

France's Deep Roots

Wine lovers will want to make the pilgrimage to Burgundy for an autumn or winter getaway that includes wine tasting, cooking classes and a stay in newly reimagined hotels.

By Casey Hatfield-Chiotti



www.stock.adobe.com/photosimysia

I VISITED BURGUNDY for the first time one brisk weekend in 2014. My husband and I were living in Paris and were eager to learn more about the hallowed wine region in east-central France known for producing the world's best pinot noirs and chardonnays — so revered is the terroir that UNESCO added the vineyard plots or *climats* of Burgundy to the World Heritage list in 2015. We stayed in the walled city of Beaune — the region's undisputed heart — and sampled Vosne-Romanée straight from the barrel, meandered through the quiet streets to find fluffy loaves of bread speckled with apricots and hazelnuts and enjoyed visiting the renowned Saturday market in the center of Beaune without the crowds. During more than half a dozen return visits, I've learned the destination is wonderful in all seasons, but it may be at its most alive in late autumn, when the vines turn a deep burnished gold, the region's famed boeuf bourguignon is bubbling on stovetops and one of the most famous and distinguished events in the wine world, the Hospices de Beaune Wine Auction, takes place. The Sotheby's-organized auction, where grand cru and premier cru barrels are auctioned off for hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund the work of the local hospital foundation, is always the third weekend in November. Here's where to go for a divine escape in Burgundy.



Dining at Le Relais Bernard Loiseau

Franck Juery

Where to Stay

The department of Burgundy, known as the Côte d'Or, includes the most prestigious vineyards, Beaune, the city of Dijon and verdant mountains. In the Morvan Regional Natural Park, **Le Relais Bernard Loiseau** (from $280 per night; www.bernard-loiseau.com) is a storied culinary getaway that marries a classic French countryside feel with contemporary, modern flourishes. New cocoon suites debuted in 2022 and incorporate local materials like Burgundian stone and wood with more modern bird nest–inspired beds and chinoiserie-style wallpaper (all 33 guest rooms will eventually have a similar look). The multistory spa, which opened in 2017, is angular and modern with indoor pools and a penthouse spa suite with a hammam and views of the Auxois Mountains. The hotel has an annual closure in January, but it will reopen in February 2023, the 20th anniversary of the death of renowned chef Bernard Loiseau. To honor his legacy, the hotel will serve a special tribute menu featuring reinterpretations of his classic dishes. The Loiseau family also operates the restaurant Loiseau des Vignes at hotel Le Cep in Beaune.

The five-star **Hostellerie Cèdre and Spa** (from $252 per night; www.cedrebeaune.com) is just outside Beaune's medieval center, but the 40 guest rooms have views of the ramparts or a leafy garden and contemporary furnishings and tiled bathrooms thanks to a recent renovation. Deluxe rooms and suites include a visit and tasting at Maison Champy, one of the oldest wine houses in Beaune.

Many of the best places to stay in Burgundy are small and intimate and book up far in advance as a result. The bed-and-breakfast **Les Jardins de Loïs** (from $184 per night; www.jardinsdelois.com) in a historic carriage house just behind the Hospices de Beaune has just six guest rooms including an apartment. Amenities include a hammam, library lounge and a large garden.

Twenty minutes from Beaune in the hamlet of Saint-Aubin, **Château de Saint-Aubin** (from $250 per night; www.chateau-st-aubin.com) is what once was the property of the Countess of Trébon, a descendant of one of Louis XIV's Musketeers. The four guest suites are elegant and understated



Hostellerie Cedre and Spa

— just like the formidable white wines produced in Saint-Aubin, which is tucked away behind the two Montrachet villages. The suites have parquet floors and a mix of modern and vintage furniture. Each booking includes a tasting in the Prosper Maufoux cellar and access to the outdoor pool, which overlooks estate vineyards.

If travelers want to be in the heart of Beaune, **Ma Place Carnot Airbnb** (from $174 per night; www.airbnb.com/rooms/11678945) offers a central location overlooking the Hôtel-Dieu and the covered market where the annual wine auction takes place. The Saturday *marché* is where vendors sell everything from black truffes to heirloom apricots and is set up on the square and streets outside the hospices. The two-bedroom accommodation has a gourmet kitchen — where you can cook something fabulous with your market finds — and a large farmhouse table.

What to Do

The **Hospices de Beaune** or Hôtel-Dieu (www.hospices-de-beaune.tickeasy.com) is a former hospital for the poor turned museum and one of Burgundy's most recognizable landmarks, with its Gothic architecture and polychrome roofs. The 162nd Hospices de Beaune Wine Auction and accompanying food and wine festival takes place November 18 to 20 and includes gala dinners, parades, a half-marathon, special tastings and gourmet food stalls on Place Carnot in Beaune.

