

Chateau Pradeaux

Bandol Le Lys

There is the appellation of Bandol with its plethora of producers, some good, some mediocre; and then there is Chateau Pradeaux, the unique, inimitable, standard-bearer for this ancient wine-growing district. The Chateau Pradeaux is situated on the outskirts of the town of Saint Cyr-sur-Mer that lies directly on the Mediterranean Ocean between Toulon and Marseilles. The estate has been in the hands of the Portalis family since before the French Revolution. In fact, Jean-Marie-Etienne Portalis, who inherited the estate in 1752, helped draft the Napoleonic Code and assisted at the negotiation of the Concordat under Napoleon the First. The estate was devastated during the French Revolution and suffered the effects of the phylloxera epidemic in the 19th century. Suzanne Portalis and her daughter, Arlette, retreated to the domaine during World War II and undertook to revive the domaine. The domaine is currently under the direction of Cyrille Portalis, the sole direct descendant of Suzanne and Arlette. He continues to maintain the great traditions of this estate and is assisted by his wife, Magali, and now his two sons, Etienne and Edouard.

Wine

The Portalis family reserves their oldest vines for their flagship Bandol Rouge, and employs their younger plantings of Mourvèdre, complemented by splashes of Grenache and Cinsault, in the “Le Lys.” De-stemmed around 50%, in contrast to the old-vines cuvée which is always fermented entirely whole-cluster, Etienne employs de-stemming here to preserve equilibrium in a cuvée whose younger fruit may threaten to be overwhelmed by stem tannins. “Le Lys” spends two years in large oak casks rather than the appellation-outlying four years of the flagship red; it’s a long enough stint for its elements to harmonize beautifully, but the fruit remains ever so slightly juicier and more primary than in the old-vines Bandol Rouge. It is far more serious, authoritative, and layered wine than most of what the appellation produces—and it is unmistakably Pradeaux to its core.



Vineyards

Country: France

Region: Provence

Appellation: AOC Bandol

Soil: Limestone-clay

Farming Practices: Following organic practices

Winemaking

Fermentation: After crushing, crop is spontaneously co-fermented whole-cluster for approximately one month in foudre.

Varieties: Mourvèdre (85%), Grenache (10%), Cinsault (5%)

Aging: 6 months on lees; 4 years in wood foudres.