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CASAMIGOS FOUNDERS TAKE TEQUILA TO THE TOP

A VENERABLE VINEYARD WITH A REVIVED VISION

Château Peyfaures, a Thirteenth Century Vineyard, is Providing a Fresh New Take on Centuries-Old Wine

BY WHITNEY HUBBELL



Miami-based Ricardo Moraes and his wife didn't know much about producing wine before diving into the adventurous endeavor of buying a vineyard in France. Once they saw Château Peyfaures on the market in 2017, they jumped on the opportunity to purchase the thirteenth century old property. Now the owner, Moraes explains, "We didn't have a background in wine or any experience but started researching and looking for properties and found a beautiful property for sale and fell in love with it and decided to buy it." They immediately began updates and refurbishments to the structure and set a goal to export a spectacular wine at an affordable price.

Château Peyfaures centers on Merlot, integrating Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, resulting in an amalgamation of lush fruit and layered complexity. The Château has been family owned and operated for seven generations, with last in line, Laurent Godeau, remaining at the estate as director of winemaking. Together, Godeau and the Moraes family strive to improve every vintage, while upholding age-old traditions of the family.

The vineyard is situated 30 km (18 miles) west of Bordeaux, and is home to Gémiosac, France. juxtaposed to today's large-scale

productions, winemaking at Château Peyfaures wields techniques used by countless generations before. "Most of the work is done in the field. Biodiversity is prized as a way to keep the vines in harmony with the land as evidenced by the lush grasses found between the vines."

They are committed to producing the purest wine, which is known to be a byproduct of healthy vines and non-tilling soil. Thus, they use sustainable farming techniques, combining ancestral traditions with cutting-edge technology. "Sustainability is a consequence of organic farming, we don't use any chemicals or pesticides," Moraes explains, "We try to make a beautiful wine that's being made the way it was 150 years ago. A premium product the way it was supposed to be made." The wine is a result of conviction, the appreciation of doing as little as possible to bring the fruit to the fore.





Château Peyfaures' explains their delicate process: "Minimal manipulations

vineyards to show their unique character. Grapes are gently crushed in a traditional basket press to emphasize aromatics and avoid harsh green notes. Because terroir is about more than simply grapes and soil, spontaneous fermentation is encouraged, utilizing the natural, indigenous wild-yeast found in the winery rather than adding a culture formulated in a lab. The soils throughout the vineyard are prototypical combinations of gravelly-sand and clay-limestone sitting on limestone subsoil. The varied soils on the gentle slopes facing the top sites of Saint Emilion give the resulting wines a layered complexity."

A plot within the vineyard contains vines that are at least 40 years old, which become a limited release, Dame de Coeur cuvée. According to Moises, "Dame de Coeur is the top wine of the property. It's made

from one specific plant, which is considered our best grapes on the property. We don't make it every year.

It's been made on the property for twenty years now." They grapes are primarily Merlot combined with a bit of Cabernet Franc; the smaller yields create an intense depth and complexity, only made possible by their unique terroir. "It's a very serious wine that complements a sit-down dinner. You have to really take the time to enjoy it." The base wines for Dame de Coeur see more new oak and is wine meant for the cellar and to be treasured for years to come.

Translated directly as Lady of Heart, the wine is an homage to all the strong hearted women who ran the property for many generations. "The property has been owned and operated by different generations of women, something that Laurent's mother started and we love it and kept it as our top wine on the property," Moises explains.

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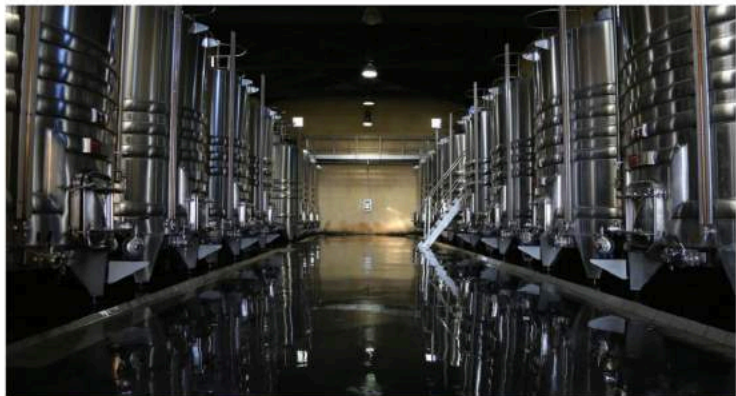


PHOTO: LAURENT GODEAU, 7th generation winemaker and director of sales at Château Peylaures.

Laurent Godeau's mother sold the property to the Moraes family, and he remains on staff as the head winemaker for Château Peylaures. "He is the 7th generation winemaker at the vineyard and grew up immersed in the history and traditions of Bordeaux, learning from a young age about the art and science of winemaking. He brings this intense pride and respect to his craft, striving to celebrate the terroir through instinctual winemaking decisions, oak selection, patience in cellar."

Godeau graduated from both Audencia business school and Bordeaux, University of Oenology DUAD. In addition to being the director of winemaking for the estate, he is currently implementing an in-depth study of the vineyard in order to apply modern technology in the cellars, as a part of his unremitting quest to improve results at Château Peylaures.

As a novice vineyard owner, Moraes is thrilled to have Godeau on board. "We didn't know anything about wine, so to have someone who knows everything about it is incredible. He's very talented, with an amazing palate. It's impossible to do without him," Moraes explains. "We also use the consulting services

of Michel Rolland, one of the top oenologists in the world today to make sure we are doing everything that's supposed to be done at the right time."

Château Peylaures' unabating pursuit to deliver an exceptional product at an affordable price point has been eminently buoyant, but the venture not without challenges. They certainly have a beautifully drinkable wine, but the most difficult element is exporting and distribution. Moraes explains, "We're exporting ourselves and doing as much as we can directly, but we're looking for boutique distributors that understand the brand, but that is not easy — getting the exposure out there and getting people to see it and getting distribution to pay attention to you — all of that is not an easy task. That has been the hardest part."

Château Peylaures also offers ability to purchase wines via their website (www.chateaupeylaures.com) with bottles ranging from \$49.99 to \$79.99. They are committed to the classic design of Bordeaux, making wines with luscious and fragrant notes with a strong and enduring structure. They are made to mature beautifully over time, perfect for private cellars. "Each vintage creates variations in the wines' character, but each bottle is uniquely Château Peylaures." ■

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