

Product specification for the Cognac or Eau-de-vie de Cognac or Eau-de-vie des Charentes controlled appellation of origin, officially recognised by French decree No. 2015-10 dated 7 January 2015 amended by the Order of 8 November 2018, as published in the Official Journal of the French Republic on 14 November 2018.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION FOR THE
Cognac or Eau-de-vie de Cognac or Eau-de-vie des Charentes
CONTROLLED APPELLATION OF ORIGIN

Part 1 - Technical fact sheet

A. — Name of the controlled appellation of origin and spirit drink category

1. Geographical name

Only wine spirits respecting the provisions detailed hereafter can legally lay claim to the Cognac or Eau-de-vie de Cognac or Eau-de-vie des Charentes controlled appellation of origin (hereafter referred to as Cognac), initially defined by French decrees dated 1 May 1909 and 15 May 1936.

2. Wine spirit category in keeping with Regulation (EC) no. 110/2008:

The Cognac controlled appellation of origin corresponds to the “wine spirit” category defined in Annex II, point 4, Regulation (EC) No. 110/2008 of the European Parliament and the European Council dated 15 January 2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks. This is included in annex III of the above regulation.

B. — Description of the spirit drink

1. Production and ageing methods

a) The Cognac controlled appellation of origin is restricted to aged wine spirit, except for quantities intended for industrial purposes or compound products, which do not necessarily need to be aged.

b) "Esprit de Cognac" is the result of the 3rd distillation of Cognac wine spirit with a distillation apparatus called a “Charentais pot still”. Its alcohol by volume varies from 80 to 85%. It is exclusively used for making sparkling wines.

2. Main physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics

Wine spirits must have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 40% to be eligible for sale to consumers.

Their colour must correspond to a minimum absorbance at 420 nm of 0.1 for a 10 mm optical path.

The sensory profile of Cognac wine spirit is characterised by organoleptic complexity and aromatic finesse.

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The youngest wine spirits are dominated by floral and fruity aromas. During ageing, they acquire characteristic nuances due to contact with oak. Their aromatic profile, enriched by complexity due to ageing, is traditionally described in the literature as “rancio Charentais” (Flanzy, 1998).

As for taste, this aromatic development due to age is accompanied by added roundness and a long finish. The colour also gradually deepens, going from pale yellow with golden-yellow highlights to a more amber and mahogany-coloured hue for the oldest wine spirits.

C. — Definition of the geographical area of origin

1. Geographical area

Only wine spirits made from grapes harvested, vinified, distilled, and aged in the communes initially delimited in the decree of 1 May 1909, later modified, as listed here below, can legally lay claim to the Cognac, Eau-de-vie de Cognac, or Eau-de-vie des Charentes controlled appellation of origin:

Charente-Maritime Department	
Arrondissement of Rochefort	All communes
Arrondissement of Saintes	All communes
Arrondissement of Saint-Jean-d'Angély	All communes
Arrondissement of Jonzac	All communes
Arrondissement of La Rochelle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canton of Ars-en-Ré: all communes.- Canton of Aytré: communes of Angoulins and Aytré.- Canton of La Jarrie: all communes.- Cantons of La Rochelle No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7: the commune of La Rochelle.- Canton of La Rochelle No. 5: the communes of Esnandes, Marsilly, Puilboreau, La Rochelle and Saint-Xandre.- Canton of La Rochelle No. 8: the communes of Dompierre-sur-Mer, Périgny and La Rochelle.- Canton of La Rochelle No. 9: the communes of L'Houmeau, Lagord, Nieul-sur-Mer and La Rochelle.Canton of Saint-Martin-de-Ré: all communesCanton of Courçon: communes of Angliers, Benon, Courçon, Cramchaban, Ferrières-d'Aunis, La Grève-sur-le-Mignon, Le Gué-d'Alléré, La Laigne, Nuaille-d'Aunis, Saint-Cyr-du-Doret, Saint-Jean-de-Liversay and Saint-Sauveur-d'AunisCanton of Marans: communes of Longèves, Saint-Ouen and Villedoux
Charente Department	

Arrondissement of Cognac	All communes
Arrondissement of Angoulême:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canton of Angoulême Est: all communes- Canton of Angoulême Nord: all communes- Canton of Angoulême Ouest: all communes- Canton of Blanzac: all communes- Canton of Hiersac: all communes- Canton of Saint-Amant-de-Boixe: all communes- Canton of Villebois-la-Valette: all communes- Canton of La Rochefoucauld: communes of Agris, Brie, Bunzac, Chazelles, Coulgens, Jauldes, Pranzac, Rancogne, Rivières, La Rochette and Saint-Projet-Saint-Constant- Canton of Montbron: communes of Charras, Feuillade, Grassac, Mainzac, Marthon, Saint-Germain-de-Montbron and Souffrignac
Arrondissement of Confolens:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canton of Aigre: all communes- Canton of Ruffec: communes of Villegats and Verteuil-sur-Charente- Canton of Mansle: communes of Aunac, Bayers, Cellettes, Chenon, Fontclaireau, Fontenille, Juillé, Lichères, Lonnes, Mansle, Mouton, Moutonneau, Puyréaux, Saint-Amand-de-Bonnieure, Saint-Angeau, Saint-Ciers-sur-Bonnieure, Saint-Front, Saint-Groux, Sainte-Colombe, Valence and Villognon- Canton of Villefagnan: communes of Brettes, Courcôme, Longré, Raix, Salles de Villefagnan, Souvigné, Tuzie and Villefagnan
Dordogne Department	
Arrondissement of Périgueux:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canton of Saint-Aulaye: communes of Chenaud, Parcou, Puymanjou, La Roche-Chalais and Saint-Aulaye
Deux-Sèvres Department	
Arrondissement of Niort:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canton of Mauzé-sur-le-Mignon: communes of Le Bourdet, Prin-Deyrançon, Priaires, Mauzé-sur-le-Mignon, La Rochénard and Usseau- Canton of Beauvoir-sur-Niort: communes of Beauvoir-sur-Niort, Belleville, La Foye-Montjault, Granzay-Gript, Prissé-La Charrière, Saint-Etienne-la-Cigogne, Boisserolles and Thorigny-sur-le-Mignon- Canton of Brioux-sur-Boutonne: commune of Le Vert

2. Complementary geographical names:

The Cognac controlled appellation of origin may be accompanied by the complementary geographical names mentioned in point H of this product specification.

The use of these complementary geographical names must meet the following conditions and they are only applicable to grapes harvested from the areas stipulated below, as initially defined in the decree dated 13 January 1938, it being specified that the vinification, distillation, and ageing of the wine spirits must take place within the aforementioned geographical area.

