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Borgogne region welcomes visitors with opening of three new wine centers

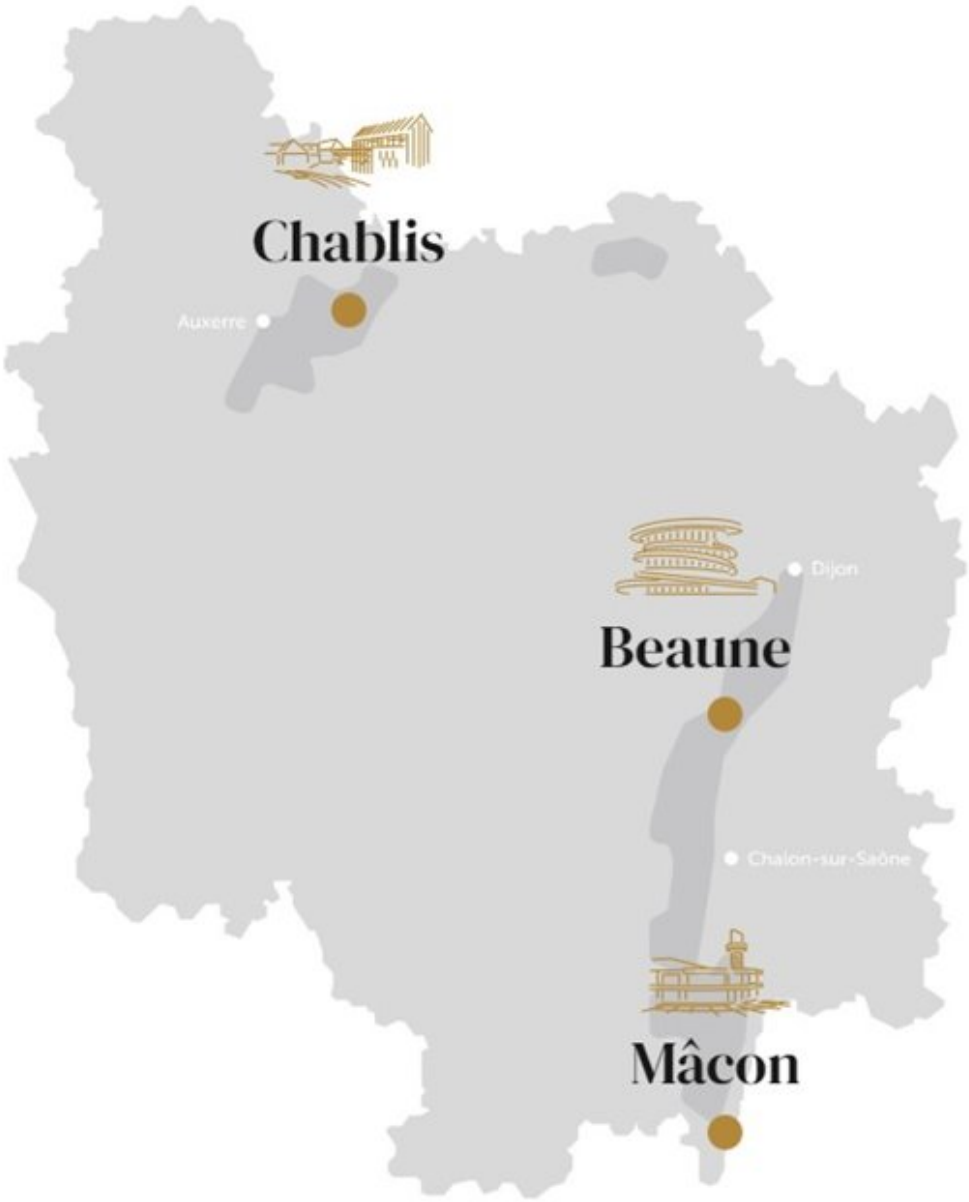
'Cité des Climats et Vins de Bourgogne' showcases rich wine tradition in france's celebrated Borgogne region

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The picturesque region of Borgogne in France, renowned for its exquisite wines, has recently unveiled three new visitor centers dedicated to sharing its rich winemaking heritage with the world. This ambitious project, known as Cité des Climats et Vins de Bourgogne, is a collaborative effort involving several entities, and it features a flagship center in Beaune, along with two additional centers in Chablis and Mâcon.

The largest and most prominent of the three sites, situated in Beaune, opened its doors this week, while the other two centers, located at the northern and southern ends of the Borgogne region in Chablis and Mâcon respectively, were inaugurated last month.



The idea of establishing a collection of regional wine museums in the area had been under discussion for over 15 years. However, it was the inscription of the Climats of Burgundy on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2015, along with the subsequent opening of Cité du Vin in Bordeaux the following year, that spurred the realization of this project.

With an initial budget of 22 million euros (equivalent to 23.8 million dollars), the project received support from the city of Beaune and the BIVB (Burgundy Wine Board), which oversaw the concept and agreed to the creation of the three sites. Furthermore, it garnered financial and moral support from some of Burgundy's most renowned names, including Domaines Albert Bichot, Boisset, Leflaive, and Romanée-Conti, among many other wineries, cooperatives, wine merchants, as well as local banks and wine-related service providers.

The Beaune center is located on the outskirts of the city, within a new 10-hectare park called Parc de la Chartreuse, which is designed to be carbon-neutral and aligns with the city's commitment to environmental sustainability. The Chablis center, on the other hand, is situated near the center of the small town, adapting an existing event venue building, while the Mâcon center is located on the outskirts, alongside the Saône River, at the site of a former local wine information center. Each of these centers boasts a distinctive architectural design.

Although the basic structure of the museums is the same at all three sites, each offers additional regional features. They all include bars, gift shops, bookstores, event rooms, and facilities for the prestigious Burgundy wine school.



These interactive museums provide an excellent opportunity for wine enthusiasts and their families to delve into the intricacies behind Burgundy's wines. Special care has been taken to include exhibits and activities specifically designed for children, such as "cabottes," vineyard shelters where they can play and learn with educational toys.

While children are entertained, adults can immerse themselves in the region's history, geology, grape varieties, barrel making, characteristic wine aromas, and the challenges posed by climate change, among other topics. The interactive displays employ cutting-edge technology, offering a modern and educational approach.

One particularly impressive interactive feature is a three-dimensional topographic map providing an aerial view of the vineyard areas. Visitors can activate the effects of different weather systems in the area through a series of selections.

A highlight of the exhibitions is the focus on "climats," a term that refers to a specific concept unique to Burgundy, encompassing the history, terroir, and individuals associated with a particular winegrowing area. The "climats" include both classified vineyards as grand cru and premier cru, as well as those that are not.

Visits are generally self-guided and last approximately 90 minutes, with ticket prices starting at nine euros depending on the location. At the conclusion of the tour, a small wine tasting is offered.

There is hope that the Cité des Climats et Vins de Bourgogne will alleviate some of the pressure on wine producers in terms of educational visits, as it assumes that educational role. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to embrace and respect the traditions of the region by utilizing its own language.

With their impressive architectural beauty, innovation, and accomplishments, the centers of the Cité des Climats et Vins de Bourgogne deserve a visit from wine professionals, students, and enthusiasts alike.