

Armagnac vs. Cognac

Traditional Armagnac

Geographical situation : Southwest of France, inland, close to the Pyrenees mountains. The best grapes are grown on sandy soil and benefit from warm weather.

Producers: 800 small producers, no big Armagnac house. Armagnac did not initially benefit from the Bordeaux wine trade and the salt trade brought out by the English and the Dutch sailors.

Grapes : Ugni Blanc, Baco, Colombard, Folle Blanche

Distillation : single distillation in a column still (although double distillation is also allowed since 1972), at low degree of 54 to 58% vol.

Reduction : traditional Armagnacs are usually hardly reduced (unless sold young) because of their lower distillation degree.

Wood Ageing : Limousin (for vanilla and tannins) and/or black Gascon oak (for tannins, spices and color)

Vintages: Armagnac does not strictly regulate vintages. Armagnac invented the idea of “cask-strength”

Tasting Notes :

Aromas and notes of prunes, orange peel, quince, cocoa, almonds, figs and walnuts, spices and natural sweetness. Rich and fat texture, fruity, hearty, rustic and complex.

Production :

About 6 Million bottles / year

US consumption :

206,613 bottles / year



Traditional Cognac

Geographical situation : Southwest of France, on the Atlantic Ocean. The best grapes are grown on chalky soil and enjoy mild temperature and salty mist from the sea.

Producers: Many big (and powerful) houses and small producers. Cognac, by its location, benefited from the Bordeaux trade and salt trade brought out by the English and the Dutch sailors.

Grapes : 98% Ugni Blanc

Distillation : the law requires all Cognacs to be distilled twice in a charentais still at a degree of 70% vol. at the end of the second pass.

Reduction : Cognacs need to be reduced with water because of the higher degree of the distillation.

Wood Ageing : Limousin (for vanilla and tannins) or Tronçais oak. Very few cask-strength Cognac.

Vintages: vintage production is very regulated by the BNIC, and also very costly, so there are very few vintages available. Very few cask-strength Cognac.

Tasting Notes :

Aromas and notes of flowers, citrus, peach, dried fruits, overall more subtle because of the double-distillation. Overall lighter in texture but rich and long in flavors.

Production :

About 160 Million bottles / year

US consumption :

47 Million bottles / year

