

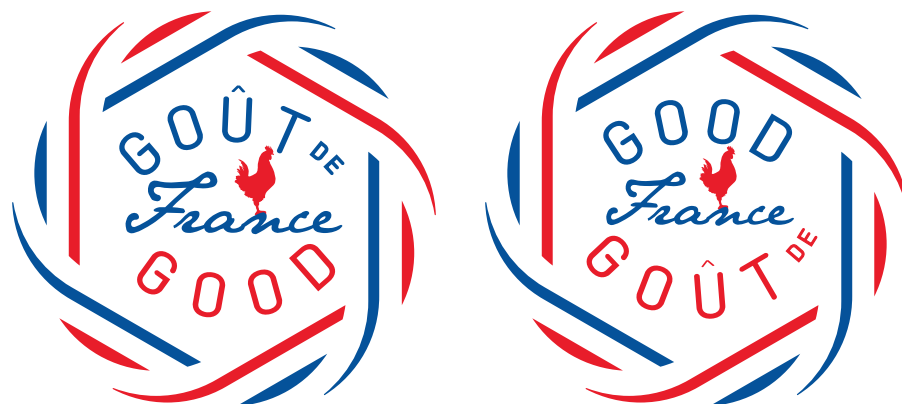


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good!**

Celebrating the French Meal
Nouvelle-Aquitaine in the Spotlight

— 21 March 2018 —





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Jean-Yves Le Drian

Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs

Over the years, the 'Goût de France' event has been eagerly awaited by professionals and culinary enthusiasts alike, so much so that it is now a cornerstone of French gastronomy's outreach across the world. On 21 March the operation will grow even further thanks to 3000 restaurants who have joined this initiative and will be serving a 'French-style' dinner, alongside festive events which will be organised across the world by our diplomatic network and Atout France. This strong involvement means that more than 150 countries will be celebrating our cuisine. This year we have chosen to showcase French wines and spirits. France is renowned for its excellence in this area, as also demonstrated by the development of wine tourism as a genuine standalone sector. Building on this theme, our embassies are enlisting chefs, sommeliers, apprentices and producers from all walks of life to showcase the gastronomic meal of the French, inscribed on UNESCO's .../...

ALAIN DUCASSE

The power of flavour



In 2018, 140 Nouvelle-Aquitaine chefs will be participating in Goût de France, taking place across 150 countries and showcasing the region, its gastronomy and its products

Interview page 2

Photo: Pierrometta

.../... representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2010. I also wanted to give this major event a new dimension in order to better highlight the gastronomic riches of our region. With this in mind, from now on one particular French region will be showcased each year. Nouvelle-Aquitaine with its exceptional gastronomic heritage will therefore be in the spotlight for 2018. This goes hand in hand with an unprecedented national mobilisation in both mainland France and French overseas territories, involving 1500 restaurants which are members of the Collège Culinaire de France (an event partner). Gastronomy is one of the pillars of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs's tourism promotion strategy. The government has committed dedicated resources and is also working with sector professionals and the various ministries involved, with a 1.5-million-euro action plan entrusted to the operator Atout France in 2018. Our aim is therefore to help our gastronomy reach its full potential and become a true driving force boosting our country's attractiveness.'



This will be the fourth year of Goût de France/ Good France. What tangible benefits have you already observed over the past three years?

Our initiative aims to publicise French cuisine across the world, and its most tangible result has quite simply been its continuing existence and increasing scale. When I suggested this idea to Laurent Fabius (then France's Minister of Foreign Affairs) four years ago, I was far from sure that we would even reach a second year. The enthusiastic reception which we enjoyed, particularly from international chefs, allowed us to establish the event as a permanent feature on the landscape of major global gastronomic events. Cooks and the general public followed suit. In 2018, 3,000 chefs (including 1,500 in France) across 150 countries will be taking part in Goût de France/Good France. This is the best reward we could possibly imagine.

Do you think that gastronomy is a form of diplomatic language? Do you have any examples?

Diplomats seem to think so, at any rate. Let us start with the illustrious Talleyrand, who is said to have remarked, 'give me good chefs and I will give you good treaties'. If you look at the grandeur of the dinners that Carême organised for him

Photo Pierromoneta

during the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, and the efficient way in which Talleyrand reined in the ambitions of the major powers, it might suggest that gastronomy did indeed play a role. Incidentally, it is said that Carême invented the 'diplomat' cake during the Congress of Vienna.