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a) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Grande Champagne* (or *Grande Fine Champagne*) complementary geographical name:

Charente Department

Communes of Ambleville, Angeac-Champagne, Bonneuil, Bouteville, Châteaubernard, Criteuil-la-Magdeleine, Eraville, Gensac-la-Pallue, Genté, Gimeux, Gondeville, Juillac-le-Coq, Lignières-Sonneville, Mainxe, Malaville, Merpins, Saint-Fort-sur-le-Né, Saint-Même-les-Carières, Saint-Preuil, Salles-d'Angles, Segonzac, Touzac, Verrières and Viville.

Communes partially included: Bourg-Charente (left bank of the River Charente), Cognac (left bank of the River Charente) and Saint-Brice (left bank of the River Charente).

b) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Petite Champagne* (or *Petite Fine Champagne*) complementary geographical name:

Charente Department

Communes of Angeac-Charente, Ars, Barbezieux-Saint-Hilaire, Barret, Birac, Châteauneuf-sur-Charente, Graves-Saint-Amant, Guimps, Jurignac, Lachaise, Ladiville, Lagarde-sur-le-Né, Montchaude, Mosnac, Nonaville, Saint-Bonnet, Saint-Médard-de-Barbezieux, Saint-Palais-du-Né, Salles-de-Barbezieux and Vignolles.

Commune partially included: Bourg-Charente (right bank of the River Charente).

Charente-Maritime Department

Communes of Allas-Champagne, Archiac, Arthenac, Biron, Bougneau, Brie-sous-Archiac, Brives-sur-Charente, Celles, Chadenac, Champagnac, Cierzac, Coulonges, Echebrune, Germignac, Jarnac-Champagne, Jonzac, Lonzac, Meux, Moings, Montils, Neuillac, Neulles, Pérignac, Réaux, Rouffiac, Saint-Ciers-Champagne, Saint-Eugène, Saint-Germain-de-Lusignan, Saint-Germain-de-Vibrac, Saint-Martial-sur-le-Né, Saint-Martial-de-Vitaterne, Saint-Maurice-de-Tavernole, Saint-Seurin-de-Palenne, Saint-Sever-de-Saintonge, Sainte-Lheurine and Salignac-sur-Charente.

Commune partially included: Clam (the part located northeast of the D 142 road).

c) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Fine Champagne* complementary geographical name, it must be a blend of wine spirits entitled to both the *Grande Champagne* and *Petite Champagne* complementary geographical names and contain at least 50 % of wine spirit entitled to the *Grande Champagne* complementary geographical name.

d) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Borderies* complementary geographical name:

Charente Department

Communes of Cherves-Richemont, Javrezac, Louzac-Saint-André, Saint-Laurent-de-Cognac and Saint-Sulpice-de-Cognac.

Commune partially included: Cognac (right bank of the River Charente).

Charente-Maritime Department

Communes of Burie and Chérac.

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e) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Fins bois* complementary geographical name:

Charente Department

Communes of Aignes-et-Puyperoux, Aigre, Ambérac, Anais, Angeduc, Angoulême, Anville, Asnières-sur-Nouère, Auberville, Auge-Saint-Médard, Aussac-Vadalle, Balzac, Barbezières, Bassac, Bécheresse, Bessac, Bignac, Blanzac-Porcheresse, Bonneville, Boutiers-Saint-Trojan, Bréville, Brie, Brie-sous-Barbezieux, Cellettes, Chadurie, Chalignac, Champagne-Vigny, Champmillon, Champniers, La Chapelle, Charmant, Charmé, Chassors, Chavenat, Claix, Condéon, Coulonges, Courbillac, La Couronne, Cressac-Saint-Genis, Deviat, Dignac, Dirac, Douzat, Ebréon, Echallat, Etriac, Fléac, Fleurac, Fontenille, Fouquebrune, Fouqueure, Foussignac, Garat, Gardes-le-Pontaroux, Genac, Le Gond-Pontouvre, Les Gours, Gourville, Hiersac, Houlette, L'Isle-d'Espagnac, Jarnac, Jauldes, Juillaguet, Juillé, Julienne, Lamérac, Ligné, Linars, Lonnes, Lupsault, Luxé, Magnac-Lavalette-Villars, Magnac-sur-Touvre, Le Maine-de-Boixe, Mainfonds, Mansle, Marcillac-Lanville, Mareuil, Marsac, Mérignac, Mesnac, Les Métairies, Mons, Montignac-Charente, Montigné, Mornac, Moulidars, Mouthiers-sur-Boëme, Nanclars, Nercillac, Nersac, Nonac, Oradour, Péreuil, Pérignac, Plaizac, Plassac-Rouffiac, Puymoyen, Puyréaux, Ranville-Breuillaud, Reignac, Réparsac, Ronsenac, Rouillac, Roullet-Saint-Estèphe, Ruelle-sur-Touvre, Saint-Amant-de-Boixe, Saint-Amant-de-Nouère, Saint-Aulais-la-Chapelle, Saint-Ciers-sur-Bonnieure, Saint-Cybardeaux, Saint-Eutrope, Saint-Fraigne, Saint-Genis-d'Hiersac, Saint-Groux, Saint-Léger, Saint-Michel, Saint-Saturnin, Saint-Simeux, Saint-Simon, Saint-Yrieix-sur-Charente, Sainte-Sévère, Salles-de-Villefagnan, Sigogne, Sireuil, Sonnevile, Soyaux, Torsac, Tourriers, Touvre, Triac-Lautrait, Trois-Palis, Tusson, Vars, Vaux-Lavalette, Vaux-Rouillac, Verdille, Vervant, Vibrac, Villebois-Lavalette, Villejésus, Villejoubert, Villognon, Vindelle, Vœuil-et-Giget, Vouharte, Voulgezac and Xambes.

Communes partially included: Montmoreau-Saint-Cybard (the part corresponding to the former commune of Saint-Cybard as defined on 20 January 1938) and Saint-Brice (right bank of the River Charente).

