

The World's Window on Japan

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Le Petit Tonneau

"Pink is the new black," proclaimed Parisian native Nelson Surjon, executive general manager of the Le Petit Tonneau group, as he poured us a glass of his favorite rose at the outfit's newly opened Le Petit Tonneau bistro in the center of Azabu Juban, Tokyo. While there are many insipid, flabby roses in the world (and no shortage of outright abominations — think White Zinfandel), this wasn't one of them. The Mas Cornet Rose (¥800/glass) is made by Abbe Rous from grapes grown in Collioure, a series of mountains which run directly into the Mediterranean just north of the French-Spanish border. The process used to make this wine is known as *saignée* (French for "bled"). In order to increase the color and concentration of their red wines, some quality producers bleed off a small percentage of the juice from tanks of recently crushed grapes, which results in a higher ratio of darkly colored skins to juice during fermentation. This "excess" juice is used to make high-quality rose. This wine is mouthwateringly succulent, high in acid, and has great grip; a glass to potentially convert any antirose holdouts. Nelson's top white recommendation was the Blanc de Blanc Terrassous (¥800/glass), from Collioure's nearby appellation of Côtes du Roussillon. An interesting blend of 50 percent Grenache Blanc, 26 percent Vermentino and 24 percent Macabeo, its bright lemon and mineral notes give it the freshness to stand up nicely in the warmth of the open terrace, but at the same time it has enough roundness and depth to pair well with Le Petit Tonneau's *steak frites*. The bistro lists 70 wines, all French — an astounding 36 of which are available by the glass. Many of these are directly imported by their parent company, and they are available online as well at www.petitonneau.com