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[Delightful Whites and a Rosé from Domaine du Tariquet](#)

Posted by Fredric Koeppel under [Chardonnay](#) , [Cheap Wine](#) , [Chenin blanc](#) , [France](#) , [Rose wines](#) , [Sauvignon blanc](#)
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The history of Domaine du Tariquet is complicated — the progenitor was a bear-tamer — so it will suit our purposes merely to say that the same family has owned the property

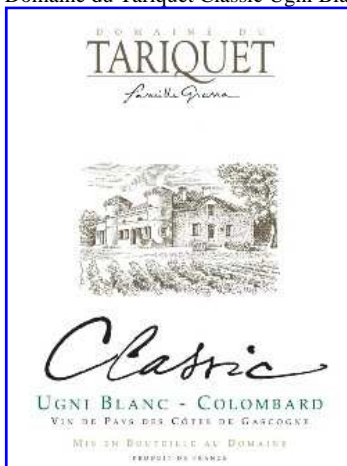


since 1912, first the Artaud family and then, through marriage in the early 1940s, the Grassa family. Today, the third Grassa generation operates the estate, which originally produced only Bas-Armagnac and then in 1982 added white wines in what were pioneering blends of chardonnay and chenin blanc or chardonnay and sauvignon blanc or ugni blanc and colombard. These white wines and a rosé, great values among them, are the subject of today's reviews. The appellation is Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne, in the southwest region of France called Midi-Pyrénées. For centuries, Gascony, which shares a mountainous border with Spain, was home to a Basque-speaking people whose origins and affinities really lay in Spanish culture; in fact, the root of the words Basque and Gascony is the same. Côtes de Gascogne, surrounded by predominantly red wine regions, is unusual in that 91 percent of the production is white wine, the rest being about 8 percent red and 1 percent rosé.

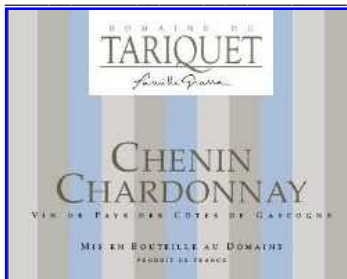


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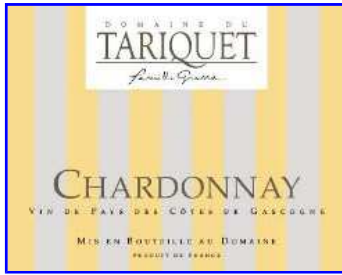
Domaine du Tariquet Classic Ugni Blanc Colombard 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne. 70 percent ugni blanc, 30 percent colombard.



Ugni blanc is the same grape as the usually nondescript Italian trebbiano; by keeping things simple and controlling the grape's inherent withering acidity, it's capable of making an attractive, lively wine of no huge character; it would help if yields were kept low. Paradoxically, ugni blanc is the principle grape in Cognac and Armagnac, precisely because its neutral nature and high acidity make it perfect for distillation and wood aging. *Anyway*, this little quaffer is as alluring as all get-out, offering hints of lemon, pear and yellow plum woven with touches of jasmine and cloves, a bit of almond skin and something slightly herbal. Fresh, clean, delightful and very nice as an aperitif or with mild cheeses and seafood dishes. 11 percent alcohol. Very Good. About \$9, a **Real Bargain**.



Domaine du Tariquet Chenin Chardonnay 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne. Chenin blanc 75 percent, chardonnay 25 percent. This is pleasant enough but certainly not the most attractive or compelling of this group of wines. Crisp and vibrant, with tasty touches of lemon, quince and green plum and a burgeoning spicy element supported by a hint of limestone. 12.5 percent alcohol. Good+. About \$11.



Domaine du Tariquet Chardonnay 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne. While the other wines noted in this post receive no oak aging, Tariquet's Chardonnay 2010 was given three months in barrels. **Amazing quality for the price** here: this is clean, fresh and bright, with pears and roasted lemon for the nose, highlighted by hints of grapefruit and pineapple and gentle spice and a touch of buttered toast, while a few minutes bring round a note of jasmine; the texture deftly balances moderate lushness and a very pleasing texture with resonant acidity and a bit of limestone in the background. Surprising heft, presence and personality for a chardonnay in this range. 12.5 percent alcohol. Very Good+. About \$11.



Domaine du Tariquet Cote 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne. This beguiling wine is a well-balanced blend of 50 percent chardonnay and 50 percent sauvignon blanc, each grape nicely delineated yet fitting seamlessly into the package. Fresh aromas of apples, pears and slightly spiced and macerated lemons with hints of thyme and freshly-mown grass and a touch of jasmine; crisp and quite lively, with spicy, roasted lemon and grapefruit flavors ensconced in a texture seductively poised between chardonnay's ripe lushness and sauvignon blanc's tidy sparseness, all encompassed by a finish packed with limestone. We enjoyed this wine with seared rare tuna, under a dense peppercorn crust. 11 percent alcohol. Very Good+. About \$15.



Domaine du Tariquet Rosé de Pressée 2010, Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne. My favorite of this group. A blend of 30 percent each merlot and cabernet franc, 25 percent syrah and 15 percent tannat, the wine was made in the fashion of a white wine, that is grapes pressed and the juice removed from the skins, rather than the saignée method of crushing the grapes and bleeding off some juice before it colors completely. This example is unusually ripe and fleshy for a rosé, though the color is a pale melon-copper; aromas of fresh strawberries, red currants and melon unfold to elements of pomegranate, almond skin, thyme and limestone; a lovely, almost silken texture is riven by scintillating acidity and limestone-like minerality, pointing up spicy red fruit flavors that aim toward a finish that gets spare and almost austere. A superior rosé, charming yet with a fairly serious edge. 12 percent alcohol. Excellent. About \$12, a **Great Bargain**.