Charente-Maritime Department

Communes of Annepont, Asnières-la-Giraud, Aujac, Aumagne, Authon-Ebéon, Avy, Bagnizeau, Ballans, Bazauges, Beauvais-sous-Matha, Belluire, Bercloux, Berneuil, Blanzac-lès-Matha, Bresdon, Brie-sous-Matha, Brizambourg, La Brousse, Bussac, Chaniers, La Chapelle-des-Pots, Cherbonnières, Chives, Clion-sur-Seugne, Colombiers, Consac, Courcelles, Courcerac, Courcoury, Cressé, Dompierre-sur-Charente, Le Douhet, Ecoyeux, Eglises-d'Argenteuil, Fenioux, Fléac-sur-Seugne, Fontaine-Chalandray, Fontcouverte, Fontenet, La Fredière, Gibourne, Le Gicq, Les Gonds, Gourvillette, Grandjean, Guitinières, Haimps, La Jard, Juicq, Léoville, Loiré-sur-Nié, Lorignac, Louzignac, Lussac, Macqueville, Marignac, Massac, Matha, Mazeray, Migron, Mirambeau, Mons, Mortiers, Mosnac, Nantillé, Néré, Neuvicq-le-Château, Ozillac, Paillé, Pons, Poursay-Garnaud, Préguiillac, Prignac, Saint-Bonnet-sur-Gironde, Saint-Bris-des-Bois, Saint-Césaire, Saint-Ciers-du-Taillon, Saint-Dizant-du-Bois, Saint-Dizant-du-Gua, Saint-Fort-sur-Gironde, Saint-Georges-Antignac, Saint-Georges-des-Agouts, Saint-Grégoire-d'Ardennes, Saint-Hilaire-de-Villefranche, Saint-Hilaire-du-Bois, Saint-Jean-d'Angély, Saint-Julien-de-l'Escap, Saint-Léger, Saint-Maigrin, Saint-Martial-de-Mirambeau, Saint-Martin-de-Juillers, Saint-Médard, Saint-Ouen-la-Thène, Saint-Pierre-de-Juillers, Sainte-Ramée, Saint-Sauvant, Saint-Simon-de-Bordes, Saint-Sorlin-de-Conac, Saint-Thomas-de-Conac, Saint-Vaize, Sainte-Même, Saintes, Seigne, Semillac, Semoussac, Le Seure, Siecq, Sonnac, Taillant, Taillebourg, Tesson, Thénac, Thors, Les Touches-de-Périgny, Varaize, Vénérand, Villars-en-Pons, Villars-les-Bois and Villemorin.
Communes partially included: Clam (the part located southwest of the D 142 road) and Saint-Savinien (the part corresponding to the former commune of Coulouge-sur-Charente as defined on 20 January 1938).

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f) For the Cognac controlled appellation of origin to be accompanied by the *Bons bois* complementary geographical name:

Charente Department

Communes of Agris, Aubeterre-sur-Dronne, Aunac, Baignes-Sainte-Radegonde, Bardenac, Bayers, Bazac, Bellon, Berneuil, Besse, Blanzaguet-Saint-Cybard, Boisbreteau, Bonnes, Bors-de-Montmoreau, Bors-de-Baignes, Bouex, Brettes, Brie-sous-Chalais, Brossac, Bunzac, Chalais, Chantillac, Charras, Chatignac, Chazelles, Chenommet, Chenon, Chillac, Combiers, Coulgens, Courcôme, Courgeac, Courlac, Curac, Edon, Les Essards, Feuillade, Fontclaireau, Grassac, Guizengeard, Gurat, Juignac, Laprade, Lichères, Longré, Mainzac, Marthon, Médillac, Montboyer, Montignac-le-Coq, Mouton, Moutonneau, Nabinaud, Oriolles, Orival, Palluaud, Passirac, Pillac, Poullignac, Poursac, Pranzac, Raix, Rancogne, Rioux-Martin, Rivières, La Rochette, Rouffiac, Rognac, Saint-Amant-de-Bonnieure, Saint-Amant-de-Montmoreau, Saint-Angeau, Saint-Avit, Sainte-Colombe, Saint-Félix, Saint-Front, Saint-Germain-de-Montbron, Saint-Laurent-de-Belzagot, Saint-Laurent-des-Combes, Saint-Martial, Saint-Projet-Saint-Constant, Saint-Quentin-de-Chalais, Saint-Romain, Saint-Séverin, Saint-Vallier, Sainte-Souligne, Salles-Lavalette, Sauvignac, Sers, Souffrignac, Souvigné, Le Tâtre, Touvérac, Tuzie, Valence, Verteuil-sur-Charente, Villefagnan, Villegats, Vouzan and Yviers.

Commune partially included: Montmoreau-Saint-Cybard (the part corresponding to the former commune of Montmoreau as defined on 20 January 1938).

Charente-Maritime Department

Communes of Agudelle, Allas-Bocage, Antezant-La Chapelle, Arces, Archingeay, Aulnay, Balanzac, La Barde, Barzan, Bédénac, La Benate, Bernay-Saint-Martin, Bignay, Blanzay-sur-Boutonne, Bois, Boisredon, Brosses-et-Martron, Boscammant, Boutenac-Touvent, Bran, Brie-sous-Mortagne, Bussac-Forêt, Cercoux, Chamouillac, Champagnolles, Chantemerle-sur-la-Soie, Chartuzac, Châtenet, Chaunac, Le Chay, Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet, Chepniers, Chermignac, Chevanceaux, Clérac, La Clisse, La Clotte, Coivert, Contré, Corignac, Corme-Ecluse, Corme-Royal, Courant, Courpignac, Coux, Cozes, Cravans, Crazannes, La Croix-Comtesse, Dampierre-sur-Boutonne, Doeuil-sur-le-Mignon, Ecurat, Les Eduts, Epargnes, Les Essards, Expiremont, Floirac, Fontaines-d'Ozillac, Le Fouilloux, Gémozac, La Génétouze, Givrezac, Grézac, Le Gua, La Jarrie-Audouin, Jazennes, Jussas, Landes, Loulay, Lozay, Luchat, Marsais, Mazerolles, Médis, Mérignac, Meschers-sur-Gironde, Messac, Meursac, Migré, Montendre, Montguyon, Montlieu-La Garde, Montpellier-de-Médillan, Mortagne-sur-Gironde, Le Mung, Nachamps, Nancras, Neuvicq, Nieul-lès-Saintes, Nieul-le-Virouil, Les Nouillers, Nuillé-sur-Boutonne, Orignolles, Pessines, Le Pin, Pisany, Plassac, Plassay, Polignac, Pommiers-Moulons, Port-d'Envaux, Pouillac, Puyrolland, Rétaud, Rioux, Romazières, Rouffignac, Sablonceaux, Saint-Aigulin, Saint-André-de-Lidon, Sainte-Colombe, Saint-Félix, Saint-Genis-de-Saintonge, Saint-Georges-de-Longuepierre, Saint-Georges-des-Coteaux, Saint-Germain-du-Seudre, Saint-Loup, Saint-Mandé-sur-Brédoire, Saint-Martial-de-Loulay, Saint-Martin-d'Ary, Saint-Martin-de-Coux, Saint-Palais-de-Négrignac, Saint-Palais-de-Phiolin, Saint-Pardoult, Saint-Pierre-de-l'Île, Saint-Pierre-du-Palais, Saint-Porchaire, Saint-Quantin-de-Rançanne, Saint-Romain-sur-Gironde, Saint-Romain-de-Benet, Saint-Séverin-sur-Boutonne, Saint-Sigismond-de-Clermont, Saint-Simon-de-Pellouaille, Saleignes, Salignac-de-Mirambeau, Saujon, Semussac, Soubran, Soulignonne, Soumeras, Sousmoulins, Talmont-sur-Gironde, Tazac, Ternant, Thaims, Thézac, Tonnay-Boutonne, Torxe, Tugeras-Saint-Maurice, Vanzac, Varzay, La Vergne, Vergné, Vervant, Vibrac, La Villedieu, Villeneuve-la-Comtesse, Villexavier, Villiers-Couture, Vinax, Virollet and Voissay.

