

DOMAINE DE LA MOTTE



BONFILS: A STORY OF WOMEN AND MEN, WINEMAKERS FOR FIVE GENERATIONS

In 1870, Joseph Bonfils was a young teacher, and participated in the revolutionary Paris Commune. He was subsequently forced into exile in Algeria where he met and married Honorine Dorvaux, who was from Alsace.

They lived together in a small Algerian town on the Mediterranean coast called Mostaganem. The climate was harsh, and the soil was hard, except for a fertile river plateau where Honorine started a farm and planted grape vines. She worked tirelessly and began growing the Bonfils family legacy. In 1875, she was the first woman to receive the Medal of Agricultural Merit. This prosperous period ended when Algeria declared independence in 1962. The land planted by Honorine was nationalized. Having lost everything, the Bonfils family was forced to return to France. They settled outside Béziers, in the Languedoc.

A few generations later, Jean-Michel Bonfils purchased 15 acres of vineyards in the Languedoc with a loan, using his reputation and a handshake as collateral. Jean-Michel grew up in his family's cellars and vineyards, and worked tirelessly, like his ancestor Honorine. He prospered and purchased an additional 25 acres in a short time. Over time he kept buying little parcels of vineyard as opportunities arose. In 1978 he acquired Domaine de Cibadiès in Capetang (in the Languedoc), now the headquarters of Bonfils Vineyards, where Domaine de La Motte is grown and produced.

In 1990 Jean-Michel's son Laurent, then 25 years old and recently graduated from Dauphine, took over Domaine de Cibadiès. At the time, all the wine produced by Bonfils was sold in bulk to other suppliers. With the help of his brothers, Olivier and Jérôme, Laurent increased production and began marketing the finished wine under the family's own brands. Today, Jérôme manages the vineyards, Olivier makes the wines, and Laurent handles the marketing and business management.

