

# Les Amants de la Vigneronne

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HÉRAULT



Hailing from the inclement Brabant, Régine and Christian Godefroid were drawn to the south by the climate. "It rains rather a lot in Belgium so we came in search of the sun." They ended up with more than sunshine: a whole new life in a hilly land 'twixt mountains and sea', plus vineyard.

La Vigneronne is a grand 19th-century house with blue shutters on the edge of the wine village of Faugères. When the couple arrived it was in a parlous state but Christian and Régine beavered away, and so successfully that by the end of the first year they had restored the main house and created five B&B rooms. Next, five hectares of vineyards needed attention. "We opened the winery in 2003 and our first vintage was in 2004," says Régine.



From the courtyard you enter a snug salon and a dining room built into the old winery vaults. A crackling fire in the grate of a large cheminée illuminates old bottles and country bric-a-brac, while shadows dance on rustic walls. In contemporary bedrooms are new terracotta-tiled floors, original oak-beamed ceilings and the occasional wall of exposed stone, meticulously restored. Voile-hung four-poster beds add softness, a canopy ring was crafted from an old wine barrel, and restored oak doors open to bathrooms, one with a spa bath.



Régine serves dinner by the fire on cool evenings but most of the year they eat outside. Ask, and she'll give you a recipe: "Good food does not need to be complicated." The entrée she cooked for us is an excellent example: Pélardon goat's cheese sprinkled with pepper and thyme, a touch of garlic and a drizzle of honey, served on salad leaves with a light vinaigrette. Breakfast is a tasty array of fresh bread and homemade preserves (fig, quince, cherry, lemon) – and, as befits a proper Belgian household, chocolate and cheese.

Christian has named his small winery Les Amants (The Lovers). His wines, too, have sensual names. "Yes, I choose



unusual names for my wines," he admits, as he pours a generous glass of De Chair et De Sang (Flesh and Blood). "This is a full-bodied wine that gets its plenitude ('la chair') from the grenache grape and its cardinal colour ('le sang') from the mourvèdre." As for the intensely dark Rouge aux Lèvres (Blood on the Lips), its inspiration was an old vampire film. The name of Christian's juiciest white wine, Soif de Toi (Thirst for You), is taken from a psalm. Visit the boutique and wine bar in the vaults where they stock wines from each of Faugères' producers.

La Vigneronne's wines are grown organically and the harvest is done by hand. Each autumn, friends work from first light to bring in the crop and Régine keeps them going with supplies of coffee. After a hard day's harvesting (or exploring) it's comforting to know you can come back here. Take a dip in La Vigneronne's pool or find a seat in the shady courtyard for a moment's contemplation. Or visit Faugères' Les Trois Tours, an amazing three-towered windmill (still functioning) on a windswept hill with stupendous views.

### WINES

Les Amants de la Vigneronne,  
'De Chair et de Sang' Faugères

A leg of lamb, slowly oven-roasted with garlic, thyme and rosemary begs for a full, juicy southern red. Christian's wine is just the ticket: a blend of deeply coloured mourvèdre and firm, concentrated grenache make a full bodied wine bursting with lively fruit. You'll find aromas of almond and vanilla, white pepper and dark chocolate.

Wines €8-€22.50



Régine & Christian Godefroid  
Les Amants de la Vigneronne,  
La Vigneronne, 18 route de Pézenas,  
34600 Faugères

- Rooms: 5 twins/doubles, €74-€106
- Meals: Dinner, with wine €32.
- Closed: 15 November-15 February
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- [www.lavigneronne.com](http://www.lavigneronne.com)