More seriously, today cuisine is indisputably a part of what specialists in international relations call 'soft power', in other words a country's ability to exert a cultural influence. The French ambassadors I have met are very aware of this, which is why they are so committed to Goût de France/Good France.

In your view, what is the current international image of French gastronomy, and what role did the recently departed Paul Bocuse play?

Paul Bocuse was a pioneer in numerous areas. Before him, although those abroad recognised the brilliance of our cuisine, they tended to consider it overly heavy and formal. In the 1970s, Bocuse began to travel and raise awareness of modern French cuisine. This was a key turning point. Today, the context has of course changed, and increasing numbers of countries are involved in the grand concert of global cuisine. However, the fact that France has weapons in its arsenal is largely down to Paul Bocuse, which is why I want-

ed the fourth Goût de France/Good France this year to pay tribute to him.

You are a child of Chalosse in Landes. What close links do you retain with your native region?

The flavours of my childhood have remained my yardsticks. On a wider scale, Nouvelle-

Aquitaine is a region with a fantastic wealth of products. I put down roots in the Riviera, where I also discovered taste treasures. In every region and every village, I discover producers, maturers and horticultural growers creating extraordinary products. It is thanks to them that French cuisine exists, and we owe them a debt of gratitude.



Photo Rick

'Increasing numbers of countries are involved in the grand concert of global cuisine. However, the fact that France has weapons in its arsenal is largely down to Paul Bocuse'



Alain Rousset

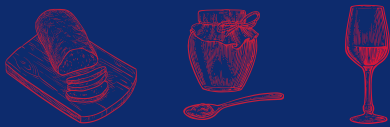
President of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Council

'Nouvelle-Aquitaine is very proud to be showcased as part of this fantastic event, although this is of course not something which has happened by accident. Offering a truly French way of life where gastronomy occupies a particularly important position, and also standing as France's top region for agriculture, Nouvelle-Aquitaine has numerous local wines and products available. Authenticity, hard work and passion ensure that our products are of exceptional quality, a fine blend of tradition and modernity. So allow me to wish you all bon appétit!'

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Knocking CHEF'S HATS off

In their eyes, French gastronomy is not necessarily synonymous with classicism. Obsessed with produce and passionate about plants, they are radical, impassioned enthusiasts. Portraits



'If knocking someone's hat off means doing what you love 2000%, then that's what I want to do! In reality, we are first and foremost dusting off the old ways of French cuisine. The only difference is that we are truly devastated that we cannot always please everyone.'

Vivien DURAND, Gironde

He spent time in the kitchens of Alain Ducasse in Monaco and Nicolas Masse in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, before gaining his first star with Lieu-Dit Vin in Hendaye then taking over from Jean-Marie Amat at Château du Prince Noir near Bordeaux. Lauded by his peers, hordes of gourmets have been swarming to pledge allegiance to Vivien Durand ever since he took up position. His Basque-inspired creative cuisine plays a land-and-sea trump card where produce reigns supreme: giant octopuses and squid, Mios pigeons and Banca trout are the favourite subjects of this Lormont lord of the stoves, who is passionate about cooking produce whole and slicing it in front of diners in a relaxed atmosphere.

Restaurant Le Prince Noir, 33310 Lormont,
leprincenoir-restaurant.fr



Photos : DR



'I particularly enjoy "rustic" cuisine. I try to build on this and play with more modern textures. One single product can be very different depending on how it is handled. That is what I am passionate about.'

Victor OSTRONZEC, Gironde

The success of his monkfish with verbena, steamed in a pot sealed with salt dough, spread through Bordeaux like wildfire last year. Trained at Côte Saint-Jacques in Yonne by the three-starred chef Jean-Michel Lorain before coming second to 'Meilleur Ouvrier de France' François Adamski at Gabriel in Bordeaux, Victor Ostronzec chose the Gironde capital for his first premises. It only took a few months for Soléna's chef to bewitch the taste buds of enthusiastic gourmets and professionals alike. Named a 'future great' by the Gault & Millau guide, he has made it clear that he is very committed to the fundamentals of French cuisine: proper old-style roasting on the bone, real meat juices, fatty stocks for roasting and reducing – all constantly being reinterpreted.

Soléna, 33000 Bordeaux,
www.solena-restaurant.com





'I advocate authentic, spontaneous cuisine where nature is given the deciding vote. A fisherman brings us his day's catch; 99% of what we make in the restaurant comes from within a radius of 90 km, and everything that goes into our cuisine is natural.'

