

Domaine Gilles Brisson

Cognac



Cyril Brisson is his family's 4th generation to run Domaine Gilles Brisson. He's a couple of miles south of the river town of Cognac, in the prized Grande Champagne zone, and it's here that he farms 69 acres of Ugni Blanc. These parcels are the sole source of wine that is double-distilled for his Cognacs.

The zone—the prestigious core of Cognac—gives him the right to label the Brisson spirits as 1er Cru. The champagne name stems from the Roman occupation and from their Latin *campania*, the root of campaign and champagne, and refers to level, open ground. Both the regions of Cognac and Champagne have vast open fields. Roman legions preferred to fight in the open, and in Gaul these tended coincidentally to be formed by limestone chalk geology. Such landscapes came to be known as ideal for grape crops, largely because little clearing was required, and grapes, unlike many crops, took to limestone. Similarly, the Cognac regions of Fin Bois and Bon Bois received their names based upon the density of their woods, and presumably the proportionate difficulty in farming due to the clearing required.

Cyril took over from his father in 1989, and recently his sons Alexis and Loan have joined him. The family's notable points:

- Their Cognac is estate-bottled from their grapes in the Grande Champagne zone.
- The Gilles Brisson domaine was the first in Cognac to receive HVE 3, the highest level of that certification for good environmental practices.
- Only the coeur de chauffe, or the finest cut of the distillation, is used for their Cognacs (the rest is sold off).
- Excellent price/quality ratios.

Below is a link to a concise history of Cognac. An interesting bit of history that isn't noted there is how the Roaring Twenties and Prohibition were instrumental in the creation of a number of classic Cognac cocktails, such as the Sidecar, Corpse Reviver, and Vieux Carré.

Some disturbing facts about the current commercial situation are that Cognac has roughly 4,500 producers, yet four large brands account for nearly 90% of sales. When Cyril took over from his father in 1983, there were roughly 20,000 producers.