

## FRANCE – SOUTH-WEST

<p><b>SPECIFICATIONS</b> (What you have to know)</p>	<p><b>DISTRICTS, COMMUNES AND VINEYARDS</b> South West: Bergerac, Monbazillac, Cahors, Madiran, Gaillac, Jurançon Indication Géographique Protégée: Côtes de Gascogne IGP, Gers IGP</p> <p><b>KEY LIGHT WINES</b> Red Cahors Madiran White Inexpensive IGP (eg Gers IGP or Côtes de Gascogne IGP)</p> <p><b>KEY FACTORS</b> <b>Grape varieties:</b> Tannat, Gamay Noir, Syrah, Mauzac, Fer, Len de l'EI, Petit Manseng, Gros Manseng, Petit Courbu <b>Vinification:</b> Passerillage, Micro-oxygenation</p>		
<p><b>HISTORY</b></p>	<p>- Vines cultivated in Roman times but winemaking really started in the Middle Ages under the influence of monks and monasteries - Trade development limited by Bordeaux &gt; non Bordeaux wines taxed. Further inland (e.g. Madiran), commercial progress limited by lack of easy navigation to the sea and competition with other crops. - Bergerac: Long to recover from Phylloxera</p>		
<p><b>CLIMATE &amp; WEATHER</b></p>	<p><b>Maritime</b> but generally less heavily influenced by the Atlantic // Bordeaux</p>		
<p><b>GRAPE VARIETIES</b></p>	<p><b>Bordeaux varieties</b> i.e. Merlot, Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc, Sauvignon blanc, Sémillon and Muscadelle dominate in Bergerac (+Monbazillac), Buzet &amp; to a lesser extent Gaillac (white varieties) and Fronton (red varieties)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><u>Reds</u></p> <p>- <b>Auxerrois / Malbec – Cahors / Bergerac /Buzet / Fronton</b> Believed to originate from Burgundy (Cot) Thin-skinned grape / needs more sun vs. Cab Sauv or Merlot Often cultivated in bush vines (gobelet) Darkest and most tannic wines in limestone soils of Cahors Ripe fruit &gt; deep colour, ample tannins and aromas of damsons, tobacco and raisin</p> <p>- <b>Tannat – Madiran / Cahors</b> Tough, deep black-berried grape Often blended w Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc and Fer to soften <b>astringency</b> Deep colour, very high potentially astringent tannins, hi alcohol, raspberry aromas and ageing potential <b>Micro-oxygenation</b> created to help soften tannins</p> <p>- <b>Duras – Gaillac</b> Early budding vine Usually blended w Fer and Négrette Deep colour, full bodied wines with good structure and acidity</p> <p>- <b>Braucol / Fer – Gaillac / Madiran</b> Main component in Gaillac; minor in Madiran &amp; Bergerac; nothing to do w the Argentinian Fer Aromas of currants and red fruits w soft tannins</p> <p>- <b>Négrette - Fronton</b> Grown primarily between Toulouse and Albi Suited for hot, dry climate of Toulouse Fruit flavours w slight animal or violet flavour Must dominate the blend in Fronton AC</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><u>Whites</u></p> <p>- <b>Mauzac - Gaillac</b> Principal grape variety in Gaillac Relatively aromatic (apple flavours) Usually blended w Len de l'EI Slight revival since the late 80s</p> <p>- <b>Len de l'EI - Gaillac</b> Compulsory minor ingredient in Gaillac whites Powerful and characterful but can be flabby</p> <p>- <b>Ondenc - Gaillac</b> Poor yields and prone to rot</p> <p>- <b>Petit Manseng – Jurancon / VdP</b> Top quality small thick-skinned white grape Very low yields but <b>ideal for sweet wines</b> Less than 1/3 of G. Manseng volume in France</p> <p>- <b>Gros Manseng – Jurancon Sec / VdP</b> Yields more generously to Petit Manseng Less elegant and rich. Rarely used for sweet wine</p> <p>- <b>Chardonnay, Colombard, Ugni blanc</b> for VdP</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><u>Reds</u></p> <p>- <b>Auxerrois / Malbec – Cahors / Bergerac /Buzet / Fronton</b> Believed to originate from Burgundy (Cot) Thin-skinned grape / needs more sun vs. Cab Sauv or Merlot Often cultivated in bush vines (gobelet) Darkest and most tannic wines in limestone soils of Cahors Ripe fruit &gt; deep colour, ample tannins and aromas of damsons, tobacco and raisin</p> <p>- <b>Tannat – Madiran / Cahors</b> Tough, deep black-berried grape Often blended w Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc and Fer to soften <b>astringency</b> Deep colour, very