

# Clos la Coutale

## Cahors

Cahors - pronounced with a silent "h" - is located in southwestern France on the Lot River. Cahors has produced wine continuously since approximately 50 BC.

The history of Cahors wine is longer and more glamorous than Bordeaux (Cahors was served at the marriage of Eleanor and Henry II; Pope John XXII was born in Cahors and he made it his table and sacramental wine; Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the great mercantilist reformer of the 17th century, deemed Cahors superior to Bordeaux; and Peter The Great adopted it as the sacramental wine of the Russian Orthodox Church) but the often hostile competition between the two regions has been adjudicated enduringly by geography - Bordeaux occupies a choke point on Cahors' shipping route.

By law Cahors must be made from at least 70% Malbec, with the balance allowed to consist of Merlot and Tannat. In recent years, the popularity of varietal Malbec from Argentina has contributed to new interest in Cahors wine.

Philippe Bernard is the sixth generation of his family to oversee the 50 hectare estate of Clos la Coutale, just west of the town of Cahors. The property was founded 100 years ago by his Great-Great Grandfather, Valmy, and now produces almost 20,000 cases annually.

All the grapes are destemmed and pressed before fermentation in stainless steel vats, each grape variety from different parts of the vineyard is fermented separately. Maceration at 28° C. takes 15 days. The wines are fermented for three weeks. After racking from stainless steel, half of the wine goes into 60-gallon Seguin-Moreau barrels, while the balance is aged in 800-gallon foudre.

The wine is blended and time spent (12 months) in oak vats gives it the special aromas of vanilla and silky tannins. The wine is bottled, unfiltered, after a year in wood.

