

# REVUE DE PRESSE

21/02/2018



# Sommaire

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The Rhône is a little more complicated than Villages level and Châteauneuf-du-Pape<br>belfastlive.co.uk - 10/02/2018 | 3  |
| The Rhone holds a special place in my wine cellar<br>The News (UK) Portsmouth - Portsmouth - 03/02/2018              | 5  |
| ALISTAIR GIBSON: The Rhone holds a special place in my wine cellar<br>portsmouth.co.uk - 02/02/2018                  | 6  |
| Secrets Waiting to be Uncovered<br>riddlemagazine.com - 24/01/2018   | 8  |
| WINE<br>Stockport Express - 17/01/2018   | 10 |
| RAISE A GLASS<br>Manchester Evening News - 13/01/2018  | 11 |
| Paula's Wines of the Week starting 8th January 2018<br>Maturetimes.co.uk - 08/01/2018                                | 12 |
| WINE<br>Rossendale Free Press - 22/12/2017   | 13 |
| WINE<br>Accrington Observer - 22/12/2017   | 14 |
| WINE<br>Heywood Advertiser - 21/12/2017  | 15 |
| WINE<br>Middleton Guardian - 21/12/2017  | 16 |
| WINE<br>Rochdale Observer - 20/12/2017   | 17 |
| WINE<br>Macclesfield Express - 20/12/2017  | 18 |
| WINE<br>Stockport Express - 20/12/2017   | 19 |
| BD TRAVEL FEATURE: HELLO SWEETIE....AND ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO SOUTHERN FRANCE!<br>belfastdaily.co.uk - 09/12/2017      | 20 |
| Hello Sweetie!<br>ein.org - 08/12/2017   | 22 |
| Ravishing red Rhône: some first impressions of the new 2016 vintage<br>the-buyer.net - 23/11/2017                    | 25 |
| When in Rhone... enjoy great food and wine in the beautiful south of France<br>oxfordmail.co.uk - 02/11/2017         | 27 |



## The Rhône is a little more complicated than Villages level and Châteauneuf-du-Pape



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Everybody knows the Rhône, with its wee hat over the 'O' and chunky reds you want to drink with a dish that involves a cheap cut of meat, lots of herbs and half a day in a low oven.

It's all about the Grenache, the Carignan, Cinsaut, the Mourvèdre. Rich and warm with a touch of spice, this is wine for a night in with the fire lit.

There's a great history here too, albeit the half of it's disputed. Like where did Syrah come from? Some say it's from Shiraz, the wine growing city in Persia and that the Phocaeans brought it up from their Greek colony in Marseilles around 600BC.

Others, however, reckon it derives from the name Syracuse, from where the legions of the Roman Emperor Probus arrived around 280AD. Who knows?

Fast forward a few centuries, to the 1200s, and Hermitage Le Chapelle's origin's unfold when the Crusader Gaspard de Stérinberg arrives and builds a chapel dedicated to St Christopher.

In southern Rhône, Châteauneuf-du-Pape is easily the region's best known wine. The name means the Pope's New Castle and is all about the moving of the Papal court to Avignon in the 14th century. The Avignon Schism as I remember it from history.

But history aside, what about the wines?! Well, sticking to the south (where the bargains are to be found) it's interesting to look at the areas beyond the broad, though generally very good, appellation of Côtes du Rhône Villages. It's a wee bit complicated in that there's a load of villages allowed to add their name to the Côtes du Rhône Villages label as they are a sort of a step up within the AOC.

Then there's villages that, over the years, have been granted their own appellation. These 'Crus', like Gigondas and Vacqueyras are top notch. There are wines here to rival Châteauneuf-du-Pape, in part because their lower profile means, as is often the way with wine, they offer better value.

Rasteau is a relatively new Cru as is Cairanne and they too are names to look out for.

Of course, look out for certain producers too if you're in the shop and you can't find what ever I reckon's worth getting. You can't go far wrong if either Chapoutier or Jaboulet are on the label.

You know I like steering you towards value, and it's with the lesser known names that you so often find it. Have a rattle at one of these.

Lidl Rasteau

One of those 'named villages' is Plan de Dieu, the plain of God, from where you'll get M&S's Plan de Dieu Côtes du Rhône Villages. Award winning wine for a tenner. Grenache, Syrah and Carignan make for warming wine with dark fruit and pepper.

Rasteau, its own AOC, is just north of Châteauneuf-du-Pape but its prices are generally well south, like Lidl's Cellier de Montérail which at £8 has been compared to its pricier neighbour. A real meaty wine here. Good for a Toulouse sausage with tomatoey sauce perhaps.

A mere Côtes du Rhône Villages, but with the word Chapoutier on the label. Tesco is flogging this at £8.70. All the dark fruit you'd expect. 14% too, so a big, bold wine.

Rhône white

When we think Rhône, we usually think white, but there's lovely, rich, fruity whites down here. It's a terrible looking label, but Sainsbury's Taste The Difference Côtes Du Rhône White is a

beauty at just £7. Peachy loveliness.

Also look for Les Dauphins Côtes du Rhône Blanc, now on at £6.50 at Tesco. Elderflower and lime, say the experts at Decanter.

# The Rhone holds a special place in my wine cellar

## WINE WITH ALISTAIR GIBSON



**I**f I had to choose one European wine region to drink the wines of, and to visit, it would have to be the Rhône Valley.

It was the first region I ever properly visited, and from user-friendly generic Côtes du Rhône, through to the grander of wines of Chateauneuf du Pape and Hermitage, the wines have always had a special place in my cellar.

The region is, in reality, split in two – the northern Rhône with its emphasis on syrah and the slightly warmer south which leads with grenache but also has a strong supporting cast of other red grapes.

The last few vintages have been particularly good in the Rhône

The last few vintages have been particularly good in the Rhône, with 2015 being a stunning year in the north and 2016 likewise in the south.

Decanter Magazine went as far as saying the south had 'one of the best vintages of the past few decades. Do not miss it'.

One of the great joys of the Rhône, and in particular the south, is that there are still less well-known appellations (protected areas where wine-making grapes are grown) that are great value and worth seeking out.

One of these is **Rasteau**, a relatively small wine producing region, about 15 miles from Chateauneuf du Pape, which was only approved as an appellation in its own right as recently as 2010.

Before that, Rasteau

merely added its name to that of Côtes du Rhône villages.

The wines can only be red and they must contain at least 50 per cent grenache, while syrah and mourvèdre are also planted as well as some carignan.

**Domaine Elodie Balme 2014, Rasteau** [thesampler.co.uk](http://thesampler.co.uk) **£16.50** is from one of the region's up-and-coming producers and this is a blend of grenache and syrah with a little carignan.

