

VITA

YOUR LIFESTYLE SUPPLEMENT FROM VITA DAILY • APRIL 2018

PARIS IN BLOOM
Our French *and* Floral
Shopping Guide

FORM AND FLOW
Chanel Enchants Us
into Spring-Summer

FLOWER CROWN
Hair Care Built *on the*
Bounty of Nature

ILE DE RÉ
Island Time *in the*
South of France

GRAPE ESCAPES
Wine Regions Worth Visiting



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EDITOR'S DESK

editor's letter



Spring has finally sprung (right?!) and, to celebrate, I've rounded up some of my current favourite rose-inspired obsessions to the right. And the floral theme doesn't end there. Be sure to turn to page 8, where Leo and Marco Redavid reveal how they're putting Vancouver, in all of its natural, blooming glory, on the map via their blossoming hair-care business (they're also giving all of you a chance to win a prize pack of products!).

Speaking of places that bloom, this issue of *VITA* has, in fact, a dual focus. Besides flowers, we're highlighting all things French, including a standout spring-summer collection from Chanel (page 8), a secret South of France vacation spot (page 10) and a spring-worthy shopping guide (pages 4 and 5) that, we think, ties the two themes perfectly together. Enjoy!

Noa Nichol

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

P.S. For this month's reader letter contest, I'm asking you to tell me about your favourite French or floral indulgence. The winning entry will receive a surprise from me in the mail! Email noa@vitamindaily.com.



BOUQUET BALM

This lovely range of lip and body creams from new-to-Canada-but-long-loved-Down-Under beauty brand Lano come in scents like strawberry, banana, lemon, rhubarb and rose, but the latter, as an everyday hand moisturizer (\$27 at Sephora) infused with that flower's oil (plus triple lanolin for extreme hydration), is my personal pick this month (to suit the rosie theme, natch). **1045 Robson St., 604-681-9704. Sephora.com**



PINK DRINK

Among Starbucks' newly launched line of Teavana tea lattes: an exclusive-to-Canada flavour called "blossoming rose" that's become my daily drink of choice. Available with a base of either black, matcha or rooibos tea (the third is my favourite), this sweet (but not too sweet), perfume-y (but not undrinkably so), dessert-like tea is steamed with milk to a cashmere-smooth consistency and topped with a sprinkle of naturally flavoured rose and hibiscus crystals for a fabulous floral finish. **Starbucks.ca**



PETAL PRETTY

When I went to tour the recently opened ARC Apparel boutique a few weeks back (read my review on page 7), this pretty bra (\$72) caught my eye. Featuring two red roses front and centre, this standout piece by Montreal-based Sokoloff Lingerie is super supportive without sacrificing any of that wow effect (and, due to the shop's overarching philosophy, it's an ethically made garment, to boot). **306 W. Cordova St., 604-620-6044. Arcapparel.ca**



A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

That old maxim doesn't apply in this case, as Il Profvmo's sumptuous limited-edition scent, Rose Secrète, is true rose through and through. If you're lucky enough to snag a bottle (last I heard, it had nearly sold out locally), you'll like to know the perfume is made of a gorgeous South American rose that blossoms white in the morning dew and closes red at nightfall. Oh, how sweet the smell! Available in very limited quantities (\$195 for a 50 ml bottle) at La Maison Valmont. **650 W. 41st Ave., 604-233-6699. Valmontcosmetics.com**



VITA

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FASHION & SHOPPING

FRENCH and FLORAL

MIXED MOTIFS? MAYBE. STILL,
A FEW OF OUR FAVOURITE FRENCH
AND FLOWERY THINGS FOR SPRING

BONNE NUIT

The recipe for perfect skin? Water, oxygen and rest—plus, this beautiful new mask innovation from Chanel (\$105), inspired by dewdrops that bead up on camellia petals at dawn to detoxify and re-oxygenate the flower. Chanel.ca

OUI OUI

This playful bag by Haathi House (\$100) perfectly conveys our current French mood. Haathihousejewellery.com

