

AEHT - Newsletter

Dear AEHT Members

As this academic year nears its end, members of the AEHT Presidium had the good fortune to combine business with pleasure by holding their traditional summer meeting in France in the castle of the beautiful village of Bourg Charente, in the Poitou-Charente region (Charente Department).



The members of the Presidium – Burghers for the duration of a weekend.

After his coronation as King of France, Francis 1st gave the lands of Bourg to their former governor Artus Gouffier. Artus' grandson François, a Knight of Malta, sold the land in 1607 to Pons de Pons, one of the king's former page-boys, who around this time began building the present castle on the foundations of the old fortress located on the right bank of the river Charente. And it was this same castle where we were the non-paying guests of the family firm of Marnier Lapostolle, one of the AEHT's privileged professional partners, which has occupied the premises since 1921.



Château de Bourg Charente, which belongs to the Marnier Lapostolle family



The bottle designed in 1880 by Louis-Alexandre Marnier Lapostolle evokes the curves of the upper part of the Cognac still.

The Marnier-Lapostolle distillery was set up by Jean-Baptiste 1827 in Neauphle-le-Château (Yvelines). In 1880 Louis-Alexandre Marnier Lapostolle, the son-in-law of Eugène Lapostolle, the son of the founder, invented the famous Grand Marnier® Cordon Rouge liqueur in the original distillery. During our stay we were admitted to the 'holy of holies' where Patrick Raguenaud, an agricultural engineer by training, head cellarman and company director, gave us an introduction to the process of producing and ageing the Cognacs which are used in making Grand Marnier® - and we were also shown how Grand Marnier itself is produced.

Grand Marnier® is a non-fermented drink consisting of half Cognac and half spirit, sugar syrup and essences from natural bitter oranges (*Citrus Bigaradia*) – made according to a closely-guarded secret family recipe.



Citrus Bigaradia



Harvesting the oranges by hand

Citrus Bigaradia, which is also used in the perfume industry, is the variety of orange which has the highest concentration of aromas. These oranges come from plantations in Haiti which belong to the company, and are harvested when they are still green (when their fragrance is at its most intense) – before being cut into quarters and peeled. The peel is then naturally dried in the Caribbean sun for three or four days, then sent to Neauphle-le-Château near Paris to be made into orange-flavoured alcoholic spirit. Now the orange peel is rehydrated by being soaked in water for 24 hours, before being sorted and fed into a machine which removes the inner white part of the skin. The result of this process is orange skin bursting with aromas and essential oils, which is left to macerate for three weeks in a mixture of neutral alcohol (from the Arabic 'al-chohol' meaning 'subtle thing') and water – the alcohol content varies between 60% and 65%. At the end of this maceration the mixture is distilled in copper stills (the French for 'still', 'alambic', is from the Arabic 'al-ambic', 'distillation vessel'). The purpose of the distillation process is to concentrate the orange flavours into

an orange-flavoured alcohol (which takes the name of *Haiti* flavour). Only the 'heart' of the distillation process is kept. After nine hours of distillation there remain only 1000 litres of distillate from the 4200 litres which a still can hold. 2 tonnes of orange peel per day are processed at *Grand Marnier®* and in order to avoid running out of stock, the company has set aside a sufficient reserve of orange peel for two years, and enough distillate for one year. So if supplies fail the company can last three years without needing orange peel.

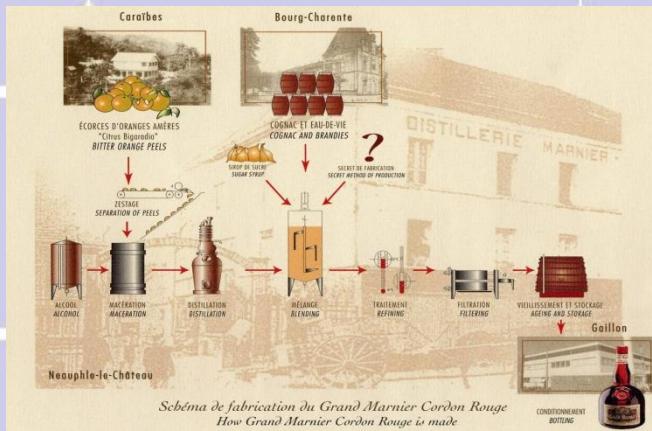
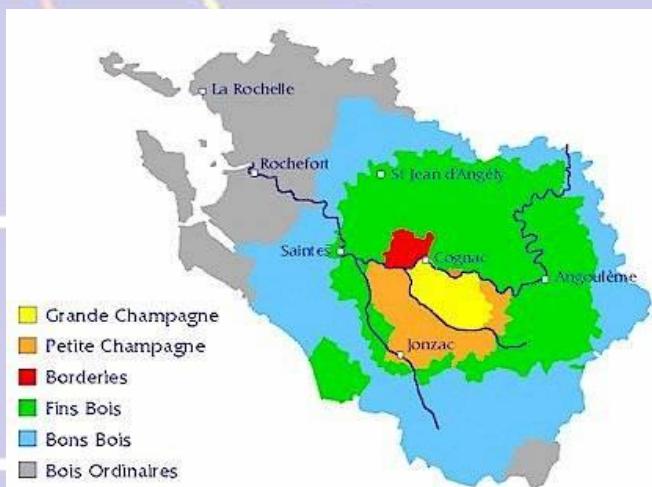


Diagram showing the production of *Grand Marnier® Cordon Rouge*

The flavour extracted from the oranges is added to an alcoholic base consisting mostly of *Cognac* produced around *Bourg Charente*. This is a spirit with an officially certified provenance made exclusively from the *Ugni Blanc* grape (these vines are more resistant to phylloxera, an insect which destroyed three quarters of Charente's vineyards around 1872) produced in a closely defined region in accordance with very strict rules and regulations as to production methods and ageing.



