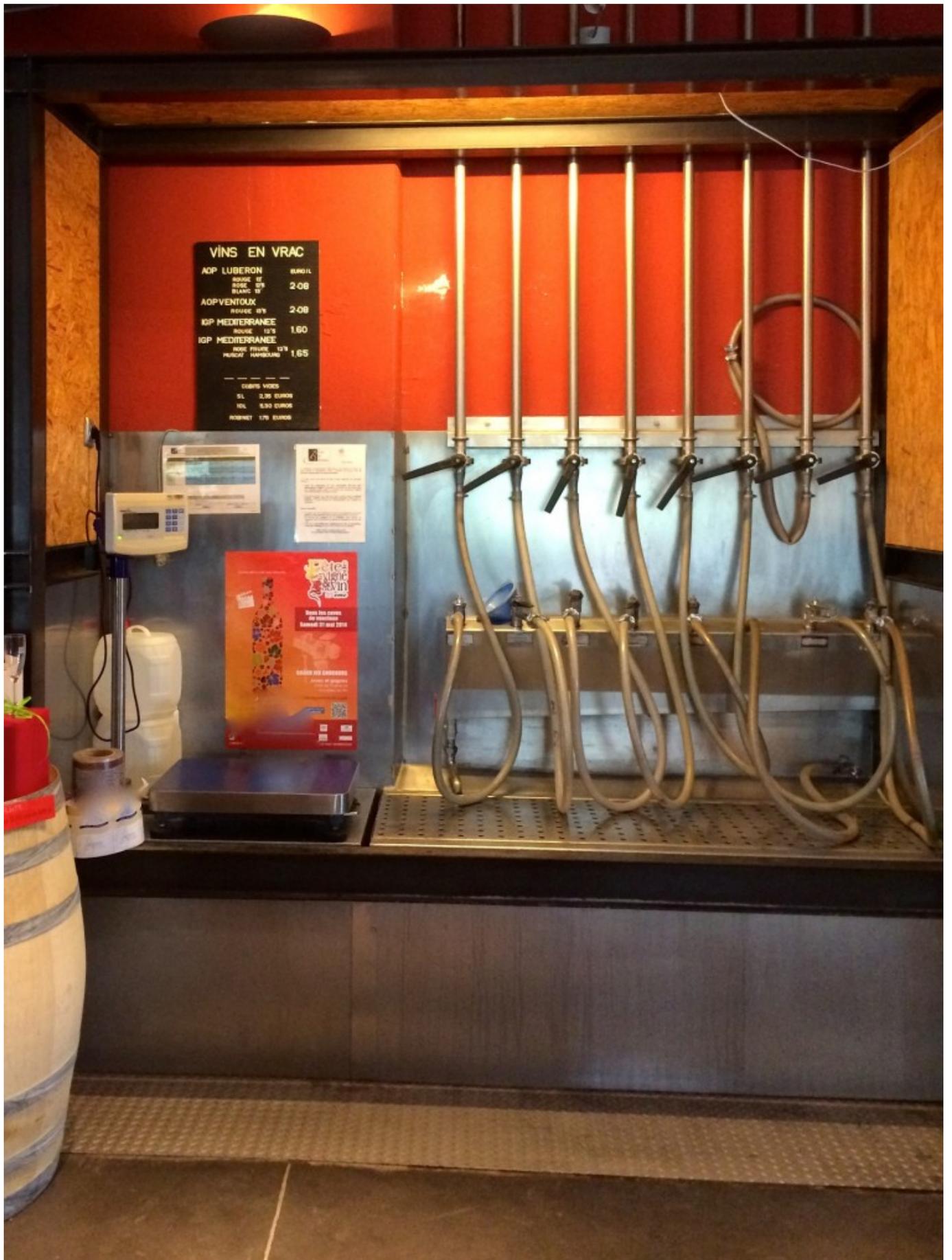


Wine Cooperatives In South Of France

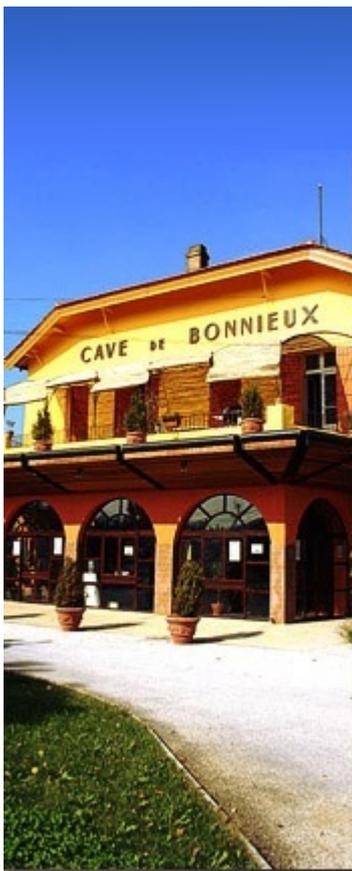
In France every region has their own wine cooperative, called *cave* (pronounced with a soft a, like 'ahhh'). In Provence, you can find caves in almost every village, large or small. As you explore the [villages of the South of France](#), we recommend stopping in for a browse and tasting wherever you can.

When you buy from the local wine cave, you are truly getting a taste of the *terrior* of the region. Buy local, taste local! And the adage – what grows together, goes together could not be more true. Wine from the village, cheese from the village, bread from the village bakery – could there be a more wonderfully local, Provencal experience than that?



Wine cooperatives started in the late 1800s, mostly out of

economic necessity, and continue to flourish today. A wine cooperative essentially consists of a building with winemaking facilities and a wine shop. During the harvest period, called *vendanges*, local farmers bring grapes from their land and either make their own wine, or pool their harvest with those of their neighbors to make a local wine. There are more wine grape growers than winemakers and not every grower has the desire, skill or finances to be a winemaker. Growers then hire or appoint a winemaker who utilizes the wine cave's equipment and resources. The winemaker selects the best grapes grown under the best conditions and makes a wine with the input of the collective, reflecting the best qualities of the region's grapes and land. The wine is then sold by the cooperative, with proceeds shared proportionately among the growers.



In addition to wines made from local grapes, you can often find wine made from small vintners in the area in the shop of a cooperative. The selection varies on the size of the cave, but often you will find an extensive collection of wines you may not be able to acquire elsewhere. Wineries are often spread out, and it's nice to have one central place to taste and purchase local wine to enjoy with an apéritif or evening meal. Like most French wineries, tasting at the cave is free.

The most fun thing about a wine cave is that you can bring in your own container and fill it inexpensively with any of the wines on tap. There's always a red, white and rosé, and

usually a few choices among them. You can also buy wines by the bottle or, now that you're in on the local's secret, bring your own wine jug to fill.

