**6 WOW-FACTOR EXPERIENCES IN COGNAC, FRANCE**

**The handsome region of Cognac lies between land and sea in south-west France, boasting a rich gastronomic and cultural heritage – and it knows how to craft an experience you won’t forget. From intimate cellar dinners to entertaining vineyard safaris, there are many creative and personal ways to explore Cognac with its towns, countryside and islands. All the experiences mean meeting and sharing, learning local knowledge first hand from passionate artisans while tasting the produce that makes this terroir unique.**

**A CELLAR DINNER AT DELAMAIN**

The family-run Delamain Cognac House has been crafting world-renowned connoisseur Cognacs for almost 200 years in Jarnac, a pretty riverside town on the Charente between Angoulême and Cognac. One of Delamain’s most unique experiences is a [**private dinner in one of the cellars**](https://www.explore-cognac.com/experiences/delamain-cognac-cellar-dinner/), available for two to eight guests. Proceedings begin with an exclusive cellar tour and continue with a spectacular gastronomic dinner prepared by a chef using local produce. Three Delamain XO Cognacs are paired with the dishes and served straight from the barrel. *Available May to September by reservation.*

**A VIP TOUR AT FRAPIN**

Immerse yourself in the secret halls of the venerable Frapin dynasty, working in Charente since 1270. The dynasty has given rise to 21 generations of vintners and distillers, all maintaining the Cognac traditions with their 240 hectares of vines in Segonzac, Grande Champagne: a Cognac Premier Cru appellation. The [**VIP tour**](https://www.explore-cognac.com/experiences/experience-cognac-frapin/) includes a tour of the vineyard, then the distillery, before delving into the chiaroscuro of the aging cellars. Midway through, there’s a stop at Château Fontpinot for a visit followed by a cocktail break. The tour continues at the headquarters with a look at the new family museum and blending cellars, before concluding with a tasting of four Cognacs (including some of the more exceptional examples). And before you ask: you can also stay at Frapin overnight. *Available year round by reservation.*

**THE NEW SIGNATURE MARTELL EXPERIENCE**

[***Signature Martell by Alexandre Mazzia***](https://www.martell.com/en-ww/book-your-table-signature-martell-restaurant/)is an exclusive gastronomic experience co-created by Christophe Valtaud, Cellar Master of Martell, and Alexandre Mazzia, Michelin three-star chef. Held at the Château de Chanteloup, former Martell family residence, the experience is designed to break the barriers between the kitchen and dining room to enhance the tasting experience. It’s designed around Cognac, highlighting exclusive blends crafted by Christophe Valtaud from the 12,000-strong eaux-de-vie reserve of Maison Martell (which are also offered à la carte during the meal). The experience begins with a signature cocktail at the bar before moving to a large, modular table that opens onto the kitchen, accommodating just six guests to allow for a privileged interaction with the Executive Chef. A final Cognac tasting takes place in the library, with Maison Martell's most exclusive editions available for purchase at the Château. *Available from one to six people; privatisation on request.*

**COCKTAILS AT CHATEAU MONTIFAUD**

Combining passion with a family feel, Château Montifaud is a unique and supremely welcoming estate. The passion for Cognac has been passed down from father to son in the Vallet family for six generations – and while current owner Laurent and his wife Élodie are keen to showcase their creativity, there’s no question that they’ll turn their backs on tradition. ‘[**Le Cocktail Se Visite**](https://www.explore-cognac.com/experiences/cognac-cocktail-tour/)’ gives visitors the chance to make their own cocktail on the tastiest of sensory tours. From the presses to the distillery via the finishing cellar, the tour explores every stage of the Cognac production process – and not without a hint of originality. Everyone is given a shaker upon arrival and is free to select from the different ingredients presented throughout the visit, from the vine to the glass. Children are welcome and can make their own non-alcoholic version. *15 people per tour; reservation recommended; private tours on request.*

