



VIGNOBLES DU
SUD-OUEST
FRANCE

WINES OF SOUTHWEST

FRANCE

PRESS KIT





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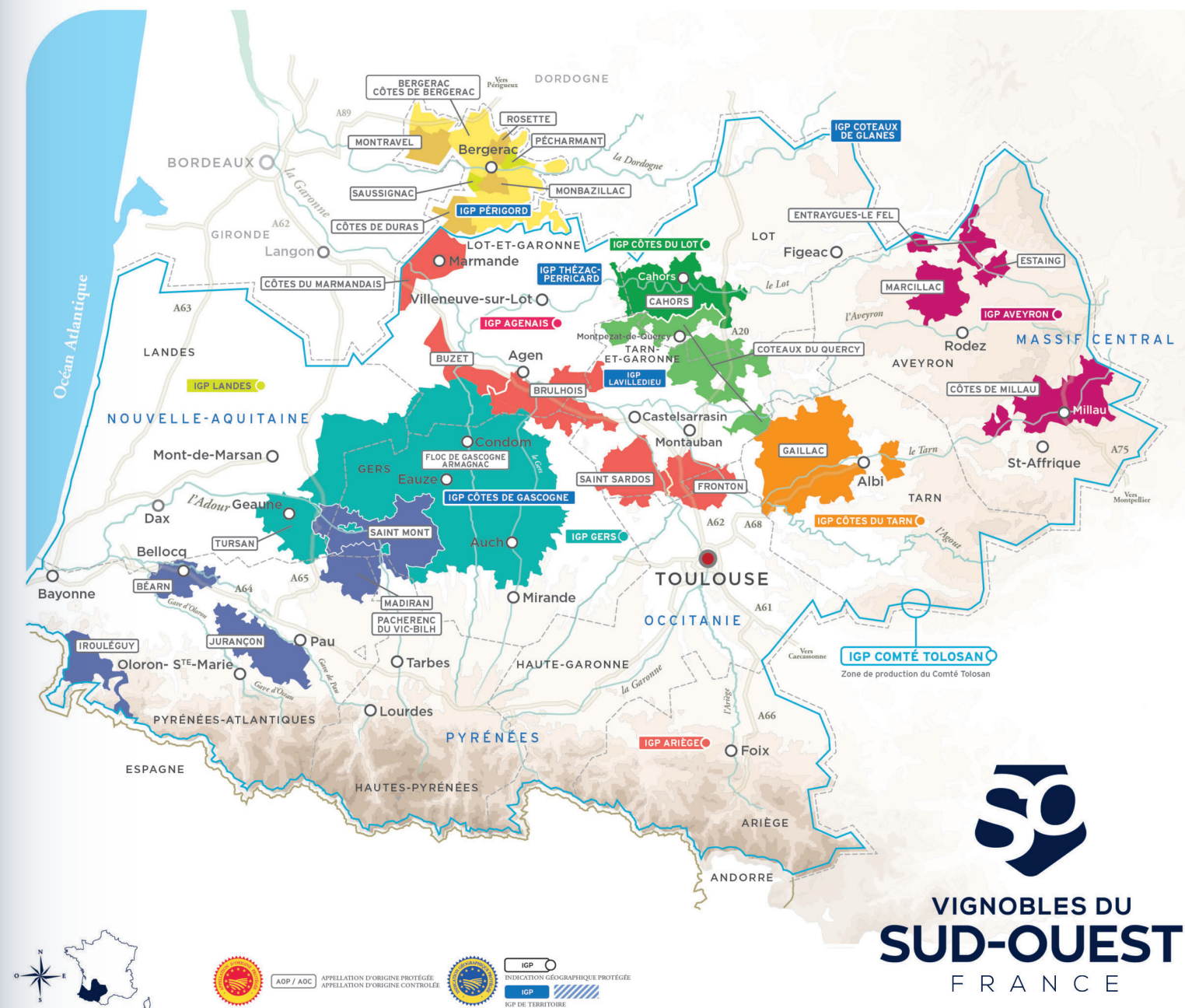
WILDLY DIVERSE WINES

Stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the West to the Massif Central mountains in the East and the Pyrenees in the South, Southwest France is known to be the cradle of some of the world's most popular grape varieties, distributed by trade and migratory flows. Among the most famous progenitors of Wines of Southwest France, Prunelard led to Malbec and others. The Pyrenees-native Cabernet Franc is the ancestor of Carménère, Chile's emblematic grape, along with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, the second and third most widely used varieties in the world.

