

Extraordinaire collection d'un homme de discréction et de passion...



An extraordinary collection that belongs to a discreet and passionate man ...

Texte de
Florence Varaine

La Gabare Cognac

Natural Luxury



The brightest ideas often spring from the simplest observations. This is how legends that fill the history of the world of spirits are made; with each product, the magic of its creation. To understand the discreet transformation that the "La Gabare" collection represents, it is important to take a look at the saga of a family that crossed France and survived several crises without ever losing its intransigent passion for authenticity. Generations follow on from one another, but eventually, marvellously, the result of determination emerges, this simple idea at the outset which was to lead to a profession and a range of products unique in the world.

The word 'world' is one often used by Guilhem Gosperrin, who has managed this firm since 2004. Taking over from his father, he has continued to maintain his trustworthy ethics as well as a love of the rural world, whose treasures would surely be acknowledged by the international market.

When determination excludes determinism...

The early stages of Jean Gosperrin's life seem set in the world of Zola. Initially a manual labourer working in Burgundy vineyards, then a travelling home distiller in the East of France, he lived like a nomad for many years, his life regulated by agricultural seasons. When he became a father at the beginning of the 1980s, he specialised in vine growing and winemaking in Montpellier before starting a career selling vintage distillation stills for a boilermaker in Cognac. The severe financial crisis in 1992 forced him to become a country broker. It was at this stage, as he began to travel all over the countryside, that he discovered some extraordinary Cognacs slumbering in the dark shadows of store-

houses owned by producers running small-scale domains. These delicate, round, aromatic and absolutely natural Cognacs were destined to be blended with others to produce extremely well known Cognac brands. Deciding to save these pure products from a fate he considered mediocre, he personally dealt with ageing and bottling them, therefore officially creating the collection of "La Gabare" Cognacs... brut, vintage, origin guaranteed, powerful or smooth, but never giving a fiery sensation on the palate. His oldest Cognacs (Petite Champagne 1962 or Grande Champagne 1944), distilled over a wood fire, are the last vestiges of a period when intensive farming did not yet exist.

Total traceability

His stroke of genius lay in transforming these natural treasures into completely unique Cognacs. Exceptional too was his activity as a broker/collector. Surpassing the historic conflict between trade and production, Jean Gosperrin was one of the first to sell his Cognacs in their natural condition...no addition of sugar, or caramel and without using a cooling process.

As for the concept of vintage Cognac, it became fashionable again thanks to the cancellation of its ban decreed by the trade bureau during the 1960s. Its return in 1988 guaranteed perfect traceability, one of the most stringent in the world. All these Cognacs produced by small-scale growers are certified by the DGCCRF and carbon dated by the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research). The Gosperrin firm does not buy its stocks solely in country storehouses. Some batches come from state-owned bonded warehouses. In exchange for storing the Cognac, the grower has an official receipt certifying that the Cognac is under state control during the ageing period. The Gosperrin firm is one of the rare companies specialised in this type of production.

Going against the trend of preconceived ideas

The 25 vintages, made with the finest Cognacs, are comprised of all the wines of the appellation's geographical area. *"All grape varieties have their rightful place. It is almost impossible to find wines of the AOC Bois Ordinaires (just 1 000 hectares planted on a total area of 400 000 hectares)..."* Guillaume Gosperrin regrets. Tasting reveals such fine quality; we discover Cognacs that are fruity, full of flavour, fleshy, complex...; alcohol is not overpowering, sweetness is natural. The terroir reveals the truth.

Going against the tide of current trends, Guilhem Gosperrin's approach to the market is also different. Although certain rare vintages are sold at high prices, they are generally reasonable for most consumers. These Cognacs are extremely competitive, with prices ranging from 35 Euros for a VSOP 12 years of age (retail price) or 55 Euros for an XO, to higher prices for older vintages. 100 000 litres of Cognac are stored at present and between 15 000 and 30 000 bottles are sold each year, 50% in France (in specialised channels) and 50% for export. *"We are currently contacting pure malt customers to propose very delicate Cognacs in small quantity. When Cognac is good, a measure of 1cl neat, served as an aperitif is sufficient."* This young Cognac merchant likes to go and meet enthusiasts. Avoiding the trap of isolating his products in a luxury niche, he concentrates on a proximity approach. A 1958 vintage for example, the only one in the region, sells for an cellar price of 120 Euros (the retail price is 200 Euros).

