



10 best armagnacs

Discover the complex French brandy with one of these superior bottles

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Armagnac, famous for being France's first brandy, hails from the Gascony region of France, in the South-west. Some claim it may be the oldest distilled spirit in Europe, dating back to before the 14th century, though we wouldn't like to bet the ranch on it.

Despite its impressive lineage, it's often confused with cognac. Both are wine-based spirits, both from South-west France and both produced from similar varieties of grape – but armagnac is the finer, to our mind. Distilled from wine made from Baco 22A, Colombard, Folle Blanche and Ugni Blanc, using column stills rather than the pot stills used for cognac, it is a complex spirit. To produce the Armagnac, wines are distilled and aged separately in oak barrels, then combined when bottling, which allows for more flexibility when creating the final blend (just ask those alchemical cellar masters). The amber spirit has a richer depth than cognac, and a subtle taste.

Whatever your price range, from Chateau du Tariquet VSOP, at a reasonably priced £25.50, to the Baron de Sigognac Platinum XO at £80.72, we have a bottle for you.

1. Chateau du Tariquet VSOP Bas Armagnac, 40%: £26 for 70cl, The Wine Society



This caramelly armagnac is seven years old, and has a delicate bouquet of prunes and freshly baked bread. Expect a smooth, well-rounded drop with a fine oak-vanilla finish.

The Verdict: Armagnacs

In terms of pure, drinkability, the dulcet tones of the Chateau du Tariquet VSOP are hard to beat. A boon since it is relatively inexpensive. If you want the sort of complexity that provokes chin-stroking and a flavour that is incredibly moreish, then plump for the Castarède 1979, you won't be disappointed.