Commune partially included: Saint-Savinien (the part corresponding to the former commune of Saint-Savinien as defined on 20 January 1938).

Dordogne Department

Commune partially included: La Roche-Chalais (the part corresponding to the former commune of La Roche-Chalais as defined on 20 January 1938).

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The borders of the aforementioned delimited areas within communes that are partially included are indicated in the communal land register.

The Cognac controlled appellation of origin may be accompanied by the *Bois ordinaires* or *Bois à terroirs* complementary geographical names. These designations are restricted to wine spirit from regions not delimited in the geographical area defined above.

D. — Description of the production process

1. Grape varieties

Wines destined to produce wine spirit are made from the following white grape varieties:

- Colombard, Folle Blanche, Montils, Sémillon and Ugni Blanc
- Folignan, representing no more than 10% of the blend

2. Viticultural practices

a) – Vine density

Minimum density of 2,200 vines per hectare

b) - Space between vine rows

The distance between vine rows cannot exceed 3.50 metres.

c) - Pruning

Pruning is obligatory every year. All pruning methods are authorised.

d) - Number of buds per hectare

The number of fruit buds is limited to 80,000 per hectare.

e) - Production from young vines

Wine spirit produced from young vines is only entitled to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin from the second year after planting, which must take place before 31 July.

f) Dead or missing vines

- For vineyards with a density at the time of planting or subsequent to transformation, of up to 2,500 vines per hectare, the maximum percentage of dead or missing vines is set at 20% in article D. 645-4 of the Rural and Marine Fisheries Code.
- For vineyards planted with a density at the time of planting or subsequent to transformation of over 2,500 vines per hectare but not exceeding 2,900 vines per hectare, the maximum percentage of dead or missing vines is set at 25% in article D. 645-4 of the Rural and Marine Fisheries Code.
- For vineyards planted with a density at the time of planting or subsequent to transformation of over 2,900 vines per hectare, the maximum percentage of dead or missing vines is set at 35% in article D. 645-4 of the Rural and Marine Fisheries Code.

3. Yields

The maximum authorised annual yield corresponds to the maximum quantity of grapes or the equivalent in volume of wine or must produced, expressed in hectolitres of wine per hectare with a real alcoholic strength by volume (ABV) of 10 %. This is set each year by interministerial order, acting on a proposal by the appropriate committee of the INAO (National Institute of Origin and Quality), after having consulted the Defence and Management Organisation. There is a maximum authorised yield of 160 hectolitres of wine per hectare with a real alcoholic strength by volume of 10%.

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Moreover, the above-mentioned annual yield may be increased in some instances by a certain amount of wine spirit within the legal limit in order to create a reserve stock in anticipation of a small crop due to poor weather referred to as the *réserve climatique individuelle*. This quantity of wine spirit cannot be aged.

Volumes of wine spirit destined for the *réserve climatique individuelle* consist of quantities above the annual yield.

Other reserve stocks that may be kept back for reasons of quality are included in the annual yield. The maximum authorised annual yield, with any approved supplements, is calculated on the basis of the quantity of wine produced and delivered or distilled, calculated at a reference real ABV of 10%, and by complementary geographical name.

Quantities produced above and beyond the maximum authorised annual yield, with the exception of those set aside for the previously defined *réserve climatique individuelle*, cannot lay claim to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin. They must be processed under conditions set forth in article D. 645-22 of the Rural and Marine Fisheries Code.

4. Transporting grapes

The use of centrifugal vane pumps to transfer the grapes is prohibited.

5. Must production

The use of a winepress with an Archimedes screw, also called a continuous screw press, is prohibited.

6. Fermentation

All enrichment methods are prohibited.

The use of sulphur dioxide is prohibited during the fermentation periods of vinification.

7. Analysis criteria for wine to be distilled

At the time they are to be distilled, all wines must have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 7% and a maximum alcoholic strength by volume of 12%. The volatile acidity content must not exceed 12.25 milliequivalents per litre.

8. Distillation

a) Distillation period

Only wine spirits obtained by distilling wines from the current winegrowing year are entitled to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin.

Distillation must be completed no later than 31 March of the year after the harvest.

b) - The principle of distillation

The double batch-distillation process is also known as *repassé* or double distillation. It consists of two successive steps, known as *chauffes*:

- The expression first *chauffe* designates the initial distillation of wine, and produces the *brouillis*, or first distillate;
- The “second *chauffe* (also called *repassé* or *bonne chauffe*) designates the distillation of the *brouillis*. Once the heads and tails (known in French as *flegmes*) have been eliminated, this produces Cognac wine spirit;

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- During the first and second *chauffe*, the heads and tails from the previous distillations, not retained as Cognac wine spirit, may be added to the wine or *brouillis*.

c) - Description of distillation equipment:

A “Charentais” pot still, or copper double distillation alembic, consisting of a boiler heated over an open flame, a head, a swan's neck, an optional wine pre-heater, and a coil with cooling tank.

The boiler, head, swan's neck, coil, and open alcohol-meter holder must be made of copper.

The boiler's total capacity must not exceed 30 hectolitres (with a tolerance of 5%) and the loading capacity is limited to 25 hectolitres (with a tolerance of 5%) per *chauffe*.

However, higher-capacity boilers are acceptable, provided that: they are used exclusively for the first distillation to obtain a *brouillis*; the total capacity of the boiler does not exceed 140 hectolitres (with a tolerance of 5%); and the volume of wine distilled is limited to 120 hectolitres (with a tolerance of 5%) per *chauffe*.

d - Alcoholic strength of the wine spirit:

After the second distillation, the alcoholic strength of the wine spirit must not exceed 72.4% by volume at 20 °C in the vat where the day's production of wine spirit is kept.

e) - Making *Esprit de Cognac*

This product is made after a further distillation of the second *chauffe* in a pot still, as described above. Its alcoholic strength by volume must be between 80 and 85 %.

f) - Distillation method when batches come from different crus:

The word *cru* refers to a complementary geographical name, as defined in point C-2 of this product specification.

When wines from different *crus* are distilled in successive batches, fractions from the beginning and end of the second *chauffe* can only be incorporated into the *brouillis* or wine from another *cru* as follows:

- Before changing to a different *cru*, the final second *chauffe* of the current *cru* must not exceed 33% of the distillery's load capacity, if at least three stills are installed.
- The heads and tails of the second *chauffe* incorporated must not exceed 8% of the load in the still being used.

9. Ageing

Cognac wine spirits are aged without interruption, exclusively in oak containers.

A wine spirit must age for at least two years before being made available for direct human consumption.

The first two years of ageing take place in an area defined in point C-1 of this product specification.

