

Everything you need to know from Dr. Jay and Amanda...
Health, Wellness & Gourmet Living in the Loire Valley Retreat
May 27-June 2, 2012

[All photo credits – [Michael Chichi](#), [Chetana Deorah](#), [Amanda Dates](#) and [Moulin Brégeon](#).]

Welcome and Bonjour!

Experience a unique and memorable 6 nights & 7 days rejuvenating, healing, and luxuriating in the serenity and history of the beautiful Loire Valley of France. Commonly known as “Le Jardin de France,” the Loire Valley also boasts stately chateaux of the French aristocracy, world-class wines and gourmet food, and quaint rural villages. This retreat will be your time to awaken your entire being and to enjoy all the “tastes of life!”

In fact, the central theme for our retreat is *rasa*, an ancient Sanskrit word that captures the important Indian concept of celebrating the “**essence, juice, and flavor of life**” via your senses. Whether it’s *seeing* the beauty of the French countryside from your bedroom, *hearing* the soothing sounds of nature as you relax in the gardens, *smelling* the aromatic foods and herbs in the markets, *feeling* the sensuous touch of the warm sun on your skin after morning yoga, or *tasting* the local wines and uniquely prepared farm-to-fork meals every day; **we want you to enjoy the *rasa*, the essential flavor of life, in every way!**

From the Moulin Brégeon website:

In 2000, UNESCO added the Loire Valley to its list of World Heritage Sites, calling it “an exceptional cultural landscape of great beauty, comprised of historic cities and villages, great architectural monuments--the Châteaux--and lands that have been cultivated and shaped by centuries of interaction between local populations and their physical environment, in particular the Loire River itself.”





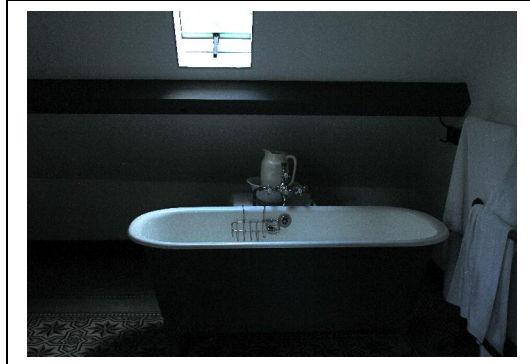
Our Venue

The venue for our [Loire Valley Health, Wellness, and Gourmet Living](#) retreat is the tiny village of [Linières-Bouton](#). Our experience will encompass the expanse of this charming 18th century hamlet: the Moulin, the village center, and a few of you will even have rooms in the chateau! Linières-Bouton is in a remote part of the Loire Valley, 30 minutes from Saumur, an hour from Tours, and 3 1/2 hours from Paris.

The venue is a collective project founded and inspired by noted artist Jonathan Robinson. The other members of the collective are Pascal Merrillou, Bernard Levenez, and Etsuko Sasao. With the success of the acquisition and renovation of their flagship project, [Moulin Brégeon](#), a 19th century wheat-grinding-mill-turned luxury inn, they have since been able to acquire and renovate several of the buildings in the nearly abandoned 18th century village. You will be housed at either the Moulin, the village center or the chateau, depending on your room preferences. Most meals will be served at the Moulin and yoga and meditation sessions will take place in a renovated barn in the village. This truly will be going on a journey back in time, embracing the rustic yet elegant qualities of this magnificent endeavor.

Read [New York Times](#) and [Boston Globe](#) articles about the vision behind Moulin Brégeon.





If you have particular allergies to animal dander/fur/feathers, please consider that Moulin Brégeon is also a tiny working farm. There are “fur/feather children”: goats, geese, chickens, turkeys, ducks, dogs and cats within close proximity of the guest spaces.



Getting There

Please plan your trip in order to arrive at Moulin Brégeon in the village of Linières-Bouton between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday, May 27.

Overview

Getting from the airport to the Moulin is a several step trip.

- Charles de Gaulle International Airport to Paris.
- Within Paris to Gare de Montparnasse train station.
- Gare de Montparnasse to Gare de Saumur (usually via train change in Tours).
 - You will be met at Gare de Montparnasse by our retreat assistant.
- Pickup from Gare de Saumur to Moulin Brégeon / Linières-Bouton.

The cost of your retreat covers your Paris – Saumur roundtrip TGV / TER train ticket. However, it does NOT cover the cost of a rental car if you choose that mode of travel.

