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Rosé Wine In Provence: Discover Famille Sumeire



Cécilia Pelloux Contributor ©
Travel

Summer is here and Rosé wine is set on the tables in Provence to refresh oneself and bring friendliness and joy among the song of the cicadas. When Greeks planted vineyards in Provence 2600 years ago, their wine was already Rosé and their entry door for vines and olive trees was Marseille. For many years, Rosé wine was considered as a secondary wine, but today the demand is booming in France and around the world. Rosé wine takes again its first place as first wine in history. The Provençal vineyard produces 90% of Rosé and Provence is the first region in France to produce Rosé wine. The Provençal vineyard is located between the Mediterranean and the Alps from Avignon to Nice.

The wines of Provence include three appellations: Côtes de Provence, Coteaux D'Aix En Provence and Coteaux Varois En Provence. The Provençal vineyard reunites 200 kilometers of dazzling and sun-drenched vines which spread over three departments in the South of France: the Var, Bouches-du-Rhône and part of the Alpes-Maritimes.



Vineyards of Château Coussin with majestic view of Sainte Victoire. SUMEIRE

Here, the beauty of landscape is unique. One of the most remarkable sites is the Sainte Victoire mountain. Located on the east side of Aix en Provence, Sainte Victoire became well known around the world with Cezanne paintings and with Jacqueline de Romilly, the renowned hellenist settling there. She lived by Sainte Victoire for many years and she wonderfully detected the beauty of the site through her Greek prism. (Read her book *Sur Les Chemins de Sainte Victoire*, Editor Julliard 1987). Since The Bronze Age, the mountain has been occupied and the Gauls built numerous oppida which stake out the headlands. (Oppidum of Saint Antonin). In The Middle Ages, priories were built and St Victoire became a place of prayers and pilgrimages (Prieuré de Saint Victoire). Today, for the scientists around the world, Sainte Victoire is a very important place for paleontology with its dinosaurs' eggs.

The climate in Provence is ideal for the grapes. Sunny, dry and warm. The grapevines can expect about 2,800 hours of sunshine each year and very low rain (only 600-900 ml per year). The winds -particularly the dry one called Mistral which comes from the North- cool down the vineyards and protect the vineyards from humidity-related illnesses. The quaternary geology characterized by limestone and stony soils, red and ocher ground is perfect for the vineyards to grow. Initiated by the Clergy and monastery (Abbaye du Thoronet and Saint Honorat), the large noble family and the bourgeoisie took over the vineyards in Modern history.

To discover and meet the Sumeire family is a wonderful opportunity. Since the 18th century, the Sumeire family -old merchants- has been settled in the little city of Trets, about 15 minutes from Aix en Provence, in front of Sainte Victoire. Today, Olivier Sumeire, his wife Annabelle and his sister Sophie run the family business. The Sumeire vineyards group together three Chateaux: Chateau Coussin, the Sumeire family's and ancestors' birthplace which is located in Trets. Chateau Coussin vineyard is considered to be one of the first to have been planted in France. Set among exceptional vineyards with



Annabelle and Olivier Sumeire at the entry of Chateau Maupague in Puylobier. CÉCILIA PELLOUX

magnificent views of the Sainte Victoire, Chateau Coussin is also the head office of the family business and the center of operations. Chateau l'Afrique is situated in Cuers, in the Var in Pierrefeu area. This domain is an old property that has existed since Roman times. Then, there is Chateau Maupague - where Olivier and Annabelle have decided to settle. The Chateau is located just outside Puylobier, a little village at an altitude of 350 meters surrounded by vineyards which spread over the sunny foothills of Sainte Victoire. Here, in Maupague, in an exceptional natural setting the family lives in a very charming typical Bastide. They have decided to enjoy a truly beautiful Provençal lifestyle linking past and present.

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They produce three million bottles of wine per year and 40% are for export. Each year the numbers are increased: when they opened the export market in 2009, the number was 6%. Annabelle who takes care of the export market tries to meet the customers' expectations. With the booming of the Rosé and to answer the growing demand from Hong Kong to Moscow, and of course the most important export market the US. Today Annabelle says that Rosé wine is recognized as a true wine, it is not a wine that we drink occasionally when we are visiting the South of France, it is a real wine, the perfect match with any type of food.

Contrary to red wine, rosé wine is part of summer in Provence and it is a lifestyle. Millennials love Rosé and the wine has become, for many, an alternative to Champagne. The Sumeire family which is leader in AOC Sainte Victoire in the area is also strengthening their local presence. They want to increase their outreach in Provence and Cote D'Azur among restaurants and wine shops. The Sumeire Family recently associated their knowledge with Mr Brando, the owner of Chateau de Fontcreuse vineyard in Cassis, and they have developed together an ultra-premium Côtes de Provence rosé called Fontcreuse. You must try it!

Their next challenge is to be ready to welcome more groups and VIPs at the bastide in Chateau l'Afrique. The Sumeire family are more than ready to embrace the success of Rosé wine and its unstoppable rise. To discover Sumeire Domaines, arrive in Marseille airport or at Aix en Provence TGV train station, and you'll be there after a thirty minutes's drive.



Chateau Coussin Rosé Côtes de Provence. SUMEIRE

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