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Main Spirits

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Introduction

- ✓ A spirit is the product of distillation, whatever the base raw material used
- ✓ A spirit for human consumption is referred to as “potable” or drinkable spirit
- ✓ Made by distilling a lower strength alcoholic liquid made by the fermentation of the sugar in fruit, vegetable or grain produce

Examples: *Brandy* – distilled from wine

Whisky – distilled from a form of ale

Background to Distillation

- ✓ Known to the ancient Chinese and Egyptians who used it to produce perfumes
- ✓ Potable spirits were distilled by early Christian missionary monks who used to call them “aqua vitae” (water of life) – the taste was crude thus herbs, seeds and fruit were added for flavour

Background to Distillation

- ✓ By the 18th Century, distillation had reached a point where cheap spirits were readily available – many of these were rough and impure due to lack of control
- ✓ To combat this, the government began to license distilleries

Background to Distillation

- ✓ The process of distillation takes place in a still and involves heating an alcoholic liquid until the alcohol vaporises
- ✓ This vapour is then condensed to a liquid of a higher degree of alcohol
- ✓ There are two types of still
 - ❖ Pot Still
 - ❖ Patent Still (Coffey)

Background to Distillation

The principle of distillation is that ethyl alcohol vaporises (boils) at a lower temperature (78c) than water (100c)

Thus, where a liquid containing alcohol is heated in an enclosed environment the alcohol will form steam first and can be taken off, leaving water and other ingredients behind

This process raises the alcoholic strength of the resulting liquid

Pot Still

- ✓ It is made of copper and the neck is connected to a condenser which is surrounded by cold water
- ✓ Pot distillation is a single bath process and more than one distillation is required to produce a spirit of sufficient alcoholic strength



Pot Still

- ✓ Spirits, distilled in a pot still will keep some of the character of the original alcoholic liquid, e.g. malted whisky and Cognac
- ✓ They need to be matured in cask before being mellow enough to drink



Patent Still

- ✓ Also known as Coffey or Column
- ✓ It is a continuous process in which the spirit vapours are condensed at a greater strength than in the pot still
- ✓ Not all patent still spirits require maturation



Patent Still

- ✓ This still produces a spirit of high alcoholic strength which has less flavour and character than the spirit produced in a pot still
- ✓ Used for lightly flavoured spirits such as rum, grain whisky, gin and vodka



Grain Spirits

Scotch Whisky

Defined by law as: “Spirits distilled from a mash of cereals, saccharified (starch converted into sugar) by the diastase of malt, fermented by yeast, distilled and matured in oak casks in Scotland for not less than three years”



Grain Spirits

Scotch Whisky

- ✓ The name originates from the Gaelic word “uisge beathe” which like “aqua vitae” means water of life
- ✓ Malt whisky is made exclusively from malted barley



Grain Spirits

Other Whiskies

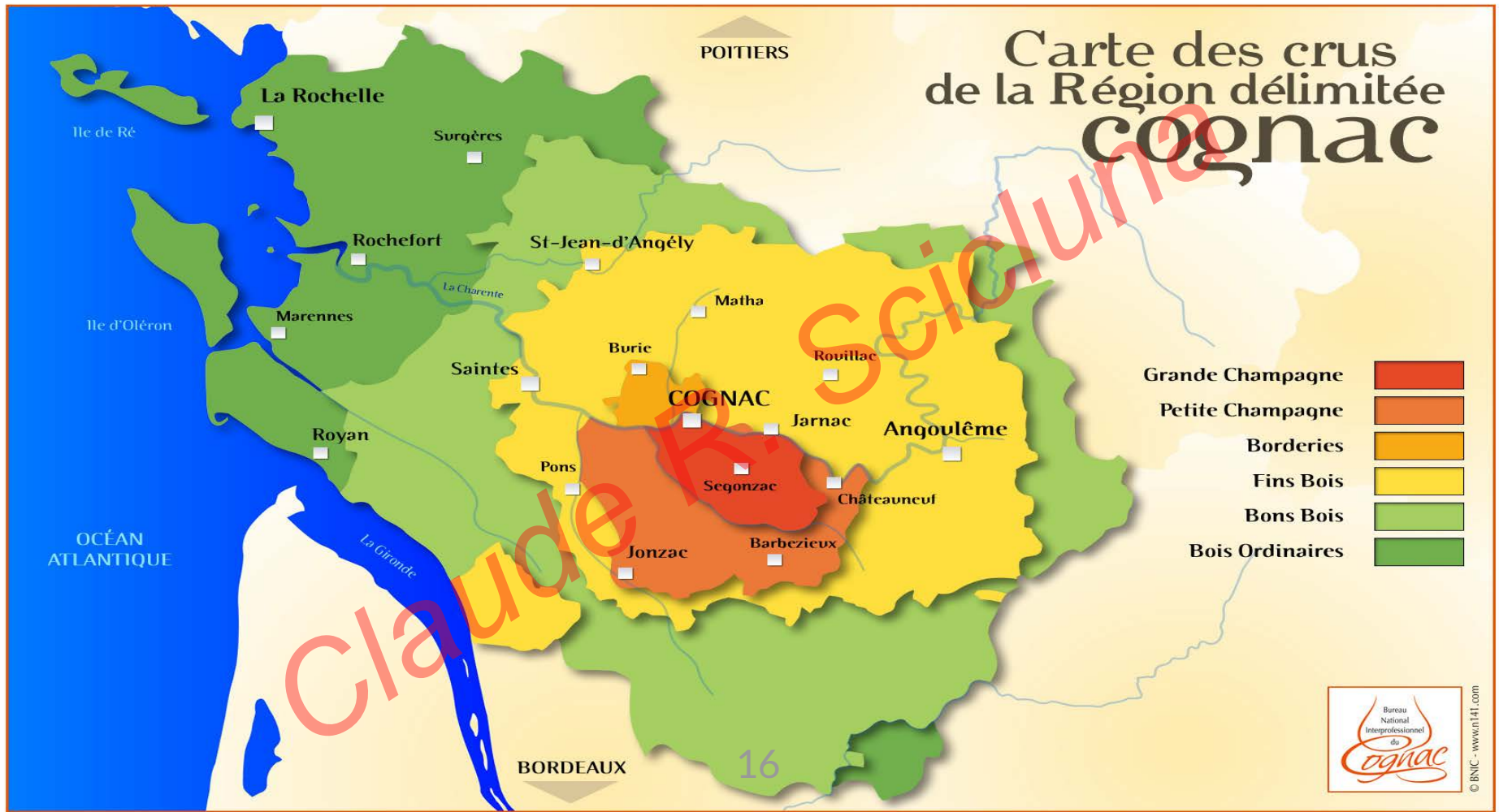
- ✓ **Whiskey (note the spelling)** is produced in other countries, such as the USA, Canada & Ireland
- ✓ Irish whiskey is a pot still spirit based on malted barley and other cereals, distilled three times and matured in wood for three years
- ✓ Rye Whisky is made in Canada and the USA (bourbon), from malted barley with rye or maize