It is impossible to avoid thinking about the current financial crisis that once again threatens the economy of the Charentes area. Will it provide an opportunity to bring about a return to activities that constitute the importance of the structure of our economy and small-scale productions? We can only hope so, for the benefit of pure Cognac lovers who believe unfailingly in it and in them.

Un peu après Cognac, dans une maison charentaise discrète, mais typique, Monsieur et Madame Gosperrin se sont installés depuis 1990. Au départ, rien ne les destinait réellement à s'enraciner dans le cognacaïs, si ce n'est...

Un pari, une passion...



De ses débuts en Bourgogne, Jean Gosperrin apprend le goût des vins, et mémorise les odeurs de l'alambic qui vient à la propriété, distiller les marcs. Ses pas le conduisent ensuite en Haute-Marne pendant 10 ans où il exerce le métier de bouilleur ambulant. Puis, il décide en famille de quitter la région pour Montpellier et de reprendre des études pour passer avec succès un BTS en commerce des vins et spiritueux à l'âge de 34 ans. Le hasard des rencontres le conduit à Cognac chez un marchand d'alambics en 1990. "J'ai redécouvert les alcools, découvert le Cognac, et passé l'examen de courtier en 1991 pour m'installer dans le métier. De courtier, je suis passé à négociant. Mais en 1998/99, la conjoncture était délicate. J'ai eu la chance de rencontrer un négociant, installé depuis cinq générations, qui cherchait à se défaire d'une partie de son stock de vieilles eaux-de-vie. Un coup de cœur, que j'ai acheté immédiatement, sans avoir aucun débouché en vue. Je suis un peu joueur..."



In 1990, Mr and Mrs Gosperrin settled a short distance from Cognac, in a discreet house, built in a style typical of the Charentes region. At the outset, nothing really predestined them to set down their roots in the Cognac area, except...a venture, a passion ...

From his youth spent in Burgundy, Jean Gosperrin learnt the taste of wines and stored in his memory the smell of the distillation still which used to come to the family estate to distil the marc. Later, he became a travelling distiller and this took him to the Haute-Marne area for a period of 10 years. Then, with the full support of his family, he decided to leave the Haute-Marne area for Montpellier. Here, at the age of 34, he took a wine and spirits course and successfully passed his professional qualification certificate (BTS). By coincidence, his travels took him, in 1990, to Cognac, to visit a vendor of distillation stills. "I re-discovered spirits, and Cognac and then passed my exam to be a broker in 1991 so that I could establish myself in this profession. From being a broker, I then went on to be merchant. But in 1998 and 1999, the economic situation was difficult. I was lucky enough to meet a merchant, whose business had been established five generations ago and who was seeking to sell off part of his stock of old brandies. I fell in love with them straight away and bought the stock immediately, without even having a prospective market for them. I'm a bit of a gambler ...

Puis au gré de ses rencontres, il estime, juge la qualité des cognacs et totalise aujourd'hui, près de 60 000 bouteilles en stock des millésimes de 1944 à 1974. Ces dernières années, la douloureuse mais indispensable mutation du vignoble charentais a conduit à une nouvelle répartition des richesses obligeant de nombreuses familles à se déposséder de lots extraordinaires. "Je prolonge un peu leur histoire et leur mémoire sur l'étiquette, et par le produit lui-même. Un patrimoine du cognacais révélé par des Cognacs atypiques, d'une forte personnalité, et issus d'un savoir-faire familial, parfois disparu."

Par un ami, conservateur au musée d'archéologie, il prend contact avec un chercheur du CNRS de Villeurbanne afin de réaliser sur ses Cognacs une datation au Carbone 14. Une innovation dans la région et un moyen utile pour la vérification de l'authenticité des archives. Un soupçon d'inconscience, un pari, des coups de cœur complétés par un travail sur sa marque baptisée "Cognac de Collection" permet un accueil unanime auprès des sommeliers et des cavistes.

Then during subsequent meetings, he evaluated and assessed the quality of these cognacs which today represent a total stock of 60 000 bottles of vintages ranging from 1944 to 1974. These last years, which represent both difficult, but essential changes in the Charentes cognac producing area, led to a new distribution of wealth, obliging numerous families to sell off some of their extraordinary stocks of Cognac. "With the label and the product itself, I am perpetuating their history and their memory. The heritage of the cognac producing area is revealed by these exceptional Cognacs that have their own distinctive personalities and which were made with family skills. These days, this expertise no longer exists in many estates."

