By Jurgen Lijcops

Lannoo

Introduction by Jurgen Lijcops

The best wine bars are a boon to humanity in many respects. Cosy, stylish and often inspiring locales where we can meet friends and relax. An inviting ambience – the final step in a creation process both natural and fascinating – forms the perfect setting for sophisticated drinks crafted in a symbiosis between terroir and winemaker.

As a sommelier with experience in a variety of restaurants and wine bars, I have always respectfully immersed myself in the collective endeavour that vineyards and winemakers embark upon to craft exceptional wine. In-depth courses, endless tastings, intense trainings, and continuous study. All are milestones on the journey taken by every professional sommelier. Relationships with gifted winemakers also serve as the basis for grasping the essence of making and serving wine. They afford insights into the finer points of the winemaking craft that cannot be gleaned from professional literature. Glimpses of the cherished, hard-won secrets of what makes some wines special and unique. This brings me to my mentor, the Flemish winemaker and pioneer Peter Colemont, owner of Clos d'Opleeuw, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for honing and deepening my understanding of producing and assessing wines, and of the profession of sommelier.

With all of that knowledge, abundant experience, and professional connections in the wine world, selecting and assessing an authentic, exciting wine list becomes so much easier. Just as the excellence of the cuisine defines the quality of a restaurant, the skilfully selected wine references signal a wine bar's ambitions. And just as a restaurant's setting, interior, comfort and service levels are the DNA of its dining experience, location, views, décor, and hospitality are the essence of a truly unique wine bar.

In this book, you and I will travel the world, and visit 150 of the world's most iconic wine bars. Stunning locales where tantalising and fascinating wine selections are served in an ambience that brings people together over an exquisite glass of wine.

In vino veritas!

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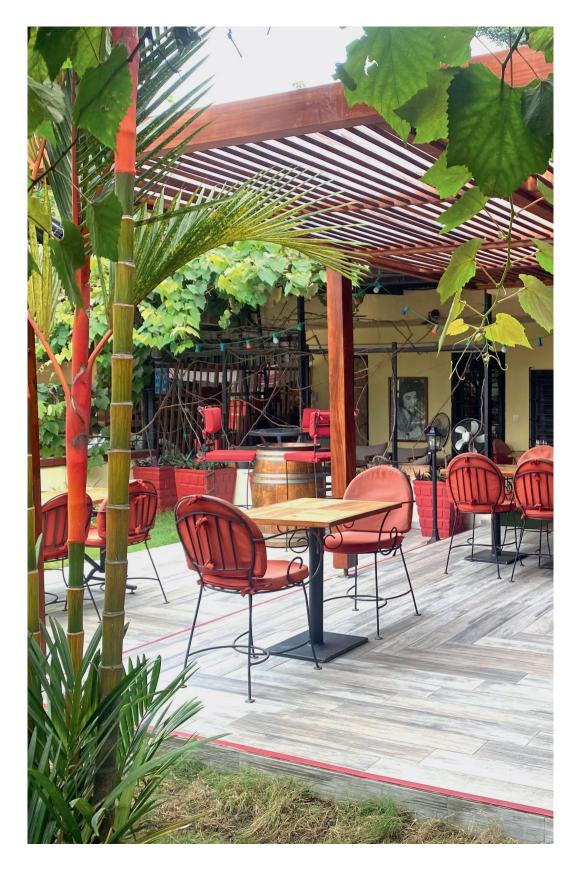
LA ROUTE DES VINS

72Q9+8RM, Impasse Bugeat, rue Paul Langevin, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

It's a champion of French organic wines and fine food, uniquely located in one of West Africa's booming metropolises It's another wine miracle – here in tropical Ivory Coast, a beautiful country known for its fine cocoa beans and fresh ginger juice, you can also find some of the world's best natural wines and an abundance of the best French products. Initially opened by Franck Lainé in Togo in 2009, La Route des Vins relocated to Abidjan in 2017 and has been a hit with the locals ever since. Here guests can enjoy Lainé's hospitality along with a choice of 450 wines, from 150 mostly organic winemakers on the bar's lovely shady terrace. Favourites include Château de Fosse-Sèche, by sustainability champions Adrien and Guillaume Pire; Flo and Olivier Leriche's Domaine des Accoles and Olivier Bellanger's La Piffaudière. Also on offer are many great wines from Burgundy, Franck's native region. Guest sommeliers, such as John Euvrard, who has worked with Paul Bocuse for over 15 years, are regularly invited, while food includes charcuterie and cheese platters sourced from the best French producers.





Amman

02

13C BAR IN THE BACK

129 Arar St, Amman, Jordan

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This chic bar, hidden behind the showroom of Jordan's leading wine producer, offers both worldclass wines and food Among the old souks and Roman ruins of Amman is a nondescript street that you must not miss: it is home to 13C Bar in the Back, one of the Middle East's top wine bars and restaurants. Named after the ideal temperature at which to store wine, it is accessed through a small door at the back of the fully stocked showroom of Jordan's Zumot Wines. A hidden oasis for wine lovers and foodies alike, it features Art Deco-inspired interiors, with a large oval bar and sheltered terrace. Any bottle of the 600 different wines from Jordan and Lebanon to the Mediterranean—including Zumot's very own Saint George Cabernet Sauvignon—can be bought from the shop and consumed in the bar for a minimal corkage fee. Its award-winning food offering focuses on Mediterranean small plates with Levantine touches, as well as a *risotto al vino* prepared with the diner's preferred wine, and a three-cheese mille-feuille that looks worth the trip to Jordan on its own.