Cognac from only five of the six vineyards in the Cognac Region is used in the production of *Grand Marnier* products.

This is a brief account of the production of the Cognac used in *Grand Marnier® Cordon Rouge*:

The pressing of the *Ugni Blanc* grapes from the best of the Cognac vineyards (Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fins Bois and Bon Bois) as well as the fermentation of the resulting must (juice) take place immediately after the harvest. Chaptalisation (addition of sugar) is not allowed.

VINEYARD	SOIL	QUALITY OF THE SPIRIT	Cordon Rouge	LAX	CI100	CI150
GRANDE CHAMPAGNE	Hard limestone	Strong floral flavours, great finesse, benefits from long ageing	X	X++	X	X
PETITE CHAMPAGNE	Crumbly limestone	Same character as Grandes Champagnes, but less powerful	X	X++	X	
BORDERIES	Clay and flint	Elegance, floral elegance (violets)	X	X		
FINS BOIS	Clay and limestone	Fruity (grapes) Well rounded	X	X		
BON BOIS	Clay and sand	Structure, rapid maturity	X	X		
BOIS ORDINAIRES	Clay and sand	(used in Pineau de Charentes)				

After five to seven days of fermentation (of the sugars contained in the must) the result is a wine that is low in alcohol (around 8° to 11°) acidic and cloudy – not very pleasant to drink. It is through double distillation, enabling the separation of the 'heart' from the other components on the principle of differing volatilities, and through ageing in oak barrels, that this wine is transformed into Cognac.



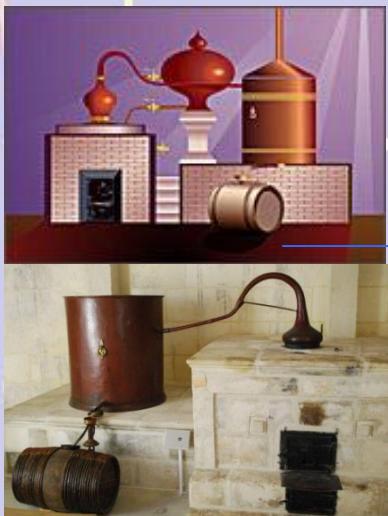
Tasting the Cognacs used in the production of *Grand Marnier®* products

Patrick Raguenaud, from a family of home distillers, explains the process

Distillation of wine from the Charente dates back to the 15th century and was intended to make this originally low-alcohol wine more stable and thus easier to transport. At that time this wine was popular beyond the national frontiers, and was transported along the river Charente to the kingdoms of northern Europe. All the great Cognac houses were founded between the 16th and 18th

centuries and had their warehouses along this river. When the Dutch Provinces gained their independence in 1579 the commercial domination of the Dutch ship-owners over the rest of Europe was strengthened, and a century later the Dutch owned three quarters of the world's merchant shipping. The Dutch were very fond of the sweet wines produced in the Borderies vineyards to the north of Cognac, and gradually they asked the wine growers to produce wines intended for double distillation. The Dutch loved this 'burnt wine' (brandwijn, hence the term brandy) which they drank diluted with water.

Quite apart from the improved taste, double distillation had many other advantages at the time: it ensured the stability of the wines, reduced the volume of the cargos, and during long sea voyages the production of a healthy and easily-conserved drink avoided the health problems associated with polluted water. During the long northward journeys along the Atlantic coasts the brandy aged in its oak casks and its potential and its quality improved. Cognac was born.



Double distillation – the basis of Cognac production

The distilling season is closely regulated: it begins after the grape harvest and lasts until March 31st of the following year.

Double distillation is still the process used today in Charente stills known as 'repeat' stills, which are the same as those used in bygone days. During the 'first boil' the unfiltered wine is placed in the boiler and brought to its boiling point (80°). The vaporised alcohol is boiled off and accumulates in the head (shaped like an onion or an olive or more rarely a mushroom), moves into the swan's neck then into the coil immersed in a cooling chamber (full of cold water) called a 'pipe'. On contact with the refrigerant the vapour condenses and flows on in the form of 'heads' (the first

condensates high in ethers) 'brouillis' then the 'tails' (the final condensates). The heads and the tails (also known as phlegm) are returned to the wine used in another first distillation. The 'brouillis', a slightly cloudy liquid of 28 to 32 percent proof by volume, is distilled a second time in a process known as the 'good boil'. Once again we obtain the 'heads' (the first condensates rich in alcohol), the 'heart', the 'seconds' (60% vol.) and the 'tails' (the last condensates). The distiller separates out these components according to the degree of alcohol, his nose and his skill. Note that the 'heart' has a rather sweet taste whereas the 'seconds' are bitter and could spoil the Cognac. The distiller's task is also to control the flow by adjusting the temperature of the boiler and of the refrigerant. A pressure gauge in the swan's neck enables the distiller to judge the speed at which the steam reaches the coil.

Double distillation



Normally the 'seconds' are reintroduced into the 'brouillis' for a second distillation, but it is here that Grand Marnier® is innovative and applies an intermediate method: In other words, only the first part of the 'seconds' (richer in alcohol) is re-mixed with the 'brouillis' for a second distillation, the second part being reinjected with the 'heads' and the 'tails' of a second distillation into the wine destined for a first distillation.

