

# Photo story: a journey into Armagnac, home of the world's oldest brandy

This historic region of southwest France is characterised by rolling vineyards and attractive villages, as well as the spirit that shares its name.

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The Armagnac region drifts through three French departments like a cloud of mist. Although it can't be found on most modern maps, this ancient terrain is alive within the rich, rolling landscapes, its produce and recipes, and in every glass of its potent, fiery eau de vie — the world's oldest brandy, made here since at least the early 14th century.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PAREN TAYLOR



Armagnac from Château de Pellehaut, produced using barrels from the Limousin region. The vineyard also makes still and sparkling wines.





Named after its fortress-like chateau, the village of Lavardens has experienced both highs and lows, from its days as a stronghold of the powerful dukes of Armagnac to its devastation by plague in the 17th century, some 500 years later. Located just 12 miles north of Auch, the historical capital of Gascony, the hamlet is surrounded by verdant countryside, with glimpses of the Pyrenees to the south and whispers of the vineyards all around that are carried on dry winds blowing to the Mediterranean.

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