FLOWER HOUR

While Coach's Delancey watch (\$355) is named after one of the most historic streets in New York City (not Paris), its leather strap detailed with pretty floral appliqués is perfect for spring. 755 Burrard St., 604-694-1772. Ca.coach.com



EN FRANCAIS

This J.Crew top (\$47 at Nordstrom) displays a sunny sentiment (peace on earth). 799 Robson St., 604-699-2100. Shop.nordstrom.com



PRÊT-A-PIED

Show off your nonchalant attitude with these très chic Soludos espadrilles (\$101 at Nordstrom) in a classic smoking-slipper silhouette embroidered with a breezy French phrase. 799 Robson St., 604-699-2100. Shop.nordstrom.com



BLOOM BAG

Chanel's flap bag with sequins, charms and silver-toned metal (\$16,150) makes a gorgeous French and floral statement for spring-summer 2018. Chanel.ca



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CRÈME GLACÉE

Premium French ice cream? Yes, please! La Glace scoops up fixed and seasonal flavours like café lavande (coffee ice cream with a hint of lavender) and fraise opulence (sweet summer strawberries accented with pink peppercorns) year-round (hint: top yours with house-made Champagne meringues). 2785 W. 16th Ave., 604-428-0793. Laglace.ca

ALMOND JOY

A true Parisian pleasure, no one makes traditional French macarons (\$2 each, in floral flavours like raspberry rose and cantaloupe orange blossom, to boot) quite like Faubourg. 769 Hornby St., 604-267-0769. Faubourg.com



OOH LA LACY

An exquisite new collection from French lingerie brand Lise Charmel, Instant Couture's design is inspired by intricate floral arabesquing and comes in two beautiful colourways: lavender with light purple shades highlighted with peach and cream embroidery, and a rich "lagoon" blue. Ooh la la, indeed! Diane's Lingerie, 2950 Granville St., 604-738-5121. Dianeslingerie.com



FASHION & SHOPPING

CHAMPAGNE WISHES

And caviar dreams? Quite possibly in this spring-pink Quantum Courage sweatshirt (\$325 at Blubird) that politely displays our daily drink desire. 1055 Alberni St., 604-257-0700. Blubird.ca

SPRING BLING

Chopard's new For You collection features dainty floral creations—like these emerald earrings (\$103,670), emerald ring (\$67,740) and diamond earrings (\$66,020)—that take their inspo from the springtime cherry blossoms we'll soon see lining our fair city's streets. 425 W. Georgia St., 604-684-6515. Chopard.com



PETAL PUSHERS

We'd happily trade singer Paul Simon's diamonds for florals on the soles of our shoes if it meant slipping our feet into these strappy Gucci sandals (\$1,170) trimmed with glittering embroidered sequins. 900 W. Georgia St., 604-488-0320. Gucci.com

LE CHAPEAU

We can't think of anything quite as French chic as Dior's summer-collection black cotton beret, complete with fetching lace veil. 900 W. Georgia St., 604-891-1810. Dior.com



POTTED PLANT

From Le Creuset, mini flower cocottes (\$79 for a set of three) in colours like blue bell, powder pink and cool mint feature a floral shape just right for springtime. Or, go for pieces from the Fresnoy-le-Grand, France-headquartered cookware company's brand-new Fleur collection, like this fashion-forward saucepan (\$300) embossed with raised flowers against a textured matte cotton finish. 2997 Granville St., 604-620-3915. Lecreuset.ca



SAVON FAIRE

Featuring infusions of figue d'été, miel de lavande and fleurs d'oranger, Bastide's range of body lotions, creams and washes (at [Holt Renfrew](http://HoltRenfrew)) are crafted by French artisans through the centuries-old process of saponification, transforming Provence olive oil and coconut oil into purifying, pampering bath products. 737 Dunsmuir St., 604-681-3121. Holtrenfrew.com

DRESS SUCCESS

Referencing classic pajama style, Ganni's garden-worthy Joycedale maxi dress (\$565) is made of fluid silk crêpe de chine printed with painterly blooms. Net-a-porter.com



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FASHION & SHOPPING

Form and Flow

CALLING FORTH THE POWER OF WATER,
CHANEL ENCHANTS US INTO SPRING-SUMMER 2018
BY RACHEL JOHNSTON

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The natural elements influence everything from the foods we eat to our modes of transportation to the songs we bop along to. Fashion is no exception and, for its Spring-Summer 2018 Ready-to-Wear show at Paris' Grand Palais, Chanel sent its season's best strutting down a runway meant to represent the Gorges du Verdon in the South of France, complete with tumbling waterfalls, cascading vines and rock edges.