The 'heart' of the second distillation, which is crystal clear and high in alcohol (between 68% and 72% by volume), is undrinkable as it is, and is used to produce Cognac. Double distillation lasts around 24 hours and requires great care on the part of the distiller who at this stage can confer some of his or her personality on the Cognac. Grand Marnier® takes its supplies of Cognac mostly from home distillers, wine growers who distil and age their own grapes. Unlike the Scots

whiskey industry which owns and controls the entire production and distillation process of its spirit, the Cognac wine growers still own around 50% of Cognac stocks.

The **ageing** period, which lasts at least three years, takes place in oak barrels made of oak from the Tronçais or Limousin regions. The oak will have been selected for its natural properties and for its potential for transferring these properties to the alcohol, giving it its colour and its 'nose'. Only oak is suitable for this, and other essences could even be harmful.



Paradise – the place where Cognacs which have reached their maturity after 40-60 years of ageing in barrels, are stored in containers known as 'Dame Jeanne'.

Stave wood with different grains



The dark Limousin wood produces a spirit which has more tannin and is sweeter and more structured.



The light Tronçais wood produces spirits which are more complex, finer and more aromatic.

The wood's grain depends on the richness of the soil and the climate as well as the influence of man. The poorer the soil, the harsher the climate and the closer the trees are planted, (in copses or clusters) the finer will be the oak's grain. On the other hand, the richer the soil, the more maritime the climate and the greater the space between the trees, the coarser will be the grain of the oaks. The Tronçais forest in the Allier department produces a fine-grained wood which is soft and porous to alcohol. The Tronçais type of oak tree is also found in other regions of central France. The Limousin forest provides a medium grained wood which is harder

and has irregular grain and is even more porous. The tannin from the Tronçais oak is said to be particularly soft and this wood is used more for wine barrels, while the Limousin oak is thought to confer power and balance on the Cognac. A spirit which is stored in Limousin style oak barrels can extract more tannin. Despite this, the Cognacs used in the production of Grand Marnier® are aged in Tronçais oak barrels because the complexity of this wood harmonises better with the aroma of oranges. Making Cognac barrels is an ancestral art which is almost perfection itself. The Presidium had the opportunity to visit the impressive Doreau cooperage in Cognac which produces between 9,000 and 10,000 barrels per year.

The planks of wood used to make the barrels are called 'stave-wood' and are cut from the part of the tree between the heart and the sapwood of the oak, using trees that are at least one hundred years old. Once they have been split to maintain the wood's grain (and to give the planks a greater strength and to maintain their natural water tightness) they must spend between two and three years in the open air in order to rid them of their sap and eliminate the wood's bitterness.

After this long period this stave wood is cut into staves. The coopers' work now begins. The staves are dried, because in order to be machined the wood must not contain more than 14% humidity. They now proceed with hooping the wood, above and around a fire made from oak off-cuts.



Pierre Malingrey – in charge of production at the stave wood storage yard of the Doreau cooperage

Making staves from the stave wood



Making the lids and bases – watertightness is ensured by the use of reeds inserted between the staves.



After the 'mise en rose' or 'raising the barrel' comes the heating (also known as 'bousinage' or browning) – and this phase has a great influence on the characteristics of the spirit)

Once they have been joined at the base, the staves are heated for 20 or 30 minutes until they reach a temperature outside the barrel of between 40 and 50 °C. During this heating process a cable placed at the base of the barrel is progressively tightened to bring the staves together and finally to make them join up without the need for glue or nails. After a first purely mechanical heating to aid the bending of the wood, a second heating known as 'bousinage' is used to bring out certain oenological qualities in the wood. It is during this 'bousinage' that the cooper develops the specific range of aromas (the 'organoleptic' qualities) of a barrel according to the desired result. The intensity of the heat applied enables different aromas to be obtained: light heat will develop the milder and floral aromas, while more intense heat will bring out the spicy, grilled flavours.



The base of the barrel is fixed in place using a glue made of water and wheat flour.



Two of our vice-presidents check out the solidity of a barrel.



The lids and bases are given a final sanding.



The barrels are marked using a laser gun.

After the last finishing touches the barrel is subjected to tests for solidity and water tightness. Some coopers continue to sign their 'works' as a way of assuming responsibility for them.



The barrels, worth between €550 and €750 (250 and 350 litres) are wrapped for despatch

Storage

The barrels used for Cognac may be used only to store spirits from Cognac. During the ageing process exchanges take place between the oak, the spirit and the atmosphere (thanks to the wood's porosity), exchanges which will determine the Cognac's flavour, its amber colour and the particular aromas (the 'nose'). Once it has been bottled, Cognac will cease to age – and this is why Cognacs which have reached their maturity are stored in 'Dame Jeanne' containers.

*As it ages in contact with the air, the spirit will lose a part of its alcoholic content and its volume (2 to 3% per year): this is the 'angels' share' (this stems from the terminology of alchemists in which angels designated volatile substances). Throughout the period of ageing the alcoholic strength will thus be reduced through evaporation. This is what brings the spirit naturally and progressively to an alcoholic strength of 40% by volume. After 20 years a barrel will have lost 50% of its volume. These alcoholic vapours feed a microscopic fungus, the *Torula* (*Torula compniacensis*) which blackens the walls and the roofs of the storehouses – a fact which enables the local authorities to detect illicit production. After 40 to 60 years of ageing the*

quality of the Cognac begins to decline, and it is placed in large glass bottles called 'Dame Jeanne' stored in the 'Paradise' in order to stop the ageing process.

A Cognac is an **assemblage** or combination of spirits from different years and different vineyards aged in different oak woods. The age of a Cognac is determined by the age of the youngest spirit in the assemblage. As for the Cognacs which go to make up Grand Marnier®, their selection, ageing and assemblage in large vats known as 'foudres' or tuns – all of this takes place at the Château de Bourg Charente. The assemblage also allows the company to eliminate any variations in the taste.