If possible, and also to prevent unwanted anxiety related to delayed flights and missed trains, **we recommend arriving in Paris on Saturday, May 26 or earlier** so that you can get your bearings and a good night's rest after a long day of air travel. This will enable you to make your way to the train station at your leisure the next day.

If anyone would like recommendations for reasonably priced accommodations and restaurants in Paris, let us know.

Arrival from the Charles de Gaulle International Airport (CDG)

Whether you arrive a day early or on Sunday May 27th, you will need to travel from CDG airport to the city of Paris. As most of you know CDG airport is about a half hour to the northeast of Paris. There are three options to get to Paris from the airport.

1. Public transportation (RER B)

The most efficient and economical way to get into the city is simply to take public transportation – the RER B train to the Metro (Paris subway). There is an RER station inside the airport, with clear signage. It costs about 10€, and you can purchase a ticket from a machine or from an agent. The 10€ will cover the cost of the entire trip from the airport to Paris, including the metro to the train station.

Directions from CDG to Gare de Montparnasse: RER B toward *St Remy les Chevreuse*. Disembark at *St Michel – Notre Dame* and get the Metro 4 line toward *Porte d'Orleans*. You will disembark at *Gare Montparnasse* and look for the signs to the TGV platforms (“*Grands Lignes*”). From the Line 4 platform, it is a several hundred-yard walk, with several stairs and a moving walkway.

If you are spending a few days in Paris, then take the RER B and disembark at the stop nearest your hotel.

2. Roissy Bus

This is a private bus run by the airport. It also costs 10€ but takes an hour to get to Paris, and only stops at Opera. This is a good option if you are arriving early as Opera is major Metro hub.

3. Taxi

A taxi is the most expensive option (50 – 100€ depending on the time of day and amount of baggage). Taxi rides within Paris cost between 6€ (minimum) to 30€+ (depending on distance and traffic).

Here is a [WONDERFUL interactive map of the Paris RER and Metro system](#). You can tell it where you are starting and where you are going and it will give you the route and approximate travel time.

Paris Gare de Montparnasse to Gare de Saumur

The cost of your retreat covers your Paris – Saumur roundtrip train ticket. We will pre-purchase the train tickets, and the retreat assistant meeting you at Gare de Montparnasse will have them to distribute. The tickets are typically non-changeable and non-refundable, so it is important that everyone arrive at Gare de Montparnasse at the designated time.

The train trip requires a change in Tours or Angers, from a TGV train to a local TER train. You will have one ticket for both legs; you will have a reserved seat on the TGV, but it is open seating on TER. The train stations in Tours and Angers are small, and easily navigable. You will typically have about 5-10 minutes to change trains.

Once in Saumur, the whole group will be picked up by one of the representatives from Moulin Brégeon. Since the Saumur train station is 30 minutes from Linières-Bouton, we are encouraging as many people as possible to travel in the accompanied group from Gare de Montparnasse to Gare de Saumur to cut down on the number of trips back and forth to Saumur.

Renting a Car

If you are renting a car at the airport and driving to Moulin Brégeon in the village of Linières-Bouton, please give yourself 4-5 hours. It generally does not take that long, but it is wise to plan for traffic delays, road construction, and (inevitably) getting lost.

Here are the [Google map driving directions](#) from CDG to Linières-Bouton /Moulin Brégeon.

Return flights: CDG – US destination

The retreat wraps in the early afternoon on Saturday, June 2. We highly recommend NOT trying to make it to the airport in time to fly out that night. Again, anything can happen. However, if you absolutely have to leave Paris on Saturday, be sure to book a late flight to give you the leeway needed to make your train and flight connections on-time.

Being There

What's Included, What's Not

Included

- Paris – Saumur roundtrip TGV / TER train ticket.
- Rustic yet elegant lodging.
- Daily yoga classes, guided meditation, and talks on conscious awareness.
- All farm-to-fork gourmet French meals and regional wine.
- Cooking & wine classes with visits to local markets and independent vintners.
- Architecture & *brocante* (flea market) tours through the historic and picturesque Loire Valley.
- Ongoing French-English translation.

Not Included

- Round-trip airfare.
- Personal purchases while on day-trips.
- One-on-one private sessions with Amanda (yoga), Dr Jay (Ayurveda consultations), or Jonathan Robinson (art / painting).

