DOMAINE

DE LA TOUR DU BON

Country: **France**
Region: **Provence**
Appellation(s): **Bandol**
Producer: **Hocquard-Henry Family**
Founded: **1925**
Annual Production: **3,750 cases**
Farming: **Organic**
Website: **www.tourdubon.com**

Several years ago, Kermit's children were attending grammar school in Provence during the months he worked tasting and selecting wines in France. One day when he picked them up after classes, a charming lady walked up and asked if he would drop by one day to taste her Bandol. Little did they know that it would be the perfect fit. Domaine de la Tour du Bon rests peacefully atop a limestone plateau in Le Brûlat du Castellet, in the northwestern corner of the A.O.C. Bandol. Nestled beneath the mountains to the North, it is a bastion of tranquility, an oasis on the Mediterranean surrounded by beautiful gardens and vineyards with emblematic names like *La Rémoise* (The Dweller), *Saint Ferréol* (a local saint), *Ensoleillade* (Place Bathed in Sunshine), *Clos des Aïeux* (Clos of the Forefathers), *l'Aire* (the Aerie), and *Bellevue* (Beautiful View). The Hocquard family has been farming this land since 1968, though this has been a full-time farm since 1925. Today, Agnès Henry runs the show. Independent, quick to laugh, and modest enough to be self-depricating, Agnès has come into her own. For years, she worked in tandem with a hired winemaker to make La Tour du Bon's wines. Though they made wines that won great acclaim, they did not always reflect her own taste. Not surprisingly, once she finally set her mind to making them on her own, she hit her stride, crafting wines with power and precision, but also finesse and charm. Who better to understand how to make the wine than the person who knows the story of the land the best?

The domaine is situated at an altitude of 150 meters above sea-level—a high point on this coastal appellation where maritime breezes cool the arid climate. Fourteen hectares of red earth, clay, sand, and gravel rest upon sturdy limestone bedrock. Brow-beating excavation and focused determination alone have built these vineyards. Agnès still has early photographs of the Mauric family, who lived here before the Hocquards, working the soil. Knee-deep into the red earth, behind heavy plows, vineyard workers toiled to bring this land to its current glory. (The tradition continues even today.) The copious rock served as sturdy material for building the house and walls that surround the property. The limestone has most importantly left its trace in the wines, instilling them with tremendous complexity, long length, and fresh elegance that makes them ideal for cellar-aging.

DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON(continued)

Wine	Blend	Vine Age	Soil Type	Vineyard Area*
Bandol *Blanc*	*Varies :* 85% Clairette 10% Vermentino 5% Ugni Blanc	Average 38 years	Clay, Limestone, Silt, Sandstone	11 ha
Bandol Rosé	*Varies :* 35% Grenache 30% Cinsault 25% Mourvèdre 10% Clairette			
Bandol *Rouge*	*Varies :* 55% Mourvèdre 25% Grenache 15% Cinsault 5% Carignan			
Bandol *Rouge Saint Ferréol*	*Varies :* 90% Mourvèdre 10% Carignan			
Vin de France "D'Ici"	Grenache	Planted in 1970	Limestone	0.5 ha
IGP Méditerranée "En-Sol"	Mourvèdre	45 years	Clay, Limestone	0.2 ha

* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Grapes are all harvested by hand
- Average yields are incredibly low at 28 hl/ha

Bandol *Blanc*:

- Juice obtained by direct pressing
- Vinification occurs in stainless steel *cuves*
- *Blanc* may or may not go through malolactic fermentation depending on vintage

Bandol Rosé:

- Juice obtained by direct pressing
- Vinification occurs in stainless steel *cuves*
- Rosé does not go through malolactic fermentation

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Bandol *Rouge* & Bandol *Rouge Saint Ferréol*:

- Grapes are de-stemmed
- Traditional vinification with indigenous yeasts
- Judicious use of punch-downs and pump-overs
- Wines age in *foudres* for 18 months before bottling

Vin de France "D'Ici":

- A Port/Banyuls style wine
- Only made in exceptional years
- From the *Clos des Aïeux*
- Natural fermentation
- Grapes harvested 1 month after harvest. At harvest about half the grapes are dried and half still contain juice
- De-stemmed
- Fermentation in concrete tank
- Fermentation stops on its own at 16.5% alcohol, 80g/L RS
- Aged in stainless steel tank for 2 years

IGP Méditerranée "En Sol":

- Traditional vinification with indigenous yeasts
- Fermented and aged for 6 months in amphorae, then racked to stainless steel tank
- Neither filtered nor fined