



BONNER
PRIVATE WINE
PARTNERSHIP

A photograph of a large, historic stone castle with multiple towers and a central cathedral-like structure, set against a clear blue sky and distant mountains. The castle is built on a hillside, surrounded by lush green trees and a clear blue sky. The architecture features red-tiled roofs and stone walls. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

Your French Collection

from the Bonner
Private Wine Partnership

America's Most Unique Wine Club

Dedicated to searching the world for astounding wines from little-known winemakers

Wish You Could Buy More of Our Wine?

Log into your profile on www.bonnerprivatewines.com to view our store and get your hands on more of the wines you love (while we still have them!) You can also give us a call at 844.733.5249.

...Can We Ask A Small Favor?

Can we “compare notes” with you on these wines?

Maybe you picked up on aromas that we didn't. Maybe you just fell in love with a particular bottle. Or maybe the exact opposite. Whatever the case, we want to hear from you. Because you're part of this. And we can only keep this mission going if you're on board.

Shoot us an email at feedback@bonnerprivatewines.com.

Dear Member,

In his book about his travels through France, importer Kermit Lynch describes the old way of winemaking:

The taste of the grape told them when to harvest. The taste of the wine told them when to bottle, what sort of oak to employ, the appropriate barrel size, how to prune different grape varieties...

If the taste of the wine indicated that a steep, stony piece of land produced better wine, then that was the land they worked, regardless of the labor involved.

If the public taste changed, they did not rip out their Pineau vines in order to plant Chardonnay. [...]

They seem to have been instinctively directed toward quality. Only in this century have we seen the hard-earned knowledge of the ancients discarded, almost overnight, in the name of progress."

Over the last couple decades, in almost every country, trust in tradition has been tossed aside in favor of catering to the public taste.

But the French are a rebellious lot. Just try taking a train from Bordeaux to Paris at the end of August and see if your trip isn't disrupted by a sudden revolutionary zeal amongst the train workers.

This is, after all, the country where advocates of Roquefort cheese destroy McDonald's restaurants.

Similarly, there remains an undercurrent among Gallic winemakers of anti-modernism, and rebellion as an embrace of tradition, rather than its destruction.

For our second-ever French collection, we focused on finding the iconoclasts, the upstarts, and the dark horses. Our search led us from the Haut-Médoc, where the Gironde River meets the Atlantic, down through the Rhône Valley, to the Languedoc where white stone villages sit on the Mediterranean coast.



In this box, you will find six bottles:

- ① Domaine Aléofane Crozes-Hermitage 2019
- ② Château Ventenac Le Mas 2015
- ③ Les Prunelles de Montblanc Cuvée Prestige 2019
- ④ Château Vieille Tour Côtes de Bordeaux Exception 2018
- ⑤ Marquis de Saint-Estèphe Château Léo de Prades 2016
- ⑥ Clefs des Murailles Vacqueyras 2018

These are hot weather zones, without the chill of Champagne or Bourgogne. As such, this is probably our most potent collection outside of Argentine imports. But if you focus on the raw power, you'll miss the far more interesting element that brings together all these wines: a pure terroir expression, from the red pebble soils of Vacqueyras, to Montblanc's sea breezes, to the limestone hills of Cadillac. Opening these wines, you get the sense that they could not have come from anywhere other than exactly where they were made.

A votre santé,

Will Bonner
Founder, Bonner Private Wine Partnership

A Quick Note on Wine Tasting

On the next few pages, we've included tasting notes written with some help from our resident "sommelier" French winemaker Julien Miquel. Here's a quick tip on how to approach them:

What makes a wine expert is not just depth of knowledge – which anyone can achieve – but a sensitivity to taste and smell. A great wine expert will find a hundred little aromas that most will never be able to detect.

Now, if you don't get the same flavors, does that mean you're wrong?

No. Tasting is subjective. Besides which, wines are always evolving in the bottle. That hint of cherry from a few months ago might present itself differently now. So, if you detect a flavor or aroma you don't see on the tasting sheet, add it. See what your friends say. Better yet, if you have a tasting that differs markedly from what's written here, send us your notes. We'd love to compare them!

2019 Domaine Aléofane Crozes-Hermitage



Syrah

**Organic, Unfiltered,
Low Sulphite**

Old Vine

**Crozes-Hermitage
(Northern Rhône)**

In the Northern Rhône, terraced vineyards snake along crumbling granite and slate hillsides, baking in the southern French sun. One such hill, l'Hermitage, produces some of France's most prestigious wines.

On the northern side of the hill lies the village of Crozes-Hermitage, and a small winery, Domaine Aléofane. The name means "gem of truth" – fitting for a wine made with such a minimal amount of technical intervention. Winemaker/philosopher Natacha Chave does every aspect by hand, refuses to use chemicals, fining or filtration, and opts for *demi-muid* barrels so as not to cloud the wisdom of her 50-year-old syrah vines with unnecessary oak flavor.

The terroir is something special. Covered in *galets roulés* (smooth, round stones), you might think Natacha's plots were in Chateauneuf-du-Pape (another ultra-prestigious French region). Indeed, Aléofane is dense and concentrated in a way that makes it an outlier among most Crozes wines. Cellar up to 2025.



2015 Château Ventenac Le Mas



Cabernet Franc,
Merlot, Syrah

Organic, Low
Sulphite

Old Vine

Cabardès
(Languedoc)

“Ici, pas de maquillage!” says rebel winemaker Olivier Ramé (“no make-up here!”)

We were first introduced to Olivier back in 2019 when Julien Miquel turned us onto his wine, *L’Intrus* (“the trespasser”) for our first ever French collection. *L’Intrus* remains one of the most popular wines we’ve ever sourced for the Partnership. “Easily a 90+ point wine if anyone knew about it,” remarked Julien at the time.

