Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

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Introduction to Burgundy

France is more than just one place and it is certainly more than just Paris. While I love the city of light, and each year Sara and I try to spend some time in Paris, it is the French countryside with its farms, villages and canals that I truly treasure. These are the places that evoke a bygone era, where the medieval age mingles with the modern. Where tradition still holds sway on how things are made, said, and served. In these rural enclaves when the traveler encounters nostalgia it doesn't brew melancholy but rather the youthful surge of discovery.

Each region in France has its own unique culture and it is easiest to explore this through their gastronomy: Alsatian Choucroute Garnie (garnished sauerkraut); Normandy butter, Camembert, and Moules Frites (steamed mussels cooked in a wine sauce and served with fries); Loire valley Sauvignon Blanc paired with Chèvre (goat cheese) and summer ripe apricots; Cassoulet (bean casserole) eaten in the Languedoc village of Castelnaudary; frog leg pies from the village of Sarralbe which proudly proclaims they are the best frog catchers in France; Quiche Lorraine in Lorraine, and I could go on...

But no other part of France weighs heavier on the palate than Burgundy. The cuisine of this region outshines the rest of France. Here are a few Burgundian dishes you may have heard of: coq au vin, beef Bourgonion, and escargot. Its wines are world famous and treasured, from the northern Chablis to southern sun kissed Beaujolais, and the many other red and white wines that are made from native Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes. And let's not forget the mustard named after the Burgundian medieval capital, Dijon, or the black currant liqueur, Creme de Cassis, that when mixed with sparkling wine produces the shockingly refreshing and stimulating cocktail, Kir Royal. This region is so spoiled for choice that it even lends its name to the dark, cherry-hued color, burgundy.

For me the allure of Burgundy is heightened by the many canals that criss-cross its landscapes. In the very center is the little village of Saint-Jean-de-Losne. This small Burgundian enclave is the epicenter of barging and boating in France. From here, boaters can explore eight different directions at almost all points of the compass.

And so with a tinge of remorse, next year we will say goodbye to Alsace and Strasbourg and strike out on a grand adventure. We will take about a month to meander from Alsace to Burgundy traveling up the Rhine, almost to Switzerland and then down the entire length of the Canal du Rhone au Rhin to Saint-Jean-de-Losne.

From here we will explore a new region: Burgundy. We invite you to join us next Fall in September and October of 2025 as we take you to the Canal du Rhone au Rhin and the Canal Bourgogne, traveling from Dijon to Besançon or vice versa.

We are taking reservations for the following 4 weeks in 2025:
With David and Sara,
September 3-10
September 13-20
With Rick and Carla,
September 24-October 1
October 4-11
We are excited to share this new region of France with you and hope you decide to join us.

Click here to download the 2025 Burgundy travel packet.

A Brief Photo Tour of Places on our Route in 2025

The book-ends for our 2025 fall trips are the cities of Dijon and Besançon. Both of these cities feature Unesco Heritage Status for their city centers. We are excited to show you around.

In between, we will travel the Canal de Bourgogne and the Canal du Rhone au Rhin, plus the Saône and Doubs rivers. We will navigate 44 locks, two tunnels, and numerous little villages such as the village of Dole, pictured above.

Besançon's name is impossible for english speakers to pronounce. You have to hear it said. You can try to say it like this: booze-an-san. The city, pictured below, lies on an oxbow and has been inhabited since 1500BC.

Burgundy Wine Education Classes

The last in-person wine class that Sara and I hosted was in February 2020. I'm sure you all remember what happened in March 2020: Covid-19 changed the world.

Well, here we are in 2024 and I've been teaching some wine classes on YouTube but I think it's time to start teaching in person again.

And since we are moving the boat to Burgundy - Burgundy wine classes are in order!

But wait, there is a twist. When Sara and I come back from France in September I'm going to bring wines with me. I'm going to bring Burgundian wines and we are going to taste them together.

Here is your opportunity to taste and learn about the wines of Burgundy. Class starts at 6:30pm

Class #1: October 26, 2024
Class #2: November 16, 2024

Class number limited to 16.
Cost: $20

Light palate cleanser snacks provided. Tasting 3 white & 3 red.

If you want to attend: R.S.V.P *respondez-si-vous-plait* to david@savvynomad.com.

À Votre Santé!