Alongside its global impact, Southwest France has maintained a local flair. The diverse terroirs—on mountain foothills, nestled in river basins, or under oceanic influences—make it possible for the region to cultivate numerous rare, native grape varieties that are found nowhere else in the world.

Today, Southwest France is home to 300 grape varieties, 130 of which are indigenous, grown across 42 name-protected appellations. The result is wildly diverse wines of an incomparable diversity and excellence. These are wines of character that reflect the richness of the region and its people: true originals born from historic origins.

MAP OF THE REGION



KEY FACTS & FIGURES:

WINES

#1 FRENCH REGION
FOR GRAPE DIVERSITY

300
GRAPE VARIETIES

130
INDIGENOUS
GRAPE VARIETIES

42 APPELLATIONS

29 PDO
8% OF ALL FRENCH PDO



13 PGI
18% OF ALL FRENCH PGI



PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION
BY STYLE



31% 55% 14%

3 MILLION BARRELS PRODUCED IN 2020
8.1% of French wine production.

135,025 ACRES FARMED IN 2020 FARMED IN 2020
accounting for 7.4% of national land.

WINEMAKER NETWORK

28 COOPERATIVE WINERIES

8 261 FARMS

BUSINESS

TURNOVER = >\$1 BILLION

* based on 2020 harvest





GRAPE VARIETIES: SIGNATURES OF SOUTHWEST FRANCE

WINES STYLES

Southwest France produces a great diversity of wine in every style.

DRY STILL WINES



Southwest France is known for its red wines, with ancient indigenous red grape varieties like Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Tannat, Négrette, Duras, and Fer Servadou—some famous and some ready to be discovered!



Producing nearly twice as many white wines, Southwest France's unique and indigenous white varieties include Colombard, Mauzac, Petit and Gros Manseng, Ondenc, Petit Courbu, and Loin de l'œil.



Under the influence of the Mediterranean sun, Southwest France offers quality rosé wines, including refreshing PDO Fronton wines made with the native grape Négrette and ripe, round rosés from PDOs Marcillac, Coteaux du Quercy, Saint Mont, Tursan, Brulhois, Irouléguy, and PGIs Côtes du Lot and Comté Tolosan.

SWEET WINES



Southwest France's excellent sweet and dessert wines are made from varying techniques depending on local tradition and climate. Certain appellations, like Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh in the Pyrenean foothills, make sweet wines through a process called passerillage, when water evaporates from the grape clusters to obtain a higher concentration of sugar. In other areas, riverside vineyards experience morning mist followed by afternoon sun, resulting in the development of noble rot, increasing the sugar in the grapes.

SPARKLING



Southwest France also has sparkling wines to share, most notably from the PDO Gaillac. These bubbly wines, made from the Mauzac grape using the ancestral method, are 100% natural and very distinct.

SOUTHWEST FRANCE:

A GENUINE POOL OF BIODIVERSITY

NATIVE GRAPES

In Southwest France there are 300 grape varieties, 130 of which are native to the area. It is no wonder that the region is the leader of grape diversity, offering more varieties than any other French region. The native varieties are the legacy of the region's particular geography, centuries of careful selection, and the migrations on the Camino de Santiago. Here are thirteen of them:

CABERNET FRANC

Originally from the Basque Country and present in most South-West vineyards, it sets itself apart with its finesse, spicy aromas, and great capacity for aging.

CÔT (OR MALBEC)

An emblematic grape from the Cahors appellation, it produces powerful red wines with aromas of dark berries that may tend towards truffle with ageing.

DURAS

Originally from Gaillac, it produces colorful and flexible wines with peppery aromas.

COLOMBARD

Established in Côtes-de-Gascogne since the early 20th century, it is used for producing eau-de-vie. Primarily used for dry whites, it produces expressive tangy wines with grapefruit aromas.

FER SERVADOU

Connecting the vineyards of Southwest France, it produces well-structured with typical characteristics and a broad aromatic palette stretching from green pepper to blackcurrant notes. Depending on where you are in Southwest France, the grape has different names, known as Braucol in Gaillac, Mansoi in Marcillac, and Pinenc in Saint-Mont.

GROS MANSENG

Originally from the Basque country, found throughout the Pyrenean foothills, it produces sweet or dry wines with tropical fruit aromas, with a good level of acidity.