Anthony ORJOLLET, Basque Country

His passion for produce prompted him to make radical choices which brought him luck. Having settled in a commercial area of Bidart in Basque Country, in just a few months Anthony Orjollet transformed his restaurant *Éléments* into a gourmet favourite, even being named 'table of the year' by the Fooding guide in 2018. Between traditional training in the hotel industry and travelling the world, this young chef sharpened his culinary convictions. Glorifying produce in all its simplicity is a constant pursuit, focusing for example on calamari or kriaxera duck depending on the season. Wood fires or Teppanyaki cooking, organic or sustainable agriculture produce, no gluten, no refined sugar, and above all no frills!

Éléments, 64120 Bidart,
www.restaurant-elements.com



'My cuisine is truly driven by instinct. I create dishes based on what I enjoy, flavours I find that surprise me. It is intuitive: it is current desires using current produce.'

Maxime LEBRUN, Dordogne

On the menu, hake is sometimes paired with smoked goose, John Dory could rub shoulders with a beetroot and anise risotto, and foie gras IGP from Périgord may be enhanced by a yuzu and walnut wine granita... Maxime Lebrun is an instinctive matchmaker. Having spent time in the Matignon kitchens as a young boy, this butcher's grandson grappled with the greats of French gastronomy (La Tour d'Argent, Faucher, Le Grand Véfour) before returning to his native Dordogne, notably with Roland Mazères in Eyzies. He gained his first star at Grand Bleu in Sarlat. Delighted with the possibilities opened up by the wide range of products, he found it easier to handle everything fresh – he believes that this is where the emotion of flavour comes from.

Le Grand Bleu, 24200 Sarlat,
www.legrandbleu.eu





'Daring to do something different is a commitment, but we are reaching customers aged 20 to 97. And I love it when an old timer tells me that he has tasted something he had never tasted before.'

Nicolas DURIF, Charente-Maritime

From his native Alsace, Nicolas Durif took a diagonal detour to put his talents to use in La Jarrie, near La Rochelle. The name of his restaurant – L'Hysope, meaning hyssop – is a reference to his love of herbs, the properties of which he particularly enjoys exploring. Working with sixty-odd plants every day, he tirelessly strives to pair flavours and textures that the taste buds have never experienced before. Named the 'hope of Nouvelle-Aquitaine' by Gault & Millau in 2017 and gaining a Michelin star in 2018, his signature menu pairs his favourite dishes (a nod to his southward journey) with creations that delight in breaking the mould, like bull fillet with anchovies or No. 1 oysters with crab meat, Aquitaine caviar and an English tea emulsion.

L'Hysope, 17220 La Jarrie,
www.lhysope.fr



'I like variations. You can dare to break down some barriers by showcasing a classic in a different way, but the product must remain the product, with its texture and flavour. It is important to me that I can recognise what I am eating!'

Nicolas SOULIÉ, Corrèze

Nicolas Soulié's career has not been a conventional one. Entirely self-taught chefs who have gained Michelin stars are few and far between! However this is a happy tale of a young man brought to the Château de Castel Novel near Brive by love, a tale of a food enthusiast who suddenly discovered remarkable talents... Driven by his passion for good food, the chef says that his imagination builds on the foundations once laid by the great pioneers of gastronomy. Open to new experiences, he allows the lottery of a pairing to inspire him to create an Arabica veal sauce to accompany veal sweetbreads. He indulges in variations of flavour and texture, which he views as a way of paying tribute to his produce.

Château de Castel-Novel, 19240 Varetz,
www.castelnovel.com





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*'If we closed the borders of Nouvelle-Aquitaine,
French cuisine would cease to be an option anywhere else'*

Michel Guérard,

Three-star chef
in Eugénie-les-Bains,
Landes



VINEYARDS

come to the table



For a long time, the world of wine travelled alone. However, with the recent development of wine tourism, wine estates have begun to understand that gastronomy has a story to tell which is very similar to vines. The **Bordeaux** greats are pioneers, venues where renowned and ambitious chefs have set up sumptuous restaurants and each estate's wine is showcased. The

other vineyards of Nouvelle-Aquitaine are slowly starting to embark on this adventure, such as various high-end Cognac projects. Elsewhere, such as in the **Jurançon** or **Bergerac** regions or even on the **island of Oléron**, restaurant owners committed to their area are offering local labels in a more dynamic fashion. Here, wine and gastronomy are creating a new frontier.