The extravagance when it comes to locale and décor is not a surprise, coming from design wizard Karl Lagerfeld, but an amazing feat nonetheless—and clearly crucial to illustrate the inspiration behind the collection.

As it flows, water cleanses, transforms and gives life, guiding us into the emergence of spring. Fitting, then, that shades of blue and aqua dominated the looks in classic Chanel tweed, leather and knits. Playful pastels and fringe also featured, with bra tops paired with mini-skirts and wide-shouldered (or “tumbling,” according to Lagerfeld) suit jackets matched to wide-legged cropped trousers. Puff-sleeved blouses flounced while quirky clear plastic hats, ponchos and thigh-high



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“As it flows, water cleanses,
TRANSFORMS and gives *LIFE*, guiding
us into the emergence of **SPRING**”



boots paid compliment to a glistening waterfall (and also, functionally, protected from splashes). Bold lip and blue eye-shadowed faces provided a retro spin next to accessories all a-glitz, including raindrop earrings and crystal beaded necklaces.

And the bags? Oh the bags! In prismatic vinyl the Boy Chanel shimmered down the catwalk while the 11.12 danced with rainbow sequins. Mini backpacks showed in either patent leather or vinyl and clutches carried their own micro rain capes. Celebrities speckled the enthused crowd, including actress Monica Bellucci and supermodel Cindy Crawford (her daughter, Kaia Gerber, walked the show).

To encapsulate the pieces, the iconic house chose Dutch model Luna Bijl and American Grace Elizabeth for the accompanying ad campaign—timeless beauties exuding youth and vitality. Shot by Lagerfeld himself, the images dive deep into aquatic tones, showcasing with pastel elements and bold energy. Available in boutiques now, the collection is ready for your purchasing *plaisir*. Chanel.ca



Hot Shops

VANCOUVER'S GREATEST AND LATEST RETAILERS



ARC APPAREL

For those of us who wish to shop for fashion-forward threads without concern for their impact on the world, **ARC Apparel**, housed in a circa-1800s heritage building on the edge of Gastown, is a dream come true. The do-good dudes in this boutique are thoroughly researched by founder Sarah Stewart to ensure the brands behind them pay workers fairly and hold the environment in high regard—plus, they're super stylish, to boot. From well-known clothing cos like **Levi's** (which works with a strict code of employment ethics and does much in the realm of sustainable manufacturing) to local designers like **Emma Knudsen** (her products, too, are made in a responsible and ethical manner), ARC is a rich source of wardrobe-filling garments we can wear in exceedingly good conscience. **306 W. Cordova St., 604-620-6044** Arcapparel.ca NOA NICHOL

MOSH FRAMEMAKERS

Fun fact: Vancouver is home to one of just three female eyeglass frame-makers in the whole wide world. That said, after several years perfecting her craft, Sara Moshurchak (one of these wonder women) has set up shop along Water Street, rebranding as **Mosh** (her high-school nickname). Although a beautiful collection lines the shelves (along with other brands), customized frames are the focus here. In a workspace tucked behind the tiny bright-yellow showroom, Moshurchak and her team of self-described "optical elves" craft artisanal bespoke eyewear for local and international clients seeking a one-of-a-kind statement piece. Choose your own shape, size and lens colour or implement meaningful materials like prairie wheat, bridal veil lace and, yes, even dog hair (this is Vancouver, after all)! **45 Water St., 604-488-0909. Moshframemakers.com** RACHEL JOHNSTON



ENTER TO WIN!