Ageing conditions are defined in orders issued by ministries in charge of the economy, the budget, and agriculture.

10. Finishing

The blending of wine spirits of different ages and with different profiles is inherent in producing Cognac. This is essential to produce a consistent product with specifically sought-after, well-balanced, organoleptic characteristics.

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The addition of a decoction of oak chips is included among authorised traditional methods. Only colouring using E150a caramel (plain caramel) and/or the addition of a decoction of oak chips and/or the addition of products defined in points 3 a) and c) of Annex I of Regulation (EC) no. 110/2008 of 15 January 2008 are authorised, so long as their effect is less than or equal to 4% obscuration by volume. This obscuration, expressed in percentage by volume, is obtained by measuring the difference between the real alcoholic strength by volume and the apparent alcoholic strength by volume.

11. Transitional measures

a) - Viticultural techniques

Vineyard plots planted before 21 September 2009 that do not respect the measures regarding vine density and distance between vine rows nevertheless maintain the right to produce wine spirit with a controlled appellation of origin, until they are uprooted and until the 2040 harvest, at the latest.

b) - Grape varieties

The white wine grape varieties Jurançon, Meslier Saint-François, and Sélect are only authorised if the vines were planted before 18 September 2005. Their use in blends is permitted up to and including the 2020 vintage.

c) - Minimum ageing in the geographical area

Producers who, prior to 21 September 2009, have partially or entirely aged their wine spirit with the Cognac controlled appellation of origin outside the geographical area defined in C-1 of this product specification can continue to do so until 31 July 2023.

d) - Dead or missing vines

Provisions relative to dead or missing vines will only start to apply from the 2016 harvest.

e) - Wording regarding ageing

Until 1 April 2018, “XO”, “Hors d’âge”, “Extra”, “Ancestral”, “Ancêtre”, “Or”, “Gold”, and “Impérial” can be used for wine spirits that have been aged for at least six years starting from 1 April after the harvest.

E. — Factors inherent to origin

Cognac wine spirits have a unique balance and aromatic typicity corresponding to respect for all the specifications for the appellation concerning geographical origin, grape varieties, viticultural practices, winemaking techniques, distillation and ageing.

Their sensory profile, characterised by complexity and finesse, develops during ageing.

The youngest wine spirits have floral and fruity notes, such as vine flowers, acacia blossoms, fresh grapes, pears, and some tropical fruits. In contact with oak, they acquire characteristic aromas, including vanilla, coconut, and roasted overtones.

Ageing also makes their aromatic profile more rich and complex, with nuances of candied fruit, spices, wood, tobacco, and dried fruit. Taken together, these overtones form a complex, specific aromatic profile described in the literature as “rancio Charentais” (Flanzy C., 1998).

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This aromatic evolution is also accompanied by changes in flavour, particularly greater smoothness on the palate and the development of characteristic roundness and volume, as well as a significantly longer aftertaste.

The colour of wine spirits also evolves during ageing, gradually deepening from pale yellow with golden-yellow highlights to amber and even mahogany for the oldest wine spirits.

Flanzy C. (1998), *Œnologie: fondements scientifiques et technologiques, collection sciences et techniques agroalimentaires*, published by Lavoisier Tec & Doc

1. Description of terroir-related natural and human factors

a) - The climate

The delimited Cognac region, which encompasses almost all of the Charente-Maritime department, a large part of the Charente department, and a few communes in the Dordogne and Deux-Sèvres departments, is located in the northern part of the Aquitaine Basin, on the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered on the west by the Gironde Estuary and the islands of Ré and Oléron, and on the east, towards Angoulême, by the first foothills of the Massif Central. The River Charente crosses the region, with small tributaries, including the Né, Antenne, Seugne, etc.

The temperate, oceanic climate is fairly homogeneous, except for the coastal areas, which are sunnier and with fewer extremes of temperature. Due to the proximity of the ocean, rain can fall at any time of year, although precipitation is more prevalent in winter. Drought conditions are therefore rare and vines do not suffer from water stress. The average annual temperature is approximately 13 °C, with relatively mild winters. Temperatures are sufficiently warm for the proper ripening of grapes, but not hot enough to scorch them.

b) - The vineyards

Henri Coquand (1811-1881), a geology professor, studied the composition of the Cognac region's soil in the 19th century and, with the help of a knowledgeable taster, classified the various sub-regions based on the quality of the wine spirit they produced.

Their work resulted in the delimitation of various *crus* circa 1860 and served as the basis for the decree of 13 January 1938. The Cognac appellation's historical complementary geographical names continue to be used: *Grande Champagne*, *Petite Champagne*, *Fine Champagne*, *Borderies*, *Fins bois*, *Bons bois*, and *Bois ordinaires* or *Bois à terroir*.

It should be pointed out that the *Fine Champagne* complementary geographical name does not correspond to a specific delimited area.

Its use is restricted to a blend of wine spirits exclusively from two areas with complementary geographical names: *Grande Champagne* and *Petite Champagne*, and must contain at least 50% wine spirit from *Grande Champagne*.

As shown by studies carried out at that time, the simplified characteristics of the various sectors in the Cognac appellation can be described as follows:

- *Grande* and *Petite Champagne*: fairly shallow clay-limestone overlaying soft limestone, chalk, and cretaceous soil
- *Borderies*: siliceous-clay and flint created by limestone decarbonation
- *Fins bois*: largely consisting of *groies* (thin, red, very stony clay-limestone soil), hard Jurassic limestone, and very clayey soil for the rest;
- *Bois* (*Bons bois*, *Bois ordinaires*, and *Bois à terroirs*): sandy soil near the coast, in certain valleys, and in the entire southern part of the delimited Cognac region. This sand was produced by erosion in the Massif Central.

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Vineyards producing the Cognac controlled appellation of origin currently cover about 75,000 hectares, accounting for 95 % of all vines planted in the geographical area and 9 % of all the agricultural land in the delimited region. Ugni Blanc is the most widely-planted grape variety, accounting for nearly 98 % of vines planted in Cognac.

c) The economy of Cognac:

The regional economy has historically been linked to the prosperity of the Cognac trade, which also fostered the growth of many related activities and industries that have combined to form a professional community entirely focused on the production and sale of Cognac.

The various firms involved with the Cognac industry (about 5,500 winegrowers, 110 professional distillers, and 300 negociants) employ some 12,000 people who work at cooperages, boilermakers, glass producers, carton manufacturers, printers, cork producers, transport firms, oenology laboratories, agricultural equipment manufacturers, etc.

2. Historic factors linked to terroir:

Archaeological research carried out in the Charentes proves that vines were first grown there in the late first century AD. Furthermore, digs in the region have revealed numerous farm buildings (including winemaking facilities) dating from that period, confirming that wine has been made in Cognac since Roman times.