Through a friend who is curator of an archaeological museum, he contacted a researcher at the CNRS (Science Research Council) in Villeurbanne, in order to be able to carry out a radiocarbon dating on his collection of Cognacs. This is an innovation in the region and a useful way of verifying the authenticity of archives. Thanks to a hint of recklessness, a venture risked for these products that he fell in love with and the efforts he has made for his brand named "Cognac de Collection", Jean Gosperrin is now able to enjoy an unanimous welcome from sommeliers and wine shops.



À travers l'étiquette sobre et précise, Jean Gosperrin s'engage sur la qualité, l'authenticité de ses Cognacs dont la couleur annonce les prémisses d'une dégustation surprenante par le détail du millésime, du terroir dont ils sont issus. Un respect de l'intégrité de chaque Cognac pour le suggérer aux dégustateurs et amateurs dans son essence même. À cela, l'obligation de contraintes draconiennes. Les lots dégustés, choisis, sans assemblage, continuent leur vieillissement dans leurs barriques d'origine ou en dame-jeannes pour les plus antiques millésimes. Le stockage s'effectue sous la surveillance d'un magasin général sous contrôle d'État, et chaque lot subi une identification au Carbone 14, afin de garantir le millésime, ou l'âge. La préparation des Cognacs, leur mise en bouteille s'effectuent sous contrôle d'huissier de justice et sont notées sur un certificat qui scelle le bouchon. "Mon grand plaisir c'est lorsque les gens reconnaissent la qualité du produit. Essayer de préserver une image pour Cognac, par passion gustative, olfactive, et sauver modestement les témoignages d'un savoir-faire individuel de la région."

Plaisir que l'on présume total lorsque l'on déguste certains flacons et convoite des yeux les millésimes de la Collection... Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Les Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois... 1944, 50, 54, 58... 68, 71 et 74...

La Gabare S.A. – 16 370 CHERVES DE COGNAC – 05 45 83 74 24



With a traditional and precise label, Jean Gosperrin commits himself to ensuring the quality and authenticity of these Cognacs, whose colour announces the possibility of an astonishing tasting, because of the precision of vintage and terroir. A respect for the integrity of each Cognac, to suggest each product in its very quintessence to tasters and connoisseurs. In addition to this, an obligation of adhering to very strict constraints. Batches are tasted, selected, not blended and then continue their ageing in their original barrels or in demijohns for the oldest vintages. Storage is assured by a State-run bonded warehouse and each batch is identified by radiocarbon dating, in order to guarantee the vintage or age of the Cognac. The Cognacs are prepared and bottled under the supervision of a bailiff and this is noted on a certificate sealed to the cork. "I get tremendous pleasure when people recognise the quality of the product. Because of my love for the taste and aromas of these products, I'm trying to safeguard an image of Cognac and simply preserving the evidence of a unique skill in this region."

We can assume that the pleasure must be absolute, when we taste some of these bottles of Cognac and look covetously at the Collection ...Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Les Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois ...1944, 1950, 1954, 1958, 1968, 1971 and 1974.

Cognac La Gabare

Cognac

Ce cognac millésimé a été produit par une famille de viticulteurs de la région de Châteauneuf sur Charente, installée dans ce lieu depuis 80 ans.

Cette famille n'avait pas de successeur sur l'exploitation, elle a cessé pour cette raison son activité en 1976.

**COGNAC
PETITE CHAMPAGNE**
APPELLATION PETITE CHAMPAGNE CONTRÔLÉE

1964

LOT N° 136 - POUR 200 LITRES

Cette bouteille porte le N° 00106

Je soussigné, Jean GROSSEPIN,
certifie que ce cognac date au carbonne 14 et bénéficiant
d'archives irréfutables est bien de la récolte 1964. Il vous est
présenté brut de fait; c'est-à-dire réduit naturellement.
Son assemblage n'a adjonction d'aucun autre élément.
Il présente toutes les caractéristiques d'un vieux cognac de
petite champagne avec ses arômes de fleur de vigne et de
fruits confits. C'est un cognac exceptionnel que les
dégustateurs confirmés apprécieront.
Pour le savourer pleinement, je vous recommande de le boire
sans ajouter d'eau et de n'en prendre qu'une très petite
quantité en bouche.

60,5%vol. 70cl

Jean Grossepin
Cognac Collectionneur

Petite Champagne



Robe: orange, miel mille fleurs, brillante.

