



**BONNER**  
PRIVATE WINE  
PARTNERSHIP



# 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

## Dear Member,

As they say in France, “a great wine comes not from the soil, but from the man who made it.”

Thus, it is not enough, in the eyes of the French, to have a label that reads Lafite or Petrus. It is not enough to be among the lucky few allowed a “Left Bank” Bordeaux classification. Winemaking is, first and foremost, a test of character.

But what does “character” look like in a wine?

After you taste the six bottles in this carefully curated collection, you’ll know that it looks like a man who dares to walk away from the hyper-stylized French wines so prized in China and the US to return to something older, simpler, and far more authentic...

...you’ll know that it looks like a vineyard planted on misty slopes covered with razor-sharp schist rock, in a region so remote that the TGV (France’s high-speed train) doesn’t even pass by there...

...you’ll know that it looks like an old stone semaphore tower on a high hill in Chateauneuf du Pape, where France’s most legendary winemaking family decided to bet their century-old reputation on a bad year that resulted in a very special wine...no filtration, hand-harvested, traditional fermentation...

(They ended up winning that bet handily with high praise from critics like James Suckling, 96 points, and Robert Parker, 91 points.)

French wine has become synonymous with “big,” “extravagant,” and “perfection.” What else can a true Frenchman do, then, but turn up his nose at these clichés?

Out with the chemists, the enologists, the marketing mavens. In with the old ways, the old vines, and the wisdom of the ancients.

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.”

The ultimate act of rebellion, perhaps, lies not in boldly tearing down tradition in the name of “progress,” but in restoring tradition to its rightful place.



In this box, you will find six bottles:

- ① Château Rozier Grand Cru Saint-Emilion (Bordeaux) 2016
- ② Maison Ventenac L’Intrus Cabardès 2016
- ③ Telegramme Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2016
- ④ Domaine Ollier-Taillefer Les Collines Rosé Faugères 2018
- ⑤ Domaine Anita Moulin à Vent Coeur de Vigneronne Chénas (Beaujolais) 2018
- ⑥ Champagne Moutard Brut NV

Some are low sulfite and low alcohol (simply because of where they are made). Some are heavier and bolder. Some you will drink easily. Some will challenge you. Our advice is to let each bottle speak to you on its own terms. Each has a character all its own.

To your health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Bonner', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Will Bonner

## A Quick Note on Wine Tasting

On the next few pages, we've included tasting notes 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!

# 2016 Château Rozier Grand Cru Saint-Emilion



**Winemakers: Jean-Bernard Saby & Son**  
**Gold Medal Winner Concours Agricole de Paris**

**Merlot (80%), Cab Franc (20%)**  
**Saint-Emilion (Bordeaux)**

In 2015, a small bidding war erupted at an auction of several bottles of Château Rozier 2015. By the time it was over, the winner wound up paying over 30-times the opening bid. Perhaps it was an anomaly, but taste this ever-so-French bottle from Bordeaux's Right Bank and you may agree that the price was a fair one. 2016 was an even better year than 2015, and remains one of the best vintages of the last two decades.

The grapes were grown on a hillside named Rozier where vines with an average age of 45 years old still serve a family that has been making wine for nine generations. The vines have had a chance to settle in and you can taste the earthiness as if you were walking among the vines in the early morning when dew remains on the leaves and grapes.

Some detect a note of tobacco and smoke too – no doubt left over from the days when any Frenchman worth his salt started the day with an unfiltered *Gauloise* cigarette. But don't forget that this is 80% merlot, which smooths out the earth and smoke to produce a delicate floral taste. This tough old man's got a soft, sweet heart. In Europe, you can still find bottles of Château Rozier from the 1970s so don't be afraid to let it age. Drink 2016 to 2026.



# 2016 Maison Ventenac L'Intrus Cabardès



**Winemaker: Olivier Ramé**

**Low Sulfite**

**Cab Franc**

**Languedoc**

Born at the foot of La Montagne Noir (The Black Mountain) in Cabardès in the south of France, *L'Intrus* is an anarchist, a trespasser, a “*païen*” (pagan), as winemaker Olivier Ramé calls it.

You have to be at least a libertarian to plant Cabernet Franc (a typical Loire varietal) down in the Languedoc, where Cabardès is situated. To choose concrete instead of oak, forego additional sulfites and chemicals, and weed every bit of the property manually on top of that is enough make Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (the 19th century father of French anarchism and originator of the oft-quoted line “property is liberty”) proud.

“Ici, pas de maquillage!” says Ramé (“no make-up here!”) But *L'Intrus* is not about the ideal triumphing over the aesthetic. The reward is an excellent wine with aromas of freshly squeezed berries draped over a “kick” of green pepper and peppermint. On the palate the cabernet franc proves its mettle with a thirst-quenching, fresh mouthfeel and additional flavors of violet and berry. (“Easily a 90+ point wine if anyone knew about it,” says Julien Miquel). Perfect for meat dishes and antipasti. Pour a hefty glass and leave a few drips to snake down through the white label. Drink 2019-2023



# 2016 Télégramme Châteauneuf-du-Pape



**Winemakers: Famille Brunier**

**James Suckling: 96 pts; Robert Parker: 91 pts**

**Grenache (80%), Syrah (10%), Mourvèdre (6%), Cinsault (4%)**

**Plateau de La Crau  
(Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Rhône)**

Visit the plain of La Crau in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and you may rightly wonder: how does anything grow here? The high elevation plateau is covered in round stones called *galets roulets*. Fortunately, Hippolyte Brunier knew better and around 100 years ago, he planted vines here around an old semaphore tower. Thus was born Vieux Télégraphe, Châteauneuf-du-Pape's pre-eminent wine (think \$100 a bottle and 90+ points from Robert Parker every year).