Wine exports developed in the Middle Ages, largely thanks to trade routes opened up via the Charente River. After the success of its salt warehouse going back to the 11th century, the city of Cognac also became a centre of the wine trade. Wines from the Poitou region were shipped to North Sea countries on Dutch ships that came to the Atlantic coast to buy salt.

Trade grew significantly during the Renaissance. Dutch vessels docked at Cognac and other ports on the Charente to load their ships with wines from the famous *crus* known as *Grande* and *Petite Champagne*, and *Borderies*.

However, these low-alcohol wines suffered from the long ocean voyage, so, in the 15th century, the Dutch, who were skilled in the art of distillation, decided to distil wines from the Cognac area in their country in order to preserve them. They called the result “brandwijn” (literally meaning “burnt wine”), which explains the etymology of the wine spirit that later became known as “brandy”.

Double distillation was first practised in the early 15th century and enabled the wine spirit to travel in an absolutely stable and much more concentrated form than wine. The first stills used by the Dutch were gradually modified over time and the Charentais, in turn, mastered the distilling process and improved upon it by introducing double distillation.

A number of firms were established in the mid-19th century and began shipping Cognac in bottles rather than in barrels.

This new form of trade led to the birth of associated industries: glass (local producers developed sophisticated automated techniques), wooden cases, cork, and printing.

Phylloxera vastatrix struck the Cognac region circa 1875. This plant louse of the Hemiptera genus sucked the sap from the vine roots and laid waste to most of the vineyards. There were only 40,600 hectares of vines in the region circa 1893, as compared to some 280,000 before phylloxera struck. As elsewhere in Europe, the Cognac vines were replanted thanks to grafting on American rootstocks. A viticultural committee, set up in 1888 in reaction to this crisis, became an experimental station, with an interprofessional research unit devoted to producing quality Cognac, in 1892.

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This station was closely involved with finding the grape varieties best-suited to Cognac. In-depth studies showed that Ugni Blanc was the most appropriate grape variety and, by the mid-20th century, it had become, by far, the most commonly planted variety. Ugni Blanc proved to be more resistant than traditional pre-phylloxera varieties planted (Colombard, Folle Blanche, etc.). The latter had the further disadvantage of becoming fragile after grafting.

Ugni Blanc was also selected because of its productivity (yields are approximately 120 to 130 hectolitres per hectare), high acidity, and low sugar content, which produces low-alcohol wines. Originally from Italy, where it is known as Trebbiano Toscano, Ugni Blanc grows at the variety's northern limit in Cognac with regard to proper ripening.

3. Historic factors linked to Cognac's reputation

The market for Cognac started to develop in the late 17th and, especially, early 18th centuries. This led to the creation of thriving negociant businesses, some of Northern-European origin, in the region's main towns, for example: Martell in 1715, Rémy Martin in 1724, Delamain in 1759, Hennessy in 1765, Godet in 1782, Hine in 1791, and Otard in 1795.

The signing of a trade agreement between France and England on 23 January 1860, thanks to the initiative of Napoleon III, led to the explosion of Cognac sales, which peaked in 1879 (other major negociant firms were founded during this period: Bisquit in 1819, Courvoisier in 1843, Royer in 1853, Meukow in 1862, as well as Camus and Hardy, both in 1863).

Rules and regulations governing Cognac production were introduced in the first half of the 20th century to ensure and perpetuate time-honoured and trustworthy local methods:

- 1909: delimitation of the geographical area of production
- 1936: recognition of Cognac as a controlled appellation of origin;
- 1938: delimitation of "sub-appellations" (i.e. *crus*, or complementary geographical names).

During the Second World War, a bureau to “oversee the distribution of wines and wine spirits” was created to manage Cognac stocks. In 1946, this was replaced by the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac, to which the experimental station was attached in 1948. Cognac winegrowers and negociants agreed on the BNIC's mission: to develop Cognac and represent and defend the collective interests of professionals. Among other roles, the BNIC promotes and defends the Cognac *appellation d'origine* (controlled appellation of origin) and promotes good relations between negociants and winegrowers. It also has several public service missions: to ensure that Cognac is aged properly, monitor the accuracy of age indications on labels, control quality downstream (throughout the distribution network), and issue the necessary export certificates.

Historically turned towards exports, over 95 % of Cognac is currently consumed outside France, in nearly 160 countries. From the Far East to the Americas, not forgetting Europe, Cognac is synonymous with fine quality wine spirit and symbolises the French way of life.

4. Links between the product's geographical region of origin, quality, and characteristics

Cognac grape varieties, especially Ugni Blanc, are late-ripening and have high yields, which constitute major advantages. The region's low-alcohol, high-acid wines possess the cardinal virtues for making Cognac fine wine spirit.

Wines used to produce Cognac wine spirits are truly unique and have been regularly described for over a century in scientific and technical literature.

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An unusual and permanent feature of Cognac wine spirit is the use of acidic wines low in alcohol (RAVAZ (1900), LAFON et al (1964), LURTON et al (2011)).

Good acidity enables the wine to keep well over the winter months until it is distilled and its low alcohol content leads to greater concentration of its aromas in the wine spirit.

Vineyards with low yields tend to produce wines with a higher alcoholic strength by volume, as well as grapes with lower levels of acidity and nitrogen, whereas increasing yields tends to have the opposite effect, i.e. lower alcohol content and higher acidity.

However, the negative impact of other parameters, such as malic acid levels, underripe aromas, their dilution, and the frequency of botrytis infections, on the quality of wine spirits is exacerbated by excessive yields.

All of these parameters lead to the definition of an ideal bracket for yields that varies every year according to the characteristics of the crop.

Setting a maximum yield each year, based on variations in these parameters, ensures that the volume of wine produced will be optimised to ensure a balance of the various quality factors required to obtain Cognac wine spirits. The annual yield is thus within the optimum bracket that includes the *réserve climatique*.

Furthermore, the risk of lower wine quality in case of excessive yields has led to the introduction of additional measures concerning productivity, including an absolute maximum authorised yield.

The aromatic quality of wine spirits depends in large part on the characteristics of the wines used to make them.

The choice of grape varieties and respect for specific winemaking regulations designated in the product specification for the Cognac appellation leads to the production of wines with fine, elegant aromas indispensable to making wine spirits of great quality. These wines must not present flaws such as herbaceous characteristics, excess acetaldehyde (oxidised notes), higher alcohols (heaviness), or certain compounds linked with altering wines during storage. Above and beyond the specifications, a number of recommendations are issued, regularly updated, and widely disseminated to winegrowers in the appellation, concerning the harvesting and pressing of grapes, as well as the fermentation and storage of wines prior to distillation.

Expertise in pruning and winemaking:

The high acidity and low alcoholic strength of wines used to make Cognac are enhanced by pruning methods the winegrower chooses, based on several parameters:

- distance between the vine rows;
- trunk and leaf canopy height;
- the vine-training method: traditional long cane pruning or cordon pruning (on a tall permanent branch, or low on guide wires).