The head cellarman's job is to buy the spirits, to keep an eye on them from the moment they leave the still, to watch over their maturation, to taste them regularly, to decide whether to transfer them to another barrel or another store in order to make them sweeter or dryer, to add distilled or demineralised water very gradually in order to bring their alcoholic strength slowly to that of Cognac sold to the public (40% by volume minimum). This delicate operation is called 'reduction' – though it is not used by the Marnier-Lapostolle company. If one uses spirits which are less strong in alcohol and richer in water, the water-soluble components will be more present in the Cognac, which will be more rounded, sweeter, and will contain more tannin. If the spirit contains more alcohol and less water, the alcohol-soluble components will be present in greater quantities, thus producing more complex and aggressive flavours.

Finally the Grand Marnier® liqueur is made from a **blend** of three ingredients – essences of distilled bitter oranges, Cognacs and sugar syrup – according to a secret formula at the Neauphle-le-Château premises. The blend will be refrigerated down to about -4°C and filtered to remove impurities (fatty acids, carbon compounds etc) and to obtain a clear liquid. The blend will then rest in wooden barrels for one or two months for Cordon Rouge and for up to three years for vintages to enable the ingredients to blend well together. Subsequently it will be transported to a factory in Normandy where it is prepared for sale. You may like to know that for Cordon Rouge, Cognacs aged from two to three years are used, mostly from Fin Bois and Bon Bois vineyards, while for the Cuvée du Centenaire they use 20 to 30 year-old Cognacs from the Petite and Grande Champagne vineyards. Finally, for the Cuvée du Cent-

Cinquantenaire they use 30 to 40 year-old Cognacs from the Grande Champagne vineyards (see table on p.2 above). The AEHT Presidium had the opportunity of tasting all of these Grand Marnier® vintages as well as the Cognacs from which they are made.

To sum up, the final product will have acquired its hints of fruit from the Cognacs, its mineral notes from the soil and its hints of wood, spices and vanilla from the oak barrels – all of this balanced thanks to the subtle and exotic notes from the Citrus-Bigaradia bitter oranges. Add to this the skill of the distiller and the head cellarman and the company's secret recipe – and you have the unique flavour of Grand Marnier®.

The exceptional quality of its noble ingredients and of the production process makes Grand Marnier® a top-of-the-range liqueur, and explain its high price. However, because of its powerful flavour it can be used more sparingly than a cheaper 'triple sec'. The liqueur has acquired such an international reputation that the brand is present in more than 150 countries, and a bottle is sold throughout the world every two seconds.



Red Lion based on Grand Marnier & Yellow Cab cocktail based on Navan
Some Marnier-Lapostolle products

Grand Marnier® liqueur may be enjoyed on its own, on ice, in hot drinks, in cocktails in short and long drinks or in gastronomic recipes such as duck with orange and in Grand Marnier® soufflés.

To make the famous Red Lion cocktail created in Chicago in 1933, mix in a shaker 2 cl of Grand Marnier®, 3 cl of gin, 3 cl of orange juice and 1 cl of lemon juice. For a 'Yellow Cab', mix 3 cl of Navan, 4 cl of pineapple juice and 1 cl of lemon juice. Shake in the shaker and serve in a cocktail glass or in a low tumbler on ice.

If you fancy the famous crêpes Suzette created at the beginning of the 20th century by the famous chef Escoffier or a good Grand Marnier® soufflé, visit <http://fr.grand-marnier.com>. You will discover that the Grand Marnier® liqueur has

provided inspiration for many great chefs and barmen.

Furthermore, we strongly recommend that you visit the Museum of the Arts of Cognac in the town of Cognac which gives a detailed account of all the stages of production and its eventful history.



Museum of the Arts of Cognac



Cuvée François Rabelais vintage bottled in a fob watch made by the Etains d'Anjou pewter company



The palette of flavours to be found in Cognacs



Old Cognac labels

We spent our last evening at the Ribaudière in Bourg Charente, a Michelin-starred restaurant (see the menu at the end of the Newsletter) and a favourite venue for the large Cognac houses for their business dinners. On this occasion we were joined by a true citizen of Cognac well known to all of us as our guide and escort during our stay in Colombia in 2008, who also accompanied the SENA delegation to the Kuressaare Annual Conference (see our 2008 Newsletters). Sébastien Longhurst, whose family has worked in Cognac for many years, more precisely for Hennessy, has now jumped the AEHT ship to work in the International Relations department of the University of Antioquia. Valeria Cecilia Nicholls Ospina (vnicholls@sena.edu.co) is now your contact at the SENA.

The following day some members of the Presidium pursued their investigations of the ancestral traditions of the Charente-Maritime department in the company of Michel Gaillot, Honorary President of our Association and a member of the Council of Elders.

After the traditional aperitif, a Pineau des Charentes (a mixture of Charente grape juice containing at least 10° of alcohol and Cognac containing at least 60° from the same producer) at

Michel's home, we went to drop off our luggage at the Hôtel de l'Île in Port-des-Barques near the Ile Madame and Rochefort. The La Chaloupe hotel and restaurant have recently been renovated and are run by Christophe Labarsouque, a former student of the La Rochelle Hotel School, who trained there when Michel Gaillot was the director. He put together the freshest and most delicious menu: the starter was a mouclade with saffron, followed by a line-caught sea bass which, like all the fish he serves, was freshly caught and brought to him by a local fisherman early in the morning, to be served for lunch at the restaurant. It is rare to find fresh fish nowadays, and it really is worth seeking out.