Nez: intense, présent, élégant et puissant. Pruneau, fruits confits, légères notes florales et chocolatées.

Bouche: chaude (60,5° non réduit), mais douceur des fruits cuits avec une grande légèreté; expressif et aromatique.

Commentaires: une superbe présence due à la richesse volumétrique; cette petite Champagne de caractère se veut percutante mais reste équilibrée et aérienne.

1964



Visual aspect: gleaming, with an orangey-honey colour.

Nose: powerful, distinct and elegant, with aromas of prune, crystallised fruit and slight hints of flowers and chocolate.

Palate: a very warm sensation (60,5°vol, not reduced), but suppleness too with very light flavours of cooked fruit. It is expressive and full of flavour.

Comment: superb intensity thanks to the richness of its full-body. This Petite Champagne with great character aims to be powerful, but is well balanced and airy.

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Cognac La Gabare

Cognac

Ce Cognac de Grande Champagne, vendanges 1971, distillé les premiers jours de l'année suivante a vieilli depuis cette période dans les chais sous contrôle d'état, vous garantissant ainsi de façon absolue le millésime indiqué.

**COGNAC
GRANDE CHAMPAGNE**
APPELLATION GRANDE CHAMPAGNE CONTRÔLÉE

1971

IDENTIFIÉ KW 124222 - LOT N° 1 LIMITÉ À 334 LITRES

Cette bouteille porte le N° 00017

Je soussigné, Jean GROSSEPIN,
certifie que ce cognac Grande Champagne a perdu par évaporation naturelle 50% de son volume initiallement mis en stock. Le chai très sec dans lequel il a séjourné a favorisé une démente concentration des arômes dans laquelle vous retrouverez des sentances de cannelle et de vanille. Vous serez surpris par la bouche ronde et onctueuse de ce cognac.
Il n'a fait l'objet d'aucun assemblage ni adjonction d'aucun autre élément hormis de l'eau déminéralisée pour sa réduction.
Pour savourer ce Cognac, je vous recommande de n'en prendre qu'une très petite quantité en bouche.

45,9%vol. 70cl Jean Grossepin
Cognac Collectionneur

Grande Champagne



Robe: ambrée, orangée.

Nez: orange, chèvrefeuille; très floral et raffiné.

Bouche: une attaque souple et ample sans feu, avec des notes d'écorce d'orange dénuées d'amertume. Une grande maturité et une certaine plénitude.

Commentaires: la puissance de la Grande Champagne s'allie à la maturité du vieillissement. Un flacon à consommer dans la durée, à petites gorgées, les yeux fermés, dans la quiétude d'une après-midi de novembre au coin d'un feu de cheminée. Le bonheur!

1971



Visual aspect: an orangey-amber hue.

Nose: aromas of orange and honeysuckle; its aromas are rather floral and elegant.

Palate: supple and full-bodied on the first taste, without a burning sensation, and flavours of orange peel. There is no bitterness whatsoever. Excellent maturity and a certain fullness.

Comment: the powerfulness of Grande Champagne combines with the maturity of ageing. A Cognac to savour over a long time, sip by sip, eyes closed, in the tranquil peace of a late afternoon of November sitting near a glowing log fire. Pure pleasure!

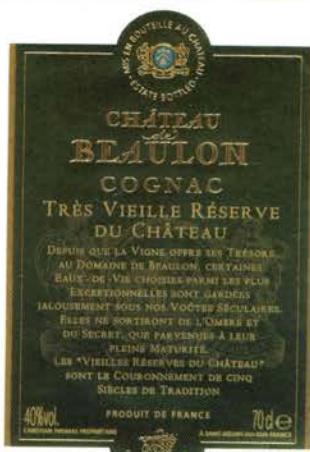
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Château de Beaulon

Cognac

Château de Beaulon
Très Vieille Réserve millésimé

Robe: acajou très clair (reflets cuivrés, dorés), grasse et limpide.

Nez: intense, sur les fruits confits (abricot), les fruits secs (amande, noisette) avec de légères notes épices.

Bouche: souple, ronde et longue, sur les arômes floraux et de fruits.

1983



Visual aspect: a very light mahogany colour (coppery, golden tints), it is rich and pellucid.

Nose: powerful aromas of dried fruit (apricot), and nuts (almond, hazelnut), with some light spicy hints.

Palate: supple, round and long, on floral, fruity flavours.

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