

All About Cassis

Cassis - the Town, History, and Viticulture

Cassis is a town that is located in the Provence area of Southern France. Unusual for Provence, where rosé generally dominates, Cassis specializes in the production of white wine, which makes up 75% of its production.

Cassis was one of the first wine-making regions of France to be accorded an Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC), a legally defined and protected geographical indication which identifies where the grapes for a wine are grown. Alongside of Châteauneuf du Pape and Sauternes, Cassis was named an AOC region in 1936. With the Phylloxera epidemic, all of the grapes grown in Cassis were destroyed. Muscat grapes were widely grown in Cassis until Phylloxera hit. The new version of Cassis wine was quite different from the original one (before Phylloxera). Instead of Muscat grapes, winemakers drew on a range of other grapes, including Clairette, Marsanne, Ugni Blanc (also used to make Cognac) and Sauvignon Blanc. Cassis is known as a fishing town in the tourist world and for its beautiful water; seafood is dominant for its cuisine.

Cassis wine is not to be confused with crème de cassis, a sweet black currant liqueur that's a specialty in Burgundy.



2012 Clos Sainte Magdeleine Cassis

The estate of Clos Sainte Magdeleine has been in existence since the 1920s.

What is Crème de Cassis?

Crème de Cassis literally means “cream of black currants.” Crème de cassis is a black currant-flavored liqueur with a light consistency and semi-sweet flavor. This beauty is an exception to the overly syrupy styles and is a specialty of the Burgundy region in France that began about 150 years ago. It's made from macerated, real fruit (black currants), rather than just flavoring. The fruit is picked quickly at its peak of ripeness and is immediately immersed in alcohol where they macerate for 3 months. Sugar is then added to balance out the tart flavor of the currants. Cassis has about the same amount of alcohol content as port wine.

What can it be used in - Kir, Kir Royale and Whisky cocktails

Crème de cassis is a key ingredient in Kir, a famous cocktail and aperitif made by combining about half an ounce of the crème de cassis with about five ounces of dry white wine. A Kir Royale is similar, but is made with Champagne instead of white wine. In both cases only a little is needed, and it makes an aperitif with a beautiful light purple hue. Or venture out and try it in a whisky cocktail, maybe this weekend!