

# WHAT'S YOUR VINEYARD STYLE?

A visit to France's vineyards isn't just a chance to see where your favorite wines come from – it's part of your hard-earned vacation. Luckily, whether you like your getaways to be educational, laid-back, or a little on the wild side, it's easy to find the perfect fit in one of France's 17 wine regions.



FranceAgriMer

## CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING 7 PERSONALITIES FOR YOUR PERFECT VINEYARD MATCH!



### URBAN

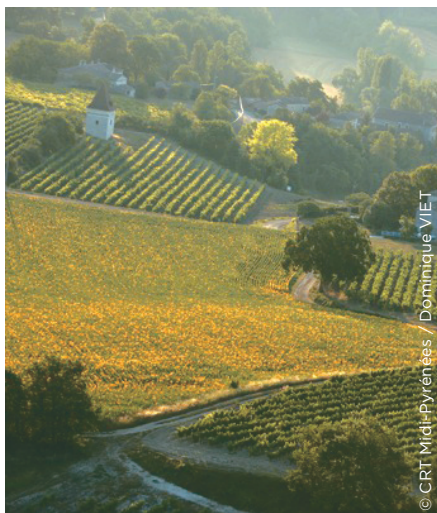
You feel more at home in a sleek cosmopolitan hotel than a quaint country inn, and your idea of fun involves endless museums, restaurants, bars, and city lights.

#### YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - AQUITAINE

Located on France's southwestern edge, Aquitaine boasts over 350,000 acres of vines – the most in the country. In fact the region is so connected to viniculture that its capital city, Bordeaux, is synonymous with wine. But don't let its agricultural ties fool you: Bordeaux is more Gotham than Green Acres.

This UNESCO World Heritage city is pulsing with activity. After a day admiring the city's spire rooftops, grand blond-stone buildings, and art and wine museums, visitors can enjoy sophisticated nightlife. The city's many *bars à vin* specialize in local wines and often organize educational tastings. A rich culinary scene runs the gamut from outdoor bistros to Michelin-starred temples of haute gastronomy. And, this being Bordeaux, the vineyards are never far away: the local tourism office organizes a bevy of half-day or day-long tours to the historic vineyards of St. Emilion, the Médoc, and more, all leaving right from the city center.





© CRT Midi-Pyrénées / Dominique VIET

# PROGRESSIVE

You are always up to date on what's new, innovative, or under the radar, whether it's a new band or the best place to buy organic produce.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - MIDI-PYRÉNÉES

This southwestern region's known for sites that have withstood the test of time: the cities of Toulouse and Lourdes, the Armagnac area where the oldest brandy in France is made, and, of course, the Pyrenees mountains. But the region's steadily building a record of innovation, too, thanks to progressive wineries.

The area's Lot department is home to a number of *bio-dynamique* vineyards and wineries, as well as others that are taking chances on new methods of blending. At Clos d'un Jour, sheep replace lawn mowers, and wine is aged in large terra-cotta jars. The Château Lacapelle Cabanac winery is known for its organic sparkling rosé, and at the Château du Cèdres, vintners experiment with blending grapes of the same variety from different climates. At Clos Troteligotte, an ambitious young couple is using a "holistic approach" to management and farming that goes beyond traditional organic standards to produce whites, rosés, and A.O.C. reds.



© Alain DOIRE / Bourgogne Tourisme

# ROMANTIC

You believe in fairy-tale endings, dinners by candlelight, and toasts to everlasting love.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - BURGUNDY

If you and your sweetheart want to say "I do" amid the vines, this legendary wine region just south of Paris is the place to do it. Bulles et Compagnie, a specialist wedding planner, can help you arrange unforgettable ceremonies in vineyards from Beaune to Nuits-Saint-Georges.

And no need to take off for the honeymoon: opt for a stay at the Château de Gilly, near Vougeot, or the Abbaye de la Bussière, in the village of La Bussière-sur-Ouche close to Dijon. Both were once home to Cistercian monks, but today they make perfect couple's getaways. Stroll their historic grounds, have a romantic dinner in their cathedral-like restaurants, or relax with a romantic wine tasting *à deux*.

By day, try a unique spin on the classic vineyard tour. Old Cars Tours will set you up with the keys to a British or French sports car from the 1950s or '60s, a road map, picnic basket, and appointments for tastings and vineyard visits around the region.

For low-key romance, try a couples' spa day at the Spa Bourgogne Vignes et Bien-Être in Beaune. Proudly proving their connection to Burgundy's wines is skin-deep, this spa actually incorporates grapes and vines into its products and treatments.