SAINT-ÉMILION

La Terrasse rouge



Like an equator between the Pomerol and Saint-Émilion appellations, the restaurant created by Jean Nouvel above the cellars of La Dominique (a Grand Cru Classé) offers a red touch to its prestigious vineyard neighbours, including Cheval Blanc. Its panoramic terrace is comprised of garnet-coloured mini pebbles, and the trendy south-western menu from chef Rémy Joly plays with the codes of a chic brasserie (Landes chicken casserole, Blaye asparagus, black truffles from Périgord and so on). The bellota ham and Champ Secret camembert on the countertop in turn bear witness to the quality of the products sourced by manager Nicolas Lascombes.

Château La Dominique, 33330 Saint-Émilion. Tél. 05 57 24 47 05. www.laterrasserouge.com

SAINT-ÉMILION

L'hôtel de Plaisance

As the wine tourism base of the Perse family (Château Pavie, Château Monbousquet), this five-star Relais & Châteaux hotel overlooking the village has long been aware of the art of

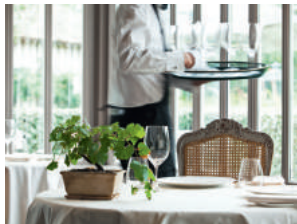


showcasing vines and gastronomy. Brilliant renovation work a year ago transformed La Table de Plaisance, the gourmet stronghold of two-starred chef Ronan Kervarrec. Breton born and bred, he did not hesitate to breathe sea air into cuisine fed by childhood memories, inspired by the talent of Aquitaine producers (lamb, cheese, oysters, mushrooms) and enhanced by in-house Grands Crus Classés.

Hostellerie de Plaisance, 5, rue du Clocher, 33330 Saint-Émilion. Tél. 05 57 55 07 55. www.hostelleriedeplaisance.fr

Photos : DR, Anne Lanthia, McCellard 2011, Deepix

PESSAC-LÉOGNAN *La Grand Vigne*



An 'even more vineyard' approach is the path which Nicolas Masse, the two-star

chef of Sources de Caudalie, has chosen for his latest menu. Created with the same care and attention paid to a wine blend, his recipes – like his innovative 'picker potato with truffles' – all tell a story: 'of the vineyard and those behind it', as he says. At Smith Haut Lafitte, this can be seen in the John Dory baked over gravel or the crumbs of grape sourdough bread. As you would expect for a Grand Cru, chocolate is also a feature, overseen by pastry chef Jordane Stié.

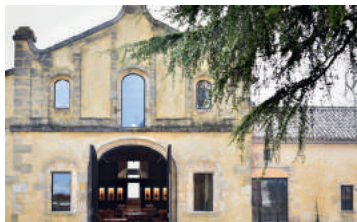
Sources de Caudalie, chemin de Smith-Haut-Lafitte, 33650 Martillac. Tél. 05 57 83 83 83. www.sources-caudalie.com

BORDEAUX *La Grande Maison*



Four Grands Crus Classés, around forty châteaux, a modern art centre: the self-appointed 'ambassador for excellence' also reigns over this Relais & Châteaux residence in Bordeaux, where local touches are everywhere even down to the knife handles by designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance. As the introduction to feasts orchestrated by Pierre Gagnaire and Jean-Denis Le Bras, a butter using Pape-Clément fine lees offers a nod to the winemaking world whilst a white clementine granita tops a langoustine tartare. These dishes can be complemented by more than 259 wines (including 172 Grands Crus Classés).

La Grande Maison, 10, rue Labottière, 33000 Bordeaux. Tél. 05 35 38 16 16. www.lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com



SAUTERNES *La Chapelle*

Having been in the pipeline for two years, the project undertaken by Xavier Planty and Nicolas Lascombes is finally flourishing on an estate with a pioneering soul: the only one to be producing biodynamic Premier Cru Classé Sauternes. It has just opened a restaurant

in the chateau's 18th-century chapel, offering various modular spaces (including a lounge, bar, dining room and shop) where the pointed arches stand alongside raw materials and guest tables carved from oak trees which survived the 1999 storm. Like Terrasse Rouge and Le 7 (in La Cité du Vin), there is a focus on 'choice tasty produce' and the Gascony touches so beloved by chef Djordje Ercevic.

La Chapelle, 33210 Sauternes. www.nicolaslascombes.fr

MÉDOC *Château Cordeillan-Bages*



It is impossible to separate wine from gastronomy in the Médoc. The Cazes family fully understands this, and made a point of whispering this concept in the ear of young Michelin-starred chef Julien Lefebvre before taking over this Relais & Châteaux. Across three, four or even more dishes, lobster jostles for place with pigeon, hare and beetroot. This season sees a 'balanced' menu ruled over by seasonality and juice extracts; it serves as a counterpoint to the 'vintage' menu, where iconic products (suckling lamb, Vertesse chicken, lamprey) are paired with carefully crafted wine sauces.