For those who are renting villas in the Luberon, one of the most popular regions in the South of France, the [Cave de Bonnieux](#), founded 1920, is especially lovely and as a bonus, eco-friendly. Situated just outside the village of Bonnieux, the cave has a wide selection of wines and a small range of food items for sale. From May to the end of September, the cave hosts a market on Wednesday mornings, featuring regional producers. You can also find a wonderful cave in the village of Saint-Rémy-de-[Provence](#).

Learn more about the [Tours in the South Of France](#)

[Saint-Rémy-de-Provence on Market Day: A Tour for Your Senses](#)

[Saint-Rémy-de-Provence](#) is a hotspot for [luxury villa rentals](#) due to its proximity to the Luberon, Avignon, other quaint Provencal villages and the wide variety of amenities and services offered within the village.

While on vacation in Provence, be sure to visit Saint-Rémy on a Wednesday to enjoy the market. Well known as one of the best in the region, the St-Rémy market has everything – fabric, clothing, flowers, ceramics as well as a plethora of produce

and prepared food. Walking through the sprawling market is a nice tour of the old village, taking you past shops, musicians, art and historic buildings, but really it's a tour for your senses. Fabrics are soft to the touch, art and pottery are colorful and visually striking, and the food, oh the food!

The food section of the market is an expanse of wonderful scents and beautiful visuals. I dare you to not fill your tote with all the fixings for an evening's aperitif or an afternoon picnic! The bread smells warm and inviting, like it's just come from the oven, the olives glisten, the produce is bright and fresh and the fruit smells so sweet it could be candy. The strawberries from Carpenteras are a personal favorite. I also love stopping



by the spice vendors – the aromas are so fragrant and tantalizing I envision my next flavorful meal as I move from one end of the booth to the other, inhaling and day-dreaming. Many of the vendors offer samples and you should definitely try everything! If you like cooking, this market is foodie heaven. And if you don't feel like cooking, you can pick up some of the wonderful prepared items – tapenade, cured meats, preserves, local honey and don't forget the cheese! So many delicious cheeses to choose from!

