

The Cognac



What is cognac?

Cognac is the name of a small town, located on the north of Bordeaux close to the river Charente. The area around the town (well known as Grande Champagne and Petite Champagne) is world wide famous for the brandy from this region, which call the name of this town.

Short view into the history

In the 15. Century, dealer from Great Britain and Scandinavia came to Cognac, to buy salt. On the way back they also took French wines, but the wine quality become down during the long sea turn. French wine grower found a solution for this problem, which even minimise the space for the transport. They distillate the wine, then they delivered to the final destination and mix it with water again. From nine



barrels of wine they got 1 barrel with brandy. The Brandy was crystal clear and colourless. Until the 17. Century, during the war in France, they keep the wine for many years in small oak barrels. When the war was already finish and they open that barrels again, the brandy already got colour and a better taste too.

In the 18. and 19. Century the cognac starts to conquer the world. The most famous cognac house was established during this time:

- REMY MARTIN 1724
- MARTELL 1715
- HENNESSY 1765
- COURVOISIER 1828.

Quality:

The 3 main criterions for checking the quality are:

- The cultivation areas for the Brandy
- The distillation procedure
- The kind a duration of the hoop procedure

The cultivation areas

The so called *crus* of the region cognac and ranking of their quality was fixed in 1909 and 1938 from the French government

und die Rangfolge ihrer Qualität wurden 1909, bzw. 1938 von der französischen Regierung offiziell festgelegt:

1. Grande Champagne
2. Petite Champagne
3. Borderies
4. Fins Bois
5. Bons Bois
6. Bois Ordinaires



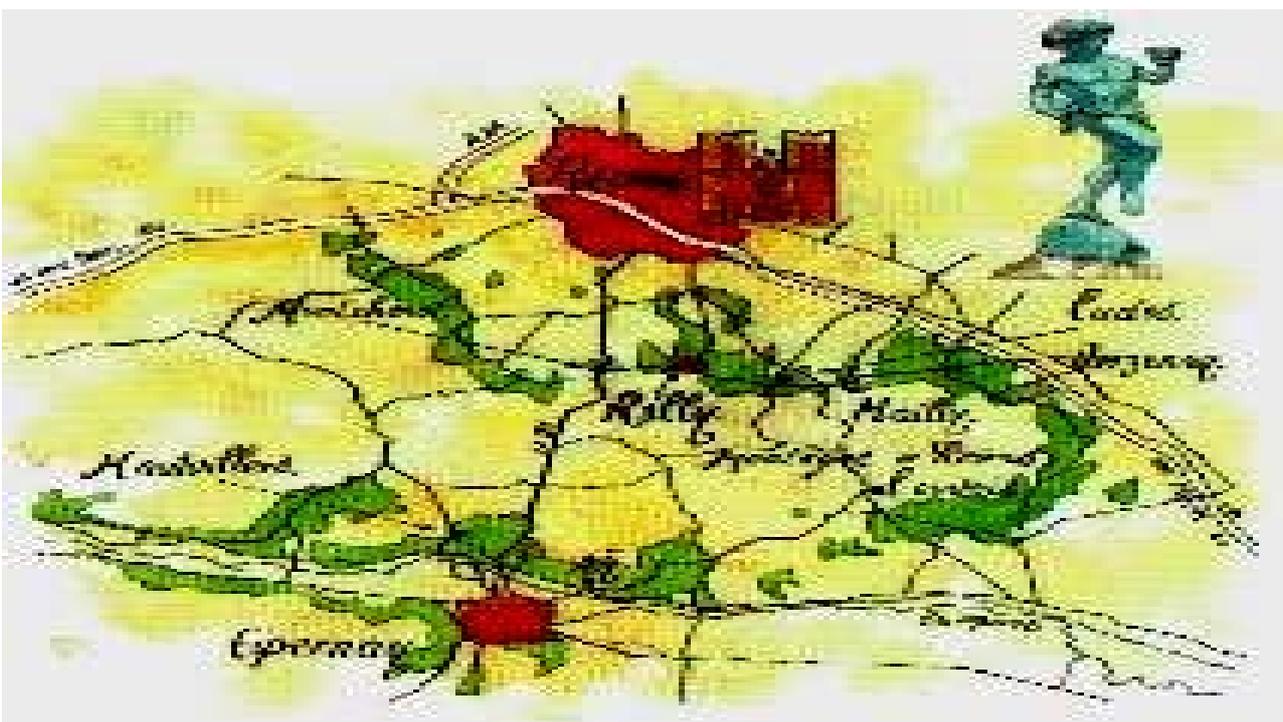
Fine Champagne

The Fine Champagne Cognac is a blend, which is only produced from distillates of the 2 champagnes with a minimum content of 50% Grande Champagne.