Mouclade with saffron



Eclade – a warm way to chill out in summer

On the subject of mussels, in the evening we were treated to an 'éclade charentaise' – a convivial outdoor way of eating mussels. It was a real treat which we would urge you to offer your friends – it's sure to make a good party! To prepare the dish arrange the mussels on a plank of wood, in a spiral, with their points facing upwards – you can wedge the first ones in position using kitchen foil.



Then place a good layer of pine needle on top of the mussels (around 50 cms) as uniformly as possible, allowing them to overflow onto the plank.



Then set fire to it; be careful of the wind, as the pine needles are very light and may blow away. When all the pine needles have burnt up, wait two or three minutes, then use a piece of stiff card (Michel told us that the older generation still use the Post Office calendar which is ideally suited to the purpose) to blow away the cinders to uncover the mussels – and tuck in. And be careful – it's delicious, but a bit messy to eat!



Michel lights the fire with a 'buffadou' – an instrument invented in the Limousin region



An Improvised barbecue

Michel – is deputy mayor of Echillais

The following day Michel Gaillet took us to see his great-grand-father's oyster beds in Gravas near to Marennes and the Moulin des Loges. The bed is located within a bird sanctuary which today has France's largest stork population which only 15 years ago did not even exist.



Stork nests on a high voltage pylon – very 'current' in the region

Michel Gaillet's oyster bed

Michel Gaillet owns, together with his brother, 1000 m² of oyster beds and grows there 3000 oysters, the so-called 'pousses-en-claire' which produce the equivalent of around 200 kgs (between two and five oysters per square metre is the norm). Just beside Michel's beds is the oyster production of David Hervé, a young and talented

producer whose outstandingly good produce is exported to the world's gastronomic centres, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Moscow.

Michel Gaillet told us that it would be unthinkable for Charente-Maritime families to celebrate Christmas without eating oysters. For this reason the young oysters are placed in the beds in September or October so that they reach maturity for Christmas and New Year. Just as his forebears, Michel allows his beds to dry out once a year in July or August in order to get rid of the seaweed and the crabs and to ensure the quality of his oyster beds.



'Pousses-en-claire' – young oysters

If you are in the region, take a detour to La Rochelle, located on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, at the heart of the Antioche Narrows. The city is sheltered from storms by the barrier formed by the four islands - Ré, Oléron, Aix and Madame, and is above all an important sea port which has been in operation since the 12th century. This thousand-year-old city has a rich history and ancient buildings, and is still a working port and a large industrial centre. It is also an important administrative and services hub, reinforced by its university and the tourism sector. It really is worth making a detour to visit La Rochelle.



The towers of La Rochelle's old port

The town hall with its renaissance courtyard

The 'Innovation and Creativity in Education and Lifelong Learning' conference took place in Prague in the Czech Republic on May 6th and 7th 2009; at the conference the VIRTEX project was selected to appear in a catalogue of European examples of good practice (see

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/leonardo/creativity_fr.pdf, where there is a wealth of interesting information – the project is mentioned on page 14). The VIRTEX project had already won First Prize in the European Languages Label competition – and the AEHT and three of its member schools were participants: Kuressaare in Estonia, Podebrady in the Czech Republic and Bad Leonfelden in Austria.

An Innovation Transfer project, in which the AEHT and the Kuressaare Ametikool are partners, was selected by the European Commission in 2008 and has already started work. You are invited to read John Rees Smith's articles on the working meetings held in January 2009 in Amsterdam and in June 2009 in Izmir at:

<http://www.aeht.eu/fr/european-projects/vortex4all>.



A poster welcoming the Virtex4all team to the Bornova High School in Izmir



Partnership meeting

The elections to select National Representatives have now been completed, and the results are as follows:

COUNTRY	Elected Candidate
ALBANIA	VAQARRI Flutura
AUSTRIA	ENENGL Klaus
BELGIUM	SIEBENS Herman
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	SPASOJEVIC Boris
BULGARIA	<i>Result awaited</i>
CROATIA	BARANASIC Vesna
CYPRUS	ANDILIOS Nicos
CZECH REPUBLIC	PODOLAKOVA Jana
DENMARK	KÜHLWEIN KRISTIANSEN Soren
ESTONIA	RAND Neeme
FINLAND	NIEMINEN Marit
FRANCE	COLLINET Annie
GERMANY	WEBER-POHL Sibylle
GREECE	NIKOLAKOPOULOS G. Nikolaos
HUNGARY	SASVARI Akos
ICELAND	PEDERSEN Helene H.

IRELAND	O'HARA John
ITALY	MERLONE Rinaldo
LATVIA	OZOLINA Silva
LITHUANIA	STASIUNIENE Birute
LUXEMBOURG	ROBERT Louis
MACEDONIA	NIKOLOVSKI Zoran
MALTA	ABELA Reginald
MONACO	None – no candidate
MONTENEGRO	DUSKO Lucic
NORWAY	ANDREASSEN Stig
POLAND	PIENKOWSKA Boguslawa
PORTUGAL	PAIS Ana Paula
ROMANIA	PIRJOL Razvan
RUSSIA	VASILIEVICH IVANOV Evgeny
SERBIA	VICIC Slavoljub
SLOVAKIA	SENKO Jozef
SLOVENIA	SPEC Jana
SPAIN	SOLA-MORALES Carmina
SWEDEN	LARSSON Arne
SWITZERLAND	GARTMANN Marc
THE NETHERLANDS	LUYCKX Ans
TURKEY	CELIKTAŞ Aydin
UKRAINE	PALCHUK Marina
UNITED KINGDOM	None – no candidate



Smiles after re-election

In certain countries – the United Kingdom, Monaco and Bulgaria – no candidates presented themselves and the posts of National Representative remain vacant, and we would welcome proposals. With the exception of those who are re-elected, all those who have been elected will not begin their mandates as members of the Executive Board until November 19th 2009, on which date there will also be elections for membership of the new Presidium. The documents relating to these elections will be sent to all those eligible to stand on June 16th 2009. Any National Representatives interested in standing for election to the Presidium are requested to send their candidature and their personal statement to the

AEHT Head Office by September 11th 2009 at the latest.



