



COGNAC FERRAND

The Father of Artisanal Spirits

Alexandre Gabriel was a determined man with a simple mission—to make the finest Cognac in the world using the ways of days gone by. Twenty years ago, long before the word “artisanal” would become common throughout the world of food and drink, before “small batch” was on the radar, Gabriel was producing the world’s finest Cognac in tiny, carefully crafted amounts. Casting aside the common methods of producing spirits in mass quantities, Gabriel instead poured extensive – some would say obsessive – research into the production methods of the past to make Pierre Ferrand Cognac the only way he knew how, slowly, carefully, one cask at a time.

“I arrived in America with a suitcase full of Pierre Ferrand Cognac and a vision that the Pierre Ferrand brand could forever change the quality spirits market,” says Cognac Ferrand owner Gabriel. Told by his potential clients that his products would need to be sold one bottle at a time, he pressed forward, undeterred. Said Gabriel, “After all, we make Ferrand Cognac one bottle at a time, so this was not a problem. We created a loyal following and ultimately set a new standard that has made our Cognac Ferrand products the benchmark for other artisanal spirits. America was a wonderful market with consumers wanting the best, so this resonated well for us and our brands.”

The Logis d’Angeac, the distillery where Pierre Ferrand Cognac is made, was very old and dated back to 1776. When Gabriel bought into the Logis d’Angeac, located in the very heart of the Grande Champagne region of Cognac, it had become a sort of faded gem. At the same time, Gabriel also purchased the 18th century Chateau de Bonbonnet, once owned by the Martell family, and turned it into his home as well as Cognac Ferrand’s state of the art blending hall. He assembled a strong team and was determined to follow the four steps required to make superb Cognac the old fashioned way, with: exceptional vineyards, expert distillation, precise aging and careful blending.

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When talking about exceptional vineyards, it all begins with the earth. It is widely known that the grapes grown in Grande Champagne produce the world's premiere Cognacs. The Cognac region of France is legally divided into six areas or districts – “the Cognac Crus.” In the center lies the Grande Champagne region whose name has nothing to do with the bubbly champagne but instead refers to the region's chalky soil. In turn, the best master blenders often divide Grande Champagne again into two areas, each one smaller than the previous, each one increasingly prized. In that centermost region, the *bullseye* of the so-called “Golden Triangle” of Cognac, lie the vineyards that yield the grapes that will become Pierre Ferrand. Those storied vineyards are what attracted Gabriel and what gives the eau de vie its unique character. They are also the reason why all Pierre Ferrand Cognacs are classified as “Premier Cru de Cognac.”

“We embraced the century-old tradition of using the best grapes and distilled on the lees,” said Gabriel. He sought to turn the industry on its head, harkening back to the centuries past. Cognac Ferrand is one of the few houses with a cooper (cask maker) on staff whose sole job is to repair and restave casks and, at the Logis d'Angeac, the only producer with a Bordeaux trained oenologist (winemaker) who is still a consultant for Bordeaux Chateaux Classés. The company's master blender, a fifth generation blender, was raised in the vineyards of Cognac. Even the water used to bring the Cognac to proper form is first aged in old Cognac barrels. To preserve the quality of the product, Pierre Ferrand carefully monitors and limits the amount of Cognac it produces. For example, the Logis d'Angeac distilled 30 percent less Cognac in 2008 than allowed by French law, strictly for the sake of quality.

No company's success could be possible without a team of highly-trained professionals committed to the same principles, so Gabriel dedicated himself to finding and creating the most qualified and focused team of experts—from the growers, to the blender to the salespeople. Over the years, the vineyards have passed from generation to generation, as has the job of cellar master.

To showcase its products in the United States, Guillaume Lamy, Vice President of Cognac Ferrand USA, and a team of “Ferrand Geeks” – what the very knowledgeable Cognac Ferrand spirit specialists call themselves – tirelessly travel the country, spending time with restaurant staffs, mixologists and wine and spirit shop staffs to help them appreciate the product they're serving. The sales team shares the artisans' pride in the truly fine spirits Cognac Ferrand creates, which translates into international industry accolades and loyal consumers.

