

Get to know
**Blanche
Armagnac**

By Christina Staalstrom

Brandy is a spirit distilled from fermented fruit juice, most commonly grapes, and is an umbrella term for an entire category of spirits, one of which is Armagnac. While traditional Armagnacs are aged in oak until the liquid is toasty and brown and are meant to be swirled and sipped, Blanche (French for white) Armagnacs are fruity and floral with a freshness that is closer to vodka or cachaça.

Blanche is essentially the Armagnac that comes directly out of the still. Rather than being placed in barrels to age, this grape-based eaux-de-vie is

“rested” in stainless steel tanks after distillation. Water is gradually added to bring its alcohol level down from above 60% to somewhere under 45% allowing the spirit to retain its liveliness and complexity. It is artisanal and comes in slightly different styles since producers are allowed to use a wide variety of grapes or grape combinations in the distillation process. Each grape variety brings a different character to the final product. Some are fruitier, while others have a floral bouquet or spice notes, resulting in very distinct elixirs that can be sipped neat or as welcome additions to many cocktails.



*Photo by
Kendra Rosa*

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While Blanche Armagnac has been around just as long as its well-aged brother, it did not earn France's highly respected AOC status (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) until 2005.

This official certification guarantees authenticity in geographic origins and production conditions. It can only be produced in the Armagnac zone in the Gascony region of France from four main grape varietals: Ugni Blanc, Baco, Folle Blanche, and Colombard, used either pure or as a blend. Also, to preserve its aromas and crystal-clear appearance, it must be put into inert containers for a minimum of three months to aerate the eaux-de-vie and lower its alcohol level.

Traditionally sipped as a palate-cleanser between courses, Blanche Armagnac, like Dartigalongue's Un-Oaked, a fruity and round eaux-de-vie, can be served neat or on the rocks. The subtle floral aroma with hints of pear and apple works wonderfully with caviar, smoked fish, and numerous desserts such as lemon tart. The clean palate with boldness in character also makes for a versatile base for cocktails.



Delord Blanche Armagnac, distilled from 100% Colombard grapes, is rich and fruity with a clean mouth cleansing dryness that marries well with citrus flavors, red berries, kiwi, and chocolate, and can be used as a substitute for vodka.

So next time you reach for something new to pour into that glass, a good Blanche Armagnac on the rocks with a splash of grapefruit juice and a dash of chocolate bitters might do the trick.