The wine is mainly aged in concrete vats with a small proportion aged in oak.

It has a deep colour with black fruits, spices, violets and dried herbs on the nose, followed by a lovely mouth-feel with fine tannins and sweet dark berry fruit and some earthiness, before a long, expressive finish.

Try this with a hearty beef stew.

**Rasteau Ortas**



**Tradition 2016, Caves de Rasteau** ([oxfordwine.co.uk](http://oxfordwine.co.uk)) **£14.50** is from one of the Rhône's oldest wine co-operatives and from the highly acclaimed 2016 vintage.

It's a blend of grenache, syrah and mourvèdre and shows a lovely purity of fruit.

More red fruits than the previous wine, there are also notes of violets, chocolate, cherry and plum with a smooth palate with ripe tannins and a very moreish finish.

Match this with some simple grilled lamb chops or a slow-cooked shoulder of lamb.

**Turkey Flat Butchers Block Red 2015, Barossa** ([TheGeneralWineCompany.co.uk](http://TheGeneralWineCompany.co.uk)) **£14.49**, **Hermitage Cellars** **£13.50** is, of course, not from Rasteau at all but from Australia.

But I happened



to taste it on the same day as some wines from Rasteau and it's so good I just had to include it.

It's a blend of shiraz, grenache and mourvèdre (or matero as the Aussies call it) and so very similar in style, a sort of Rhône meets Barossa Valley.

And it's seriously great value with dark bramble-like fruits, cherry, spices and a savoury edge, followed by some firm tannins and great length.

You could cellar this happily for a few years but it's great now. Try with a hearty casserole.

■ **Alistair Gibson** is proprietor of **Hermitage Cellars**, Emsworth. Call 01243 431002 or e-mail [alistair@hermitagecellars.co.uk](mailto:alistair@hermitagecellars.co.uk).





## ALISTAIR GIBSON: The Rhone holds a special place in my wine cellar

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### **Cave de Rasteau Ortas Rasteau Tradition 2016**

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### **Butchers Block Red NV**

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## Secrets Waiting to be Uncovered

Secrets Waiting to be Uncovered : Rich history, idyllic scenery and wine, the Rhone Valley offers education and indulgence to lovers of the grape. Article by Andrew Steel To say that France isn't exactly lacking when it comes to wine would be somewhat of a frank understatement. From Alsace to Armagnac, Burgundy to Bordeaux, L'Hexagone has no shortage on its shores of the stuff, one of the globe's key producers and exporters in the business. There's a reason why those who practice oenophilia are drawn to the country on their sojourns, for it offers a near-unparalleled variety of flavour and character. But nestled away from the glitz and glamour of the Republic's internationally-recognised brand regions such as Champagne, to the south, lies a part of the world just as rich in terroir and prestige worth a visit; the stunningly scenic landscapes of the Rhone Valley vineyards that span Drome and the Vaucluse from Lyon to Marseille, a near picture-perfect getaway for the aspiring sommelier. There are few places better to start such an exploration than in the sleepy commune of **Suze-la-Rousse**. Once the Renaissance retreat of the princes of the neighbouring Orange, and offering panoramic views of Mont Ventoux, it is dominated by its namesake chateau, perched on the crest of a promontory above the town centre. Housed within its ramparts is the Université du Vin, an educational institute dedicated to the art of viticulture; formed in 1978, it not only takes on full-time students in professional development courses, but also offers individual sessions for amateurs, guiding them through the first steps of understanding the art. It is through this school that beginners learn to sample the quality of a wine through three broad categories; appearance, nose and palate. Each of these come with various subsections that give additional depth and detail to the elements that make the finished bottle virtuosic or less so, such as its visual clarity, the intensity and complexity of its scent, and the tactile sensations in the taste. As experiences go, a visit to the Université and the time spent under the watchful guidance of its resident experts makes for an engaging appetizer to any tour of the Rhone Valley; a palate cleanser in a sense for the chocolate-box locale of the Vaucluse and the Drome. Seguret, is located in the northern part of the Vaucluse, by Teddy Verneuil To its north lies the latter's department capital, in the heart of the Rhone corridor; Valence. A hub of heritage for the region, this former Roman colony is dubbed in the local tongue as à Valence le Midi commence (at Valence, the Midi begins) and is also referred to as "the gateway to the south of France". History here cleaves to both romanticism and religious tragedy; the Kiosque Paeynet bandstand on the Champ de Mars was made famous as a temple of love by the illustrator Raymond Peynet's depiction in 1942, whilst the city's Cathedral of St Apolinaris contains a bust of the late Pope Pius VI, whose entrails are housed within following his death in the city under pursuit and capture of the French Directory. As a cultural touchstone, few communes in the valley offer such storied legacy; as a base to discover the Côtes du Rhône from, it offers suitable accommodation options for all travellers and explorers on a workable budget. Valence is relatively industrialised in comparison to large swathes of the Rhone Valley; for those willing to part with a little more for their stay, one can step up to a genuine castle away from the machine-made hullabaloo, in the shape of the Chateau De Rochegude. Tucked inside the southern-east border of the Drome with the Vaucluse, this former 12th-century fortress-turned-ancestral seat and summer retreat of the Marquis de Rochegude makes for a little slice of personal royalty. Complete with outdoor swimming pool and tennis courts, and with gourmet gastronomic selections overseen in its sumptuous stone dining quarters by resident chef Thierry Frebout, the Chateau De Rochegude isn't exactly for those exploring the bounties of Provence on a shoestring; but for those with the expendable funds, it does offer something outside of the nominal B&B – and who doesn't want to start off the occasional morning by patrolling their own ramparts as the distant sun breaks over Ventoux and spills onto the surrounding hills? Séguret and Cabasse by air For the true student of oenology though, there's no reason to not go one step further, and journey out to the Domaine De Cabasse for a few nights' rest and relaxation. If perhaps not as vivaciously striking as Rochegude, this hotel and winery, sat at the bottom of the village of Seguret, own a combined 15 hectares of vineyard which produce what they term as eight different "noble appellations". In addition, if one ventures out into the lush greens of the valley, the headquarters of the Cave de Rasteau are only a short bike ride away on the other side



of the river. Located in its namesake village, on smooth southern soil, the Cave is one of the Rhone's oldest cooperatives, with 80 individual members growing grapes for the organisation since 1925. The winery itself sits across the road from the Cave's modernist, sleek store outlet where tastings and treats related to the vine can be found across a variety of specialities. As a traditionalist purveyor of winemaking lore, Rasteau's sleepy slopes produce a great speciality line in reds, culled from the varieties of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, to create something truly satisfying across the range. The Drome and the Vaucluse offer something visually arresting, without being inhospitable to either day trippers or weekend travellers; from the early spring through the late autumn, it seems almost permanently caressed in the glimmer of sunlight. The Rhone Valley is not just beautiful though; it remains a great bastion of history, in both winemaking and as a portrayal of the evolution of France over the past millennium. For those looking to get away from it all, there can be few more convincing arguments than to do so here; lush and languorous, yet somewhere fettled in secrets waiting to be uncovered.