Route des Châteaux, 33250 Pauillac. Tél. 05 56 59 24 24. www.jmcazes.com

COGNAC *Chais Monnet*

A monumental cellar for this gastronomic restaurant, a brasserie devoted to traditional cuisine, and the largest cognac bar in the world: the five-star transformation of the old trading house at Chais Monnet (1838) has made its ambitions clear. The arrival of Michelin-starred chef Sébastien Broda (Grand Hôtel de Cannes) was no coincidence, nor the (imminent) appearance of a pastry chef straight out of a south-eastern luxury hotel. The duo are carefully examining the art of pairing food with cognac as well as with pineau des Charentes, taking a 100% local approach (notably represented by a vegetable garden on the rooftops) when it comes to supplying the kitchens.

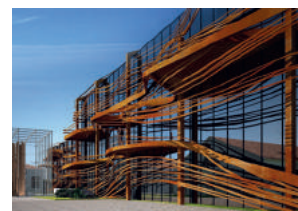
Chais Monnet Hôtel, 50, avenue Paul-Firino-Martell, 16100 Cognac. contact@chaismonnethotel.com Ouverture : été 2018.



SAUTERNES *Hôtel-restaurant Lalique*

In the spring, this high-end setting will play host to an entire way of life à la Silvio Denz, CEO of Maison Lalique, collector, and owner of Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey (Sauternes Premier Cru Classé). Re-clad in glass, the building – which is celebrating its 400th birthday – will bear the hallmarks of a company which is no less long-standing: furnishings, chandeliers, inlays, and tones evoking the beige of stone and the green and red of the surrounding vines. In Jérôme Schilling's signature dishes (Villa René Lalique, two stars), Sauternes is given majestic pride of place, sometimes in entirely unexpected ways.

Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey, 33210 Bommès. Rés. info@lafauriepeyragueylalique.com Ouverture : courant mai 2018.



One **CHEF** one **PRODUCT**



Julien **DUBOUÉ**
All ears

For a chef from Landes, what could be more natural than a love of corn? However, adoring it to the point of devoting a restaurant to it is less ordinary – and yet Julien Duboué has done just that at the Maison de la Nouvelle-Aquitaine in Paris with premises dedicated to corn, which he cooks in no fewer than 13 different forms. Soups, toasted sandwiches and more: the young chef lets his unfettered imagination run wild.

www.corn-r.com



Corn

Grown by nine out of ten holdings in Landes, corn is a cornerstone of agriculture in the department. Landes is the country's top producer of this cereal.



Nicolas **MAGIE**
His precious

Nicolas Magie loves Périgord truffles so much that he has devoted entire menus to them – all the way through to dessert, in the form of a soufflé. However, the chef of Saint-James in Bouliac knows how to (sparingly) enhance the precious aromas of truffle, whether paired with scallops or beef.

www.saintjames-bouliac.com



Périgord truffles

Périgord truffles, renowned for their excellent quality for multiple centuries, were even described by the Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d'Alembert as being the 'best' of all.



Hélène **DARROZE** *Uncompromising confit*

There is no need to introduce Hélène Darroze, without a doubt one of the best ambassadors for Landes cuisine. And what could be a more iconic representative of the department than duck? This Mont-de-Marsan chef in particular chooses to enhance it in a foie gras macaronade, a crumble, or even a confit with peas, which (along with other dishes) delight customers in the Parisian restaurant which bears her name.

www.helenedarroze.com



Duck

The quality of Landes duck is down to its feed, consisting of local corn, which is exceptional thanks to the particular Chalosse soils. A land rich in flavour...



Christopher **COUTANCEAU** *A rare pearl*

Christopher Coutanceau, a cooking fisherman and two-starred chef, describes himself as 'La Rochelle through and through'. Showcasing oysters therefore goes without saying. In the restaurant bearing his name, the chef offers guests an opportunity to rediscover the delicacy – plain or in its marine environment accompanied by scallops and a seawater foam.

www.coutanceaularochelle.com



Marennes-Oléron oysters

Marennes-Oléron oysters – grown in 'claires' maturation ponds – enjoy an environment where phytoplankton are able to develop rapidly, leaving them richer and brighter in colour than oysters from the open sea.



