

Vinotherapy Just for You



In 1993, Mathilde Thomas and her husband Bertrand met at their family's vineyard Dr. Joseph Vercauteren, an eminent professor from the Faculty of Pharmaceutics at Bordeaux University. Mr. Vercauteren had discovered that grape seeds discarded at the end of the harvest contained powerful anti-aging properties; an antioxidant called polyphenol.

This discovery encouraged the Thomas' to produce the Caudalie skincare line in 1995, and four years later they trademarked the name Caudalie Vinothérapie and opened the world's first vinotherapy hotel, Les Sources de Caudalie, on their estate in France.

Vinotherapy includes Pulp Friction massage, wine-infused baths, grape extract facials and treatments using Olavie's Le Vin range of oils made from Chardonnay grape seed. Creams and oils from Chianti, Chardonnay and Pinot grapes are used for other treatments.

While the most famous of wine spas is probably still the very first one (Les Sources, above) in the Bordeaux region, the concept has been taking off across the world. Some claim that the Marqués de Riscal Hotel, opened in Spain's Rioja wine country in 2006, is an overwhelming experience. Another popular wine spa, located in the U.S. in the Sonoma Valley, is the Kenwood Inn and Spa. This 30-room, Mediterranean-style villa is surrounded by vineyards. Their specialty is the Sauvignon Massage.

Such spas can also be found in Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Australia and the United Kingdom. In South Africa, Vinotherapy is offered at the Santé Winelands Hotel & Wellness Centre. Nevertheless, Mathilde Thomas warns against some practices in some of these establishments. She said that drinking wine is not a part of the treatment and she also claims that "Bathing in wine is definitely not good for you."

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