high potentially astringent tannins, hi alcohol, raspberry aromas and ageing potential <b>Micro-oxygenation</b> created to help soften tannins</p> <p>- <b>Duras – Gaillac</b> Early budding vine Usually blended w Fer and Négrette Deep colour, full bodied wines with good structure and acidity</p> <p>- <b>Braucol / Fer – Gaillac / Madiran</b> Main component in Gaillac; minor in Madiran &amp; Bergerac; nothing to do w the Argentinian Fer Aromas of currants and red fruits w soft tannins</p> <p>- <b>Négrette - Fronton</b> Grown primarily between Toulouse and Albi Suited for hot, dry climate of Toulouse Fruit flavours w slight animal or violet flavour Must dominate the blend in Fronton AC</p>	<p><u>Whites</u></p> <p>- <b>Mauzac - Gaillac</b> Principal grape variety in Gaillac Relatively aromatic (apple flavours) Usually blended w Len de l'EI Slight revival since the late 80s</p> <p>- <b>Len de l'EI - Gaillac</b> Compulsory minor ingredient in Gaillac whites Powerful and characterful but can be flabby</p> <p>- <b>Ondenc - Gaillac</b> Poor yields and prone to rot</p> <p>- <b>Petit Manseng – Jurancon / VdP</b> Top quality small thick-skinned white grape Very low yields but <b>ideal for sweet wines</b> Less than 1/3 of G. Manseng volume in France</p> <p>- <b>Gros Manseng – Jurancon Sec / VdP</b> Yields more generously to Petit Manseng Less elegant and rich. Rarely used for sweet wine</p> <p>- <b>Chardonnay, Colombard, Ugni blanc</b> for VdP</p>
<p><u>Reds</u></p> <p>- <b>Auxerrois / Malbec – Cahors / Bergerac /Buzet / Fronton</b> Believed to originate from Burgundy (Cot) Thin-skinned grape / needs more sun vs. Cab Sauv or Merlot Often cultivated in bush vines (gobelet) Darkest and most tannic wines in limestone soils of Cahors Ripe fruit &gt; deep colour, ample tannins and aromas of damsons, tobacco and raisin</p> <p>- <b>Tannat – Madiran / Cahors</b> Tough, deep black-berried grape Often blended w Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc and Fer to soften <b>astringency</b> Deep colour, very high potentially astringent tannins, hi alcohol, raspberry aromas and ageing potential <b>Micro-oxygenation</b> created to help soften tannins</p> <p>- <b>Duras – Gaillac</b> Early budding vine Usually blended w Fer and Négrette Deep colour, full bodied wines with good structure and acidity</p> <p>- <b>Braucol / Fer – Gaillac / Madiran</b> Main component in Gaillac; minor in Madiran &amp; Bergerac; nothing to do w the Argentinian Fer Aromas of currants and red fruits w soft tannins</p> <p>- <b>Négrette - Fronton</b> Grown primarily between Toulouse and Albi Suited for hot, dry climate of Toulouse Fruit flavours w slight animal or violet flavour Must dominate the blend in Fronton AC</p>	<p><u>Whites</u></p> <p>- <b>Mauzac - Gaillac</b> Principal grape variety in Gaillac Relatively aromatic (apple flavours) Usually blended w Len de l'EI Slight revival since the late 80s</p> <p>- <b>Len de l'EI - Gaillac</b> Compulsory minor ingredient in Gaillac whites Powerful and characterful but can be flabby</p> <p>- <b>Ondenc - Gaillac</b> Poor yields and prone to rot</p> <p>- <b>Petit Manseng – Jurancon / VdP</b> Top quality small thick-skinned white grape Very low yields but <b>ideal for sweet wines</b> Less than 1/3 of G. Manseng volume in France</p> <p>- <b>Gros Manseng – Jurancon Sec / VdP</b> Yields more generously to Petit Manseng Less elegant and rich. Rarely used for sweet wine</p> <p>- <b>Chardonnay, Colombard, Ugni blanc</b> for VdP</p>		
<p><b>VITICULTURE</b></p>	<p>20,000ha of AC &amp; 50,000ha of total vines split 50/50 between individual producers and coops.</p>		
<p><b>WINEMAKING</b></p>	<p><b>Micro-oxygenation</b> created in Madiran to accelerate softening of tannins during maturation Sweet Jurancon produced using <b>passerillage</b> (grapes dried on the vine), at least 2 passages at harvest in vineyards, aged in oak.</p>		
<p><b>WINE APPELLATIONS &amp; STYLES</b></p>	<p><b>1. Bergerac AC</b> (●●●+ sweet) – <b>8,000ha</b> Eastern continuation of right bank and Entre-deux-mers with vineyards on both sides of the Dordogne Climate between <b>maritime and continental</b></p>		