A pair of handcrafted eyeglasses from Mosh Framemakers! Find out how at Vitadaily.ca/contests



AVENUE ROAD

What do you do with 12,000 square feet of primo heritage space in downtown Vancouver? If you're Stephan Weishaupt, you open a "total concept design destination" complete with flower shop, café and an anything-but-ordinary furniture store that caters to every room of your home, from kitchen to bedroom to patio. The aim of **Avenue Road**, according to Weishaupt, is to encourage people to come in, meander and enjoy the offerings, much like they would in a gallery or museum (easy, considering the eye-popping stock comes from master designers like **Vivienne Westwood**, **Paul Smith**, **Alexander McQueen** and **Porsche**, among many others). In fact, everything you see in store, from the ceiling lights to the coffee cup your latté comes in, can be purchased for your own abode—and it's all set against a gorgeous backdrop dreamed up by interior designer Abraham Chan, a native Vancouverite who made sure to preserve portions of the century-old building's history and pay tribute to the region's natural environment in, for instance, original Douglas fir columns and beams. **301 W. Pender St., 778-588-6840. Avenue-road.com** N.N.



KIT & ACE

If you're in Gastown and craving some **Kit and Ace**, don't be alarmed if you can't find the old shop. The Vancouver-based athleisure brand has relocated just a hop, skip and a jump down Water Street, bidding farewell to its original flagship. The move is symbolic of a lesson experienced by the company in its first few years of operation: "To create the next best thing, you may have to leave something you are fully invested in behind." But don't get us wrong, the long, narrow showroom is by no means a downgrade and still classic Gastown beautiful (read: bricks and beams), sprinkled with green and draped in that luxe technical apparel us West Coasters have grown to adore. **165 Water St., 604-559-8363. Kitandace.com** R.J.



TOPKNOT BEAUTY ROOM

Canada's only top-knot beauty bar has opened in Yaletown. The knotted-updo menu features styles named after supermodels (think: Cindy, Naomi and Kate). Co-owner Ashlee Oldenburger, who's worked hair with top designers at New York Fashion Week, recommends the Gisele for first-timers, as the half-up, half-down look nicely frames the face. Though Topknot's "mane" attraction is its buns, it's really a full-service beauty bar that offers haircuts, waxing and YUMI keratin eyelash enhancements. So, the next time you're planning a night out to let your hair down, think up. Think Topknot. **1243 Hamilton St., 604-979-8809. Topknotbeautyroom.com** MIRANDA SAM



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Flower Crown

VANCOUVER DAD-SON DUO LEONARDO AND MARCO REDAVID ARE BUILDING A HAIR-CARE EMPIRE BASED ON NATURE'S BOUNTY
BY NOA NICHOL



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Tell us about your love for hair.

Leo: When I was a kid in Italy I'd hang around the barber shop in my neighbourhood. I liked the vibe there, where everyone would hang out. When I came to Canada I had to beg my dad to let me go to hairdressing school, and I learned really quickly. I had a love for it; it was very natural for me to do hair.

Marco: My dad had a super old-school family. When he said he wanted to do hairdressing it didn't fly at all. Unfortunately, my dad lost both his parents at a young age. At 19 he had to look after his family, and at 24 he decided, "That's it I'm going to follow my passion and become a hairdresser." My first passion was golf, and I became a golf pro, but eventually my passion shifted and I wanted to help my dad out on the business side of things.

What sets REDAVID apart?

Marco: I'd say it's our protein, which is derived from sugar cane. It's one of the most molecularly similar proteins to hair, so it binds really well. The chemist my dad's worked with for 35 years said he had to try this Dynagen-R protein, it's been scientifically proven to grow hair faster, to strengthen the follicle, to boost the nutrition from root to tip. My dad said, "OK, sure, I'm broke, but I'll put it on my credit card." It cost \$5,000 and the jar it came in was the size of a coffee tin. It's super, super expensive, but man-oh-man it works. The minute my dad put it into his products people who had been coming into the salon every six weeks like clockwork started booking every five weeks because their roots were coming in so fast, their hair was growing like weeds. And then there are all the nice botanicals we use, like rosemary and ginseng and aloe vera. We use all naturally derived and plant-based formulas in our products. My dad's been a flower child his whole life. When we go golfing he hits his ball into the bush and, when he comes out, he's got flowers behind his ears.