A couple years later people are finally beginning to discover Olivier. *Le Mas* has a 90+ score from none other than Robert Parker. But don’t worry that success has changed Olivier. He still weeds and harvests by hand; he still eschews chemicals and lab grown yeast. (He is even contemplating swapping out his concrete, stainless steel, and oak containers for terracotta amphorae.)

With organic grapes and 18 months in French oak, this limited run wine (1,000 cases only) draws the best out of its limestone terroir for an inky color, a pure minerality, and a powerful, yet balanced, wild fruit expression. Cellar up to 2025.



2019 Les Prunelles de Montblanc Cuvée Prestige



Syrah, Grenache,
Mourvèdre

Organic

Languedoc

Old Vine

On the Mediterranean coast, in the village of Montblanc, stands a white stone church with a tower and a hidden staircase. Back in the 8th century, the tower offered refuge to terrified villagers during Viking raids.

Montblanc gets its name from the white stone, a type of chalk, found throughout the area. That stone, along with a gravel topsoil, is what makes the terroir in this southerly part of Languedoc so desirable to a winemaker like Bruno Andreu. He's a man who likes typicity – a wine that can come from nowhere else than the terroir where it was born.

With a strong sea influence, and full-sun southern exposure, Bruno's grapes drink in the French Mediterranean as they grow. He then harvests them at night to preserve peak aromatics – mature black fruit, fresh red berries, and southern spice. When this label says "prestige," you can believe it. Drink this on a special occasion within the next year and a half.



2018 Château Vieille Tour Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée “Exception”



**Merlot, Cabernet
Sauvignon,
Cabernet Franc**

Low Intervention

Old Vine

**Côtes de Bordeaux
(Red Cadillac)**

**Only 8,000 bottles
produced**

Côtes de Bordeaux is a franken-appellation – a non-contiguous amalgam of four older appellations on the west and east sides of Bordeaux dreamed up in a bureaucrat’s office. This Vieille Tour is really from Cadillac, on the east bank of the Garonne River, opposite Sauternes, the sweet white region.

Cadillac, too, is a sweet white region. But Vieille Tour is a full-bodied red with a ripe plum nose and spicy vanilla and cacao in the mouth. That’s why this 2018 bears the Côtes de Bordeaux, not Cadillac, appellation.

Not that winemaker Jérôme Guin is terribly concerned with labels. At his core, he’s a farmer. His concern is for his land – a small plot planted around a ruined tower overlooking the Garonne Valley. Visit there during the harvest and you’ll see daughter Lilly-Hanna running the rows, helping as her father and mother harvest each bunch with their own hands. Cellar up to 2033.



2016 Marquis de Saint-Estèphe Château Léo de Prades



**Merlot, Cabernet
Sauvignon, Cabernet
Franc**

**Gold and Silver Medal
Winner**

Old Vine

**Saint-Estèphe
(Haut-Médoc, Bordeaux)**

North of Bordeaux, close to where the Gironde River meets the Atlantic, a little stream breaks off, bringing water to the hallowed grounds of Château Lafite-Rothschild. On the other side of the stream from Lafite lies the village of St-Estèphe, highest appellation within the Haut-Médoc.

St-Estèphe is an outlier among top tier terroirs: with a top layer of gravel sitting on a bed of pure clay, it has awful drainage. St-Estèphe also lacks the protective barrier of forest enjoyed by most of the Médoc. The result is one of France's most difficult-yet-rewarding wines.

This 2016 Château Léo de Prades, from vines over 70 years old, had to spend 24 months in oak just to tamp down the tannins before bottling. It is just now coming into its own with a character and depth that seem well beyond its mere 4 years in bottle. Let the bottle decant for a moment, then dive in for tobacco, clove, dark fruit, and toasted coffee beans. That we know of no one else has this wine State-side. Load up while you can. Cellar up to 2026.



2018 Clefs des Murailles Vacqueyras



**Grenache, Syrah,
Mourvèdre**
Old Vine
Vacqueyras
(Southern Rhône)

Above the green and purple vineyards of Gigondas, a giant set of ancient teeth poke up through the earth. These are the Dentelles de Montmirail, a series of small mountains that look like teeth made of Jurassic-era limestone.

Outside the small medieval village of Vacqueyras, the ancient limestone mixes with clay (and a red pebble topsoil) to produce wines that can be a bit of a shotgun blast to the palate, in the manner of a less fussy and more forceful Chateauneuf. What makes winemaker Phanette Double unique is her ability to make Vacqueyras elegant.

That kind of know-how comes only with a deep understanding of the red pebble and limestone clay terroir. To wit, the Double family has been making wine in the Rhône Valley since 1864 (and they were Aix-en-Provence winemakers before that). That generational knowledge pays off in this 2018, with an intense bouquet of wild fruits, strawberry and blueberry in the nose, followed by a graceful, surprisingly well-structured explosion of fruit (plus a hint of licorice?) in the mouth. Cellar up to 2028.





Our Mission

At the Bonner Private Wine Partnership, our mission is to bring you unique bottles from all over the world. We seek wines that are bursting with life and character – wines with an adventure in every bottle.

Your Next Quarterly Shipment

As you read this, we are already selecting and arranging to import wines for next quarter's shipment. We will be in touch to share what we've found with you when we get closer to the shipping date. Until then, enjoy your wine! (And let us know what you think!)

Problem with Your Shipment?

Please call our customer service, 9-5 Monday through Friday at 844.733.5249. We want everyone to get the most out of this club and these wines. So if there's a problem, we'll do our best to make it right.

Want More Wine?

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