And then, about 20 years ago, the Bruniers had a bad year, which forced them to combine grapes from "younger" vines in La Crau along with vines below the plateau (don't let the "younger" fool you – the average age is still 40 years). The result stunned everyone.

Instead of the intense earthiness of Vieux Télégraphe, they found a freshness and vitality uncharacteristic of Châteauneuf. They liked it so much that they decided to keep making it under the name Télégramme. Vieux Télégraphe literally translates to "old telegraph," which might lead you to think that Télégramme is too young to be taken seriously. Not the case, its name comes, after all, from the telegram, not the iPhone.

This is a rich yet composed wine – unfiltered, hand-harvested, traditional fermentation – with notes of wild red fruit, herbs and tannins that you won't want to say goodbye to (thank the Grenache for that). Enjoy 2019-2026.





# 2018 Domaine Ollier-Taillefer Les Collines Rosé Faugères



**Winemakers: Famille Ollier**  
**Organic, Lower Alcohol**  
**Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre**  
**Languedoc**

Don't let the rosé coloring fool you: this is more Languedoc than most Languedoc reds! Aficionados of the region will instantly spot that tell-tale trace of garrigue – the bushy, fragrant vegetation that grows on the Mediterranean (think juniper, thyme, rosemary, and lavender).

You may also find a hint of black fruit, a product of the razor-sharp schist rock that makes up the top layer of soil in Faugères, Languedoc's highest and most remote appellation. The high altitude produces not only a lower alcohol wine but one that's also organic due to the absence of pests and rot.

While you're sniffing the garrigue take another look at the coloring. Yes, it's rosé but it's not your typical pinkish hue; it's paler, like wall paper bleached by the sun. That sun-bleached effect comes from the *saignée* method of first pressing the Grenache (which is naturally less colorful), then slowly bleeding the more intense Syrah and Mourvèdre into the mix. Enjoy it over dinner or out on the patio on a fall evening. Drink 2019-2022.



# 2018 Domaine Anita Moulin à Vent Coeur de Vigneronne Chénas



**Winemaker: Anita Kuhnel**

**Wine Advocate: 92 pts**

**Gamay**

**Beaujolais**

If it's not "highly drinkable" it's not Beaujolais. The trend, in years of late, has been to contort Beaujolais into some kind of Bordeaux knock-off. Don't fall for it. True Beaujolais is made for long dinners and multiple courses of rich, sharp flavored food. A big, imposing Bordeaux has no business in such a meal.

Winemaker Anita Kuhnel, with her 60-year-old, hand-pruned vines and manual harvests, has not forgotten Beaujolais' roots. Her Coeur de Vigneronne (heart of a winemaker) has won the hearts of publications like Wine Enthusiast (94 points - 2016) and Robert Parker's Wine Advocate (92 pts - 2018), as well as that of our own resident critic Julien Miquel, who calls this wine, simply, "a stunner."

Kuhnel's method is known as "faire parler les parcelles," which translates to "let each parcel speak." Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all strategy typical of most winemakers, her objective is to coax each parcel to its maximum expression, carefully pruning and harvesting with her own hands.

The resulting wine is powerful yet refined, just like a Beaujolais should be. It is, at heart, a confident wine comfortable in its own skin (firm tannins without being overbearing) and sans soucis, with dark jam (this is, after all, gamay), mocha, vanilla and spices. Save it for a long dinner like Thanksgiving or sip while you watch a game. Enjoy 2019.



# Champagne Moutard Brut NV



The Moutard family has been growing grapes since 1642. Perhaps that explains why they are so comfortable operating on the Côte des Bar, where vines are planted on slopes to ensure drainage over clay, limestone, and fossilized oysters (more on that in a moment).

Why bother with such a tough soil? Taste the champagne and find out... (Yes! Go ahead and open it; it's a myth that champagne must be reserved for special occasions; the French drink it daily before dinner; besides which, we have put aside extra bottles should you like it and want us to send you some more.)

To say Côte des Bar has an oceanic climate is a slight understatement. The whole place used to be underwater, which is why the roots of the Moutard family vines eventually find a layer of extensive marine fossils (including those fossilized oysters) under all that clay. The result of these marine influences on the soil is Moutard's distinctive taste - a beguiling mix of the tropical (papaya, passion fruit) with the austere (apple, almond), and a mineral finish that leaves us wanting more. Enjoy it now!





## **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 email us at [contact@bonnerprivatewines.com](mailto:contact@bonnerprivatewines.com). We want everyone to get the most out this club and these wines. So if there's a problem, we'll do our best to make it right.

### **...Can We Ask A Small Favor?**

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

Maybe you picked upon 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 onboard.

Shoot us an email at [feedback@bonnerprivatewines.com](mailto:feedback@bonnerprivatewines.com)