**A VINEYARD SAFARI AT BOURGOIN**

Need to get some air? [**Take a drive around the Bourgoin family vineyard**](https://www.explore-cognac.com/experiences/experience-bourgoin-cognac-expert-safari-dans-le-vignoble/) in a 1960 Peugeot D4B. Frédéric Bourgoin is a grower in the AOC Cognac appellation, who crafts cask-strength Cognacs at his family farm in the village of Tarsac near Saint-Saturnin, just west of Angoulême. His brandies are diluted with local spring water, with the spirits still drawn according to the moon’s cycles to take advantage of its effect on fluid dynamics. Following a long tradition in the paper industry, Angoulême has become the capital of French *bande dessinée* (comic books) and now boasts an international festival and over 30 street artworks dotted across the city. Its Romanesque cathedral and treasury, water sports and bike trails are not to be missed.

*Bourgoin safaris available daily at 11am and 3pm.*

**MEET THE FAMILY BEHIND COGNAC BERTRAND**

Surely no Cognac House is more personal than Maison Bertrand, home to the Bertrand family since 1731. Thérèse and Samuel, a brother and sister team, run the business, while their parents and grandmother, Simone, continue to live on the estate. Holding the prestigious position of Cellar Master is Thérèse’s husband, Thomas, born in Tennessee. Visitors are warmly welcomed here for [**two types of tour**](https://www.cognac-bertrand.com/en/visits/): the Classic visit, introducing the essentials of Cognac and Pineau des Charentes production with a tasting of two Cognacs and two Pineaux; and the Private visit, which includes the distillery, ageing cellars and vineyards, plus three Cognacs and four Pineaux alongside gourmet canapés. Thérèse takes great pleasure in sharing her story and will make you feel like part of the family. And, just like the estate’s windmill, the Bertrands work full circle on site: from the vine to the bottle. *Available year round by reservation.*

**Where to stay**

The region of Cognac offers a tempting array of accommodation. You could choose from one of the region’s five-star hotels: the Relais & Châteaux **La Nauve** or **Chais Monnet Hotel & Spa**, a converted cognac distillery on the banks of the River Charente. If you’re keen to travel further afield and combine Cognac with the coast, try La Rochelle’s only five-star hotel, the **Maison des Ambassadeurs**, or its boutique **Villa Grand Voile** (another Relais & Châteaux) – or head across to **Le Grand Large** on the island of Oléron.

There is equally no shortage of authentic, home-from-home experiences to be enjoyed at accommodation in the Cognac region. The 19th-century **Domaine de Pladuc** is run by Shandra and Bernard, a couple from Réunion Island, their dinners reflecting these roots. Pascale and Ivan’s hotel-restaurant **Domaine du Châtelard** – literally meaning “small castle” – is testament to the couple’s romantic vision and offers just 11 guest rooms, looking out onto 80 hectares of woods and meadows. The **Moulin du Val de Seugne** is a four-star hotel in a 16th-century watermill, where breakfasts are taken in your own room beside the river and personal picnics are prepared on request. And at boutique B&B **Le Relais de Saint-Preuil** in the Grande Champagne vineyards, Stevan and Sven welcome each guest like an old friend.

**Find out more**

For more on this unsung, authentic and creative region, [**click here**](https://franceuncovered1.files.wordpress.com/2023/09/dossier-de-presse-ven-2023.pdf) **to browse the Explore Cognac Press Kit.** It includes a large variety of entertaining things to do and experience, hotels and restaurants and, last but not least, suggested itineraries.

**-ENDS-**

**Further information -** [Explore Cognac site](http://www.explore-cognac.com/)

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**About Atout France**

Atout France (France Tourism Development Agency) is responsible for promoting the development of the tourism industry, the country’s largest economic sector. Atout France’s primary mission is to monitor and analyse the supply and demand in the tourist market. Atout France is also committed to promoting destinations and tourism partners in and from France. This is achieved through marketing campaigns, online promotion, PR and working closely with the travel trade sector. Atout France is represented in the UK and Ireland from its office in London.