► 17 janvier 2018

# WINE



WHEN it comes to winter dishes, certainly the ones we eat at my house such as oxtail or sausage and mash, the Rhône is always a great place to head for matching duties.

I've mentioned Côtes du Rhône wines many times before in this column but never much about Rasteau, other than a passing reference.

Rasteau, previously designated a Côtes du Rhône 'Villages' level, has gone one better and gained its own appellation in 2010 to put it on a par with Gigondas, Cairanne and Sablet.

As wine-making fashions tilt toward fresher wines with a keener sense of minerality, Rasteau is going from strength to strength with vineyards based on limestone and clay. There are several

smaller winemakers in the area who are leading this charge while bigger estates are getting involved, such as Famille Perrin, who make one of the most prestigious examples of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Chateau Beaucastel.

In fact, Rasteau could quickly be earning itself a place as a more reasonably priced alternative to Châteauneuf with a profile that lends itself more readily to a greater assortment of food pairings.

Producers are a little bit hampered by the appellation rules which insist on blends containing at least 50 percent Grenache.

Some wine-makers, such as Jerome Bressy, owner of Domaine Gourt de Mautens, have fallen foul of the rules because the percentages of Grenache are not

high enough. The rules do allow producers to pick grapes in other villages, however, making for some flexibility.

The three samples that I received recently show that Rasteau's wines are both easy drinking but bursting with character.

And each example had its own take on the area's terroir, perhaps

suggesting that it's well worth looking out for each producer in turn.

**Lavau Rasteau, 2012 (M & M Personal Vintners, Worcestershire, £18)**

A 50-50 percentage blend of Grenache and Syrah with a herby blackberry nose carrying a savoury note.

The elegant but

generous palate has lots of minerality with good acidity softened by a cocoa edge.

Perfect with roast beef or steak.

**Famille Perrin Rasteau L'Andeol, 2013 (Crump, Richmond & Shaw Fine Wines £8)**

There's a lifted note of spicy red fruits about the nose here and a hint of vanilla.

The palate feels a little darker in the mouth with a nice depth to the fruit and a lick of coffee.

Drink this wine with sausages or rabbit.

**2015 Domaine la Soumade Rasteau Cuvee Prestige, 2015 (Fine and rare wines, £15)**

Marginally my favourite of the three wines, this example was a joy to drink.

There's a great mineral intensity about this wine, although the palate is beautifully supple and sensuous.

Again there's that distinctive Rhone herbal aroma and spice and extra depth perhaps from the addition of rounded Mourvedre.



● Lavau Rasteau, Rasteau L'Andeol and Soumade



► 13 janvier 2018

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## Paula's Wines of the Week starting 8th January 2018

Paula's Wines of the Week starting 8th January 2018 : Regular alcohol intake, of the moderate sort, improves the quality of life in middle-aged adults declares the latest research findings investigating the link between alcohol consumption and health. Canadians aged over-50 were the subjects of this particular wine-is-good-for-you-study with many showing both 'stable patterns of alcohol consumption' and high scores on the Health Utilities Index: it seems if you want good memory, dexterity and mobility then drink a couple of glasses of wine every day. But you'll be doing that already won't you? Because you'll just be following the advice of all those other wine research boffins who found if you want to lower your risk of a heart attack then drink red wine. Red wine is rich in chemicals called polyphenols. Research has shown that these compounds expand your blood vessels, making it easier for blood to flow. They also fight hardening of your arteries, the major contributor to heart disease. To get the best effect we need to be on the look out for reds high in tannin. If, like me, you're not a great fan of tongue-curling tannin, then 'decant' the wine before drinking – slosh it into a jug to mix in air and reduce the stewed-tea taste. The news gets even better if you're a woman because those glasses of red will keep you slim as you get older (in that particular study 40% of the alcohol abstainers became over-weight or obese). It seems the women in the study who scoffed wine had little room left for scoffing food, so their overall calorie intake did not go up very much. Unfortunately the scientists believe the findings may not apply to men. When men drink they tend not to substitute wine for food but consume both. PG Wine Reviews Famille Perrin L'Andeol Rasteau 2015, France £8 Richmond and Shaw An interesting red from the Rhone Valley that tastes of raspberries and sloes plus raisins. Dark and fruity. Castrum Douro 2015, Portugal £9.99 Co-op An interesting red blend of four Portuguese grape varieties that often make their way into Port wine too. But this red isn't overpowering with its cherry and coffee flavours. Marques de Valido Rioja Gran Reserva, Spain £12.99 Co-op Cherry and recurrant with some smoky liquorice flavours. Ortas Tradition Rasteau 2016, France £14.50 Oxford Wine Company Creamy plum and cherry with a bit of vanilla. A smooth and fruity red. Nepenthe Pinnacle Petraea Australian Sauvignon Blanc 2014 £17.15 Amazon.co.uk Only available through online retailer Amazon at the moment, this premium Aussie white tastes of lemon meringue with some additional apple, pear and banana. Tweet me a wine question @huxelrebe © Paula Goddard 2018





► 22 décembre 2017

## WINE



WINE, of course, will play a huge part in my family's Christmas celebrations.

But this year perhaps more so than usual.

We are dispensing with turkey and 'all the trimmings'; a phrase which unaccountably I detest almost as much as when weather forecasters talk of 'spits and spots' of rain.

I digress. The reason for this culinary break with tradition is one of convenience and comfort.

It's a tactical move that will save on energy, reduce washing up and stress. A beef casserole made in advance and served with a little pumpkin mash and greens will form the centrepiece of our Christmas feast.

Not very Christmassy? I am forced to insist that it may be more so.

A stick of cinnamon, cloves, allspice and a full bottle of red will add the festive taste of mulled wine to our meal.

And the wine to drink with it?

In our case a bottle of Chateau Musar from the Lebanon.

It's wine that is fit for the purpose being powerful and rounded enough to cope with the spice element of the dish without sacrificing elegance.

However, I could have done just as well in heading to New World Syrah or Cabernet for my match up.

One of the prevailing trends in Chilean wine has been a move away from blockbuster reds to leaner, more elegant

● **Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon**

styles that are still fruit forward.

