



# CHÂTEAU GASSIER

EN SAINTE VICTOIRE

## OLIVIER SOUVELAIN PRESIDENT



In 2010 Olivier Souvelain took charge of the Château Gassier Winery in Provence and under his guidance this family-sized estate, situated at the foot of the Sainte Victoire Mountain, has made it into the big league in just a few years. This sports-lover, with his passion for France, has always drawn on his family values, high standards, and determination to promote his country's gastronomic and wine-making heritage around the world. After a series of enriching experiences he has finally settled in Provence, where the beauty of the countryside, the quality of the wine and the personality of the local people have won the heart of this Norman...

Olivier was born in 1968 in Normandy. One of his grandfather was a cabinetmaker, the other one owned a grocery shop and his uncle was a farmer, so he quickly understood the importance of hard work and did not think twice about working hands-on and out in the field, from the very beginning of his professional career, with audacity and determination. At just 17 years of age, he became a salesman at the Institut Européen des Affaires (IEA) and immediately decided to focus on the export market. He started out with the United Kingdom and then Canada, with the objective of promoting French products and finding distributors for them. The following years took him to Southern Europe (Madrid), and then Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, etc.). These experiences were professionally and personally enriching for this naturally energetic and curious young man.

In 1989, when his business school peers were looking for jobs in big companies, he preferred to join the team of a family-sized Winery in Morey Saint-Denis (Burgundy), the very same that had given him his chance during his first internships. This was a deliberate choice in order to be as close as possible to the product and the people creating it. Showing typical Norman spirit, he immediately pulled up his sleeves and got down to work perfecting his technical skills: tending to the vines, the winemaking process, blending, maturing, etc. This know-how would prove essential for the 12 years of sales and technical experiences which would follow, and then for his future managerial tasks.

In the early years of 2000, he left Burgundy for Paris and swapped production for distribution. He took charge of Laplace - a company that seeks out and distributes fine wines for the on-trade market - and was rapidly recognized for his hard work and integrity. The firm was soon counting on him to rescue and develop its business. In 2008, he met Antoine Leccia, already CEO of Jeanjean, who immediately saw in him the human and managerial qualities in line with the ambitions of the future Advini. Two years later, he proposed that he leave the grey skies of Paris for the sunny climes of Provence.

### THE ENCOUNTER WITH CHÂTEAU GASSIER

For Olivier this was a professional and life-changing opportunity and he threw himself into this new challenge with energy and humility. Just like he had done in the past, he began by spending 6 months in the field, watching, asking questions, and tasting the wines. He was keen to understand this region, the wines, and the local people. He wanted to take inspiration from the

land to gain a clearer vision of the future of the Winery. Then came the time for action, and he embarked upon major projects, including reorganizing the vineyard, working on the Château Gassier identity, and above all his mission to promote the Sainte Victoire appellation.

Like a maestro, Olivier puts his trust in his teams whom he directs without ever straying from his guiding principles and his values. So he has managed to maintain the family spirit of the Winery while bringing it up into the ranks of the other great Côtes de Provence wines. So the story between Olivier and Château Gassier has only just begun, and many other projects are underway to promote this status of Vigneron en Sainte Victoire which he holds so dear.

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