Leo: I live in the West End so it's kind of my backyard. Stanley Park has got so many beautiful plants and trees. Sometimes I'll just go into the park and smell things and think, "Oh, this would be a great hand-cream fragrance." The true mark of an artist, I think, is to see the world in a different light. Any artist can find greatness and inspiration by opening themselves to the world around them. The artist asks, "What if?" and everything changes. I have always, for example, loved orchids—their elegant form, their symmetry, their beauty. One day, many years ago, I saw these flowers in a different light. The shine, the delicate, touchable softness in every petal. I wondered if the precious oil contained within the orchid can offer the same benefits to hair. I asked myself, "What if?" and that's how REDAVID Orchid Oil was born.

What are the benefits of orchid oil when it comes to hair?

Marco: It gets rid of frizz, it detangles, it adds incredible shine and moisture to hair, but one of the coolest things we found when we started studying orchids was their anti-aging and moisture-balancing properties, which in part are the reason behind an orchid's longevity. If you've ever had an orchid plant at home you know that it's very low maintenance. You put an ice cube in its pot once a week and it lives. The reason is it contains components that regulate the amount of moisture the plant either absorbs or



blocks. When these properties are on hair they act as a moisture balancer. If you're in a really humid climate, the orchid oil won't allow your hair to absorb that moisture and go poof. If you're in a dry climate it will allow your hair to absorb moisture and stay soft. It also scavenges free radicals four times better than vitamins C and E combined.

Leo: I usually try to look up flowers or plants that last a long time because I feel they have some moisture properties. In this case it just happened that I love orchids and that Richard, my chemist, was already using this oil in skin products. Everything just came together beautifully.

How is orchid oil sourced?

Marco: The orchid plant that we use blooms twice a year. We steam distill the petals and the stems and that allows us to get the most oil out of the plant without altering its natural state. If you ever grabbed one of these orchids, they're really thick and hardy. If you squeeze the petals you can actually see and feel the oil come out of the plant.

Leo: Like a little gummy bear!

How does Vancouver inspire you?

Leo: I've travelled a lot and Vancouver you can describe in one word: it's fresh. I want to inspire the world with this beautiful British Columbia product. Sometimes Canadian people, they think we can't do good stuff. They think something from France or something from Italy is better than something from Vancouver and our goal is to change that and put Vancouver on the map when it comes to the best hair-care products in the world.

Marco: Our bottles are blown in a company in Kelowna, our lab is in Vancouver, right off of Franklin Street, we get our labels from Burnaby, we do all our printing here, so we focus really hard on keeping everything local and supporting people here as well. We're in salons now on Rodeo Drive in California beside the highest-end products in the world. Our product is sitting on those shelves and competing and representing. We're proud to be supporting B.C. in all these ways.

Hair and happiness—what's the connection?

Leo: You've been to a salon, right? You sit in the chair and you get a shampoo done and it feels amazing. All your worries are washed away. And then there's nothing like getting a nice hair cut, a beautiful blow dry. Your hair feels like silk, you're rejuvenated and you're happy.

Marco: During our Orchid Oil Challenge last year we sent out about 15,000 samples to Canadians who signed up. Every day I was waking up to messages and emails from people thanking us for creating an amazing product. It was humbling, I wasn't expecting that. I knew we had a good product, but there was a lady that messaged me saying it gave her more confidence, her hair hadn't looked this good in 20 years and it's actually changed her life. That's the power of hair, the power of looking and feeling good and walking down the street with confidence because you're having a great hair day!