Grande Champagne

The Grande Champagne Cognac will be produced to 100% from wines located at the same regions and the same cultivation areas

The name Champagne means the heart from the region Cognac; the soils are especially based on chalk there, like in the French wine region Champagne too.



The art of distillation

The vine sorts

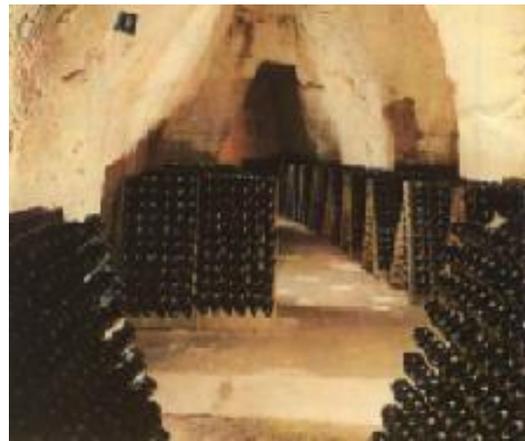
- For the making of cognac only the following kinds of grapes will be used Folie Blanche, Colombard and Ugni-Blanc
- The biggest part is based on the vine Ugni-Blanc (94%), which has been called Saint-Emilion in the past. In Italy it's well known also as Trebbiano vine
- In comparison with other vines, which will be used for the production of drink wines, are the one for cognac with especially power, as well as they give an very light drink and an special touch of acid

Fermentation

The grapes become squeezed and after their juice is fermented without addition of sulphur dioxides

Characteristic of the burning wines

- Tender and fruity aromas and nice bouquet
- High acid content
- Low alcohol content (7 to 9 % vol.)
- Storage on the top from the yeast



Double distillation

Rough procedure

- The wine for the Remy Martin will be distilled on the top of yeast (*sur lie procedure*) in and distil bubble, which is called "**Alambic**". This is a boiler based on solid copper inside of a brick walled oven
- The wine is getting hot, the alcohol steam goes up to the condenser, and this takes around 10 hours.
- The steam will be condensed inside the cooling system to an muddy liquid, which results in an alcohol content from 27-30 % vol., after removing the preliminary heat and the after run

Fine procedure

- The preliminary heat and the after run of the second distillation will be removed, just the middle run, the so-called heart of the distillate with an alcohol content from 70% vol. will be used later for the cognac
- The fresh distillate is colourless and clear as well as it has fruity aromas with nice bouquet

The hoop

- The Cognac hoops in not totally filled oak barrels (*). Inside of the barrels, 2-3% of the content evaporate yearly at the same time unwanted substances will be removed gradual.
- During the time the distillate is changing – The content inside the barrel and the alcohol content too are going down. Substances from the oak barrel are going together with the distillate.
- Different distillates will put together and result, depend on the company standards, in cognac

(*) Remy Martin only use barrels based on oak wood. The wood is coming from the region of Limousin only.

The age ranking

The brandy only hoops inside the barrels. After the brandy was bottled it doesn't hoops anymore.

