

# CHÂTEAU BELLE-VUE, LA RENAISSANCE, BORDEAUX STYLE BLEND

BHAMDOUN- MOUNT LEBANON, LEBANON 2007

## FRUIT



## EARTH



## BODY



## TANNIN



## ACID



## ALCOHOL



Today's wine hails from the cradle of vine cultivation (along with Georgia and Iran). Lebanon, known in biblical times as the land of Canaan, was exporting wines to Egypt as early as the 2600 BC and is believed by many to have been the source of the Phoenician religion's Dionysus, the precursor to Rome's Bacchus, God of Wine. Due to decades-long volatility in the region and a civil war from 1975 to 1990, Lebanon's wine industry took a major hiatus. Today, a band of talented producers are proving, once again, that one of wine's oldest growing regions is capable of producing world-class wine, especially with Bordeaux-style blends. I recently tried the 2007 Château Belle-Vue la Renaissance and the wine had polish and class which, to be perfectly honest, I never expected. This wine delivers the quality and depth of a top-flight Bordeaux, but also offers a richness and fullness on the palate which most Bordeaux never reaches. If you love Bordeaux and Bordeaux Blends, this unique red will impress even the most seasoned fans.

Naji Boutros, owner and founder of Château Belle-Vue along with his wife Jill, left his tiny, home village of Bhamdoun during the early days of Lebanon's civil war. He attended Stanford and made a name for himself on Wall Street and in London's world of finance. After two decades, Naji returned home with his wife and four children with a passionate determination to return his family's land to its agrarian roots and help the village prosper again. Today, Château Belle-Vue is the largest employer in the community. Bhamdoun, nestled half an hour east of Beirut on the hills above the entrance to the Bekaa Valley, is a village that has been rejuvenated with the help of Naji and Jill as well as the local B&B, bistro and public library. The vineyards of Château Belle-Vue stand on hallowed ground for Naji. The first vineyard they planted rests of the soil of his maternal grandparents' Hotel Belle-Vue, which was forced to close its doors and serve as the family residence when war hit. Although the structure did not survive the war, the vineyard upholds the family's agricultural roots while the winery bears its name.

Naji and Jill practice organic viticulture, dry farming and maintain incredibly low yields, which results in maximum concentration as evidenced by their stunning wine. They utilize cover crops to prevent erosion, maintain soil structure and manage water availability in their vineyards, which rise over 3000 to 4000 feet in altitude. This incredible mountain terroir provides unique minerality, a pest and disease-free environment and excellent diurnal shifts for their grapes, which are hand-harvested at optimal phenolic ripeness each year. The wine is fermented naturally without additional yeasts in stainless steel over three to four weeks. After a gentle press, followed by malolactic fermentation, the wine is aged by varietal for 24 months in new French Oak. After a final blend, the wines age in bottle for a minimum of two years prior to release. This particular blend of 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon is reminiscent of top-flight Bordeaux with a concentration and slight sweetness of fruit that surfaces in only the warmest vintages. With only 200 cases produced, this is truly a special, boutique wine that delivers astonishing price to quality.

Château Belle-Vue's Renaissance exhibits an opaque dark garnet core that moves to slight orange reflections on the rim, showing signs of maturity. The generous yet polished nose bursts from the glass with beautiful aromas of ripe and slightly dried fruits including blackcurrant liqueur, dried black cherries, black plum and a hint of black raspberry, laced with dried violets, licorice, wet tobacco leaf, dried leather, pencil lead and crushed gravel alongside cedar, chai, and an array of baking spices derived from the new oak. The full-bodied



**COUNTRY**  
Lebanon

**REGION**  
Bhamdoun- Mount Lebanon

**SUB-REGION**  
n/a

**VARIETAL**  
40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 60% Merlot

**PRODUCTION**  
n/a

**ALCOHOL**  
14.5%

**OAK**  
New French

**SOIL**  
Clay and Limestone

**FARMING**  
Sustainable