Laurent **BUTOT** *Tenderness above all*

Limousin chef Laurent Butot, an ambassador for Blason Prestige meat, is striving to promote the qualities of his terroir. His restaurant (Le Geyracois in Limoges) specialises in dishes using meat bearing this label, with Limousin beef serving as the standard bearer. However, it also takes pride of place on the plate, accompanied by entirely regional produce designed to delight our taste buds...

www.legeyracois.com



Limousin beef

It was born of millennia of adaptation. From the aurochs drawn on Lascaux cave walls to the present day, Limousin's own particular characteristics have shaped this special breed.



Xavier **ISABAL** *Sacred nature*

Picking up on the cuisine of family establishment Ithurria in Ainhoa, chef Xavier Isabal treats Basque cheese with respect but inventive flair. Offering penne with Oteiza chorizo and Agur sheep's cheese or accompanied by vegetable slithers, the chef advocates a 'product culture' which is in his blood and behind the Basque slow-food movement Bizi Ona, founded by his father.

www.ithurria.com



Pyrenees cheese

In Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Pyrenees cheeses offer a variety of flavours: Ossau-Iraty (an AOP), black Tomme (an IGP) or even Estive cheese (traditionally made by transhumance farmers) all have their 'aficionados'.



Thibaud **PIROUX** *Inspired locavore*



In his restaurant (which holds Écolabel certification), young chef Thibaud Piroux's Goût de France menu showcases Poitou lamb. It is served as a main course, a carpaccio with radishes and milk kefir. By sourcing ingredients directly from his village's organic farm, the chef is able to offer high-quality local meat that minimises its carbon footprint.

www.lesorangeries.fr

Lamb

Found in Poitou-Charentes from the Middle Ages, lambs were initially bred for their wool, before their meat became popular. Sheep breeding helps to preserve biodiversity and the rural way of life.



Vincent **ARNOULD** *Struck by strawberries*

Despite being from the Vosges, chef Vincent Arnould is passionate about working with Périgord produce. Rather than being left behind by truffles, according to the chef Périgord strawberries have been 'wreaking havoc' in his restaurant Le Vieux Logis. Refined into a sorbet, the fruit reveals sweet aromas to delight gourmets.

www.vieux-logis.com



Périgord strawberries

Périgord strawberries appeared in 1895 but only really began to develop from around 1950. Périgord farmers created the first strawberry cooperative in the region in 1959.



SO FRANCE CONQUERING THE EAST

Created jointly by InVivo and AANA, this new ambassador brand for French gastronomy is launching its first premises in Singapore.

It will offer walnut oil, Espelette pepper, canelés, foie gras, caviar, lemonade, ham, wine (of course), spirits, cheeses, honey, seasonal fruit, and even oysters. The food and wine products of the SO France brand have been carefully selected (products bearing quality labels, with French origins and rigorous specifications) and are considered to be iconic. More than half of them come from Nouvelle-Aquitaine. As the name suggests, they represent both the essence of France and the southwest region ('Sud-Ouest' in French).

This unique idea of a partnership between France's top agricultural cooperative group and the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Food Agency (AANA) will first be coming to fruition with the opening of a new type of concept store in the highly strategic location of Singapore on 21 March. As a retail outlet, wine bar and restaurant (with a menu created by the chef Frédéric Coiffé), SO France's first bistro deli will aim to raise awareness of French gastronomy in a 'bistronomy' environment. Rather than just serving as a shop window, this will be place of sharing and experiences as well as a tasting venue designed to open up France's market in south-east Asia, which is a particular fan of the French way of life. More than 700 different products will be on offer.

7 Frazer Street, Duo Galleria, Singapore 189356

In Nouvelle-Aquitaine we promote quality



Bayonne Ham



Agen pruneau



Ossau Iraty Cheese



Butter Charentes-Poitou



www.produits-de-nouvelle-aquitaine.fr





Michel Durrieu

Managing Director of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Tourism Board

'Nouvelle-Aquitaine's gastronomy is just like our tourist facilities – pairing tradition with ceaseless innovation, generosity with finesse, diversity with conviviality.

From Biarritz to Poitiers via Limoges, Bordeaux, the Dordogne, Cognac or even the Atlantic coast, every destination offers tourists an infinite range of flavours and activities.

The Goût de France/Good France event is once again an opportunity to demonstrate that our region is THE key destination for a certain French lifestyle, THE destination for authenticity and unique experiences, and THE destination for innovative, lasting tourism opportunities with a focus on the future.'