'Teramo in tavola' deferred until late September 2009 because of the earthquake in the Abruzze

The 'Teramo in tavola' event, planned for April 22nd this year (and omitted from the AEHT calendar) has been deferred to September 22nd-25th because of the aftermath of the earthquake which shook the Abruzze. As part of this conference held by the Teramo IPSSARCT (an AEHT member school which has the Giulianova school as its annex until the start of the new academic year) there will be a culinary arts competition and a lecture on 'The Gran Sasso National Park and the Monti della Laga – the present situation and future prospects for sustainable gastronomic tourism'. We hope that the 15 schools which registered in April and that the 11 restaurants in Teramo and the surrounding region which had promised to take part will still be participating in September. Part of the Presidium will also be present and will hold a meeting to review its three-year mandate which ends this coming November.

THIS AND THAT

News from our AEHT Members

*Serge Sevaux - Cocktails Ambassador to the
Maison Marnier-Lapostolle*



Serge Sevaux – Cocktails Ambassador at the Maison Grand Marnier

stand at the Kuressaare Annual Conference

Born in 1956 in Avranches (in the Manche department in Lower Normandy) he was attracted to bar work at a very young age, thanks to his father. At 14 he became a student at the Paris Hotel School, and passed all his culinary arts and restaurant service qualifications, but his passion for bar work gave him no respite! At 17 he decided to strike out on his own. After two seasons at the 'Hôtel du Golf' in Deauville, the bars of Paris opened their doors to him. He moved from the Sofitel to the Warwick to the Bar Le Forum to the Saint James & Albany, gradually moving up the hierarchy.

In the early 80s he discovered the ABF (Association des Barmen de France) and in due course was placed in charge of cocktail competitions, becoming General Secretary and Public Relations Officer. His dedication and willingness to work all hours made him one of the most important figures in this Association for 19 years.

He was winner of several important cocktail competitions and was a finalist in the 1982 Martini Grand Prix International; he became the competition co-organiser from 1986 to 1993 and took part in all the European finals.

Serge is very media-oriented, and from 1984 to 1986 he appeared live every evening on the Zénith show as a barman beside Michel Denisot, who became Director General for Programmes of the channel in 2001. Serge Sevaux also mixes cocktails in live broadcasts such as 'Panique sur 16' with Christophe Dechavanne on the TF1 channel and on 'Matin Bonheur' (Morning Happiness) on the state France channel.

In 1993 he left bar work for two years in order to become director of publicity, photography and reports for LE SHAKER magazine (the ABF's official publication created in 1983, and since 2006 published as a supplement to the Revue des Comptoirs). These two years enabled him to enrich his knowledge of public relations in terms of large distribution companies, barmen and with hotel schools.

After his arrival at Marnier-Lapostolle, he created the International Barman's Guide – aimed at French-speaking barmen, and translating into ten languages the expressions most frequently used in the profession.

In early 1999 he joined the Société des Produits Marnier-Lapostolle (Marnier-Lapostolle Products) as Cocktails Ambassador with the remit of developing the use of Grand Marnier® in cocktails.

We took the opportunity of our visit to Bourg-Charente to ask him some questions about his

brilliant career and about the personal qualities needed to become a good barman.

1. How did your father inspire in you your passion and vocation for bar work?

My father delivered beer for a living, and when I went with him on his rounds to the bars at the age of five, I was struck by the conviviality there, both between the barman and my father and between the barman and his clients. My passion for the profession of barman dates from this time, and has never left me. What's more, when the Marnier-Lapostolle company asked me to come and work for them, the thing that made me hesitate most was the prospect of losing contact with the clients and consumers.

2. What are your memories of your training years?

In 1971, when I started my hotel school training, I asked my restaurant service teacher how to become a barman. I was only 14, and was quite shocked by his reply, in which he said that being a barman was like being a layabout. Nowadays I find this quite inappropriate. It is true that a barman is often travelling or doing night work, but there is nothing dishonest about the job. Fortunately after this I met a head barman in Deauville where I was on a two-year work placement, and he gave me a lot of support and guidance. After my placement he gave me some useful addresses where I might find work in Paris, and that opened a lot of doors for me.

The first year was tough as all I did was to wash glasses and serve the Head Barman who was in the bar backroom. One happy memory is of course the first time you are allowed to use the shaker to make a cocktail for your first client. At the time we were not allowed to serve a client until we had mastered the basic movements. Nowadays, thanks to the training programmes provided by hotel schools, young graduates have a good knowledge of the products and can serve in an appropriate manner. I also have good memories about the competitions I won.

3. What competitions did you win?

I came third in the 'best young barman' contest organised by the ABF, known as the 'Scott Cup'. The contest still exists and is open only to young people over 18 and under 25 who can prove that they have worked in bars for at least 18 months. It's a very traditional and demanding competition with general knowledge tests on a series of 70-80 classic cocktails etc.