LOIN DE L'OEIL

Originally from Gaillac, it can also be written as Len de l'el. takes its name from the fact that the bunches grow far from the bud (the eye or "l'oeil"). It produces dry wines with orchard fruit aromas and concentrated sweet wines.

MAUZAC

Originally from Gaillac, this multi-functional grape is used to make sparkling, sweet and dry white wines with typical green apple aromas.

TANNAT

Native to the Adour river basin and cultivated in Madiran, Saint-Mont, Irouléguy, and Tursan appellations. Originally producing highly concentrated wines requiring long aging, today the grape produces more supple, intensely fruity, and well-balanced wines.

PETIT MANSENG

Originally from the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, it produces very aromatic sweet or dessert wines that may develop truffle aromas with ageing.

PRUNELARD

Very common back in the day, it almost disappeared but is returning to the fore and enjoying development in Gaillac and Marcillac. With a low yield, it produces very colorful, concentrated wines with aromas of pepper and ripe fruit.

ABOURIOU

An emblem of the Côtes-du-Marmandais vineyard, this early-harvest grape is the half-sibling of Malbec and Merlot. Tannic and colorful, it adds structure and aromas of ripe fruit to blends.

NEGRETTE

The emblematic Fronton grape, it produces rosé and red wines with the aromas of violet and licorice.

WHERE SENSORY EXPERIENCE AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE CONVERGE

SUBTLE AROMAS

Recent developments in analysis of aromas and their influence, conducted by the Southwest branch of the French Wine and Vine Institute in collaboration with Wines of Southwest France Council, allows winemakers to optimize the exceptional bouquet of Southwest France's native grape varieties.

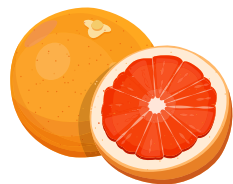
GRAPEFRUIT

Found in:

Colombard wines, Négrette rosé wines, Malbec, and often white wines made with Gros Manseng.

Fun fact:

Present in grape skin, the molecule causing grapefruit notes is released during fermentation by yeast.



COCONUT

Found in:

Wines associated with ageing or maturing in barrels.

Fun fact:

The molecules responsible are two whisky-lactones mostly found in barrels made with lightly-fired oak staves.



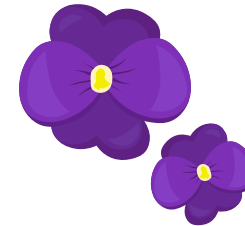
BANANA

Found in:

Primeur red wines and most white and rosé wines in Southwest France.

Fun fact:

The principal molecule associated with banana aromas is isoamyl acetate, often associated with the use of specific yeasts.



VIOLET

Found in:

Négrette red wines.

Fun fact:

Violet notes can develop when vintners encourage the grapes to grow by removing the leaves and exposing the bunches to the sun's rays.

BLACK PEPPER

Found in:

Duras, Prunelard, Négrette red wines.

Fun fact:

The molecule, rotundone, was discovered in 2008 by Australian researchers. 20% of people are incapable of smelling it. Cool and rainy weather encourages its accumulation in the grapes.



BLACKCURRANT BUD & BLACKCURRANT

Found in:

Cabernet Franc reds from the Pyrenean foothills, Fer Servadou, and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Fun fact:

The same chemical compound is responsible for both the blackcurrant and pepper aromas, but with Southwest France's sunshine and hot temperatures, the wines' bouquet develops towards blackcurrant notes.



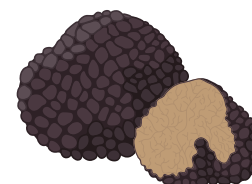
TRUFFLE

Found in:

aged sweet or dessert wines made with Petit and Gros Manseng and also red Malbec.

Fun fact:

From a compound called dimethyl sulphide, that when present in small quantities, it adds to the fruitiness of the wine.





OFFICIAL WINE APPELLATIONS

PDO & PGI: OFFICIAL CERTIFICATIONS OF QUALITY

— SOUTHWEST FRANCE IS MADE UP OF :

42 name-protected appellations, 29 PDO and 13 PGI.

The promotion of its wines of protected origin is carried out by two organizations: the Wines of Southwest France Council (Interprofession des Vins du Sud-Ouest, or IVSO) representing the broadest diversity of the Wines of Southwest France, and the Bergerac Region Council (Interprofession des vins de Bergerac et Duras, or IVBD), promoting wines from the north-east part more similar to its neighboring region, Bordeaux.