There's no better example than Marques de Casa Concha, who've made positive strides towards fresher styles in their Syrah, for example. The wines are perfect for a last-minute smash and grab from Tesco.

**Marques de Casa Concha Syrah 2015 (£13 Tesco)**

The proportion of the wine that's matured in oak has been reduced in this vintage compared with the previous year, 2014.

And it shows.

This wine has a more lifted nose than the 2014 with an abundance of blackberry cut with black pepper.

The palate displays brambly red fruits adding a lightness of touch to the wine with a supple overall feel and plenty of acidity.



**Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 (£13 Tesco)**

I really don't think you're going to get a better Cabernet Sauvignon at this price than this text book example from the coolest part of the Maipo valley.

There's concentrated blackcurrant and cherry on the nose with a hint of the mint that's often the tell-tale sign you're

drinking a Cabernet.

The palate is generous but retains an element of the sturdiness which is also readily associated with the grape.

Prefer a classic French red for the Christmas table?

This week I found myself surprised by samples that came from the **Côtes du Rhône** village of Rasteau.

I say surprised because when I the visited the Rhone annual festival Découvertes en vallée du Rhône in 2013 there was a tendency for many of the reds, including the wines from Côtes du Rhône villages, to lean toward the bigger reds: the wine territory beloved of American wine critic Robert Parker.

**Famille Perrin Rasteau L'Andeol, 2015 (Crump, Richmond & Shaw Fine Wines £8)**

The village of Rasteau is renowned for bigger more 'robust' wines but this example, made by one of the Rhône's greatest estates, is very elegant with vanilla and pepper on the nose and a well-balanced palate.

*'The village of Rasteau is renowned for bigger, more 'robust' wines but this example is very elegant'*



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There's no better example than Marques de Casa Concha, who've made positive strides towards fresher styles in their Syrah, for example. The wines are perfect for a last-minute smash and grab from Tesco.

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The proportion of the wine that's matured in oak has been reduced in this vintage compared with the previous year, 2014.

And it shows. This wine has a more lifted nose than the 2014 with an abundance of blackberry cut with black pepper.

The palate displays brambly red fruits adding a lightness of touch to the wine with a supple overall feel and plenty of acidity.



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The palate is generous but retains an element of the sturdiness which is also readily associated with the grape.

Prefer a classic French red for the Christmas table?

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**Famille Perrin Rasteau L'Andeol, 2015 (Crump, Richmond & Shaw Fine Wines £8)**

The village of Rasteau is renowned for bigger more 'robust' wines but this example, made by one of the Rhône's greatest estates, is very elegant with vanilla and pepper on the nose and a well-balanced palate.

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## WINE



WINE, of course, will play a huge part in my family's Christmas celebrations.

But this year perhaps more so than usual.

We are dispensing with turkey and 'all the trimmings'; a phrase which unaccountably I detest almost as much as when weather forecasters talk of 'spits and spots' of rain.

I digress. The reason for this culinary break with tradition is one of convenience and comfort.

It's a tactical move that will save on energy, reduce washing up and stress. A beef casserole made in advance and served with a little pumpkin mash and greens will form the centrepiece of our Christmas feast.

Not very Christmassy? I am forced to insist that it may be more so.

A stick of cinnamon, cloves, allspice and a full bottle of red will add the festive taste of mulled wine to our meal.

And the wine to drink with it?

In our case a bottle of Chateau Musar from the Lebanon.

It's wine that is fit for the purpose being powerful and rounded enough to cope with the spice element of the dish without sacrificing elegance.

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## BD TRAVEL FEATURE: HELLO SWEETIE....AND ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO SOUTHERN FRANCE!

BD TRAVEL FEATURE: HELLO SWEETIE....AND ENJOY YOUR VISIT TO SOUTHERN FRANCE! : IF you have a sweet tooth, Southern France is the place to be for some of the most well-known sweet brands in the world. I Know many of us will be filling the stockings with offerings from the large supermarkets but where do all these goodies come from? Think Haribo and Valrhona and you would be on the right track, easily accompanied by some outstanding Rhône Valley dessert wine! If you want to up the anti on the Jones's, then considering some beautiful gifts from this delightful part of France and it might just inspire you to visit! The sweet accompaniment – Wherever you go and whatever you eat in Southern France, it's almost mandatory to accompany it with the finest wines that the area has to offer. So which Rhône Valley wine of the numerous varieties to choose from should be paired with your sweet treats? Let's plump for the Beaufort-de-Venise, an iconic wine produced in the Vaucluse. It has actually nothing to do with Venice as the name might suggest but is actually a distortion of "de Venise", meaning "of the Comtat Venaissain" – the area where it is produced at the foot of the rocky Dentelles de Montmirail. Formed in the Jurassic era, the terroir contains three types of soils, as well as deposits of Triassic rock that combined, produces excellent growing conditions for these unique wine. Although there is a red Beaufort-de-Venise, ranked as a cru since 2005, the village is most famous for its naturally sweet Muscat wine, available from your local Waitrose and all good off licenses! This wine, with its wonderful notes of lychee and rose, also goes particularly well with strong tasting cheeses such as Stilton. Another AOC wine which is the perfect dessert accompaniment is the Rasteau, coming mostly from the commune of the same name in the Southern Rhône, also looking out to the Dentelles de Montmirail. These fortified wines were introduced in 1934 as a sweet vin doux naturel – red, white or rose, using principally the Grenache grape variety. Kids and grown-ups love it so, the happy world of HARIBO: one knows Haribo it seems but few people know that there's a museum – the aptly named Musée du Bonbon – owned and operated by Haribo based just outside Uzès, in the Southern France area of The Gard. It opened in 1995 and tells the story of the company's foundation and growth as well as offering a large, well stocked sweet shop for devotees to carry home some sweet samples!! So why Haribo? Well, the name is an acronym of the founder ( Ha ns Ri egl) and the city where the company was formed, Bo nn in Germany. It's the story of a husband and wife who, together, worked hard to turn a business based in a backyard laundry into a successful global brand. The famous fruit gum dancing bear appeared in 1922 and today, over 100 million golden bears are produced worldwide every day. Here's some other interesting "Did you know's": A chain of Gold Bears produced in a year would go around the earth four times! That's 160,306 Km! If all of the liquorice wheels produced in one year were unravelled and laid end to end they would stretch from the earth to the moon! Haribo employs over 7,000 staff worldwide, 550 of them in the UK, and operates at 15 production sites in nine European countries. Pontefract Cakes – those lovely little liquorice treats – are owned by Haribo and are still manufactured in the UK. So when you are next in Southern France, head for Uzès and Haribo! For entrance fees, it's a mere €7 for an adult with under five's welcomed free and 5-15 year olds priced at €5. There's a large free carpark on site. The chef's favourite chocolate: Ask any Michelin starred chef what chocolate brand they would use and most would undoubtedly say Valrhona. Even the august Chocolate Society rates Valrhona as simply the best saying, "The only company we know that focuses its attention on quality, without compromise, from the earth to the mouth is Valrhona. There are other fine chocolates being made but no other company succeeds in producing chocolate which is at the top of its class at every level from its access cooking range through to its sensational single plantation vintage chocolates." This French premium chocolate manufacturer, founded in 1922 by French pastry chef Albéric Guironnet, is located in the small town of Tain-l'Hermitage, a well-known wine-growing region in the Southern France area of the Drôme. Since 24th October