Soils from alluvial silt to clay and limestone on higher terraces  
Makes mainly reds from Bordeaux varieties w increasing proportion of barrel-aged Côtes de Bergerac (lower yields & higher abv ~12.5%abv) and whites (Bergerac sec)  
**Sweet botrytised whites** made in Monbazillac, Saussignac and Haut-Montravel – all ACs.

– **Monbazillac AC – 2,000ha**

Sub-region located on the left bank of Dordogne close to confluence w Gardonnette river -> mist in autumn + development of **noble rot**  
Botrytised whites made from Sémillon, Sauvignon blanc and Muscadelle  
Max yields 40hl/ha; mechanical harvesting banned since 93; min 14.5% potential alcohol  
Top estates include Chateau Tirecul La Graviere, Chtx Belingard and La Brie.

**2. Buzet AC (●●) - 1,400ha**

Located in the Bordure Aquitaine up the left bank of the Garonne river; south east of the Graves Viticulture area since Roman times  
AC created in 1973 under strong influence of cooperative Les Vignerons de Buzet who spearheaded the use of sophisticated **barrel ageing** (all Buzet must have min 1yr in barrel)  
Mainly gravels and clay hills planted with the 3 main Bdx varieties, especially Merlot  
Top domains include Ch de Gueyze, Baron d'Arduel

**3. Cahors AC (●) – 4,000ha**

100km north of Toulouse along the Lot river and mainly west of the town of Cahors  
Climate influenced both by the Mediterranean and the Atlantic; great sun exposure; cold winters  
Golden age in 18<sup>th</sup> w 40,000ha and wine used for blend in Bdx; phylloxera decimated the vineyards and the arrival of railways in the early 20<sup>th</sup> made the cheaper Languedoc more popular; revival since 1956  
Auxerrois (i.e. **Malbec**) (min 70% of AC's blend) w Merlot & Tannat remaining 30%  
Very tannic when young and benefit from ageing; berries, liquorice and herbs flavours

**COURSE TASTING NOTES: Cahors** - Deep garnet colour. Medium + intense nose of blackcurrant, blackberry, bacon. Dry palate with medium + acidity, high tannins (grainy), medium alcohol, full-bodied, long finish.