# ADVENTUROUS

You are always up for trying something new, especially if it means getting your hands dirty.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - CHAMPAGNE

The home of bubbly is a perfect choice for those who wouldn't mind a shot of adventure alongside their glass of *brut*.

For a rollicking twist the traditional vineyard visit, try weaving your way amid the vines in an open-top, eco-friendly electric car. Leaving from Epernay, Aÿ Éco Visite runs two-hour tours through the vineyards, stopping for champagne tastings and even picnics in the vines along the way. The circuit takes you right to the doorstep of the Reims Mountain Natural Park, making this the perfect combination of ruggedness and refinement.

Prefer to drive yourself? Move Aube, based in the historic city of Troyes, will have you revved up in no time. Accompanied by an authorized Segway instructor, you'll whiz your way through the vineyards on two-wheeled, space-age cruisers. Take in panoramic views of the champagne vines, feel the sunshine and fresh air on your skin, and hop off to explore as you please - just remember your helmet!

For a cultural adventure, make a stop in the city of Reims. Each weekend from May to October, the city's UNESCO-recognized Notre Dame cathedral is taken over by a vibrant spectacle of illuminations and music, bringing history to life and people together.



© Alain JULIEN / Ville de Reims



# CURIOUS

You are a history buff, a constant question-asker, or a would-be wine connoisseur.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - ALSACE

The mighty grape has been a part of Alsace since before the region, bordering Germany, even became a part of France. And meandering along the area's dedicated tourist wine route is a great way to immerse yourself in the history of the region and its vines. As you go from vineyard to vineyard, you'll come across medieval villages, chateau ruins, and historic abbeys.

If your thirst for knowledge involves more of an actual, well, thirst, look for the "*Vigneron Indépendant*" logo at local vineyards. Independent winemakers displaying the mark have pledged to pay special attention to educating visitors. A stop at one of these wineries always means free tastings, the chance to meet the wine-maker and his family, and access to the their endless knowledge of grape growing, wine making, and the surrounding environment.

To take your curiosity to the next level (and impress your friends at parties back home), contact *À l'École des Vins*, an amateur wine school 20 minutes from Strasbourg. Request a group class in English in advance and learn to taste and talk about wines in courses adapted to your levels and interests.



Hôtel Frédéric Carrion, picnic basket in a vineyard

# REFINED

You appreciate the finer things in life, from gastronomic meals to luxurious surroundings.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - MÂCON

In the south the famed Burgundy region, this wine-producing area is the place to sip in style.

If you're after the royal treatment, there's no place like an authentic French château. At the Château de Besseuil, a historic estate dating back to the 16th century, guests are quickly made to feel like lords and ladies of the manor. And thanks to ten acres of on-site vineyards, visitors can taste A.O.C. chardonnay in a setting fit for a king – or a queen.

Sophisticated palates will appreciate a stop at the Hôtel Frédéric Carrion, where a Michelin-starred restaurant of the same name serves up contemporary gastronomy with local flavors in the heart of the Mâconnais vineyards. But wherever you dine, be sure to try one of the Macon's renowned local vintages, like Pouilly-Fuissé or Viré-Clessé.

And for the *nec plus ultra* in exclusivity, climb aboard a hot-air balloon with Air Escargot. Following the wind 1,000 meters above tiled rooftops, medieval châteaux, and picturesque vineyards, you'll have world at your feet – and local wine at your fingertips.

# PLAYFUL

You are happiest celebrating and in a crowd, whether it's at a street festival or concert.

## YOUR VINEYARD MATCH - THE RHÔNE VALLEY

Stretching from the Rhône-Alpes into Provence and Languedoc-Roussillon, this legendary wine region has so many vineyards that there are a whopping 13 wine routes for visitors to choose from! And whether you prefer fruity whites or spicy reds, this region sets the stage for you to enjoy them with a few thousand new friends. Each fall, the "Côtes du Rhône" wine-producing area celebrates the beginning of the annual grape harvest, or the *Ban des Vendanges*, with fetes taking place in villages all over the region. But the biggest party is undoubtedly in Avignon. Visitors can watch a parade with locals in traditional costume, listen to live music, taste native wines and culinary specialties, and even witness the first grape harvest and pressing at the Popes' Palace. (Sept. 1, 2012)

In the little Languedoc village of Chusclan, autumn brings a "historic wine harvest" festival, the *Vendages de l'Histoire*. The celebration offers visitors a chance to learn about winemaking in the 1930s and '40s, with local vintners in period costume, horses moseying down straw-covered streets, and impromptu little shops featuring local wine, food, and crafts popping up all over. Best of all, the village offers free tastings of its eponymous "Côtes du Rhône Villages" wine.