2013, it's been possible to learn more about Valrhona by visiting their Cité du Chocolat – a multi-sensory visitor facility on the theme of the discovery of chocolate and based in their home town. Nibble on different chocolate buttons as you move through the inter-active exhibits which play to all your senses, particularly those of taste and touch, explaining how chocolate is made – from the bean to the button. You can time your visit to catch various culinary demonstrations using chocolate and can even have a chocolate fuelled lunch by visiting their café, Le Comptoir Porcelana! End your visit at the shop to stock up on every imaginable taste of fine chocolate. For more information, visit to [www.vin-et-sens.com](http://www.vin-et-sens.com) for further details. Footnote: As this is wine country, why not mix a wine and chocolate tasting linking Hermitage wines with Valrhona chocolate? For self-guided tours of La Cité du Chocolat, prices range from €9 for adults before noon, €7.50 for 5 – 13 year olds and family tickets from €31. Book online for tours and more.

Montélimar in the Drôme is the home of nougat and where better to see the sweet in production than at the oldest producer – Arnaud Soubeyran. They have been making nougat since 1837, using the best of local ingredients and priding themselves on their craft to develop a full range of honey and almond flavours. Their production has expanded to calisson, marshmallows, toffee, coated almonds and biscuits which you can watch being made in a tour of their premises and buy in their spacious – and very tempting – shop on site. Where did the Marrons Glacés originate? The candied chestnut or marrons glacés first appeared in Northern Italy and Southern France as the crusaders returned to Europe with sugar in their luggage. The sweet probably first appeared with the glazing around the 15th century in Piedmont with both countries arguing that they came up with the addition of a glaze first. Whatever the truth of the matter, there's no denying that the first factory to mass produce marrons glacés was located in Privas in the Ardèche in 1882 devised by an engineer, Clément Faugier, in conjunction with a confectioner. Although packaged on an industrial scale, there are a number of steps that still take place manually from harvest to the finished product. Faugier also introduced the crème de marrons de l'Ardèche – a sweetened chestnut purée flavoured with vanilla just three years later. This actually re-used any marrons glacés broken in the factory process – very green! Another equally august company – Marrons Imbert – started making marrons glacés at the turn of the century. Still in the same family's hands, the founder's great grand-daughter, Stéphanie, rules the roost today. Based in Aubenas, they are known for working with top of the range confectioners and chefs, as you can see from their rather enticing recipe section! The renowned producer Sabaton, also based in Aubenas was founded over a century ago by a chef, Paul-Roche Sabaton, who wanted to diversify his restaurant business into retail. Today, they work with AOP Châtaigne d'Ardèche and are renowned for the quality of their marrons glacés together with their fruit jams and preserves. Marrons glacés can be eaten on their own or used to make other desserts such as the Mont Blanc (a mousse-like dessert with cream), with ice cream, cakes, sauces or garnishes for other dishes. The Ardèche is famed for the quality of its chestnuts and is the largest producer in France. Granted AOC status in 2006, over 5,000 tons of chestnuts are produced each year. As well as desserts and sweets, there's chestnut liqueur, chestnut soup and chestnut flour bread. Berlingots from Carpentras, Vaucluse-Provence – The berlingots are brightly coloured boiled sweets, similar to a humbug, which come in all colours of the rainbow. What sets it apart are its white stripes, its tetrahedral shape and its differing flavours from peppermint to aniseed, lemon to strawberry. Legend has it that the berlingot was created in the early 14th century in the papacy of Clement V, the first of the Avignon popes, to celebrate the dissolution of the Knights Templar. The name, so it is said, came from the Pope's birth name – Bertrand de Got. First used for medicinal purposes, it only became known as a sweet in 1844 when confectioner François Pascal Long added fruit syrup into the mix to make it more palatable. The process was then industrialised by Gustave Eysséric and the berlingots became world renowned.



## Hello Sweetie!

Hello Sweetie! : If you have a sweet tooth, Southern France is the place to be for some of the most well-known sweet brands in the world. I know many of us will be filling the stockings with offerings from the large supermarkets but where do all these goodies come from? Think Haribo and Valrhona and you would be on the right track, easily accompanied by some outstanding Rhône Valley dessert wine! If you want to up the anti on the Jones's, then considering some beautiful gifts from this delightful part of France and it might just inspire you to visit! The sweet accompaniment – Wherever you go and whatever you eat in Southern France, it's almost mandatory to accompany it with the finest wines that the area has to offer. So which Rhône Valley wine of the numerous varieties to choose from should be paired with your sweet treats? Let's plump for the Beaufort, an iconic wine produced in the Jura. It has actually nothing to do with Venice as the name might suggest but is actually a distortion of "de Venise", meaning "of the Comtat Venaissain" – the area where it is produced at the foot of the rocky Dentelles de Montmirail. Formed in the Jurassic era, the terroir contains three types of soils, as well as deposits of Triassic rock that combined, produces excellent growing conditions for these unique wine. Although there is a red Beaufort, ranked as a cru since 2005, the village is most famous for its naturally sweet Muscat wine, available from your local Waitrose and all good off licenses! This wine, with its wonderful notes of lychee and rose, also goes particularly well with strong tasting cheeses such as Stilton. Another AOC wine which is the perfect dessert accompaniment is the Rasteau, coming mostly from the commune of the same name in the Southern Rhône, also looking out to the Dentelles de Montmirail. These fortified wines were introduced in 1934 as a sweet vin doux naturel – red, white or rose, using principally the Grenache grape variety. Kids and grown-ups love it so, the happy world of HARIBO: one knows Haribo it seems but few people know that there's a museum – the aptly named Musée du Bonbon – owned and operated by Haribo based just outside Uzès, in the Southern France area of The Gard. It opened in 1995 and tells the story of the company's foundation and growth as well as offering a large, well stocked sweet shop for devotees to carry home some sweet samples!! So why Haribo? Well, the name is an acronym of the founder ( Hans Riegel) and the city where the company was formed, Bonn in Germany. It's the story of a husband and wife who, together, worked hard to turn a business based in a backyard laundry into a successful global brand. The famous fruit gum dancing bear appeared in 1922 and today, over 100 million golden bears are produced worldwide every day. Here's some other interesting "Did you know's": A chain of Gold Bears produced in a year would go around the earth four times! That's 160,306 Km! If all of the liquorice wheels produced in one year were unravelled and laid end to end they would stretch from the earth to the moon! Haribo employs over 7,000 staff worldwide, 550 of them in the UK, and operates at 15 production sites in nine European countries. Pontefract Cakes – those lovely little liquorice treats – are owned by Haribo and are still manufactured in the UK. So when you are next in Southern France, head for Uzès and Haribo! For entrance fees, it's a mere €7 for an adult with under five's welcomed free and 5-15 year olds priced at €5. There's a large free carpark on site. The chef's favourite chocolate: Ask any Michelin starred chef what chocolate brand they would use and most would undoubtedly say Valrhona. Even the august Chocolate Society rates Valrhona as simply the best saying, "The only company we know that focuses its attention on quality, without compromise, from the earth to the mouth is Valrhona. There are other fine chocolates being made but no other company succeeds in producing chocolate which is at the top of its class at every level from its access cooking range through to its sensational single plantation vintage chocolates." This French premium chocolate manufacturer, founded in 1922 by French pastry chef Albéric Guironnet, is located in the small town of Tain-l'Hermitage, a well-known wine-growing region in the Southern France area of the Drôme. Since 24th October 2013, it's been possible to learn more about Valrhona by visiting their Cité du Chocolat – a multi-sensory visitor facility on the theme of the discovery of chocolate and based in their home town. Nibble on different chocolate buttons as you move through the inter-active exhibits which play to all your senses, particularly those of taste and touch, explaining how chocolate is made – from the bean to the button. You can time your visit to catch various culinary demonstrations

