

LHERAUD COGNAC



History

Passion is more than a word to the Lhérauds. It is total dedication. Heady, exhausting and all-encompassing. Day after day, in the community of Angeac-Charente that saw the birth of the family centuries ago, the Lhérauds work together as one, writing a saga in which each plays a unique role.

Since 1680, generations of the Lhéraud family have lived in the same 10th-century house in the small village of Lasdoux in the heart of the Petite Champagne region. The family's first cognac was made in 1802 — a few bottles of this rare and precious cognac are still kept in the Lhérauds' private cellar they call "Paradis." Since that first bottling so many years ago, the Lhéraud family has passed down the traditions and knowledge that it takes to produce their exceptional cognacs and armagnacs.

When Andrée and Guy Lhéraud inherited the domaine in the 1960s, they experienced some difficult times, and yet they never gave up. "There was a force in us. We had the land and so we knew..." Andrée lets the sentence complete itself. At that time, she was already handwriting the labels and applying them using a special flour-and-water glue.

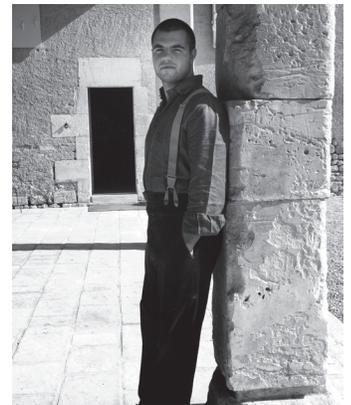
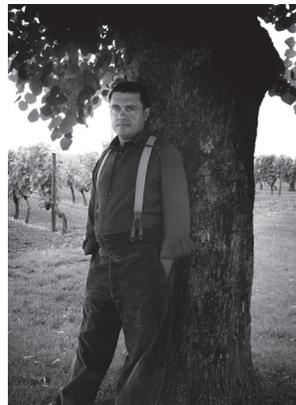
In 1970, Guy decided to stop selling the family's cognac to outside producers, and started marketing it under Cognac Lhéraud. Today, all Lhéraud cognacs and armagnacs are made from grapes from their own vineyards, with all of the winemaking, distillation, aging, bottling and labels done by the Lhéraud family.

Listening to Guy Lhéraud means being captivated by the warmth that exists in his family; the subject is never "I" but "we." Work and success are shared in equal measures. "We make a good trio. We can't do anything without each other. Without my wife and her packaging, my son and his blends, the company would not be where it is today," says the patriarch. "But," he adds with a coy smile, "Where would Laurent's fine cognacs and my wife's wonderful packaging be if the salesman didn't do a good job?"

Equally dedicated to the family's heritage, Laurent Lhéraud studied oenology, working with his parents from an early age. "We worked hard, but it wasn't a sacrifice. I never considered doing anything else." He now manages the domaine (Domaine de Lasdoux), from vineyard to distillation, following the traditions that have been handed down in the family from generation to generation.

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Clockwise from top: Andrée Lhéraud and granddaughter, Anne-Sophie, at work on the Cognac Lhéraud labels. Grandson Jean-Charles, Andrée, and son Laurent Lhéraud confer in the distillery, where crucial decisions must be made. Jean-Charles, who is learning how to run the family distillery. Laurent, enologist and distiller. "We are all born of the earth. Nature rules those who cultivate her. They are not free to do what they will with her, because she can protest. But if you respect her, she'll return the favor. It's very simple, really," says Guy, walking his vineyards in Angeac-Charente in southwestern France.

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LHERAUD COGNAC



Paradis

In the Lhérauds' world, aging is an art to be perfected and maturity is a coveted treasure. With cognac, you have to let time take its time. It works alone. Just keep a watchful eye and let it do its thing.

“Paradis” — a poetic, magical place, a quiet alcove where everything follows its course. Spiders weave their webs. Mystery, angels and dust leave their marks. For Paradis is the Lhérauds’ special cellar, where exceptional vintages and the oldest cognacs rest in peace, awaiting their moment to go out into the world.

In a corner is a cask from 1942, the year Guy Lhéraud was born — he bequeathed it to his grandson on his birth. The cask from 1906 was given to his granddaughter. 1802, 1950...the years marked in chalk on squares of slate fade over time, but before they have completely faded, a small hand restores the vintage years to legibility.

Guy likes to visit Paradis by himself, although he doesn’t go there frequently. He takes pleasure entering on a whim without saying anything to anyone. He finds solace there when he needs it. He communes with the entire family; he sees his forebears, their way of life, and he puts the world to rights. “One hour spent there is like living three centuries full of life. You sip a glass, smoke your cigar. You feel good. You’ve talked to everyone while talking to yourself.”

Today, Guy is planning on enlarging this paradise to store cognacs that won’t be released to market before 2050, vintages that he will never get to experience. You have to plan for the future. Anticipation is a value held dear by winegrowers and farmers. “We do it without even trying, without even knowing it. It is ingrained in us. That’s for sure.”

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