

Craft Cocktails French Style with Domaine du Tariquet

The Tariquet has been the cradle of an entire family since 1912. First of all, the home of Hélène and Pierre Grassa, who began the tradition with their love of fine Armagnac. Then, the home of their children Maité and Yves, both fervent winemakers, who have now been joined by Yves' sons, Armin and Rémy, the third generation of winegrowers in the family. Together they manage the Tariquet estate, which has always remained an independent and, now more than ever, family-owned company. They run the property with an eye on the future and have built a business that is well placed to meet market demand. With close to a thousand hectares of land, they produce Tariquet white wines and Bas-Armagnac brandies that have won international acclaim.

One might presume that Tariquet's success is simply the result of hard work, dedication and respect for the vine and all things vinous. Yet the small region of Gascony known as the Gers, famed for its Armagnac and quality of life, is also a bastion of Gascon grapes and terroir, where differences are cultivated with a touch of reasoned rebelliousness.

The soil that nourishes the Tariquet vineyards is key to the essence of their wine. The region's temperate climate also plays a crucial role, its mid-August warm days and cool nights encouraging the development of aromatic precursors.

Yet an expert touch is required to make the most of such favorable conditions. The fact that Tariquet wines and

Summit representatives Cassie Schaeffer, Cheri Fedrid, Angela Bryson and Nicole Milne join Domaine du Tariquet Commercial Export Director Julien Duclos at Vesta Dipping Grill.

Bas-Armagnacs brandies have been acclaimed with the best of their class is due largely to the boldness of one man. Yves Grassa, now an internationally renowned winemaker from Gascony, began 25 years ago by breaking the rules of traditional winemaking, proposing white wines that were consistently characterized by a fresh finesse and fruity elegance.

He was the first in the region to dare to plant Chardonnay, Sauvignon or Chenin grapes, which were far from popular in those days. Worse still, he conjured up combinations of sworn enemies such as Chardonnay with Sauvignon, or Chenin with Chardonnay. The Tariquet brand was born of contemplation, rebellion and reason, followed by continuous observation and improvement. Both in the vineyard, and in the wine cellar, as only a true winemaker makes wine in the midst of his vineyard.

Defying his detractors, Yves Grassa took on the challenge of producing white wine and was duly rewarded for his work by being selected as Winemaker of The Year in 1987.

The Grassa family has always adhered to the basic values of rural life. Honesty – never selling a product for more than it is worth; dedication – planting vines requires long-term commitment from a winemaker; order and respect – only a well-balanced vine will produce good grapes. The Grassas believe that we must also give back to Nature what she so generously offers.

To respect these commitments the winery has adopted environmental best practices, such as organic manuring. In order to limit the impact of treatments on the grape juice, the winery uses use partially demineralized water with a lowered pH level to dilute active ingredients. The results are enlightening; pesticide treatments have been cut by 40%. An effluent treatment plant ensures that waste water no longer has an environmental impact.

Finally, the use of sulphites has been reduced to the strict minimum, as antioxidants such as Vitamin C are the preferred alternative. Furthermore, glass bottles, aluminum caps, paper labels and cardboard packaging are all 100% recyclable.

The estate's Bas-Armagnacs, among





At left, Robert Kacher Selections Regional Manager Nathan Slingsby (second from left) invites some Vesta patrons over for an informal tasting of the Domaine du Tariquet Bas-Armagnacs.

the jewels of Gascony, are smooth and elegant with original aromas and a surprising variety of flavors. When served young they are fresh on the palate and warm your heart. The vintage Bas-Armagnacs are coppery and golden in color, [powerful and rich in taste.

Tasting Notes:

Bas Armagnac – This is a blend of 60% Ugni Blanc and 40% Baco. This classic Armagnac is aged in oak casks for a minimum of 3 years. The color is gold-amber and the nose suggests crusty, warm bread and toffee. On the palate, it is clean and youthful with hints of vanilla.

V.S.O.P. – This is a blend of 60% Ugni Blanc and 40% Baco. The V.S.O.P. is aged in cask for at least 8 years. It displays an attractive amber color and offers up a rich, powerful and concentrated nose featuring toast, candied fruits and gingerbread. This armagnac is almost too smooth and round with no sensation of alcohol, but only woody vanilla.

XO – This is a blend of 60% Ugni Blanc and 40% Baco. It stays in barrels for a minimum of 12 years. Here the candied fruit is most apparent in the nose. In the mouth it is spirited and round, and very supple, with subtle hints of vanilla-scented wood, nuts and toast. Gold Medal San Francisco World Spirits Competition 2008.

The wines and Bas-Armagnac produced at the estate are nature and culture in a nutshell, bottles that are both serious and pleasurable, ephemeral and eternal.

William Davis of Beverage Distributors, Julien Duclos, Robert Kacher Selections Midwest and West Division Manager Anne Markovich-Girard, Cassie Schaeffer, Nate Slingsby, Cheri Fedrid, Nicole Milne, Eric Dutton of Vesta Dipping Grill and Angela Bryson pose for a commemorative photo.

Guests at a special evening at Vesta Dipping Grill had the opportunity to meet with Julien Duclos, Commercial Export Director for Domaine du Tariquet, and sample his Armagnacs, as well as cocktails prepared by Vesta's team of expert mixologists. Try some of these recipes from Domaine du Tariquet:

TORITO

- 1/7 Armagnac
- 6/7 Red Orangina

Serve cold without ice.

ARMAGNAC TONIC

- 1/5 Armagnac
- 4/5 Tonic

Serve cold; decorate with lemon slice.

ARMAGNAC ORANGE

- 1/5 Armagnac
- 4/5 Fresh orange juice
- Splash of grenadine

Decorate with a slice of orange.

ARMAGNAC CHAMPAGNE

Pour 1/8 Armagnac into a champagne flute. Add 1/8 Orange liqueur. Top off with 6/8 chilled Brut Champagne.

Decorate with a Maraschino cherry.

MR. LAMBERT'S APÉRITIF

- 3/10 Armagnac
- 3/10 Pineapple juice
- 2/10 Strawberry (fraise des bois) liqueur
- 2/10 Peach liqueur

Shake well in a cocktail shaker and serve.

AFTER DINNER

- 3/5 Armagnac
- 1/5 Green mint cordial
- 1/5 Gin

Pour ingredients into a cocktail shaker, shake well and decorate with fresh mint.

RAVAILLAC

- 1/10 Armagnac
- 1/10 Yellow Izarra liqueur
- 8/10 Grapefruit juice

Shake well and pour into a tumbler over ice.

CALYPSO

- 2/10 Armagnac
- 1/10 Pineapple juice
- 3/10 Imperial Mandarin
- Splash of strawberry syrup
- 3/10 Orange juice

Shake well and serve decorated with a slice of mandarin.

Domaine du Tariquet Bas-Armagnacs are imported by Robert Kacher Selections and available from Summit Distributing. For more information, please contact your Summit representative or visit www.robertkacherselections.com.