using chocolate and can even have a chocolate fuelled lunch by visiting their café, Le Comptoir Porcelana! End your visit at the shop to stock up on every imaginable taste of fine chocolate. For more information, visit to [www.vin-et-sens.com](http://www.vin-et-sens.com) for further details. Footnote: As this is wine country, why not mix a wine and chocolate tasting linking Hermitage wines with Valrhona chocolate? For self-guided tours of La Cité du Chocolat, prices range from €9 for adults before noon, €7.50 for 5 – 13 year olds and family tickets from €31. Book online for tours and more.

Montélimar in the Drôme is the home of nougat and where better to see the sweet in production than at the oldest producer – Arnaud Soubeyran . They have been making nougat since 1837, using the best of local ingredients and priding themselves on their craft to develop a full range of honey and almond flavours. Their production has expanded to calisson, marshmallows, toffee, coated almonds and biscuits which you can watch being made in a tour of their premises and buy in their spacious – and very tempting – shop on site. Where did the Marrons Glacés originate? The candied chestnut or marrons glacés first appeared in Northern Italy and Southern France as the crusaders returned to Europe with sugar in their luggage. The sweet probably first appeared with the glazing around the 15th century in Piedmont with both countries arguing that they came up with the addition of a glaze first. Whatever the truth of the matter, there's no denying that the first factory to mass produce marrons glacés was located in Privas in the Ardèche in 1882 devised by an engineer, Clément Faugier , in conjunction with a confectioner. Although packaged on an industrial scale, there are a number of steps that still take place manually from harvest to the finished product. Faugier also introduced the crème de marrons de l'Ardèche – a sweetened chestnut purée flavoured with vanilla just three years later. This actually re-used any marrons glacés broken in the factory process – very green! Another equally august company – Marrons Imbert – started making marrons glacés at the turn of the century. Still in the same family's hands, the founder's great grand-daughter, Stéphanie, rules the roost today. Based in Aubenas, they are known for working with top of the range confectioners and chefs, as you can see from their rather enticing recipe section! The renowned producer Sabaton , also based in Aubenas was founded over a century ago by a chef, Paul-Roche Sabaton, who wanted to diversify his restaurant business into retail. Today, they work with AOP Châtaigne d'Ardèche and are renowned for the quality of their marrons glacés together with their fruit jams and preserves. Marrons glacés can be eaten on their own or used to make other desserts such as the Mont Blanc (a mousse-like dessert with cream), with ice cream, cakes, sauces or garnishes for other dishes. The Ardèche is famed for the quality of its chestnuts and is the largest producer in France. Granted AOC status in 2006, over 5,000 tons of chestnuts are produced each year. As well as desserts and sweets, there's chestnut liqueur, chestnut soup and chestnut flour bread. Berlingots from Carpentras, Vaucluse-Provence – The berlingots are brightly coloured boiled sweets, similar to a humbug, which come in all colours of the rainbow. What sets it apart are its white stripes, its tetrahedral shape and its differing flavours from peppermint to aniseed, lemon to strawberry. Legend has it that the berlingot was created in the early 14th century in the papacy of Clement V, the first of the Avignon popes, to celebrate the dissolution of the Knights Templar. The name, so it is said, came from the Pope's birth name – Bertrand de Got. First used for medicinal purposes, it only became known as a sweet in 1844 when confectioner François Pascal Long added fruit syrup into the mix to make it more palatable. The process was then industrialised by Gustave Eysséric and the berlingots became world renowned. There are five stages in the production of the berlingot as you can see from the above image. It's cooked, stretched, mixed, cut and laid on racks all before packaging. The colours of the berlingot normally indicate its taste – red for mint, green for anise, yellow for lemon etc. New flavours are always being introduced and include coffee, chocolate, melon, cherry, lavender, mandarin, apple and so forth. It's still made today in Carpentras by two companies – Thierry Vial (Confiserie du Mont-Ventoux) and Serge Clavel (Confiserie de Carpentras).

Papaline d'Avignon – The Papaline d'Avignon , created in 1960, is a small chocolate truffle in the shape of a thistle and filled with a liqueur – d'origan du Comtat . Its name was chosen to honour the Popes of Avignon and it was created by the Maîtres Pâtisseries of Vaucluse to give the region its own speciality. It is, in effect, a kind of chocolate liqueur. L'origan du Comtat is a beverage which dates back to 1835 and is produced by macerating alcohol with honey and 60 different plants from the region. It's covered in two coats of chocolate, the outer applied by hand with a special brush to lend it its textured

finish. Given its bright pink colouring, you certainly couldn't miss it! Photo credit thanks to : Valerie Biset / Sue Lowry / Valerie Gillet / Alain Hocquel / C. Fougérol / Christophe Grilhé / C'Est ma food / AOC Beaufort / Lucile Clara The post appeared first on Northern Ireland Travel Magazine .



