

JOHN BRUNTON'S ARMAGNAC TRAIL

Posted:
January 10, 2021

Château de Pellehaut



Don't be surprised if a tasting tour of Château de Pellehaut continues on after the cellars to see their herd of 60 Blonde d'Aquitaine cows, as the environmentally- conscious brothers who run the estate, Mathieu and Martin Béraut are just as proud of the cows as their exceptional armagnacs and innovative wine range.

Mathieu proudly relates how, "there are records of our family being active in the local commune over 400 years ago, and my father, Gaston, bought this 18th century château in the 1970's. It covered 280 hectares of fully-functioning polyculture; farming, vineyard and armagnac. That has been the Gascon tradition for centuries, explaining our incredible biodiversity. But sadly estates like ours have become the exception rather than the rule today. The formula was simple and we have never changed – plant vines on the best land, grow cereals on fertile fields to feed cattle while the rest leave as woods." Wine is also very important here, as the family launched their first commercial bottles in 1985, and have extended the original 65 hectare vineyard to some 300 hectares. When tasting, be sure to try the 'brut de fût' selection much loved by modern connoisseurs, often single cask, single grape bottles with no water reduction, so be ready for a jolt of 50° alcohol rather than the softer, smoother 40° of an aged blend or older vintage.

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