

## About Occitan Imports

### Laurence Bertone Bio

My name is Laurence. In case you are wondering, in France Laurence is a girl's name! I was born in the North of France, in a region called the Pas-de-Calais. My father had a butcher shop in a coal mining town (a *coron*). When I was six years old my family moved to the South of France, where I lived for the next thirty years. When I was in my twenties, my boyfriend (now my husband) and I used to travel all over Provence on the weekends - riding our bikes, hiking, sightseeing - and we discovered many wonderful people, places and things. I now live in the United States with my husband and my two beautiful children. I started my business, Occitan Imports, so that I can stay connected to Provence and share some of the beautiful things it has to offer with others.



*How long have you been in this business?*

We've been in business since August, 2013 - so only about a year and a half. The business has been very successful - even more so than we had expected - and is growing fast.

*You mentioned already have customers in our area – meaning Portland, Oregon and/or Washington state?*

Yes, we have dozens of customers in Oregon and Washington. And our e-commerce “conversion rate” in Oregon is one of the highest in the nation (the conversion rate is the percentage of web site visitors that actually purchase something). So the people in Oregon like us even more (statistically speaking) than people from other parts of the US!

*What makes you different or special, compared to other online importers/sellers?*

Our goal is to bring our customers high quality, authentic French Provençal table linens at the lowest possible prices, and we take that goal very seriously. All of our products are truly made in Provence - many table linens that are marketed as “French Provençal” are actually not made in Provence, or even in France (many are made in India or China). I think another thing that's unique about us is that we are totally specialized in selling on the Internet, we ship very fast (99% of our orders ship within 1 or 2 business days), and we are **fanatical** about customer service (you can see some of our customer testimonials [here](#)).

### About our Name

Occitan is a language spoken in southern France as well as parts of northern Italy and Spain, an area unofficially known as Occitania. Occitan is a direct descendant of the spoken language of the Roman Empire, and was spoken extensively in southern France until well into the 20th century. The name of the language is derived from its word for "yes," which is "òc". In the past the Occitan language was often referred to as "Provençal" but the term Provençal, when used in a linguistic context, now more properly refers to the particular *dialect* of Occitan that is spoken in Provence. Although there are still several hundred thousand native Occitan speakers in Provence, spoken Occitan is rarely heard in public, and the number of native speakers is in sharp decline. However, the culture of Occitania lives on in the spirit of the people of Provence.

10% discount to AF de Portland members on purchases from the web site at [www.occitanimports.com](http://www.occitanimports.com). Just enter the discount code **AFPORTLAND** during Checkout and the discount will be applied to your order automatically.