The grapes are pressed immediately after harvesting in traditional horizontal basket presses or pneumatic ones. The use of a winepress with an Archimedes screw, or continuous screw press, is prohibited. The juice starts fermenting at once and chaptalisation is not allowed.

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Pressing and fermentation are very closely monitored because they have a decisive influence on the final quality of the wine spirit. For quality reasons, it is prohibited to add sulphur dioxide to the wine while it is fermenting.

To avoid any risk with preserving the white wines used to produce Cognac, they must be distilled by 31 March the year after the harvest.

Distillation:

Cognac wine spirit is made by double batch-distillation, known in French as *à repasse*, in a Charentais pot still. Its shape, construction material, capacity, and heating system were defined by French law in 1936. These factors are absolutely essential for producing high-quality wine spirits.

Description:

- The still's shape is designed to select the best volatile components.
- Heating with an open flame produces complementary aromas when the wine comes into contact with the bottom of the boiler (a cooking effect);
- All parts of the distillation apparatus in contact with wine, vapours, or distillates are made entirely of copper due to this metal's physical properties (malleability, good heat conduction) and its chemical reactivity with certain wine components.

Using this type of still necessitates a delicate operation each time: the *coupe*, which consists of separating the distillate according to real alcoholic strength by volume and volatile substance composition, i.e. keeping the “heart” separate from the other fractions destined to be recycled in subsequent distillations. This is why, combined with the limited load capacity during the second distillation, Cognac production is an artisanal process that calls for considerable expertise. Distillers need to evaluate both the ideal time to proceed with the *coupe*, and how best to do so, according to the characteristics of the wine (amount of lees, alcoholic strength by volume, acidity, etc.) and the quality they are seeking to distil.

Characteristics of wine spirits according to their geographical names:

Immediate after distillation, wine spirits are remarkably diverse both analytically and organoleptically, due in large part to their origin. This diversity calls for different ageing techniques of varying durations.

Grande Champagne:

Grande Champagne produces wine spirits of great finesse with considerable distinction and length, as well as a predominately floral bouquet. These wine spirits need long ageing in oak barrels to reach full maturity.

Petite Champagne:

These wine spirits have similar characteristics to *Grande Champagne*, but without quite the same extreme finesse.

Fine Champagne:

Cognac sold under the name “*Fine Champagne*” has a flavour profile reflecting its origins, i.e., a blend of *Grande Champagne* (at least 50%) and *Petite Champagne*.

Borderies:

This region produces round, aromatic, soft wine spirits with a bouquet of violets. They are said to require less ageing than wine spirits from the *Grande* and *Petite Champagne crus*.

Fins bois:

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Fins bois is the largest vineyard region in Cognac. It produces round, smooth, wine spirits that age fairly quickly, with a fruity bouquet, reminiscent of freshly-pressed grapes.

Bois (Bons bois, Bois à terroir, or Bois ordinaires):

Bons bois produces quickly-maturing wine spirits with fruity aromas.

Ageing:

New wine spirits that have just come out of the still reflect, in an essential way, the quality of the wines they are made from.

Ageing is the process by which wine spirits are brought to full maturity, when they exhibit their most harmonious organoleptic characteristics. They are aged exclusively in oak containers, which provide the ideal environment for harmonious ageing.

Ageing duration depends on the characteristics of the wine spirit and the quality of the finished product for which it is intended, as well as the type and age of the oak ageing containers.

Ageing entails the extraction of oak compounds and causes phenomena such as oxidation and many physiochemical developments essential to obtaining the sensory characteristics typical of aged wine spirits, including colour.

The Cognac ageing process benefits not only from the specific regional climate, but also from the experience and know-how that local professionals have developed over many years. As soon as it comes out of the still, the wine spirit is put into oak containers to age for several years (sometimes several decades). During this time, various physicochemical changes occur: evaporation of water and alcohol, concentration of various substances, extraction of compounds from the oak wood, oxidation, etc. These phenomena are influenced by the wine spirit's initial characteristics (such as alcoholic strength and acidity), the type of container it is aged in, and the physical characteristics of the cellar where it is stored (temperature, hygrometry, and ventilation).

When wine spirits are aged in the Cognac region's temperate, oceanic-type climate, they are exposed to ideal conditions of moderate humidity and limited seasonal temperature variations, avoiding extremes. Cellars are built in such a way as to have the best-balanced conditions to produce soft wine spirits that age harmoniously.

The use of different types of oak: fine-grained Tronçais or coarser-grained Limousin, *Quercus petraea* (sessile oak) or *Quercus robur* (pedunculate oak) enhances exchanges between the wine spirit, oak, and ageing environment over a period lasting many years. There are numerous cooperages in the Cognac region. Working closely with cellar masters, local coopers have acquired a great deal of expertise in making containers ideally adapted to ageing Cognac. It is the cellar master's job to select the containers best-suited to the wine spirit's initial characteristics and ageing stage, as well as his objectives with regard to quality.

As Cognac ages and develops thanks to contact with oak and air, it gradually loses some of its water and alcohol content. These alcohol vapours (poetically referred to as "the angels' share") represent the equivalent of several million bottles every year, and also feed a microscopic fungus, *Torula compniacensis*, that blackens the outside of many of the region's stone buildings.

The ageing of Cognac is inextricably linked to the art of blending. The art of blending is the heart of the cellar master's job in Cognac. Like a painter with his palette, the cellar master chooses various batches of Cognac from multiple origins: different *crus* of different ages, having spent time aged in new or older barrels (already used to mature Cognac), from various origins, and in different types of cellars (humid or dry).

Each wine spirit has its own unique taste profile in light of its origin and ageing. These qualities are enhanced by blending several wine spirits with complementary profiles.

Blending is a complex operation that cannot be based solely on technical recipes. The cellar master must rely on his considerable personal experience (familiarity with the diversity of raw material and typicality of the appellation, experience of interactions between the raw material and ageing factors, and technical expertise), constant tasting and a tremendous memory for the countless wine spirits he has sampled at various stages of production.

This calls for experienced professionals with years of training. This expertise is perpetuated thanks to the many different firms in the Cognac region and frequent contacts between key players in the industry (cellar masters, winegrowers, negociants and brokers).

F. — French national rules and regulations

- The decree dated 19 August 1921 establishing regulations for the application of the law dated 1 August 1905 concerning fraud control in the sales of goods and the falsification of foodstuffs and agricultural products, including wines, sparkling wines and spirits;
- The law dated 20 February 1928 regulating the use of the word “fine” in the spirits trade;
- The law dated 4 July 1934 ensuring the protection of the "Cognac" and "Armagnac" controlled appellations of origin;
- The decree dated 11 March 1938 relative to Esprit de Cognac;
- The modified administrative order dated 27 July 2003 establishing the application of article 302 G of the general tax code concerning Cognac wine spirits and their ageing.