Leo: I've been a hair dresser pretty much all my life and when I quit two years ago from cutting hair it was probably my saddest day, close to when I lost my parents, because saying goodbye to so many people you've loved and shared secrets with ... a hair dresser can make you very happy, and so can beautiful hair. It's not everything, but it's something.
Redavidhair.com

"I've travelled A LOT and Vancouver you can describe in one word: it's FRESH"



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A REDAVID prize pack! Find out how at Vitadaily.ca/contests



New Noshes

WHERE AND WHAT TO EAT THIS MONTH

COLETTE GRAND CAFÉ

Whether the name *Colette* conjures up the famous lifestyle store in Paris (recently shuttered) or the long-gone author of *Gigi*, now the reference for Vancouverites will be the reimagined restaurant in **Holt Renfrew**. After taking Toronto by storm the stylish French concept was brought to the West Coast this month, taking over the café space behind **Louis Vuitton** (we recommend perusing the spring collections of **Céline** and **Chanel** first—you know, to get you in the mood for a glass of French bubbles by **Perrier-Jouët** at the bar). The design of the café will soon shift to match the Gallic-influenced menu (think beef tartare with cornichons) but here's hoping they keep the pretty white-rope wall that makes a perfect Instagram backdrop for you and your hot-pink Holts shopping bags. **737 Dunsmuir St., 604-678-0316. Colettegrandcafe.com** SARAH BANCROFT



PHOTOS: ALLISON KUHL



VIRTUOUS PIE

Gone are the days that saw university dwellers surviving on **Kraft Dinner** and canned soup. **Virtuous Pie** has opened its second Vancouver location in UBC's Wesbrook Village with a plethora of plant-based offerings—think pizzas topped with house-crafted nut cheeses (like truffle almond ricotta or cashew mozzarella) and to-die-for cashew/coconut ice cream (also whipped up in-house). Translation: treats that vegans normally consider off limits are the focus here. Hanging greenery, greys and charred black wood wreathe the space along with locally designed light fixtures and garage doors leading out to a sure-to-be-packed-in-the-summer patio. Savour your slice with a turmeric latte from the coffee bar (exclusive to this location) and finish your meal with a cashew soft-serve sundae sprinkled with almond cookie crumble, shaved dark chocolate and fresh strawberries. Patience is a virtue but we're already scheming up our next visit. **3339 Shrum Lane, 604-428-1060. Virtuouspie.com** RACHEL JOHNSTON



TRACTOR

Pioneer in the field of healthy fast-serve, **Tractor** has cruised into another area of our fair city. Smack in the medical district of Fairview, this is the fifth location for the family-owned cafeteria-style resto. The crisp space boasts glistening white tile, wood and natural greys with sunshine-yellow seating and a south-facing terrace. Nutritional offerings have grown to include hot veg dishes like quinoa cauliflower pilaf and root veg alongside staple faves like wild mushroom salad or tomato fennel soup. And if à la carte isn't your jam, opt for build-a-bowl with either a brown rice or greens base, salad or veg mélange and finished with your choice of protein. With a full coffee bar serving up **49th Parallel** joe, take care of that midday caff fix or choose-your-own-adventure from taps a-flow with local brews **Yellow Dog** and **Four Winds** beside Van Island-based **Sea Cider**, Okanagan vino and **Healthy Hooch** kombucha. Now this is a local collab engine we can get behind. **601 W. Broadway Ave. Tractorfoods.com** R.J.



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TRIPS & SIPS

French Fête

A GILDED HOLIDAY IS YOURS ON FRANCE'S ILE DE RÉ
BY KRISTIE PERROTTE

S

Sun-soaked yachts, ripe vines, the purple haze of lavender—the South of France nods to a Branson or Ecclestone lifestyle. But those who limit themselves to the Saint-Tropez, Cannes or Nices of the region are missing out on an experience that is *vraiment française*. Ile de Ré—fitting for the golden rays dripping from the rooftops, bathing the whole island in a honey glow—is situated off the country's west coast and connected by a 2.9-kilometre bridge to the mainland and the La Rochelle airport. Dubbed the “Hamptons for Parisians,” it is truly a journey into a slower, more wholesome pace, where bicycle or horseback is the preferred (possibly the only) way to get from point A to point B.