Whether you have a sweet or savoury tooth, whether you like art and history or nature and the outdoors, Nouvelle-Aquitaine has plenty to offer. Here are five ways of exploring our different regions and tasty specialities. Off we go!

LIMOUSIN

On the porcelain trail

Since a feast for the eyes is just as important as one for the taste buds, Limoges is definitely worth a visit. With a global reputation for its fine porcelain that dates back three centuries, the capital of Limousin is home to numerous producers whose fame shows no sign of waning. One such example is Bernardaud, a true family company which opens up the gates to its historic factory (1863) to immerse visitors in the secrets of how these beautiful ceramics are made. This tour should be paired with a stroll through the city to explore the beautiful 'Bénédictin' train station, the medieval Boucherie district or the Adrien-Dubouché museum, displaying the world's largest collection of Limoges porcelain. At the very least, shouldn't this getaway be an opportunity to



head for the hills? You could combine meeting local artisans with visits to characterful towns such as Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche, where the first seam of kaolinite – a clay mineral vital for porcelain production – was discovered.

Bernardaud, 27, avenue Albert-Thomas, 87050 Limoges, www.bernardaud.fr and www.routes-porcelaine-limoges-hautevienne.fr

Photos : DR, Shutterstock, Bernardaud

ARCACHON BAY

Between oyster huts and dunes...

From the untamed tip of Cap Ferret in the north to the iconic dune of Pilat (the tallest in Europe) in the south, Archachon Bay reveals nature in all its unspoilt beauty. Lège-Cap-Ferret, Arès, Andernos, Lanton, Audenge, Le Teich, Gujan-Mestras, La Teste-de-Buch – the banks of this inland sea are strewn with a series of oyster-growing villages where life follows the rhythm of the tides. Watching the ballet of the oyster growers making their way through the oyster beds and their port is a spectacle in itself. If you want to understand them better, head to Fleur d'Écume: this family business based in the



port of La Teste-de-Buch immerses visitors in the world of oyster catchers. In an attractive tasting hut, Christelle and Florian Gausse have established an oyster bed for teaching purposes to explain every step in the production process, from collecting spays to sizing adult oysters. This voyage of discovery is combined with a tasting of these iodine delights, best enjoyed on the beautiful terrace with your feet dangling in the water.

Fleur d'Écume, avenue Ovide-Rousset, cabanes 156, 33260 La Teste-de-Buch, www.fleurs-decume.fr, www.maison-huitre.fr

BASQUE COUNTRY

Discovering red gold

This is the tale of a 16th-century Basque navigator who brought a red pepper back from his adventures in the Caribbean. This region between the sea and the mountains would prove to be a perfect location for the fruit to flourish, ultimately becoming an icon of Basque gastronomy. Enhancing both dishes and the facades of buildings where it is hung to dry, Espelette pepper can be explored across the ten villages within its territory (awarded an AOP in 2002). From venerable 17th-century houses in Ainhoa to the majestic home of the writer Jean Rostand in Cambo-les-Bains, from the panoramas of Itxassou to the cobblestone streets of Espelette, enchanting Basque Country has a thousand and one facets to be discovered. One example is Christian Aguerre's farmhouse inn Harane Ko Borda: this dedicated farmer invites you to discover local delicacies such as his own ham (aged for 26 months) or Grand Roux corn, all showcased by chef Antoine Chépy. This gourmet stop should be rounded off with a visit to the Etxea Espelette interpretation



centre, which will reveal the mysteries of this noble spice.

**Haraneko Borda, 3 Gerastoko Bidea, 64250 Itxassou.
Etxea, Centre d'interprétation du piment d'Espelette, 25 Merkatu Plaza, 64250 Espelette.**

COGNAC

Criss-crossing the vineyards of Charentes

Rolling hillsides with meandering vines, a golden light caressing the stones of a Roman church – Cognac's vineyards sometimes feel like France's very own Tuscany. Across these 80,000 hectares of hillsides and plains running along the Atlantic, locals have been producing the world's most famous brandy since the 18th century. Producers in the capital of Cognac are opening their doors to unlock the secrets of this divine drink. Maison Camus deserves a particular mention: after a fascinating tour of its cellars (built in 1863) and a tasting of its brandies, this family company gives you an opportunity to become a master blender for the day and create your own cognac. This experience is as unique as the bottle that each alchemist takes home with them. In addition, make sure to visit the town and its key attractions: the chateau of Francis I, the Récollets convent, the town hall gardens, the cognac museum, or even a trip down the Charente river in a scow, a flat-bottomed boat which was once used to transport barrels of brandy to the sea.