G. — The applicant

The applicant group is the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac (BNIC)
BP 90018
23 allées Bernard GUIONNET
16101 COGNAC Cedex

H. — Complementary indications within the Cognac controlled appellation of origin

The Cognac controlled appellation of origin may be accompanied by the following complementary geographical names: *Grande Fine Champagne*, *Grande Champagne*, *Petite Fine Champagne*, *Petite Champagne*, *Fine Champagne*, *Borderies*, *Fins bois*, *Bons bois*, *Bois ordinaires*, and *Bois à terroirs*.

I.— Specific regulations concerning labelling

- a) - The name Cognac may be used without the words *appellation contrôlée*, as long as it is not associated with any other complementary geographical name.

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b) - The minimum age of Cognac wine spirits shipped from cellars must respectively correspond to:

- *Compte 2* (at least 2 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “3 Etoiles”, “Sélection”, “VS”, “De Luxe”, “Very Special” and “Millésime”
- *Compte 3* (at least 3 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “Supérieur”, “Cuvée Supérieure” and “Qualité Supérieure”
- *Compte 4* (at least 4 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “V.S.O.P.”, “Réserve”, “Vieux”, “Rare”, “Royal” and “Very Superior Old Pale”,
- *Compte 5* (at least 5 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “Vieille Réserve”, “Réserve Rare,” and “Réserve Royale”
- *Compte 6* (at least 6 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “Napoléon”, “Très Vieille Réserve”, “Très Vieux”, “Héritage”, “Très Rare”, “Excellence”, and “Suprême”
- *Compte 10* (at least 10 years' ageing starting from 1 April the year after the harvest) for the following names: “XO”, “Hors d’âge”, “Extra”, “Ancestral”, “Ancêtre”, “Or”, “Gold”, “Impérial”, “Extra Old”, “XXO”, and “Extra Extra Old”.
- The names “XXO” and “Extra Extra Old” are specific indications given to wine spirits that have been aged for at least 14 years.

With the exception of compound terms indicating age listed above, which correspond to a particular *compte*, the use of several terms designating the same minimum age (*compte*) on the same labelling does not alter the indicated *compte* in any way.

When terms denoting different *comptes* are used on the same label, the oldest *compte* automatically takes precedence.

Labelling showing an indication of age as well as context and presentation should not create confusion in the minds of buyers or consumers as to the age and essential qualities of the Cognac.

Part II Obligatory declarations and registers

I. — Obligatory declarations

1. Annual declaration of utilisation

Wine spirits entitled to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin must be produced from wine made from grapes grown in plots situated within the designated geographical area, and which have been the object of an annual declaration of utilisation.

This declaration of utilisation must be made to the Fédération des Interprofessions du Bassin Viticole Charentes-Cognac, which in turn forwards the information to the Defence and Management Organisation and the certified inspection body in charge of overseeing the Cognac appellation's control plan.

For the 2014, and subsequent harvests, declarations of utilisation must be made before 1 July of the year preceding the following year's harvest.

If proposed by the Defence and Management Organisation the deadline date by which the declaration of utilisation must be submitted can be re-examined by the appropriate INAO National Committee up to and including the 2018 vintage.

Plots whose utilisation has previously been declared for the production of must destined for the Pineau des Charentes controlled appellation of origin, and identified according to the procedure defined in the specifications for this appellation, but not claimed as such on the harvest declaration, can also be used for production under the Cognac controlled appellation of origin without entailing any formality other than changing the utilisation on the harvest declaration.

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The volume of wine spirit produced on these plots cannot exceed the maximum annual yield of must as defined for the Pineau des Charentes controlled appellation of origin for the year in question, based on a potential alcoholic strength of 10 % by volume.

The production of vineyard plots previously entitled to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin, but where no harvest declaration had been made for this purpose, or that no longer meets the requirements of the Cognac controlled appellation of origin, must comply with the provisions in D-3 of this product specification.

2. Declaration of claims

Any producer claiming the right to use the Cognac controlled appellation of origin is required to make a declaration of claims setting forth the quantities produced (not exceeding the legal limit for annual yield), including those intended to be set aside for market regulation and, at the time of their release for sale, the quantities set aside as a *réserve climatique individuelle*, as defined above.

This declaration must be made by all operators in the form of a single document recapitulating the total amount claimed as being entitled to the controlled appellation of origin.

This declaration should be submitted to the Defence and Management Organisation before 1 May of the year after the vintage.

For wines destined to be transformed into wine spirit, a declaration of claims is included in the documents cited in article 286-I of Annex 2 of the general tax code.

For producers distilling their own harvest, the declaration at the beginning of distillation must include a partial declaration of claims.

All producers wishing to market their wine spirits with the names “XXO” and “Extra Extra Old” must mention it on the movement certificates communicated to the BNIC.

3. Commitment to vineyard conversion

The owners of vineyards concerned by the transitional viticultural measures must commit to conversion with the Defence and Management Organisation.

B. — Keeping registers

The producer's register, recording the distillation of wine spirit and winemaking stocks claiming the right to the Cognac controlled appellation of origin may be inspected at any time.

The stock register must be able to justify and monitor the use of the ageing indications “XXO” and “Extra Extra Old”.

Part III Evaluation methods and main points to inspect

POINTS TO MONITOR	REFERENCE VALUES	EVALUATION METHODS
A. — STRUCTURAL RULES		

Localisation of vineyards and distilling facilities within the appellation	Geographical area	Documentary evidence
Description of the distillation equipment	Type and size of the still	Documentary and/or visual evidence
B. — ANNUAL RULES		
Laboratory analysis of the wine when it is ready to go into the still.	Minimum total alcoholic strength by volume: 7 % vol. Maximum total alcoholic strength by volume: 12 % vol. Maximum volatile acidity: 12.25 milliequivalents/litre	Documentary and/or analytical evidence
Maximum real alcoholic strength by volume of the wine spirit	72.4 % by volume at 20 °C.	Documentary and/or analytical evidence
Distillation period	No later than 31 March of the year after the harvest	Documentary evidence
Minimum ageing period	2 years	Documentary evidence
C. — CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WINE SPIRIT		
Physical Characteristics	Minimum absorbance of 420 nm 0.1 for a 10 mm optical path	Analytical evidence
Organoleptic characteristics	Clarity - odour - flavour	Organoleptic evidence

References concerning supervisory organisations

Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (I.N.A.O.)

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A supervisory agency is accredited in keeping with standard 45011.

An outside organisation offering a guarantee of competence, impartiality and independence ensures compliance with this product specification on behalf of the INAO based on an approved monitoring plan.

The control plan is not dissimilar to self-monitoring exercised by operators and internal controls made under the responsibility of the Defence and Management Organisation. It shows that external verifications were carried out by a third party, as well as analytical and organoleptic tests. All inspections are made by spot checks.