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Gabriel takes particular pride of the fact that Pierre Ferrand Cognac became a favorite with hard-core cocktail geeks looking for authentic products to use in classic drinks. “It is a wonderful thing to see that young American mixologists share our passion for fine spirits,” says Gabriel. “We make the Stradivarius Violin, and they play it.”

“We have always believed that distilling unique spirits is an art, not a trend,” says Gabriel. “We hand-crafted our spirits in a way that we believed would yield the most distinctive and true result – one barrel at a time. Today we still hold true to that belief and have found our recipe for success. Pierre Ferrand is much more than a Grande Champagne Cognac. It is a commitment to certain values, integrity and heritage. We want to craft a one of a kind spirit that is unforgettable. I realize that, with its very specific character and style, it is not for everyone. A famous French sommelier once said ‘Ferrand is THE wine lover’s Cognac.’ We have also been called Cognac fanatics and I truly take this as a compliment! I rather see us as *Cognac jewelers*.”

The world witnessed what the artistry of handcrafted production and an unwavering commitment to perfection could produce. Gabriel’s vision had become a reality. Other spirits would later follow in the same tradition, resulting in today’s unique portfolio distributed in more than 40 countries. The company’s brands now include: Pierre Ferrand Cognac, Citadelle Gin, Mathilde Liqueurs, Plantation Rums, Cerbois Armagnac and Daron Calvados.

More than just a method, Cognac Ferrand is a model. Passion, an individualistic spirit and a commitment to tradition led to a new standard of excellence that continues to evolve with the tastes of Cognac Ferrand consumers. The company – today’s Cognac Ferrand family – treasures its awards and continues to look to the future, setting new goals that will carry on the tradition of pioneering industry standards.

FACTS ABOUT COGNAC FERRAND

- The Cognac Ferrand offices and blending hall are located at the Chateau de Bonbonnet in Ars, a town in the Cognac region of France.
- The Logis d’Angeac is the distillery, surrounded by vineyards, where Pierre Ferrand Cognac is made. It is in the heart of Grande Champagne.
- The Chateau de Bonbonnet was once owned by the Martell Family and is now the blending hall for the Cognac Ferrand brands, houses the company’s offices and is also Alexandre Gabriel’s home.

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- Cognac has been sold under the Ferrand name since the 18th century.
- Twenty years ago, Alexandre Gabriel partnered with Pierre Ferrand, the heir of one of the oldest Cognac families, to develop Cognac Ferrand and craft some of the finest spirits.
- In 1993 Alexandre Gabriel bought out the retired Pierre Ferrand.
- Grande Champagne is one of the 6 districts of the Cognac Vineyards. It lies in the heart of the Cognac region approximately 500 kilometers (or 310 miles) south west of Paris. Grande Champagne is a French A.O.C. (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée)
- The "Golden Triangle" is a small prized area located in the Grande Champagne region; it is the chalkiest part of Grande Champagne.
- The Cognac Ferrand spirits portfolio includes: Pierre Ferrand Cognac, Citadelle Gin, Mathilde Liqueurs, Plantation Rums, Cerbois Armagnac and Daron Calvados

About Cognac Ferrand:

Cognac Ferrand is one of the world's premier boutique producer of fine spirits, distributed in more than 40 countries throughout the world. Cognac Ferrand has offices and production premises at Château de Bonbonnet in Ars, France. Cognac Ferrand has administrative and sales offices in the Paris area, as well as two subsidiaries – one in the United States (Cognac Ferrand USA) and one in Germany (Ferrand Deutschland GmbH) - created to work more closely with customers. The brands available in the United States include the award-winning Pierre Ferrand Cognac, Citadelle Gin, Mathilde Liqueurs, Plantation Rum, Landy Cognac, Cerbois Armagnac and Daron Calvados. W.J. Deutsch & Sons is the importer of the aforementioned brands to the U.S. For more information about the Cognac Ferrand brands, please visit the company website at www.cognacferrand.com.

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