



The Wines of South-West France

Rod Phillips

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- Explores the wines of a significant yet under-appreciated wine region, guiding avid wine adventurers to their next new discovery
- Author is a renowned writer on wine with publications including *Alcohol: A History* and, for the Classic Wine Library, *The Wines of Canada* and *Wine: A Social and Cultural History of the Drink that Changed our Lives*
- Adds to the list of French wine titles in the *Classic Wine Library* series, which includes books on neighbouring regions Roussillon and the Languedoc

Wine production in south-west France goes back a long way. The region includes some of the first districts in France (notably Gaillac) to be planted with vines, by the Romans more than two thousand years ago. It is also the earliest-known location of scores of grape varieties, some of them precursors of international varieties such as Malbec and Cabernet Franc.

Although today south-west France is the fourth region of France in terms of wine production very few wine consumers are familiar with more than two or three of its appellations. Cahors and Madiran are well-known appellations but we don't hear (or read) much about less fashionable appellations such as Rosette and Béarn. As a result the wines generally command relatively low prices.

This book covers all the important aspects of south-west France in an accessible way. Although it includes the mass-produced wines of the region it focuses on quality wines made in more limited volumes. Although a number of the appellations of south-west France share similar climatic conditions (such as the influence of the Atlantic), the many small AOPs vary significantly in soils and topography, grape varieties, and the styles of wines they produce. They range from the botrytized sweet whites of Monbazillac to the teeth-staining reds of Cahors, from the distinctive dry whites of Jurançon to the tannic reds of Madiran.

Phillips begins with a brief history of the region and provides an overview of the region today before considering the wines of the various sub-regions in turn, including land and climate, grape varieties, wine styles, and wine law, together with entries on their most notable producers. All colours of wine are made in south-west France, as are dry and sweet wines and sparkling and still wines. The rich diversity of the world of wine is represented in south-west France, and it is this very diversity of grape varieties and wine styles that makes the region so compelling.

Rod Phillips is a professor of history at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He has written a number of books on European history, and, more recently, on the history of food and drink, with books including *A Short History of Wine*, *Alcohol: A History* (named a Book of the Year for 2014 on jancisrobinson.com), and *French Wine: A History*. General Editor of the forthcoming six-volume *A Cultural History of Alcohol*, he writes regularly for the wine media and also judges in wine competitions.