Arrive early, before 10am, to avoid the crowds. Parking can be a little tricky, but there are a few lots just outside the ring road that require only a few minutes walk to the market and village.



After strolling the market, peruse the shops and stop by one of the many restaurants for a coffee or a glass of rosé, perhaps Le Bistrot des Alpilles. For a nice lunch, try Le Bistrot Decouverte or La Gousse d'Ail. If you've somehow managed to get through the market without purchasing cheese, be sure to go to the fabulous La Cave aux Fromage – you can even have lunch there! To appease your sweet tooth, you absolutely must visit Joël Durand Chocolatier or the nearby sweets shop, Le Petit Duc. Both boutiques offer samples and they are delicious!

If you're up for sightseeing, head over to the Saint-Paul Asylum to admire the scenery that inspired some of Van Gogh's most famous works. You can also take a tour of Glanum, Roman ruins just outside the village of Saint-Rémy.

[Learn More About Saint-Rémy-de-Provence Villa Rentals & Tours](#)



[Avignon Rose Festival](#)

Rose-growers from France and abroad showcase their newest roses at [AlteraRosa](#) in the Benoit XII cloister, a lovely courtyard at the Pope's Palace in Avignon from May 29th to June 1st 2014.

Other activities at this exhibition include floral art workshops, seminars on caring for and breeding roses as well as modern uses for the rose fragrance. Arrive in Avignon early any morning (except Monday) to stroll through the outdoor market, then head over to the Pope's Palace for the roses, giving yourself enough time to enjoy lunch in town afterward.

[View More Tours In Provence](#)

Soap Tour In Provence

While you are planning your Provence Vacation one place that you will not want to miss is a tour to Marius Fabre Soap Factory, Soap Museum and Our Shop. Marius Fabre started up in the garden shed, where he set up two cauldrons and a few moulds. At that time, Salon-de-Provence was an extremely prosperous city, thanks to the commerce of oil, soap and coffee. The abundance of raw materials in Provence (olive oil in the Alpilles, soda and salt in the Camargue and oils (coco-nut and palm) coming in from the colonies via the port of Marseilles) had made possible the development of the soap-making industry

The Famous Savon (soap) de Marseille

by Magnus Kilian

The tradition lives on

You cannot help but see it everywhere while visiting Provence –in the markets, small boutiques, on the shelves at local grocery stores...Like so many aspects of Provence life, it's use goes back hundreds of years yet it continues to live on.

Marseille soap or *Savon de Marseille* is a traditional soap made from vegetable oils that has been made around Marseille, France, for about 600 years, the first documented soapmaker in the area being recorded in about 1370. By 1688, *Louis XIV* introduced regulations (*Edict of Colbert*) limiting the use of the name *savon de Marseille* to soaps made in and around the Marseille area, and only from olive oil. Today this law still applies, although the regulations now allow other vegetable oils to be used.

How it is made

Traditionally, the soap is made by mixing sea water from the [Mediterranean Sea](#), olive oil, and the alkaline chemicals soda ash (sodium carbonate) and lye (sodium hydroxide) together in

a large cauldron (usually making about 8 tons). This mixture is then heated for several days, stirred constantly. The mixture is then allowed to sit and, once ready, it is poured into a mold, and allowed to set slightly. Whilst still soft, it is cut into bars and stamped, and left to completely harden. The whole process can take up to a month from the start before the soap is ready to use.

Recommended by Dermatologists worldwide

Marseille Soap is traditionally green or white. The original green soap is made with at least 50% olive oil, while the white soap is made with palm oil. Savon de Marseille is recommended by dermatologists worldwide for dry skin conditions and other ailments. Its purity and incredible moisturizing properties make it ideal for sensitive skin. In France it has been trusted for generations to clean everything, from linen to little faces.

A Visit to Marius Fabre in Salon-de-Provence

[Marius Fabre](#) is one of the few remaining factories and is located in Salon-de-Provence. A tour is highly recommended. The factory has a gift shop (naturellement!) and is small and individual enough to learn about the complex manufacturing process.

Having said that, Savon de Marseille is of course also available, at very reasonable prices, in every supermarket and grocery shop. Many aromas, shapes and sizes are on offer. An ideal take-home-as-gifts-for-friends item.

Visit www.marius-fabre.fr to learn more or [Tours In Provence](#)