**4. Gaillac AC (●●●+sweet+sparkling) – 2,500ha (□) #1**

Dynamic region North-east of Toulouse on both sides of the Tarn river and around the town of Gaillac  
One of the 1st viticultural centres of ancient Gaul (since 1<sup>st</sup> century AD), long before Bdx  
Gaillac exports were limited by Bordeaux's tariffs and conditions to ship in the middle ages  
**Warmer climate**  
Most commonly spicy structured reds from Duras and Braucol; crisp, dry whites from sauvignon, sémillon and local Appley Mauzac and powerful Len de l'El; sweet whites from Ondenc as well Mauzac & Len de l'El

**5. Madiran AC (●) – 1,400ha #4**

In Gascogne; south of Armagnac; north-east of Pau; mainly clay & limestone soils  
Climate influenced by the Pacific that softens and moistens the vineyards but autumn are usually dry  
**Tannat** min 40-80% of vineyard- supplemented by Bouchy (Cab Frc), Cab Sauv and Fer  
**Micro-oxygenation** (i.e. precise oxygenation of wine early in fermentation and/or in maturation) developed to soften the strong tannins of Tannat and make the wines more approachable in youth  
Leading producers : Alain Brumont (Chateau Bouscassé and Chateau Montus). Most of the top wines 100% Tannat  
The wines are full bodied, tannic w brambly flavours

**COURSE TASTING NOTES: Madiran** - Deep garnet colour. Medium intense nose of dark chocolate, red/green pepper, tomato leaf, blackcurrant. Dry palate with medium + acidity, **high tannins**, medium alcohol, medium body, medium finish.

**6. Jurancon AC (Sweet) / Jurancon Sec (●) – 820ha**

One of France's earliest AC; hilly relatively cool corner (300m hi) at the foot of the Pyrénées near Pau  
Vines **espalier trained** to avoid recurrent spring frosts on the steep limestone and clays slopes  
Grapes: Gros Manseng (mostly for dry wines), Petit Manseng (mostly for sweet) + Courbu  
Sweet Jurancon produced using **passerillage** (grapes dried on the vine), at least 2 passages (up to December time) and aged in oak.  
Sweet wines develop aromas of tropical fruit (pineapple, mango)

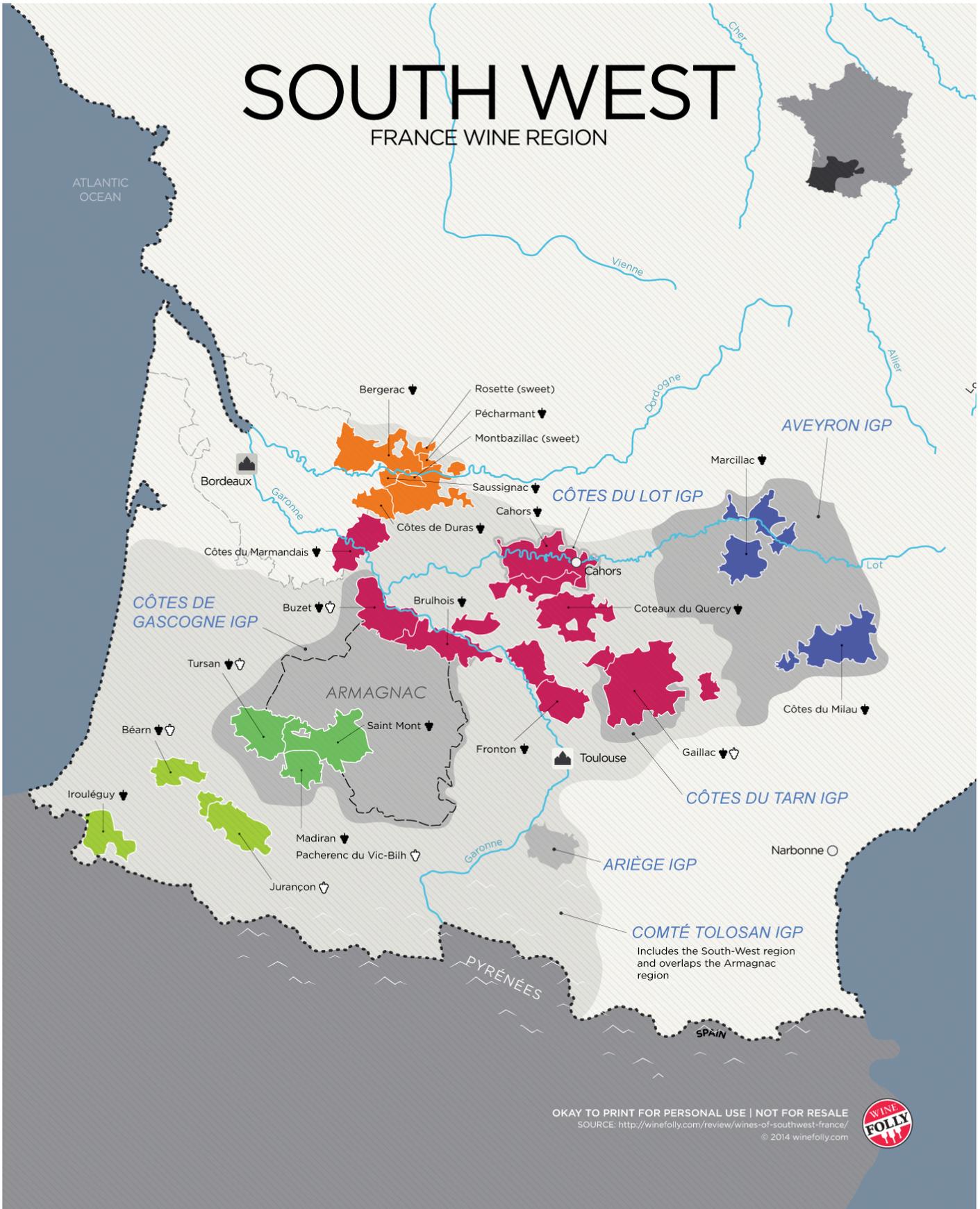
**7. Fronton AC (●●●) – 1,800ha (□) #2**