## Ravishing red Rhône: some first impressions of the new 2016 vintage

Ravishing red Rhône: some first impressions of the new 2016 vintage : While Southern Rhône vigneron were launching their 2015 wines last year they were talking just as much about the 2016 juice they had in their barrels. Now the Rhône 2016 vintage is upon us, it is indeed a spectacular year with the extended growing season proving key to the freshness of the Grenache and the ripeness of the Mourvedre. Rhône expert Dr Bart Feys took his tasting glass to the first annual tastings at Thorman Hunt and H2Vin and reports back with his top tips on reds to buy. The combination of the quality of raw materials with a more restrained wine making approach in many instances has allowed vigneron to capture the essence of grape and terroir. As a consequence, the wines come across as wonderfully poised and approachable but with the stuffing to develop into memorable wines. In 2015, Syrah in the Northern Rhône ruled supremely and produced some of the most exquisite wines that growers had seen for at least a generation. General consensus is that many a majestic Hermitage and spellbinding Côte-Rôtie will develop into modern day legends. While 2015 proved very successful in the Southern Rhône, winemakers were last year brimming with excitement about the potential of the fermenting 2016 juice in their cellars. The extended 2016 growing season allowed grapes to reach full phenolic and physiological ripeness with cool nights during the Indian summer imbuing them with great freshness, key to the success of the Grenache variety which easily attains overripe and alcoholic characteristics. The long growing season also proved key to the success of the slow ripening Mourvedre, an important blending partner in Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines such as Clos des Papes , Château de Beaucastel and Domaine Saint-Préfert Charles Giraud . The H2Vin Rhône tasting, London, November 2017 Tastings organised by Thorman Hunt & Co and H2Vin gave me the chance to form some early impressions of the quality of the 2016 Rhône vintage. Tasting examples from appellations Cairanne, Lirac, Ventoux, Rasteau, Côtes du Rhône and Châteauneuf-du-Pape in the Southern Rhône, it is immediately evident that the reds have an amazing fruit intensity, a density without heaviness, allied to a freshness and ripe tannic structure that gives the wines exquisite balance. The combination of the quality of raw materials with a more restrained wine making approach in many instances has allowed vigneron to capture the essence of grape and terroir. As a consequence, the wines come across as wonderfully poised and approachable but with the stuffing to develop into memorable wines. I remember being equally impressed when trying the 2010 Southern Rhône wines en primeur, a vintage that is now generally considered to be one of the all time greats. Rhône enthusiasts who had the good fortune of trying the 1990 vintage at a similar stage, feel that 2016 may well share some of that vintage's dense and ripe fruit character. The advantage of today's wine world is that we have seen an energetic Rhône renaissance over the last 10 or more years resulting in tremendous quality across the AOC board, from humble Vin de Pays to the top prestige bottlings. Indeed, many a bargain Côtes du Rhône will develop and improve in bottle for five to 10 years, especially when they come from well regarded terroirs lying just outside the more prestigious appellations. In the Northern Rhône, 2016 is a more classic and restrained vintage compared to 2015. As in the South, wines are marked by a freshness and fine tannic structure with excellent aromatic interest and compact fruit. In fact, certain winemakers prefer the stylistic character of their wine in 2016 over 2015, and I would certainly want both vintages in my cellar. With two great plentiful vintages in the Rhône in 2015 and 2016 (and another great one coming in 2017 apparently) now is the time to discover new producers, stock up on all time favourites or indeed revisit producers who have made recent changes/improvements in wine making. My personal standout red wines from both tastings are summarised below. Southern Rhône: Châteauneuf-du-Pape "Les Safres", Domaine Clos du Caillou . A Domaine that has been on top form for many years with one of the most consistently brilliant ranges from the great value Côtes du Rhône Bouquets des Garrigues to their top Châteauneuf-du-Pape 'La Reserve'. The 'Safres' is a great example of the crossover between old and new style Châteauneuf. (H2Vin) Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Hautes Brusquieres, Domaine de la Charbonniere . A blend of 60% Grenache and 40% Syrah; traditional garrigue, red

fruits, very structured. The 'Vieilles Vignes' cuvée made with 90% century old Grenache was equally impressive. (Thorman Hunt) Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Prestige, Domaine Roger Sabon. Classic, Provencal herbs, intense and long. (Thorman Hunt) Côtes du Rhône 'La Sages', Domaine Gramenon. Very concentrated 100% Grenache; black fruited, coffee note, tremendous structure and balance. Very consistent range of wines. (H2Vin) Châteauneuf-du-Pape Piddling, Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe. First made by the Bruniers in 2012; 90% Grenache and 10% mourvedre from specific lieu-dits including Pignan. Very aromatic, lush red fruits. 2015 was also very successful here. (Thorman Hunt) Lirac Rouge 'La Reine des Bois', Domaine de la Mordorée. Blend of 35% Grenache, 35% Syrah and 30% Mourvedre. Structured, dark fruited and ageworthy. Consistently high quality at this address with the Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Reine des Bois usually one of the top Châteauneuf-du-Papes. (H2Vin) Northern Rhône: Saint Joseph rouge 'Clos de Cuminaille', Pierre Gaillard. Always one of the best value Saint Jo's. Complex, dark and gamey aromatics. Fresh, intense and balanced structure. (H2Vin) His Côte-Rôtie 'Rose Pourpre' is a very classic, beautifully proportioned wine with lovely violets perfume. Crozes-Hermitage rouge 'Clos les Cornirets', Domaine Fayolle. Small domaine located in the original Northern part of the appellation producing classic and elegant terroir-driven wines. The top Cornirets cuvée comes from 60 year old Syrah vines grown on granite soils. Also very successful whites here in 2016 (Thorman Hunt) Cornas La Geynale, Domaine Vincent Paris. Top Cornas vineyard producing standout wine; intense and brooding nose, coffee, brambles all wrapped in a fresh and ripe tannic frame. (Thorman Hunt)





