



Beyond the Barrel: Explore Cognac Unveils its Lesser-Known Side



Images [here](#) – please credit Aurélien Terrade / BNIC

January 2025...// MMGY Grifco is delighted to announce that it has been appointed to handle the public relations for [Explore Cognac](#). Located in the southwest of France, the Cognac region offers a captivating blend of natural beauty, history, and culture. Defined by its rolling vineyards, historic towns, and picturesque countryside, the breathtaking landscape of the region provides a tranquil backdrop to the area's vibrant life. The beautiful Charente River meanders through the heart of the region, passing charming towns such as Jarnac, with gentle waters perfect for leisurely boat trips, kayaking or paddleboarding. Along its banks, you'll find ancient mills, elegant châteaux, and riverside restaurants serving regional delicacies. From history enthusiasts and nature lovers, to epicureans and connoisseurs of fine spirits, the Charentes region promises an unforgettable and immersive journey for all.

Cognac

Synonymous with elegance, history, and its world-famous namesake spirit, [Cognac](#) invites visitors to explore its rich heritage through guided tours of renowned distilleries such as [Hennessy](#), [Martell](#), and [Rémy Martin](#), as well as smaller houses including [Bache Gabrielsen](#). These visits provide a fascinating insight into the meticulous craftsmanship behind the production of Cognac, from grape to glass. Visitors can also discover more about local winegrowers such as [Frapin Cognac](#) and [Maison Boinaud](#), with vineyard and distillery tours. The town itself offers visitors an enchanting experience, complete with its cobblestone streets, half-timbered houses, and the stunning [Château de Cognac](#), which offers exceptional tasting sessions in the King's private apartments. Cognac is home to the annual Blues Passions Festival, which has hosted legendary artists over the years such as BB King, Ray Charles, Earth Wind and Fire, and Lenny Kravitz. For a refined and elegant stay in the countryside surrounding Cognac, [La Nauve Hotel & Jardin](#) is a luxurious retreat set in the heart of a twelve acre park.

Angoulême

Perched on a hilltop overlooking the Charente River and the expansive surrounding countryside, [Angoulême](#) is a city steeped in art, culture, and history. The city has become the capital of French comic books, hosting the annual International Comics Festival which draws artists and enthusiasts from every corner of the globe. Angoulême's Romanesque architecture, exemplified by the majestic Saint-Pierre Cathedral, showcase the historical richness of the city, while the lively markets offer the chance to sample local flavours. Gourmets can discover more about the age-old process behind Cognac by embarking on a full tour of [The Francis Abécassis Estates](#) or driving around the [Bourgoin family vineyard](#) in a 1960 Peugeot D4B. Just outside of Angoulême's city centre, [Hotel Saint-Gelais](#) offers a tranquil escape in a luscious setting, complemented by a bistronomic restaurant.

Aubeterre Sur Dronne

[Aubeterre-sur-Dronne](#), a charming village nestled on a hillside overlooking the tranquil Dronne River, promises to captivate visitors with its medieval architecture, narrow winding streets, and sun-filled squares. History lovers will enjoy visiting the underground 12th century Monolithic Church of Saint-Jean, whilst artisans can explore the many workshops and boutiques offering handcrafted goods and local art. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy a range of activities including kayaking on the Dronne River and exploring the surrounding countryside. With its rich history, natural beauty, and warm hospitality, Aubeterre-sur-Dronne offers an idyllic escape for travelers seeking an authentic experience of rural French life.

Jonzac

In the heart of the Haute-Saintonge region lies the city of [Jonzac](#), located in a picturesque woodland setting near the Gironde river. Jonzac boasts a wealth of historic monuments including the elegant Chateau de Jonzac. Wine and food enthusiasts can visit the Maisons de la Vigne et des Saveurs to hear from winegrowers and distillers, tour a cooperage workshop, or simply go for a stroll in the surrounding vineyards. For a creative Cognac experience, [Château Montifaud](#) offers the chance to create your own cocktail whilst touring the estate, and visitors can also discover more about the processes involved in making the spirit at [Cognac Bertrand](#). In the countryside surrounding Jonzac, the [Moulin du Val de Seugne Hotel](#) offers guests a charming waterfront stay in a former 16th century watermill.

Saintes

Located in the Charente-Maritime department, [Saintes](#) is a historic town renowned for its rich Roman heritage. Saintes is home to the remarkable Arch of Germanicus, alongside the impressive Roman amphitheater, and the town's religious architecture, particularly the stunning Saint-Eutrope Basilica. The serene riverside setting invites leisurely strolls, while the vibrant markets and local gastronomy provide a taste of traditional Charentais flavors. Take a guided tour of the city's cellars and discover the secrets of how Cognac is made and aged, complete with a tasting of some of the Groperrin family's exceptional

old Cognacs. Visitors can also escape to the heart of the Grande Champagne region for a [walking tour at Maison Boinaud](#), learning more about the producer's expertise and environmental practice.

La Rochelle

The charming coastal city of [La Rochelle](#) is perfectly placed to provide a gateway to experiencing the Charentes region. Visitors to the city can discover the rich history and culture of La Rochelle and the surrounding area, exploring the city's iconic medieval towers such as the Tour de la Chaine and Tour Saint Nicholas. La Rochelle's winding cobblestone streets lead the way to vibrant markets where visitors can savour local delicacies and discover the region's flavours. Gastronomy enthusiasts can discover several Michelin starred [restaurants](#) such as Les Flots and L'Astrolabe, alongside an array of gourmet experiences including [Cognac and chocolate](#) pairing sessions. Just outside of La Rochelle, sits one of the oldest [Cognac houses](#), Normandin-Mercier, which can be explored with guided tours. Visitors to La Rochelle should also stop by Mary Lili, the first cocktail bar in the city, for a unique [Cask Ageing mixology](#) experience.

Oléron Island

[Oléron Island](#), the largest French island on the Atlantic coast, is a breathtaking destination renowned for its unspoiled natural beauty, stunning beaches, pine forests, and colourful fishing villages. Famous for its Marennes-Oléron oysters, the island is a haven for seafood lovers, offering a number of unique experiences such as the [Cognac and oyster masterclass](#) which includes a three course lunch with Cognac pairing. Visitors can explore the multi-coloured oyster-farming huts which have now been converted to artists workshops, discover maritime landmarks such as the Chassiron Lighthouse and enchanting towns like Chateau d'Oléron. The island can be easily explored by bicycle, taking in the unspoilt natural landscapes. For a seaside stay in a wild, natural setting, the hotel [Le Grand Large](#) sits amongst the sand dunes of one of the island's most beautiful beaches.

For more information about the Explore Cognac, please visit [explore-cognac.com](#).

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For further information please reach out to the team at Grifco PR at explorecognac@grifcopr.com.