planning for independent travelers visiting the region.

For more information about this or other Spanish Journeys itineraries, contact Teresa Parker at teresa@spanishjourneys.com, or by mobile phone at 917-363-0339.