SEE

Exploring the quaint towns of La Flotte or Saint-Martin-de-Ré, enjoying long lunches on the terrace or simply sun lounging with the latest copy of *French Vogue*, it's easy to leave the city behind and fall into island life. Rent a bike. Explore the zigzag of cycling and hiking trails. Hop from town to town. Stop in on the locals offering oysters and a glass of chilled Chenin blanc from what could easily be mistaken for a child's lemonade stand. Iledere.com

SNACK

A must-eat-at is *Au QG de la Mer*—a seaside oyster shack with a chalkboard menu of oysters, langoustines, prawns and mussels, plus a wine list that puts any Parisian bistro to shame. Park your bike and spend a lazy afternoon under a straw parasol gazing across the white-capped waves to the mainland. Degustationhuitres-iledere.fr

SAVOUR

If you've still not reached your daily oyster quota, the many quayside restaurants can repair that. We like *Le Serghi*, offering such delicia-seas as fresh cod with gnocchi, prawn and mango ceviche, and salmon gravlax with black sesame. Leserghi.fr

STAY

The heart of the island—and the quaintest of the fortified towns—is the UNESCO World Heritage site of Saint-Martin-de-Ré. With its quayside hotels and eateries, you're more likely to see an old family-run fishing boat than a celebrity super-yacht. At the centre of it all is the 17th-century *L'Hotel de Toiras*, immaculately decorated in baroque style with lush fabrics and antique touches. Perfectly positioned for a romantic getaway, the concierge service caters to one's every need—from organizing private boat tours to catering beachfront picnics for two. Hotel-de-toiras.com



STAY LONGER

If a relaxed setting is more your style, head online and nab one of the island's postcard-perfect cottages, some dating back to the 14th century. If they look relatively similar, there's good reason—all of the shutters on the island must be painted one of eight shades of green or blue to preserve the quaint village feel. Plus, many cottages come fitted with their own set of bikes!



SET OFF

It's more about when not to go, and that's any French long weekend or the month of August, when Paris empties and the affluent, celebrity—and those wishing to be—descend upon the small island oasis. September is a much better bet, when the summer sun is still offering its warm blanket and evenings are crisp and fresh (consider yourself informed!). Combine the trip with a few days of wine tasting in the Bordeaux region and you'll discover that *la vie est vraiment belle!*

Grape Escapes

FRANCE AND THE SECRETS IN HER GRAPEVINES
BY LAURA STARR

We all know and love our French wines: a wander through the aisles of any local liquor store will surely entertain your thirst for the erudite terroir of Burgundy, Bordeaux and Champagne—lands we can intimately taste via the bottle on the comfort of our own Canadian soil. But globalization booms aside, there are still some vino gems that don't make it past the borders of the motherland of wine—secrets that require a plane ticket, a curious palate and a healthy dose of wanderlust. Here, then, are three enigmatic grape-producing regions of France: if you need more of a reason to visit them than floral landscapes, exquisitely crafted humans, heritage of a calibre unfamiliar to Canada and culture that is sacredly protected, then simply do it for these destinations' very cool wines.



BERGERAC, DORDOGNE

Welcome to the land of truffles! And, also, bright and flowery white wines that are an absolute bargain (we're talking \$8 a bottle). The grapes will be familiar to you (think Sauvignon, Sémillon and Muscadelle) but the house blends are rarely exported, consumed exclusively by locals.

PROVENCE-ALPES-CÔTE D'AZUR

A land known for its fields of flowers but worth the trip for its Tibouren Rosé—a spicy rich and orange-peel-y wine that, should you need a teaser of the land, is actually available through one producer, Clos Cibonne, at private liquor stores.



GAILLAC, MIDI-PYRENEES

Just north of Toulouse, this dreamy land is, supposedly, the oldest wine region in France—besides which, one of its white wines hails from a very uncommon grape called Loin de l'œil, known for wonderful rich aromatics of orange blossom, rosewater and almond.

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