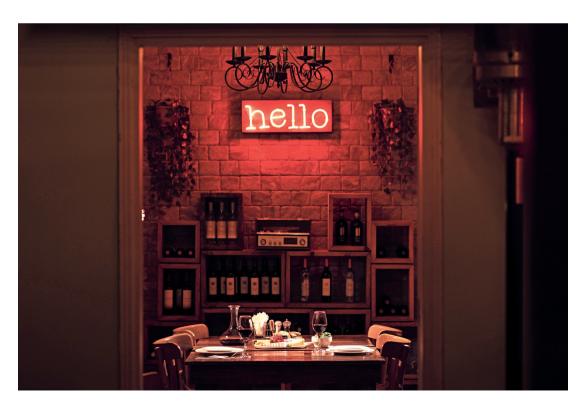


03 L'APPARTEMENT

Jean Jalakh St, Achrafieh Sioufi, Beirut, Lebanon

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

Discover the lesserknown world of Lebanese wines in a secret oasis in the centre of bustling Beirut 'It all started in an apartment in Beirut where a group of friends and acquaintances would gather every week for an art atelier. We would paint, create and share stories over wine and music, always leaving feeling more connected and inspired than before,' explains L'Appartement's founding team. The gathering grew in popularity, and a new wine bar and bistro was born, first as an underground speakeasy, and now as a terrace in a hidden garden in the heart of Beirut. Its focus is on Lebanese wines—the country has a rich history dating back thousands of years. Its unique geography and climate provide ideal conditions for growing a number of grape varietals, resulting in rich and complex flavours, from crisp whites to bold reds. On the constantly growing menu are bottles of Ixsir, Château Qanafar, Terre Joie, Vignoble Joura, Château Khoury and Château Nakad, while foodwise you can expect French dishes such as *steak frites* and *pain perdu*.



04 THE BAR AT NILE PLAZA

1089 Corniche El Nil, 11519 Garden City, Cairo, Egypt

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This chic hotel bar overlooking the mighty Nile is the place to sample the hidden gems that are Egyptian wines Although Egypt is not widely known for its winemaking tradition, it actually has a pretty impressive one. It dates back to the 3rd millennium BCE, when a thriving industry was established in the Nile Delta to supply the red wine that played a key role in ancient Egypt's ceremonial life. Today there are still a handful of producers in the country, and one of the best places to sample their wines is The Bar at Four Seasons Cairo at Nile Plaza. With wonderful views over Cairo and the Nile, this plush third-floor bar is decorated with Art Deco motifs and classy portraits of Egyptian movie stars from the 1940s and 1950s by leading local studio photographer Van Leo. Head bartender Hany Moussa's 'By the Glass' menu offers a selection of Egypt's sparkling, rosé, white and red wines, from the Nile Vineyards' Lavita Secco to Gianaclis Vineyards' Omar Khayyam Sultanine Blanche/ Bobal. Other local winemakers featured include Karm El Nada Vineyards and Egybev's Beausoleil. Bar snacks include a hit list of world dishes, including a large selection of sushi.



CULTURE

103 Bree St, Cape Town City Centre, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

This award-winning wine bar offers a carefully curated selection of all-time classics and unusual bottles Opened in 2020 on Cape Town's coolest block, Culture is a buzzing wine bar with warm and inviting interiors by Stokperd. The key to it success is its offer of over 45 wines by the glass, from a diverse wine list, which owner Matt Manning has put a 'great deal of time, love and effort into curating'. Choose from two award-wining menus that blend quirky and well-known wines: the Culture List focuses on local wines including Mullineux Chenin Blanc 2020, Sons of Sugarland Barbera and Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs; while the Wanderlist, a collaboration with Radford Dale Imports, features international wines such as Yalumba Y Series Riesling, Yves Cuilleron Les Vignes d'à Côté and Jean Chartron Rully. In addition to the traditional cheese and charcuterie boards, tapas options include delicious tempura broccoli and beef shin croquettes. Just above the bar is the Wine Library, a members' club with a walk-in cellar and a hub for South Africa's leading wine professionals.



LEO'S

Shop 28, De Oude Schuur, 120 Bree St, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

TO VISIT BEFORE YOU DIE BECAUSE

It's small but perfectly formed, offering not only an exciting selection of wines, but also great food and art Another Bree Street stalwart is this little family business, Max's bagel shop by day, and Leo's wine bar by night—a truly unusual but delicious combo. It's known for its pizza bagels and food pop-ups (think ramens, fish burgers and Spanish tapas) prepared by top chefs from South Africa and beyond. But the main draw is its selection of low-intervention wines and ciders from small producers. On the menu are bottles such as Force Celeste Chenin Blanc, Testalonga El Bandito, Whole Bunch Syrah and Craven Pinot Gris. The team loves nothing more than tasting the latest 'bonkers co-ferment' and selecting wines that 'challenge and surprise'. Co-owner Matthew Freemantle's love for collaborations and art means plenty of exciting projects, from producing its own Fun Cat rosé, to artworks on the walls curated by designer friends Hoick Studios. (Past exhibitions include a series of monotypes inspired by outtakes of overheard bar chatter.)



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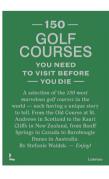
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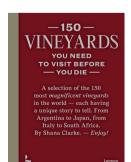
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