



Above: the famed vineyards of Meursault (photo © Atelier Muzard); below: art gallery Bartoux exhibits modern art at the Marché aux Vins (photo © Bartoux/Marché aux Vins).

Beaune

A living wine LIBRARY

IT HAS MAINTAINED A CONVIVIAL VILLAGE-LIKE AMBIANCE, WITH ITS MODEST POPULATION OF 23,000, BUT VINEYARD-FRINGED **BEAUNE** BOASTS A RICH HISTORIC HERITAGE AND YEAR-ROUND CULTURAL PROGRAMMES. BY RUBY BOUKABOU



Situated between Paris and Geneva in the east of France, 40 kilometres south of Dijon, is the charming and historic city of Beaune (not to be confused with Béarn in the south-west). The 15th century capital of the Duchy of Burgundy lies in the heart of Burgundy's Pinot Noir country. Among the offerings are wine tours, an excellent light festival, a prestigious baroque music festival and – not to be missed – a crime/thriller film festival. Combine relaxation and adventure under the heady wafts of the grape.

BEAUNE TO BE CULTURED

Let's start with the cultural fare, which is varied and nonstop. The French music festival season kicks off here with the prestigious International Baroque Music Festival from 8 – 31 July (www.festivalbeaune.com). Highlights include three concerts by Purcell, along with favourite operas by Händel, Rameau and Vivaldi.

Rediscover the city by night in a whole new light (literally) during the city's inspirational Festival of Lights. The church of Notre Dame, Hotel Dieu, the clock tower, chapel of Saint-Etienne, Wine Museum, ramparts and more all transform under the art of astoundingly beautiful laser lights.



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Take an apéro of Pinot in a medieval wine cellar, which may also help calm the nerves if attending the international crime/thriller festival (www.beaunefestivalpolicier.com).

VISITOR HIGHLIGHT: HOTEL DIEU

Once a medieval refuge palace for the poor, this monument with its gothic façade, flamboyant colours and geometrically patterned roof is one of the region's main tourist attractions. Created in 1443 by the chancellor of the Duke of Bourgogne, after the 100-year war with England, the hospital foundation has been preserved in an exceptional state. It houses a fascinating museum of objects, furniture and decoration from the Middle Ages. It also has its very own vineyard. Only in France! www.hospices-de-beaune.com

HERITAGE WINING AND DINING

The Côte de Beaune vineyards, with their unique limestone walls, are listed as UNESCO world heritage. Sip and taste in style with fellow travellers and friendly, wine-savvy locals. You can cycle the vineyard trail through villages such as Meursault, Pommard and Puligny-Montrachet. Make sure to snack on the way, so you don't get too wobbly on your bike!

Local products to try are mustard and cassis as well as cheeses, meats and breads. Top restaurants to try include local icon Clos du Cèdre (see below); the refined Loiseau des Vignes (www.bernard-loiseau.com), with its library of fine wines; and The Bistro Bourguignon, a lively bar with fine local wines.



Clockwise from top: festival of lights at Beaune's Hôtel Dieu (photo © M Joly); chef Laurent Peugeot (photo © Arnaud Dauphin); guest room at Bacchus' Secrets (photo © Bacchus' Secrets).

HERE COMES THE NIGHT

The five-star Hostellerie Le Cèdre (www.lecedre-beaune.com) is a spectacularly old-world establishment with just 40 individually styled rooms and suites, refined interiors and a wood-panelled lounge bar with fireplace and piano. The main structure faces onto a wonderful private garden. Don't miss the restaurant, Clos du Cèdre, famed for its vibrant interpretation of local cuisine.

Prefer to sit back and let the experts organise your holiday? Exquisite accommodation and bespoke tours can be booked by Bacchus' Secrets (www.bacchussecrets.com). You'll stay

in the medieval village in the Hautes Côtes region and enjoy a service that organised your wine tours, accommodations, michelins starred dining and cooking classes.

Time left over on your trip? Digest and build up your next appetite with a game of golf or tennis. Or sink into a well deserved holiday siesta to dream of your next meals, trips and sunny French adventures. ■

Further Information

Beaune Tourisme
www.beaune-tourism.com