

# The Dordogne and South West France

These wines may be divided into two groups. First, there are the wines of

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the Dordogne, many of which are made from the same grape varieties as those used in Bordeaux.

Second, there are a number of regions that make wines from varieties often never seen in Bordeaux, with styles that differ considerably – these we shall call the wines of South West France.

## THE DORDOGNE

To the east of the vineyards of Entre-Deux-Mers lie the vineyards of the Dordogne. Here the climate is similar to that of Bordeaux, although with less moderating maritime influence. The major appellation is **Bergerac**, which may be used for both red and white wines made from the same varieties as in Bordeaux. **Monbazillac** is a source of good value botrytised sweet wines made from Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc.

## SOUTH WEST FRANCE

**Cahors** is situated to the east of Bordeaux. Historically, these were described as 'black' wines, and were very tannic and long-lived. The region is located either side of

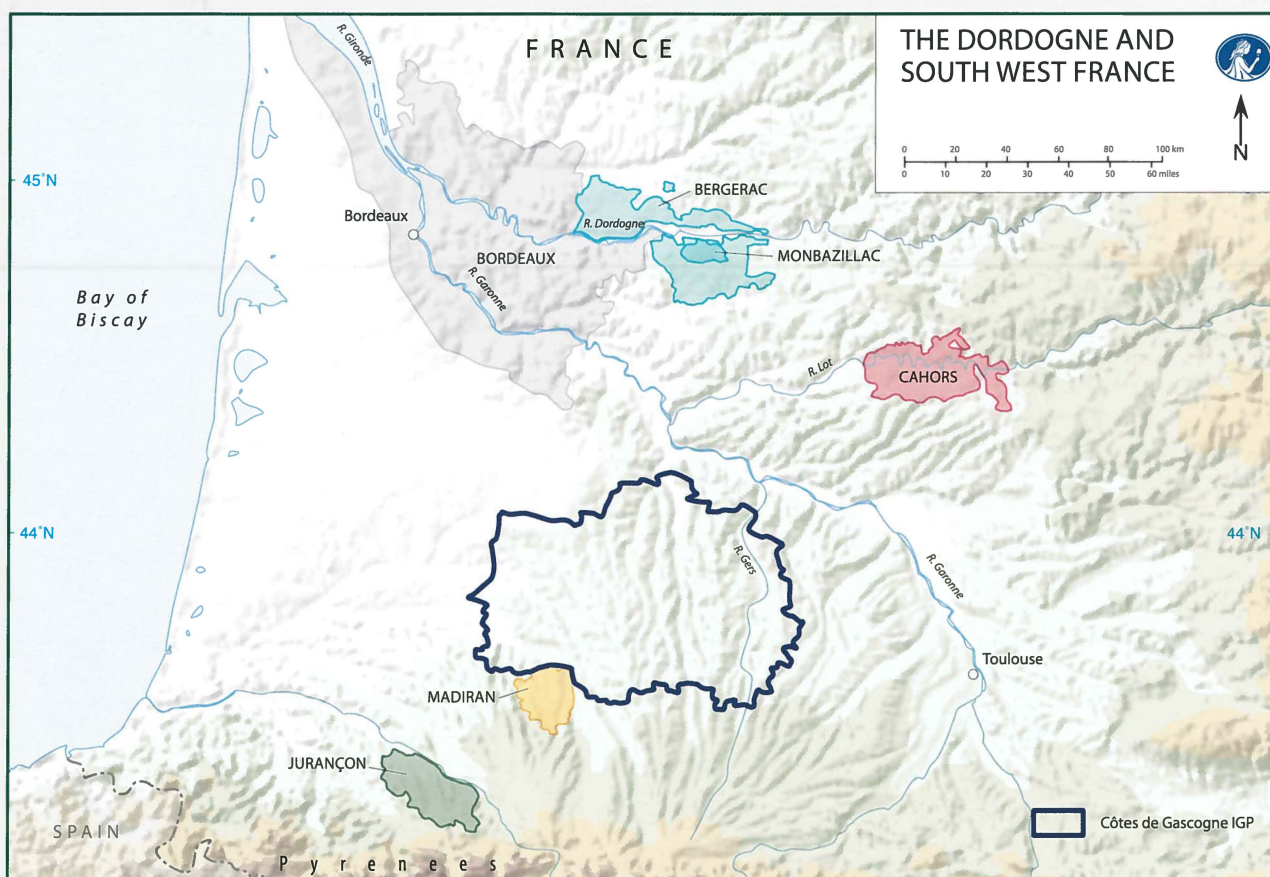
the River Lot. Now a broad range of styles is produced, depending on whether the vineyards are in the fertile valley bottom, on the poorer soils of the slopes or on the plateau above. The most important grape variety is **Malbec**. The other varieties planted are Merlot and Tannat. At their best, the wines are aged in oak, deeply coloured, high in tannin, with intense, dark berry fruits. They mature slowly to reveal notes of cedar and earth.

To the south-east of Bordeaux, there is considerable production of IGP wines, of which the most important is **Côtes de Gascogne**. These are generally dry, light-bodied white wines made from **Ugni Blanc**, with aromas and flavours of green apples.

Further south towards the Pyrenees is **Madiran**. Here,

### KEY

1500 m+
1000–1500 m
500–1000 m
200–500 m
100–200 m
0–100 m



red wines are produced from blends led by the deeply coloured, high tannin variety **Tannat**. These wines traditionally needed a long period of bottle ageing to soften their tannins. Today, riper grapes and modern winemaking techniques mean that the best wines have concentrated black fruit and high levels of softer riper tannins.

Right in the foothills of the Pyrenees is **Jurançon** where both dry and sweet white wines are made. The most important are the complex sweet wines made from the high acid **Petit Manseng**. The grapes remain free of botrytis and undergo *passerillage*. The wines have pronounced apricot and grapefruit aromas, sometimes accompanied by spicy notes from new oak.