Dynamic appellation; 35km North of Toulouse  
**Négrette** min 50-70% of AC wine w Fer, Syrah, Cab Frc and Cab Sauv complementing  
The red wines (85% of production) are dark and tannic w aromas of violet and licorice.  
The rosés (15%) from Négrette have low acidity  
A little amount of white wine made from Mauzac  
The cooperative is an important producer; fine wines made by Chateau Plaisance and Le Roc

	<p><b>8. Vin de Pays du Comté Tolosan (●●●)</b> Regional VdP that covers the whole of the Southwest region; 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Southwest IGP w 225,000hl/yr Crisp, fresh, easy drinking whites from Colombard, Gros Manseng, Ugni blanc, Sauv Blanc and Chardonnay</p> <p><b>9. Vin de Pays du Gers &amp; Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne (●●●)</b> Departmental VdPs; Cotes de Gascogne 700,000hl/yr is the largest (Gers far behind) and most exported Crisp, fresh, easy drinking whites from Colombard, Gros Manseng, Ugni blanc, Sauv Blanc and Chardonnay</p> <p><b>COURSE TASTING NOTES: White Côtes de Gascogne</b> - Pale lemon colour. Medium + intense nose of stalks, grapes, elderflower. <b>Off dry</b> palate with medium + acidity, medium – alcohol, medium – body, medium – finish.</p>
<p>PRODUCTION &amp; BUSINESS</p>	<p>3.4 million hl i.e. ~450m btls with: - 55% whites 45% reds + rosés - 45% IGP, 30% ACs and 25% (table) wine - Only 10-20% exported</p> <p><b>Plaimont</b> = major cooperative in France and the South West Groupment of 3 cooperatives initiated by André Dubosc in late 70s Linked to 1,000growers and 5,300ha 40m btls sold in 2011 w 55% of volume exported Selling IGP (e.g. Cotes de Gascogne, Comté Tolosan) as well as AC (e.g. Madiran 48% of production, St Mont -98% of production) UK: Le Citronnier in Laithwaites</p> <p><b>Uby &amp; Tariquet</b> (8 million bottles – Grassa family) for Côtes de Gascogne</p>

# SOUTH WEST

FRANCE WINE REGION



OKAY TO PRINT FOR PERSONAL USE | NOT FOR RESALE  
 SOURCE: <http://winefolly.com/review/wines-of-southwest-france/>  
 © 2014 winefolly.com