Maison Camus, 29, rue Marguerite-de-Navarre, 16100 Cognac, www.camus.fr

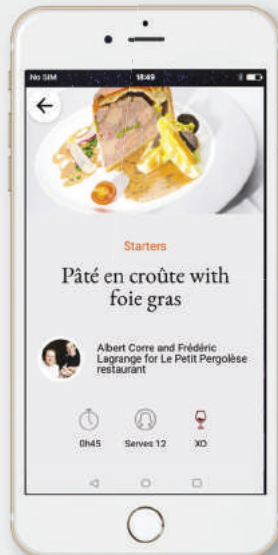
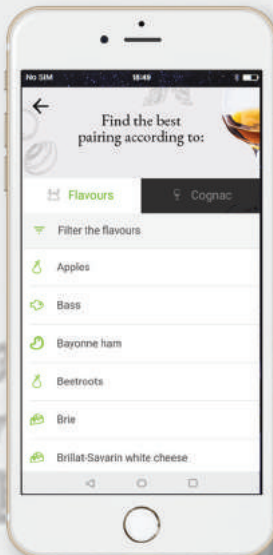
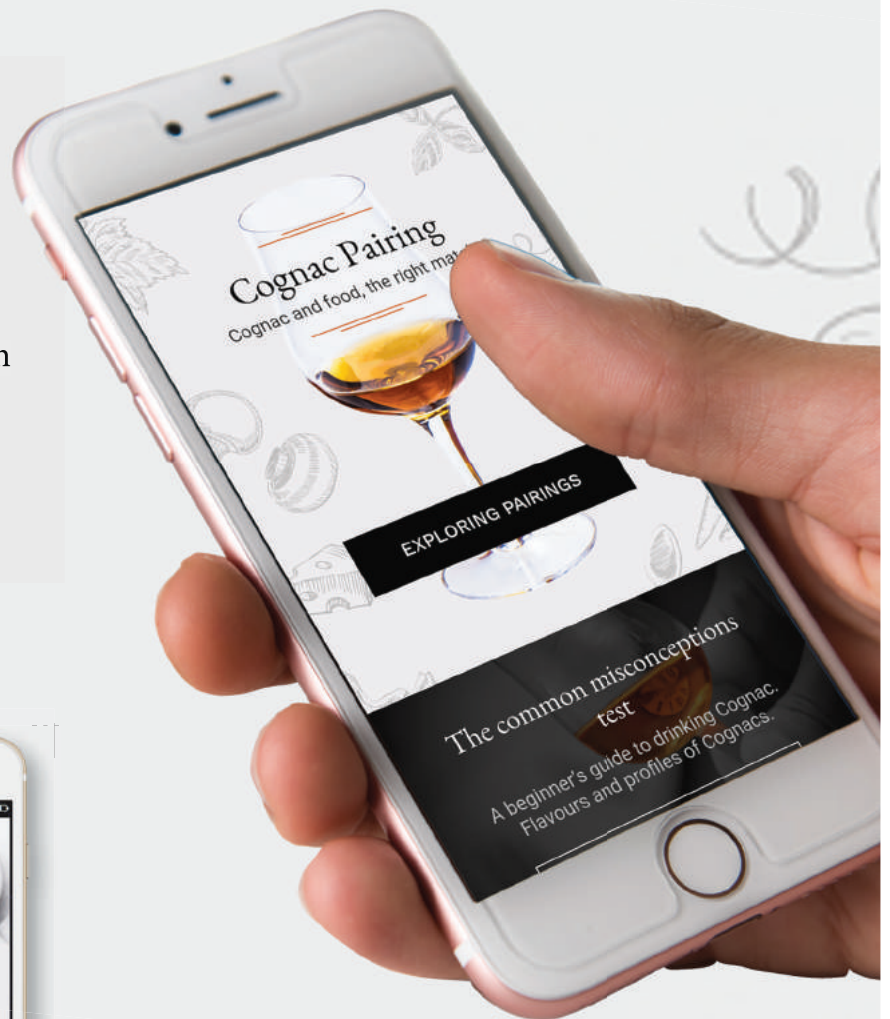


Cognac Pairing

The app that invites cognac(s) to the table.



Cognac(s) can be happily married with certain starters, dishes or desserts.
Find the right match by flavor or by type of cognac, as well as recipes to try it out.
Ready to discover?



This app is edited by the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac (BNIC)



@cognac_official



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