Showcasing the wine diversity of Southwest France, the Wines of Southwest France Council promotes a wide range of name protected wines, including the indigenous varieties that make Southwest France unique, representing over 800 producers, cooperatives, and merchants of Southwest France. The Wines of Southwest France Council federates 28 of the region's appellations, 16 PDO and 12 PGI:



- PDO Brulhois
- PDO Cahors
- PDO Coteaux du Quercy
- PDO Côtes de Millau
- PDO Côtes du Marmandais
- PDO Entraygues-Le Fel
- PDO Estaing
- PDO Fronton
- PDO Gaillac
- PDO Irouléguy
- PDO Madiran
- PDO Marcillac
- PDO Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh
- PDO Saint-Mont
- PDO Saint Sardos
- PDO Tursan



- PGI Agenais
- PGI Ariège
- PGI Aveyron
- PGI Comté Tolosan
- PGI Coteaux de Glanes
- PGI Côtes de Gascogne
- PGI Côtes du Lot
- PGI Côtes du Tarn
- PGI Gers
- PGI Landes
- PGI Lavilledieu
- PGI Thézac-Perricard

TERROIRS

& VINEYARDS

GEOGRAPHY

A VAST VINEYARD AREA

Southwest France boasts a diverse landscape that has encouraged the emergence of an incredible variety of vineyards. They stretch from the foothills of the Massif Central and the Pyrenees mountains, to the banks of the Garonne River, and the sandy heaths of the Basque country's Atlantic coast. Throughout history, the adaptation and expertise required to farm each of these specific terroirs have led to the wines of greatly varying character offered in Southwest France today.

SOUTHWEST FRANCE IS MADE UP OF SIX SUB-AREAS:

- The Pyrenean foothills
- Gascony
- The Garonne basin
- The Tarn basin
- The Lot valley
- Aveyron

GEOLOGY

AN INFINITE VARIETY OF SOILS

Most of Southwest France vineyards are established on tertiary sedimentary terrain from the Aquitaine basin and ancient alluvial deposits of quaternary terraces. There is more variation in the vineyards on the edge of region: secondary limestone plateaus in the north, primary or metamorphic terrain in the foothills of the Massif Central to the east, and complex geological terrain at the base of the Pyrenees the south. This infinite geological variety is a major contributor to the wild diversity of Wines of Southwest France.

CLIMATE

WHERE OCEANIC, CONTINENTAL, AND MEDITERRANEAN INFLUENCES MEET

The wines to the **west** of Southwest France's basin are subject to temperate oceanic influence resulting in a gentle, damp climate, with rainy springs and generally sunny, dry falls.

To the **north-east**, the continental climate reigns with more pronounced winter weather.

To the **south**, the Mediterranean influence is evident with typically hot and dry summers on the plains. Here, the characteristic southwest wind called the "Autan" is said to cleanse the atmosphere.

The **Pyrenean foothills** are impacted by the altitude and the warm, dry foehn wind descending from the mountains, helping the final stages of ripening in autumn.

On **forested riversides**, morning mists are followed by sunny afternoons in autumn, encouraging the appearance of Botrytis cinerea on the grapes. Known as noble rot, this miniscule fungus increases the grapes' sugar concentration to make sweet and dessert wines.



HISTORY & HERITAGE

FROM ROMAN GAUL TO MODERN TIMES: AN EPIC SAGA —

Grapes have existed since time immemorial, but vines were progressively developed in Gaul during the Roman conquest. At the time, each community grew its own unique grape variety, often unknown elsewhere.

In 1189, the consecration of Santiago de Compostela in Spain as a holy town by Pope Alexander III prompted waves of pilgrims to travel the roads of Europe. An obligatory passage between northern Europe and Spain, the Southwest France's abbeys and monasteries flourished as they welcomed the pilgrims.

These religious communities developed vines and vineyards, meanwhile trade routes became an essential method for spreading Southwest France's native grape varieties like Malbec and Cabernet Franc to the entire world.

In parallel to this important trade, Southwest France was isolated, until recently, from the major commercial wine routes that developed everywhere else, helping preserve its particularities.

At the end of the 19th century, phylloxera followed by mildew destroyed many vines and ruined the region's wine industry. However, thanks to policies in support of vine renewal and the tenacity of the new generation of vintners, the industry rebounded with notable improvements in wine quality. Today, the originality of the grape varieties and wines of Southwest France is a real asset in the face of both globalization and climate change.





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