



On the Trail

JUNE 29, 2019 · KATE SOTO

The French Riviera in a Glass from Château de Bellet



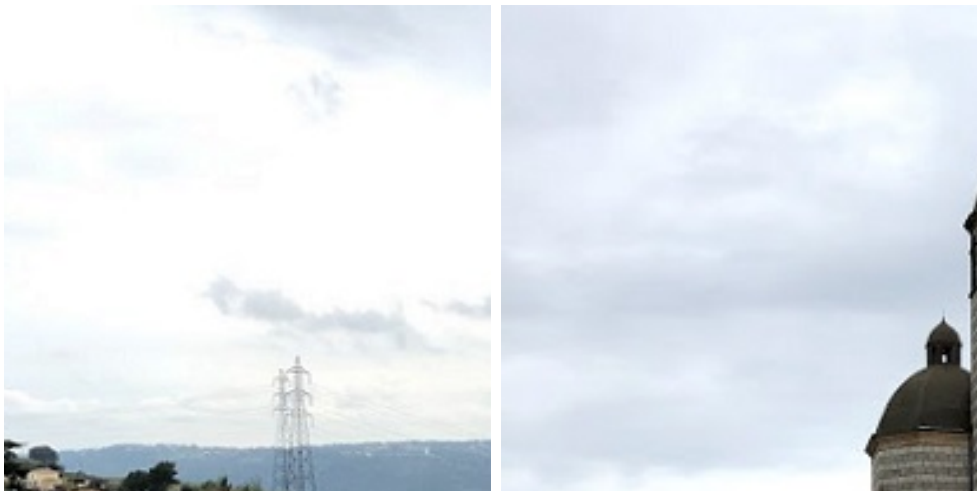
Our French Regional Buyer Keith Mabry recently had the pleasure of visiting a unique chateau in a unique place: Château de Bellet is a historic property situated on one of the highest slopes in the Bellet AOC—the only urban appellation in all of France, located entirely within the city limits of Nice. Just 5 minutes from the beautiful French Riviera’s main drag, tucked between sea and mountains and summer tourists, lies this under-the-radar region that produces great Provençal wines you’ll hardly ever see Stateside. Luckily, we have Keith, who journeys far and wide to bring us such gems. In fact, you can’t find wines from Château de Bellet anywhere in the U.S. besides K&L, so we’re proud to have these special bottles on our shelves.

Bellet is a small region, with only about 70 ha under vine, but

it is a mighty one. It's among the oldest AOCs in France, dating to 1941, and the property is one of the oldest operational wineries in Provence. Château de Bellet is steeped in history, formerly occupying part of a baronial estate from 1777. The historic chapel is still on the premises, and currently houses the winery's reception area. You can still see the original frescoes!



In addition to the history, it's a great place to grow grapes, and the gamut of Provençal varieties do well here, plus a few unique to Bellet—the red Braquet and Folle Noire grapes. Situated at the southeastern end of the region, Bellet is close enough to the Alps to benefit from that cooling mountain influence (plus that of the notorious Mistral winds) while still enjoying substantial Mediterranean sun. The appellation peaks at about 200 meters above sea level, so the vineyards are arranged into terraces that require the vines to be tended by hand. Vines are farmed organically.



Whereas most other wine-producing parts of Provence are very rosé-driven, Bellet focuses mainly on whites with some red and rosé. We carry their rouge, a blend of 70% Folle Noire with 30% Grenache Noir—a great opportunity to taste the rare Folle Noire. We have two of their whites based on Vermentino (called Rolle locally), including one (the "Baron G") that was served at the royal wedding of Prince Albert II, Prince of Monaco, to Charlene Wittstock.



Château de Bellet's wines on display in their reception area, housed in the historic chapel on the property.

We can't all be an international jet setter like Keith, but happily, we can drink like one!

- Kate Soto

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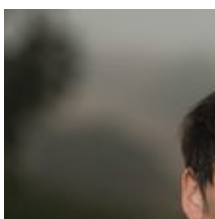
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