In the region Cognac, legal terms for the different ages was fixed

1. Three Stars***

- Minimum 2 years barrel hoop – this quality we also call as VS (Very Special)

2. V.S.O.P.

- Very Superior Old Pale –minimum 4 years barrel hoop

3. Napoleon

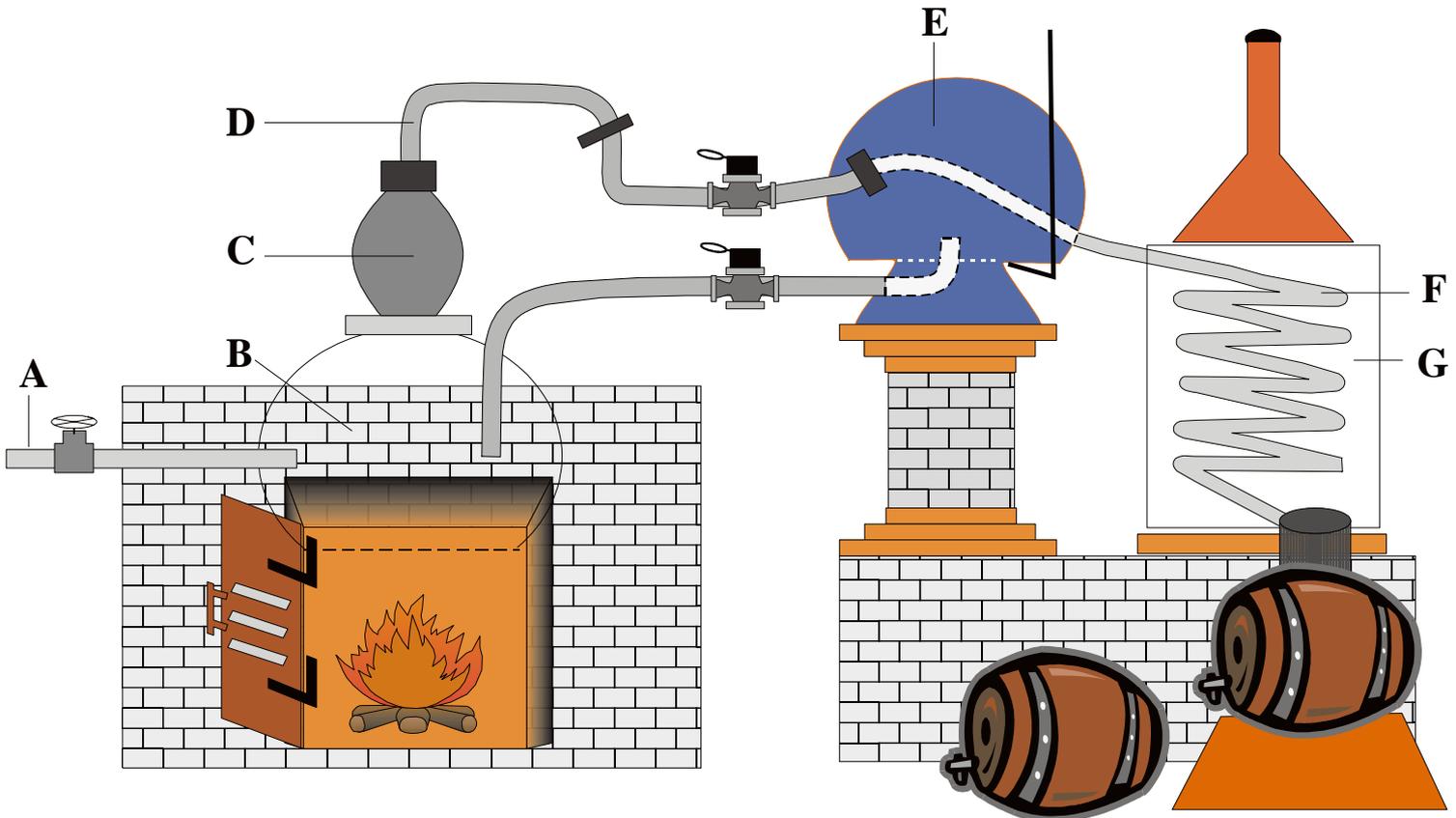
- Minimum 6 years inside the barrel. This age ranking get his name not from the famous Napoleon I Bonaparte, it's just coming from his uncle. Actually the name was given to distinguish cognac, which was distillate before and after the big phylloxera catastrophe in 1871

4. X.O./EXTRA....

- Minimum 6 years inside the barrel, but most of them are older than requested



The Cognac Distillation



- A = Intake line for the wine**
- B = Distillation boiler**
- C = Helmet**
- D = Gooseneck**
- E = Prheating Boiler for the Wine (only during first distillation)**
- F = Colling system**
- G = Water tank**