## FRANCE – SOUTH-WEST

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

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'Ardueil

**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 18th w 40,000ha and wine used for blend in Bdx; phylloxera decimated the vineyards and the arrival of railways in the early 20th 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 1st 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; crip, 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

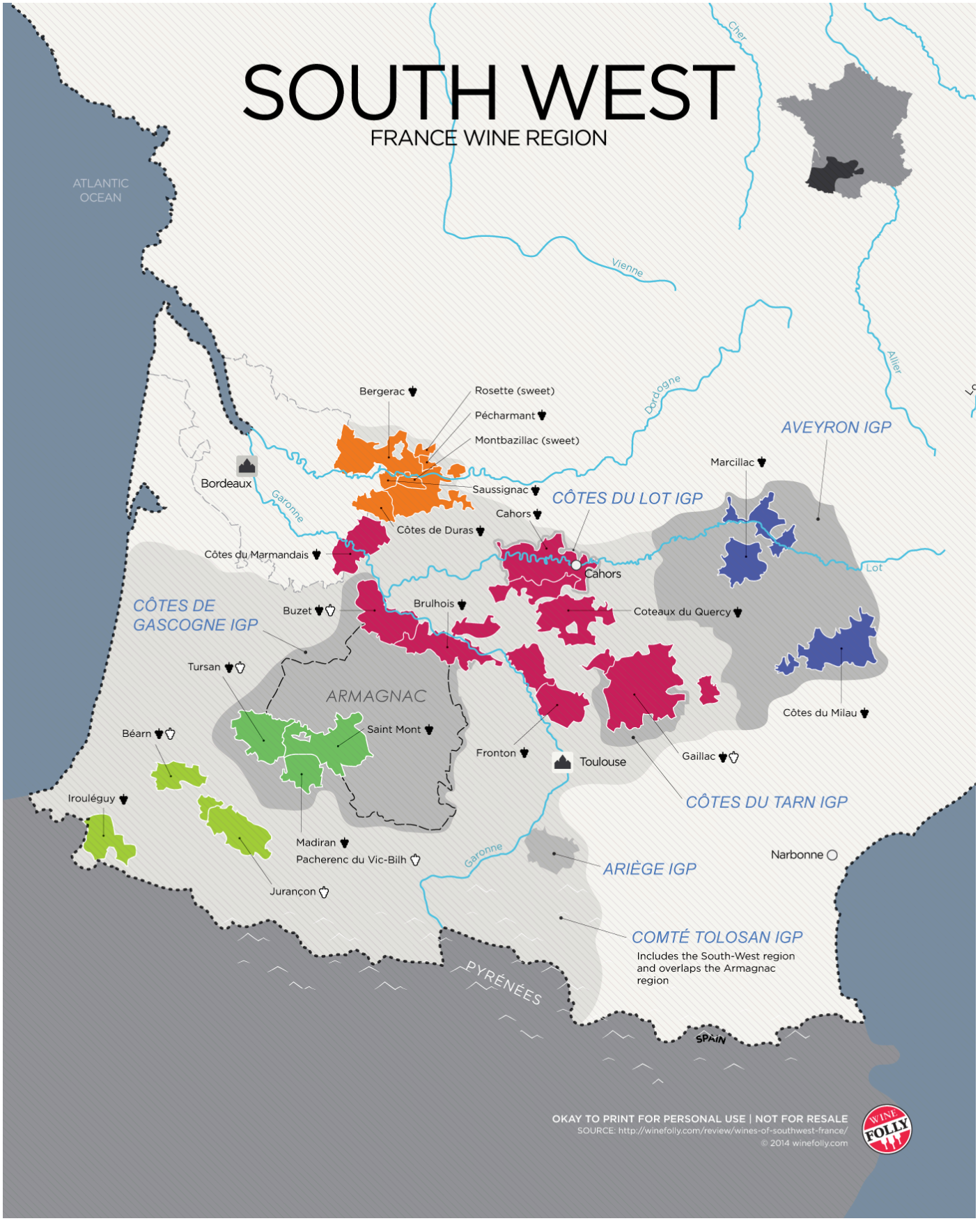
**5. Madiran AC** (●) **– 1,400ha #4**
In Gascogne; south of Armagnac; north-east of Pau; mainly clay & limestone soils
Climate influenced by the Pacific that soften and moistens the vineyards but autumn are usually dry
Tannat min 40-80% of vineyard- supplemented by Bouchy (Cab Frc), Cab Sauv and Fer
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; 35kmNorth 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

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


SOUTH WEST
FRANCE WINE REGION
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Cher
Vienne
Allier
Dordogne
Garonne
Lot
Bergerac
Rosette (sweet)
Pécharmant
Montbazillac (sweet)
Bordeaux
Saussignac
Cahors
Côtes de Duras
Côtes du Marmandais
CÔTES DU LOT IGP
AVEYRON IGP
Marcillac
Cahors
Coteaux du Quercy
Côtes du Milau
Buzet
Brulhois
CÔTES DE GASCOGNE IGP
Tursan
ARMAGNAC
Saint Mont
Béarn
Iroulléguy
Madiran
Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh
Jurançon
Fronton
Toulouse
Gaillac
CÔTES DU TARN IGP
Narbonne
ARIÈGE IGP
COMTÉ TOLOSAN IGP
Includes the South-West region and overlaps the Armagnac region
PYRÉNÉES
SPAIN
OKAY TO PRINT FOR PERSONAL USE | NOT FOR RESALE
SOURCE: http://winefolly.com/review/wines-of-southwest-france/
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