## When in Rhone... enjoy great food and wine in the beautiful south of France

When in Rhone... enjoy great food and wine in the beautiful south of France When in Rhone... enjoy great food and wine in the beautiful south of France : Benefiting from excellent wine, food, climate, a stunning landscape and good transport connections, the Rhone Valley makes for an attractive holiday destination. Thanks to Eurostar and the superb TGV services – which can all be booked through Voyages SNCF – much of southern France is accessible within a few hours of leaving St Pancras. To explore the region, we gradually worked our way south, taking a Eurostar train direct to Lyon before switching to a TGV for the short onward journey to the city of Valence. With its proximity to the A7 motorway, most visitors to this part of the world drive straight past Valence, which is a pity. Anyone who does stop in this city will enjoy strolling along its attractive boulevards and squares, or visiting its Romanesque cathedral. Valence will also appeal to lovers of fine dining, thanks in no small part to Anna-Sophie Pic's business, which has a three-Michelin starred restaurant as well as a bistro in the city. We ate at the bistro, named Andre, where high-quality food and wine were served at a reasonable price with attentive service. Both eateries are based at the Maison Pic complex, which also includes a five-star hotel. For those visitors on a more modest budget, then the four-star Hotel de France is an excellent choice. Situated in the heart of the city, it has a fresh, contemporary and stylish interior with large and comfortable ensuite rooms. Close to Valence is the town of Tain l'Hermitage, home to spectacular vineyards and the factory of Valrhona, a long-established, high-end chocolate manufacturer. The museum at La Cite du Chocolat provides a clear and fascinating guide to the art of chocolate-making. Anyone with a sweet tooth will find it difficult to resist leaving empty-handed from Valrhona's fully-stocked shop. Given the temptations that lie there, it would perhaps be wiser to visit Tain l'Hermitage's vineyards before making your way to the chocolate factory. I found taking a Segway ride was a great way of touring the vineyards in the hills, though guided tours are also available via electric bike or on foot. You can then try out, and buy, the wines at the excellent Cave de Tain. For wine lovers keen to learn more about the art of tasting, then a visit to the Universite du Vin in Suze-la-Rousse – just over 50 miles south of Valence and about 15 miles north of the city of Orange – where we were given an informative lesson on the basics of wine tasting, is worth considering. The university offers a range of courses, starting from a basic half-day session to full-time courses for budding sommeliers, though for those drinkers who take it less seriously, there is a museum on the heritage of wine at the chateau. From there, we moved to another chateau nearby, in the beautiful village of Roche-gude, for the second night of our stay. By now, we were in the Provence region and the luxurious Chateau de Roche-gude hotel prides itself on offering local produce in its restaurant, both in terms of its wine list and sumptuous food. It has gastronomic fayre as well as a set-price three-course menu. The four-star hotel is an impressive complex with period features and an attractive courtyard. The original 12th century fortress was rebuilt after being badly damaged during an attack by the Huguenots in the 16th century – and it was a similar story at the chateau in the village of Grignan, a short drive north of Roche-gude. That Renaissance gem was left in ruins after the locals gradually stripped its interior and exterior, but fortunately, thanks to the vast wealth and attention to detail of a rich, childless widow, it was rebuilt in the early 20th century and looks much as it would have done 500 years ago. The chateau in Grignan owes its fame to the 17th century letter writer Madame de Sevigne, through the vast number of letters she wrote to her daughter, Françoise, wife of the marquis of Grignan. In tribute, there is a statue to her in the centre of Grignan, a quaint village that is also home to Clair de Plume, an expanding hotel and restaurant business. Clair de Plume has a number of sites in Grignan, including an estate on the outskirts of the town that has some bedrooms and an attractive garden with an organic swimming pool and excellent view of fields and the chateau on the hill. At Clair de Plume's main base in the heart of the village, we enjoyed a fantastic lunch in the conservatory; for me, the highlight was the risotto, which was a perfect consistency and was topped with finely cut truffle mushrooms. Clair de Plume has recently converted a farmhouse in the town into bedrooms and a bistro restaurant,

leaving the main site to concentrate on gastronomic dining. After the fine dining we had enjoyed to date, the lunch on our third day was a welcome change of pace as we got back to basics and also nature. We headed to the pretty village of Brantes (population 80), set high up in a hill close to Mount Ventoux, to the delightful house where Les Aventurieres du Gout is based. Our guide, Jacqueline, who is affectionately referred to as a 'witch', led us on a walk around the village, pointing out the toxic and edible wild-growing plants as we collected the latter. It was then back to the kitchen as each of us in the group was given a job to do in preparing the food before enjoying a simple but delicious meal outside on a warm day in this picturesque location. While the landscape of this region has an abundance of pretty villages and mountains, it is lavender fields that many foreigners associate with Provence. Lavender lovers can also find out more about the plant, how it is harvested and turned into aromatic oil at the visitor centre at Bleu Provence distillery in Nyons. Not only are there a variety of aromatic products in its wonderfully scented shop, we also tucked into lavender- or geranium-favoured ice cream at its cafe. When we visited the area, in late September, the plants' colour was fading. However, we were in the area to see the start of the grape harvest, and, what's more, we were in the perfect place – a wine estate. For Domaine de Cabasse in Seguret – which comprises a three-star hotel, gourmet restaurant and vineyard – was the delightful destination for our third and final night in the Rhone region. From my room, there was a fantastic view; the terrace looked out on to the vines metres away and the attractive buildings of the village of Sablet in the distance. The room itself was large and comfortable with a clean, modern bathroom that had a walk-in shower. After a wine-tasting session with her genial and welcoming owner, Benoit, we enjoyed an excellent meal in the gourmet restaurant. On the morning of our final day, we headed to nearby Rasteau, for a tour around the distillery and wine tasting session at the cave there. Drinkers in Oxfordshire now have the opportunity to sample the wines produced by the co-operative associated with the Cave de Rasteau, for the Oxford Wine Company, which has a number of premises in the city, has recently registered as a supplier. From Rasteau, we made our way to Avignon to catch the TGV to Paris on our way home. There was not enough time to fully explore this historic city on this occasion and, indeed, after four days in the region, I felt that I had barely touched the surface of what this part of the world offers. My farewell to this wonderful part of France, therefore, was 'a bientôt' rather than 'adieu'. <http://www.cavedetain.com/> Les Aventurieres du Gout Where to stay and eat: Chateau de Rochegude- [chateauderochegude.com](http://chateauderochegude.com) Domaine de Cabasse, Séguret - [www.cabasse.fr](http://www.cabasse.fr) Clair de Plume, Grignan - [clairplume.com](http://clairplume.com) Maison de Pic, Valence - [anne-sophie-pic.com](http://anne-sophie-pic.com) These hotels all have excellent restaurants, while Hotel de France, Valence - [hotel-valence.com](http://hotel-valence.com) - is bed and breakfast accommodation. For more information visit: For the Vaucluse; [www.provenceguide.com](http://www.provenceguide.com); For the Drôme [www.ladrometourisme.com](http://www.ladrometourisme.com) For Rhône Valley wines: [www.rhone-wines.com](http://www.rhone-wines.com) Getting there: Fares from London to Valence (changing at Lyon) start at £111 return. Visit [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com) or call 0844 848 5848. <http://lesaventurieresdugout.org/>