The ambitious **International City of Gastronomy and Wine** (www.citedelagastronomie-dijon.fr), opened in the center of Dijon, the historical capital of Burgundy, takes place in May. The 16-acre complex houses a culinary school, a three-story cave and wine bar where more than 200 wines are available by the glass, a gastronomic marketplace and museum exhibitions dedicated to the history of food and wine in the region. The **Route des Grands Crus** begins in Dijon and winds its way past the most famous vineyards of the Côte de Nuits and the Côte de Beaune, ending in Santenay. Stop at **Château du Clos de Vougeot** (www.closdevougeot.fr) to see the medieval vat-house and presses and the wall-enclosed grand cru vineyard. The wine farm was built by monks in the 12th century and the Renaissance château was added in the 1500s.

One of the most intriguing wine-tasting experiences lies beyond an unassuming door in the center of Beaune. Family-owned **Joseph Drouhin** (tours and tastings from $44; www.drouhin-oenotheque.com), offers tours of the 2.5-acre caves that once belonged to the dukes of Burgundy and the kings of France beneath Beaune's historic center. Tours, available by appointment, include seeing 2,000-year-old Roman wall remnants and wine-soaked barrels and end with

Courtesy of Hostellerie Cedre and Spa

a tasting of excellent Joseph Drouhin vintages like a 1er Cru Meursault.

Silicon Valley entrepreneur Michael Baum bought **Château de Pommard** (tastings from $41; www.chateaudepommard.com), one of Burgundy's most impressive estates, a few miles southwest of Beaune in 2014. Visitors can book an educational wine tasting in an 18th-century château overlooking the estate's biodynamic vineyards and explore the manicured gardens. A five-star hotel is in the works.

Where to Eat

Burgundy's best restaurants range from homey bistros to Michelin three-star fare. Visitors will surely rub shoulders with renowned winemakers at local favorite **Caves Madeleine** (www.cavesmadeleine.com). The restaurant seats guests at a handful of small tables or a long communal table beside racks of wine bottles and serves just four appetizers and four main courses nightly, such as house-made pâté and beef cheeks cooked in red wine. There are just 10 seats around the counter at **Le Bissoh** (www.bissoh.com), where guests can watch chef Mikihiko Sawahata craft a multicourse izakaya-style meal including sashimi, tempura and skewers grilled over charcoal, which all pair incredibly well with Burgundies such as delicate Gevrey-Chambertin.

The bistro **La Table du Square** (www.tabledusquare.com) is located just outside the historic center of Beaune serves an ever-changing menu of seasonal ingredients and roasted meats like côte de boeuf for two. In the town of Savigny-les-Beaune, a chef who worked at many of Paris's hippest wine bars including Yard and Au Passage is cooking up inventive small plates at **Le Soleil** (www.lesoleil-savigny.fr). Wines from Simon Bize & Fils estate are offered by the glass. Burgundy's only three-Michelin-star restaurant, **Maison Lameloise** (www.lameloise.fr), is a quick 20-minute drive south of Beaune in Chagny. Chef Eric Pras features local ingredients in unique preparations like escargot with pickled garlic and nettle coulis. The Relais & Châteaux hotel also has 16 guest rooms.

Adeline Borra



Terroirs by Adeline

Two Immersive Culinary Experiences

Burgundy's food and wine are legendary, and there may be no better way to immerse yourself than by taking a cooking course. Burgundy native Adeline Borra-Aoust offers food and wine experiences for everyone from beginners to professionals. If booked on a Saturday, **Terroirs By Adeline**'s Cook & Taste experience (from $114 per person; www.terroirsbyadeline.com) begins with a tour of the market and visits to the excellent bakeries Pâtisserie Fabien Berteau and Boulangerie Marie Boucherot and the cheese shop Alain Hess, followed by a hands-on cooking class at Borra-Aoust's Lab. In the space with a gleaming range and a custom oak dining table, guests will learn to make gougères and other Burgundian specialties and sample those with premier and grand cru wines, of course. Borra-Aoust's wine-focused "Day in Burgundy" experience includes visits to Romanée-Conti and tastings in Gevrey-Chambertin and Chassagne-Montrachet.

Started by an American mother and daughter, **The Cook's Atelier** (from $494 per person; www.thecooksatelier.com) is a French fantasy come to life. The multistory space in Beaune is a culinary boutique, wine shop and French cooking school with copper Mauviel pots and a marble-topped butcher block. Experiences include five-day master classes — where guests learn bread-baking and preserving in an 1800s cottage — and one-day cooking classes.