Fruit Spirits

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Carte des crus de la Région délimitée **cognac**



- Grande Champagne
- Petite Champagne
- Borderies
- Fins Bois
- Bons Bois
- Bois Ordinaires



Cognac

A young brandy put into oak casks, and when mature it is blended. (French law demands two years maturity in oak casks before the Cognac may be sold)

At two years old the cognac can be called a 3 star or VS. Other styles include VSOP (more maturation)

Very soft old pale 4yrs

XO 5yrs



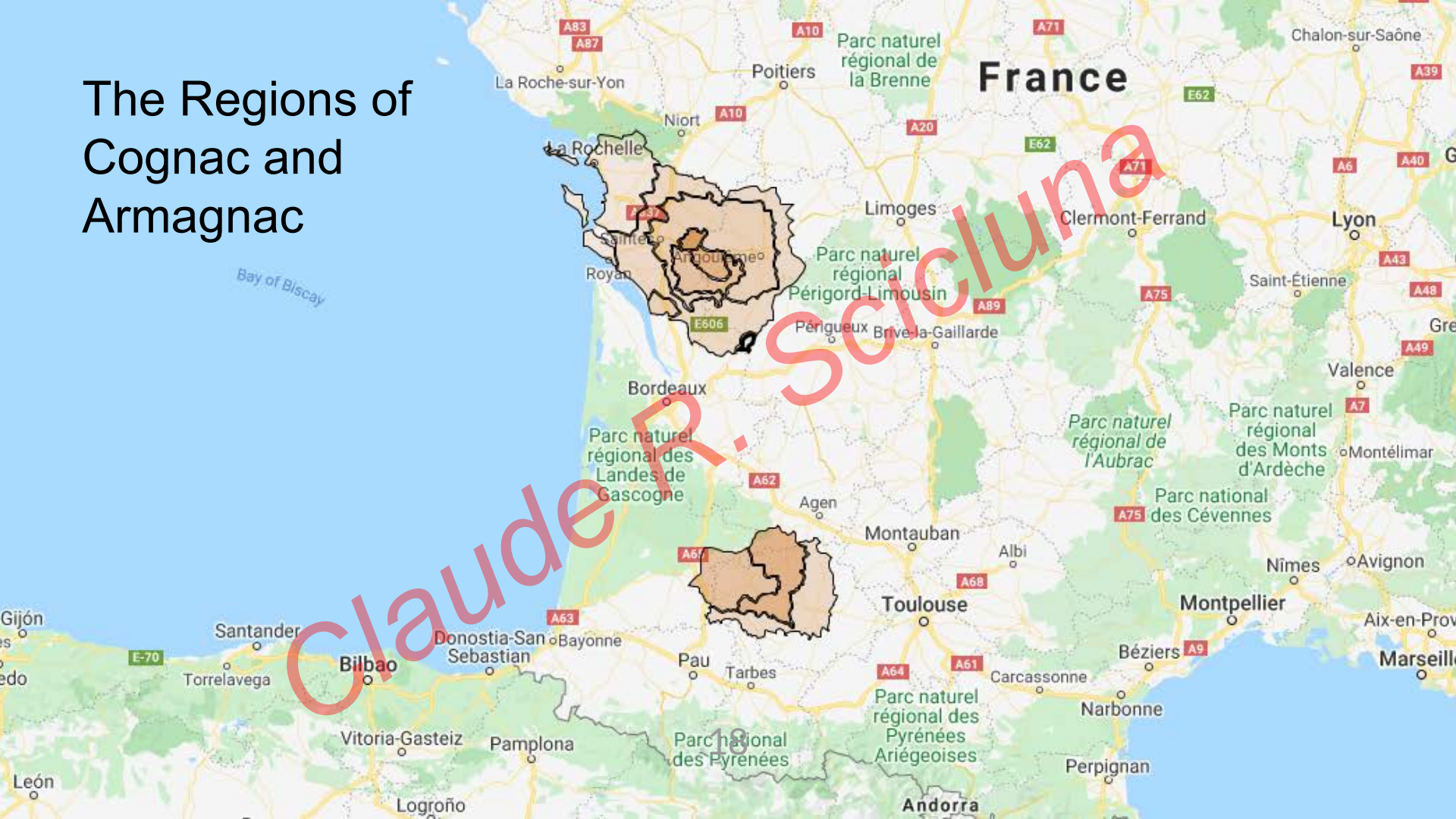
MARTELL

RÉMY MARTIN

COURVOISIER

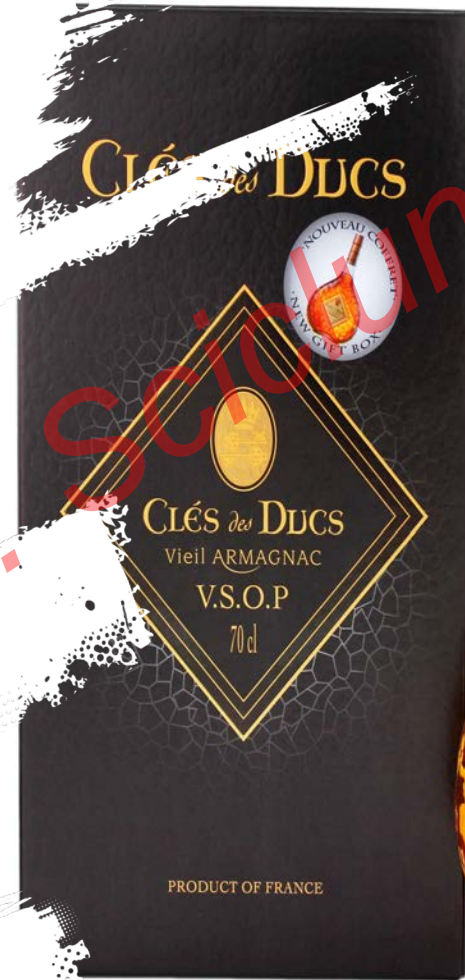
CAMUS

The Regions of Cognac and Armagnac



Armagnac

- ✓ An AC grape Brandy produced in Gascony, south east and inland from Bordeaux
- ✓ Armagnac has a fuller flavour and a deeper colour than cognac



Other Fruits Spirits

- ✓ **Calvados** – the apple brandy made in northern France (Normandy)
- ✓ **Slivovitz** – made in Bosnia from plums
- ✓ **Kirsch** – made in France from cherries

Alsace & Germany produce fruit spirits from soft fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, and apricots. In France these are called **eau-de-vie** followed by the name of the fruit



A vibrant watercolor splash in shades of yellow, orange, and red, with black speckles and a dotted pattern, set against a white background. The splash is roughly circular and has a textured, artistic feel.

Vegetable Spirits

Rum