Initially this competition was organised by a certain Mr Scott, a Parisian caterer, in the 50s. Mr Scott had realised that bartenders lacked knowledge about

the products – for example those used to make cocktails. He had donated a sum of 2000 French francs for the competition prize – an enormous amount of money at the time. It became a prestigious competition, and nowadays all bartenders study hard and go to great lengths to win this prize. I only came third, ironically because of an error I made in a cocktail based on Grand Marnier®: I put grenadine into a Red Lion whereas this cocktail is yellow!

After that I won creative competitions, contests where you have to use a product which is often that of the organiser, as for example at the le Grand Marnier® Trophy International. In 1983 in Paris I won a competition in which you had to create two cocktails based on Pineau des Charentes, a long drink and a short drink. The long drink cocktail I created was the only one that has entered the list of classics over the last 50 years. I also won five other competitions using the same base (made up of pineapple juice, limes, strawberry syrup and coconut milk) and simply changing the alcoholic spirit. After that I organised the AFB competitions for 17 years as competitions officer. I have also run the Martini (Bacardi) competitions at an international level, on each occasion at a different site owned by the group (in Cognac and Turin and in Scotland etc). As a result I am quite well known among the large companies, which enabled me to join the ABF's Shaker magazine in 1993, a job I did for six years until I joined Grand Marnier® in January 1999. It was in 1996, during an interview for a promotion in the Shaker, that Grand Marnier® had asked me to work for them, but I didn't want to leave the 'bar' and I took some time to make up my mind. They had chosen me because although at the time they were very well known in the world of gastronomy, they were less well known in the bar world, and needed someone to promote their liqueur among bartenders. It was two years later that I contacted them again and accepted their offer. They are a very good firm to work for. Right from the start they gave me carte blanche. I have arranged for Grand Marnier® to become a partner of the IBA (International Bartenders Association) and I have launched a competition in hotel schools, entitled "le Grand Marnier® Trophée Espoirs" (Trophy of Great Hopes)

4. What is your role at Marnier-Lapostolle?

I am in charge of the group's professional external relations (relations with bartenders) and I am their 'cocktails ambassador'. In other words my task is to create new cocktails using Grand Marnier®, and

to persuade barmen to adopt them and to include them in their cocktail menus.



Serge Sevaux – in charge of external relations for the group, and cocktails ambassador with Grand Marnier®

I am also in charge of national and international public relations for the company, which is a partner of the ABF and the IBA. I also work extensively with hotel schools, contributing to the part of the curriculum devoted to bar training. In order to enter these training courses in France, you need a qualification in hospitality, either a CAP, a BEP or a BAC pro (the equivalent of a GCSE, an OND or an A-level). There are several such qualifications in France, such as those relating to bar work, dessert production for restaurants, wine-waiting and cooked meats.

In drawing up the curriculum for the bar work qualification I worked closely with the Education Ministry in 1982-1984. In general terms this qualification is intended for young people aged between 19 and 21. At the time I was the ABF's general secretary, and some members wanted the profession of barman to be recognised within the national education system. We contacted the ministry and drew up, together with a committee of barmen, the curriculum for a qualification which did not exist at the time. Today this qualification is highly regarded in France.

Since that time I have been working with schools, and when I joined Grand Marnier® I insisted on being allowed to continue to do so. These days I spend five months a year working in schools.

5. Are you also involved in developing new drinks or new trends?

Requests tend to come rather from themed bars or restaurants to develop bespoke cocktails which reflect the particular characteristics of the establishment. For example for rum bars I create rum-based cocktails. On Monday we are going to try to adapt the Mojito, the cocktail which has been

fashionable for the last ten years, into a drink containing Grand Marnier®.

I didn't take part in creating the Navan, for example, because we have laboratories for that. However, before it was launched I was asked to test it out as a cocktail component, and that is how we discovered that the vanilla taste could not adequately survive being shaken up with ice. As a result the composition was changed so that the vanilla flavour emerged as the second taste to ensure a good product. I also work with our marketing department, for example to produce twizzle-sticks suitable for the different glasses and cocktails.

6. How many people are currently employed at Grand Marnier®?

Currently there are more than 400 of us working on four different sites, most of them in Gaillon in Normandy (responsible for bottling, warehousing and despatch etc). The others are spread between the Head Office in Paris (export, etc), the Neuilly-le-Château site (presently dealing with receiving and processing the orange peel and the preparation of the liqueur), and Bourg-Charente and Sancerre.

7. What are the skills and personal qualities required of a good barman these days?

To be a good barman, the first step is to come to terms with the client facing you across the bar. You need to have a good sense of psychology so you know how to approach clients, how to listen to them and work out which ingredients they don't like, etc. You have to like being with the client, which is not always the case (some bar staff can't stand clients). Customers in hotel bars are demanding because cocktails are expensive. You have to adapt to the clients, listen to them carefully, leave them in peace if they don't want to be disturbed, and chat with them if that is what they want, etc.



Serge Sevaux – an experienced barman

Professional skills are often of secondary importance. Cleanliness is very important, but even

a good cocktail will please the client only if it is to his or her taste. The important thing is to know precisely what the client wants: an aperitif, a long drink, something to quench the thirst, etc. In my view, technical competence comes after psychological qualities, and I would say a good mix is 30% to 60%.

8. Is flair-bartending (juggling) demanded by clients?

There are specific schools, contests and bars for 'working flair'. It's fine for the television, but not much requested by clients in up-market establishments. However, a fine opening gesture such as skilful handling of a bottle may be appreciated.

9. How did you come to appear on television?

It happened completely by accident. At the time it was still legal to present alcoholic drinks on television, and companies who were sponsors of a programme contacted the ABF president to ask for a barman to be present on-screen. Throughout my career I have been lucky enough to have a very understanding wife who has always allowed me to live out my passion for bar work without complaining too much about me being absent. Not all barmen enjoy the same tolerance, and divorces are frequent among bar staff.