Yoga

Do not worry if you are new to the practice. There will be people representing all levels, from very beginners to current yoga teachers. Occasionally we will break the group into two smaller classes – mellow and dynamic – so that everyone feels supported in their practice and the space is created for all students to go at the pace appropriate for them on any given day.

Gastronomy (Food & Wine)

Our two chefs, Pascal and Bernard, take great pride in creating wholesome, authentic French meals. Enjoying good food and wine in our communal dining will be a vital part of the whole *rasa* experience. Our chefs will procure everything (to the extent possible) from their own kitchen garden, eggs from their geese, etc. as well as, the farms, creameries, and markets within the region. *(You can be confident that all money spent for products and services before and during the retreat, will be an investment in the local economy.)*



Pascal and Bernard will expose us to the gastronomy specific to the Loire Valley, as well as specialties from other regions. Of course, wine pairings will come from the closest Loire Valley appellations— Saumur, Saumur-Champigny and Chinon. There will also be a French cooking class and wine tasting as part of your retreat experience!

Our chefs will be able to accommodate a variety of dietary needs. **However, it is mandatory that you make clear on the registration form what your dietary needs/restrictions are so they can be prepared.**

A Typical Day

There will be a morning yoga class and guided meditation. A typical French breakfast will be served, after which we will prepare for the day's outing or activity that may include: winery tour, architecture tour, *brocante* (flea market) tour, market visit, or cooking class. Most of our outings will include a simple picnic lunch. We will return for evening yoga and Dr. Jay's talks/discussions on conscious awareness and personal awakening. This will be followed by aperitif and dinner.

There will be plenty of time built in the schedule for just relaxing, enjoying the beautiful grounds, hiking, napping, etc.

All activities are optional and included in the cost of your retreat experience. Any personal purchases are NOT covered in the cost of the retreat.



Money

For several months the currency exchange has been approximately $\$1.3 = 1 \text{ €}$. Typically, everything is more expensive in the cities than the countryside. In Paris, you can use your ATM debit and credit cards pretty much everywhere. In the countryside, that is NOT the case. Stores (even chain stores), pharmacies, gas stations, cafes, etc. will not be able to process an American “swipe” card as opposed to a European “chip” card.

You will be able to take money out of any ATM machine and major French banks have ATM machines in *some* small towns. We recommend taking out spending money while in Paris before you arrive at Moulin Brégeon / Linières-Bouton for the tours/day trips in case you want to make purchases. There is no ATM machine in Linières-Bouton and most of the day trips will take place in the remote countryside.

Staying in Touch

Once we have received your registration form and down payment, we will provide you with all the numbers you will need and recommendations/instructions for making calls either with your own multi-band phone or at a payphone with a phone card.

Please note that the Internet connection at the venue is very slow, by design. Please do not plan on working on urgent deadlines and expect to have access to a fast connection to support you. You will be disappointed!

One of the beauties of this retreat is your ability to unplug from the virtual world of emails, Internet and cell phones so that you can be fully present for the experience.

What to Bring

Pack for warm days, cool nights, and rain. Keep it casual and comfortable with: smart walking shoes, flip-flops, yoga clothes, light weight pants/jeans, shorts, short and long-sleeved shirts, a sweater, a rain jacket, etc. The weather can vary fairly drastically, i.e., from bright and sunny 75+ degree days to rainy, windy days. Please do not forget to bring a yoga mat and a yoga towel.

Next Steps

After reading through the material, please fill out your [Registration and Waiver Forms](#) and **pay your 1,100€ deposit via Paypal directly from the website, by Sunday, January 15, 2012. The remaining balance will be due by April 1, 2012.**

We need your registration forms emailed to us NOW so that we can get dietary restrictions and room requests to Moulin Brégeon ASAP.

Amanda@dogayoga.net AND jay@livingyourlight.com.

If you do not have an electronic signature for the waiver form, you can print, sign, and bring it with you to the retreat.

We have set up a private [Facebook page](#). We have already and will continue to post regular links, photos, and updates. If you have not joined the group yet, please do!

If you have any further questions, please contact either Dr. Jay Kumar (in US at 415.730.2629) or Amanda Dates (in Paris at +33 06 75 42 41 60) or email info@loirevalleywellnessretreat.com

We look forward to seeing you at the retreat as you revel in “tasting all the fruits of life!”

A Bientôt,
Amanda and Jay

January 2012