- ✓ Rum is a spirit distilled from sugar cane
- ✓ Mainly produced in Caribbean, Indonesia, the Americas, and India
- ✓ Base ingredient: molasses, the residue left when all usable sugar and syrup has been extracted from the sugar cane



Rum

- ✓ Molasses is diluted with water and fermented
- ✓ The colour in rum comes from the addition of caramel



Vodka

- ✓ Originated in the Baltic and Russia where it was made from surplus agricultural crops, and was often flavoured
- ✓ In the West Vodka is made from a base of cane sugar spirit or grain spirit which has been highly rectified



Vodka

- ✓ Also referred to as the silent spirit
- ✓ This rectified spirit is passed through beds of activated charcoal which remove all taste and smell

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Flavoured Spirits

Flavoured Spirits

From early times spirits have been flavoured for a number of reasons, mainly:

- ✓ The medicinal properties of herbs were extracted by alcohol, and were easy to administer
- ✓ Flavour from the herbs and spices disguised the often harsh taste of spirit
- ✓ Today the most important flavoured spirit is **Gin**

Gin – London Dry

- ✓ This spirit is placed in a pot still with certain flavourings namely known as botanicals (Coriander, Angelica, & Junipers)



Dutch Gin

- ✓ Also known as **Genever**
- ✓ It is **richer and heavier**, usually drunk in small glasses, very cold and diluted
- ✓ Made from a base of malted barley and rye

