



CHATEAU BELLE-VUE  
Bhamdoun

## CHATEAU BELLE-VUE

### Lebanon

Owner: Boutros Family

Winemaker: Naji Boutros

Website: [www.chateaubelle-vue.com](http://www.chateaubelle-vue.com)

Chateau Belle-Vue started in 1999 as Naji Boutros's simple desire to pay homage to a legacy of viticulture in a village shattered by war three decades ago. This is Bhamdoun, and the terraced mountainside vineyards produce wine for Chateau Belle-Vue, a micro-winery producing around 20,000 bottles a year. It quickly became clear that the most natural route to rebuilding the local economy was viticulture, in light of the village's reputation for table grape production and the wealth of terraced vineyards lying forgotten in the surrounding valley.

The team at Chateau Belle-Vue continually strives to produce wine of the very highest quality. They use traditional, organic farming methods in all its vineyards and gardens and continually plant trees as well, including the fig, olive, cedar and umbrella pine trees native to the area, thus supporting a green and fertile valley.

Amounting to 60 acres of land, these vineyards sit from 1,000 to 1,300 metres above sea level, benefiting from changing temperatures in an essentially Mediterranean climate - hot and dry from April to October and cold and damp in winter. Other advantages of Bhamdoun's high-altitude viticulture are:

- The skin of the grape naturally thickens in an effort to protect the pulp from UV light. Thicker skin results in deeper color and an increase in tannins, which benefit the wine's aging capacity.
- Terraced, mountainside vineyards promote excellent drainage of the soil. Additionally, precipitation in the form of rain and snow is a "winter only" prospect. From May until late September no rain falls. The resulting grapes are small - about the size of a chickpea - and intensely concentrated.
- Dry mountain air discourages biotic disease while cool, Mediterranean breezes increase the fruit's acidity.
- Moderate summer temperatures at high altitude encourage photosynthesis and healthy plants. The natural, organic environment (including land intentionally kept fallow) lends balance to the ecosystem.
- Intense mountain thunderstorms ionize the rain, charging it to allow minerals to move more efficiently through



the soil.

Belle-vue's clayish, rocky soil is high in minerals and low in organic material. The soil's Exchange Capacity - or the capacity of transferring flavor to the fruit - is among the highest recorded anywhere.

- Fermentation time is extended when the oxygen content of the ambient air is lessened, as is the case at high altitude.

For all these reasons Lebanon is among the oldest sites of wine production in the world, dating back to 3000 BC, when the Phoenician traders began making wines in the coastal strip of today's Lebanon, called then "the land of Canaan". The 15-year civil war that struck Lebanon from 1975 stunted the development of the sector, which was resumed in 1992 after the fragile peace. Recently the sector has witnessed an unprecedented growth. The number of wineries went from 5 in 1998 to 30 nowadays.