

South West Wine Information

Identity card

The South-west vineyards spread over 50 000 hectares of vines in the Midi Pyrénées region and a part of The Aquitaine. In 2010, it has produced around 450 Millions of bottles (around 3.3 Millions hl.)

Nowadays South-West wines are excellent value for the money and should be recommended because of their unique personality based on local history and traditions.

Wedged between the Bordeaux region and the Pyrenees Mountains, the **South-West** of France is exceptionally sunny during the summer and autumn.

With Massif Central Mountains on the East and the Atlantic Ocean on the West, the Midi-Pyrénées is a very beautiful region of mountains and plateaux, lakes and rivers, as diverse as the wines from the **South West** of France.

South West Wine Making

South West of France is the most varied wine region in France. It is also one of the oldest. Many grape varieties grow only in this region: Tannat, Manseng, Fer Servadou, Négrette and a dozen of other varieties.

The history and the diversity result in wines of strong personality that will never go out of fashion. Tannic full bodied red wine in Madiran, sweet Gaillac wine, intense red Cahors or aromatic dry Jurançon. French South-West wines have plenty of things to offer to any wine lovers.

The main local grapes in the South West of France are Négrette, Tannat, and Malbec for the red ones and, for the whites, white Ugni Blanc and Manseng.

Wines from the South West of France are diverse. For example, we have:

Light to medium-bodied reds : Fronton (rosé also), Saint-Mont (rosé and white also)

Powerful or full-bodied red wines: Cahors, Madiran

Dry and sweet white wines: Jurançon, Gaillac (Red and rosé also)

Sparkling wines : Gaillac "Méthode Ancestrale"

Sample of appellations:

Cahors

Cahors wine is harvested in the Lot, around the nice town of Cahors, from Auxerrois grape mainly. It is one of the oldest vineyards in France.

Cahors is a powerful red wine, often harsh when young but remarkable after a few years in bottle.

Famous estates: Ch. du Cèdre (P. et J M Verhaegue), Clos Triguedina (JL Baldés)...

Madiran

Right in the middle of a region which mainly produces white wine like Pacherenc and Jurançon, **Madiran** is a sanctuary for red wine.

The vine growers in **Madiran** produce a red wine endowed with (doté d'un) a particular character. It is elaborated from quality grape-varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon & Franc, but the most popular variety is Tannat, a typical grape from the area.

Madiran is a rough wine when young. After a few years in a cellar, it turns into a sensual and tannic wine.

Famous estates: Ch. Montus and Bouscassé (A. Brumont), Dne Berthoumieu (D. Barré)...

Jurançon and Jurançon sec

Jurançon acquired its celebrity while being used for the baptism of King Henri IV. The vines grow on steep slopes such as in Hermitage, undergoing (subissant) both oceanic and mountainous climates. The vine growers use traditional grapes such as Lauzet, Petit and Gros Mansengs and Courbu.

Sweet Jurançon is a golden wine with exotic fruits and honey aromas. It can age for a very long time.

Dry Jurançon has a colour drawing towards clear green and It is a fresh and aromatic dry wine. Dry Jurançon accounts for 75 % of the total wine production in Jurançon

Famous estates: (Marie et Charles Hours) Uroulat, (Henri Ramonteu) Dne Cauhapé...

South West of France Wines and food

For most French, South West means good food!

Because the wines are so diverse in the South West of France, the food that will match these wines will be varied as well :

- Red wines are perfect with local food such as Cassoulet or roasted duck.
- Dry white wines can be paired with river fish (such as organic trout or salmon from the Adour river) or with white meat such as free range poultries or goat's milk cheeses.
- Sweet whites pair well with "Foie gras du Gers" or a local blue cheeses.
- Sparkling wines go well with local desserts like "Pastis Gascon" or, served as an Aperitif.

Food of South West of France:

People in South West of France love rich and fatty foods. That's what has been called the "French Paradox". The recipes have always been the same for ages and it seems that world food companies have no power over there!

- Cassoulet from Castelnaudard (beans and sausages - English are always amazed to see that one of their favourite breakfast is also a very popular dinner meal in France ! Actually Cassoulet is Cassoulet and nothing else)
- Bayonne Ham
- Poule au Pot (stuffed hen)
- Poulet Basquaise (Basque style chicken)

Cheeses of South West France:

The region is also a natural place for great cheeses such as

- Roquefort and Ossau Iraty (sheep's milk)
- Rocamadour (Goat's milk)
- Laguiole, Tome des Pyrénées (Cow's milk)