The first programme I did was 'Matin Bonheur' (morning happiness) and one of the guests was Sérgolène Royal. Then came the creation of Canal+, the innovative subscription channel. In its 'Zénith' programme which had a large audience because among other things it was followed by a programme called 'Coluche info' (news presented by a comic), Michel Denisot wanted to have a barman on the set to serve cocktails to his guests from the world of art and politics. Contact was made via the ABF – at the time I was more available than others to do this programme which went out between 19.00 and 20.00 because I only began work at 21.00 at the Forum Bar, a traditional establishment which still exists today. And so for two years I found myself on the television set every evening, making different cocktails. When we were short of guests, Michel Denisot even arranged a programme dedicated entirely to the ABF, inviting the then president to explain thy whys and wheresores of this association.

10. What is your view of the AEHT?

It's difficult to say after such a short time – our membership is quite recent, having joined in 2007.



Serge Sevaux together with the AEHT Presidium in Bourg Charente

I was contacted by Michel Gaillet, but I wondered whether our offices in other countries would be able to form as close a relationship with hotel schools there as we do here in France. Then we gave in to temptation, and I discovered a very dynamic Association whose competitions are very well organised and highly professional; the AEHT Annual Conference attracts large numbers of people. We are really keen to continue this collaboration, and as time goes by we make more and more contacts and the relationship becomes more and more pleasant. Unfortunately we cannot be present as all the events organised under the aegis of the AEHT.

11. Would you have any suggestions for improving the AEHT's activities?

It would be interesting to organise a creative contest at the Annual Conference, for example based on Grand Marnier® products; the winners could be awarded the AEHT-Grand Marnier® prize. The contest could require the two-person teams to prepare a long drink and a short drink using our liqueur as a base. We already have a set of rules for such a contest, and I could send them to future conference organisers – we would look forward to a large turn-out!

12. What is it that you yourself particularly like about Grand Marnier®?

Grand Marnier® is an authentic, simple, pure, up-market product that is not too modern. It is made from noble ingredients such as Cognac and our own special oranges. I have already worked with other liqueurs which are rapidly made from synthetic ingredients – and these really don't produce the same results.

In addition, as Grand Marnier®'s flavours are well balanced, it is a product that is easy to use: a larger measure isn't going to ruin your cocktail.



Marnier-Lapostolle products

The product sells very well, particularly abroad (92% of our sales are from exports). A bottle of Grand Marnier® is sold every two seconds somewhere in the world. It is the most exported French liqueur, and third in terms of worldwide consumption after Bailey's and Kahlúa.

13. What is your favourite drink apart from the Marnier-Lapostolle products?

Among liqueurs I particularly like Chartreuse VEP (Vieillissement Exceptionnellement Prolongé – exceptionally long ageing - in the barrel). Among spirits, I have always liked those based on wine such as Cognac, Armagnac and all the spirits produced from the grape – although I am not a great wine drinker. I am also very fond of liqueurs containing cream.

Restolingua – a highly effective tool for translating menus

In this section we should like first of all to share with our readers our culinary experiences, and secondly to show you examples of the use of the Restolingua translation software. Below we give you the menu of the dinner at which we were the guests of the Marnier-Lapostolle company on July 3rd at the Michelin-starred restaurant run by the chef Thierry Verrat in Bourg Charente.



La Ribaudière, Michelin-starred gastronomic restaurant



Mille feuille of charentais melon with foie gras and summer truffles

Apéritif accompagné de mises en bouche

Entrée :

- Le mille feuilles de melon charentais et son foie gras, truffes d'été

Plat:

Dos de cabillaud au jus de coquillages au safran

Dessert :

Brochette d'abricots au Grand Marnier®

Café accompagné de bouchées au chocolat

Le menu fut accompagné d'un Château de Sancerre 2007 Marnier-Lapostolle



Cod steak with saffron-flavoured shellfish juice



Paul R.A.J. Van den Heuvel from Restolingua and Louis Robert

The following German translation was produced using the Restolingua translation programme:

Aperitif und Appetithäppchen

Vorspeise:

Blätterkuchen aus Melone von der Charente und Gänseleberpastete mit Sommertrüffeln

Hauptgericht:

Kabeljausteak in Safran-Muschel-Sauce

Nachtisch:

Aprikosenspieß in Grand Marnier® getränk

Kaffee mit Schokoladenplätzchen

Zum Menü wurde ein Château de Sancerre 2007 Marnier-Lapostolle gereicht.

Currently the website www.restolingua.com enables users to translate any professional menu into the following eight languages: Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

Restolingua is currently looking for coordinating schools, both for the task of translating the system's 22,000 expressions into all the languages of the AEHT member schools which are not yet incorporated, and also to add items relating to regional specialities, dishes and ingredients. We ask anyone interested to get in touch directly with the Restolingua director Paul R.A.J. Van den Heuvel or his wife and operations director Arike Vermazen (email : arike.vermazen@gmail.com). The payment rates, the costs to users, as well as the agreement

signed between the AEHT and Restolingua, are published on our website www.aeht.eu.

We would be grateful if you could send us your menus with a view to having them translated into other languages in a forthcoming edition of the Newsletter.

We hope to see you all in Dubrovnik, and wish you all have an excellent summer vacation.

Nadine SCHINTGEN
AEHT General Secretary

Text: N. Schintgen

Photos: N. Schintgen, Société Marnier-Lapostolle,
J. Rees Smith

English translation: J. Rees Smith

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