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### **Spotlighting an amazing Armagnac producer whom we've been working with since 2012: Claire de Montesquiou**

The de Montesquiou family has been making Armagnac for many generations, and the family traces their roots in the area back to 900 AD. After hundreds of years of growing and producing, Claire's parents sold their brand in the 1960s to pursue a path in politics. Claire's own career led her to exporting products to the USSR, PR in New York for a music association and in London as a headhunter in fashion. You can say she was a globetrotter.

In 1990 Claire decided to return to her roots. With her husband, she purchased the Domaine d'Esperance (the name means "hope") estate located on a hillside in the Bas-Armagnac area. They started with about 10 acres of Baco 22A vines -- they now own 111 acres in both Baco and Folle Blanche.

Outside of her work as a vigneron and spirits producer, Claire worked within the judicial system in France for children of aged 16. She explains, "In France, the court for children is composed of a professional judge and 2 assessors coming from a non-legal background. The idea being to avoid prison for adolescents and to try helping them through education until they are 18 years old. I am interested in helping youth to grow into happy and responsible

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adults.” She had to stop due to the work demands at Esperance – but you get the picture that this is a woman of empathy.

Pour yourself a glass of this producer's Armagnac and consider this: when Claire started Dom. D'Espérance, she knew nothing about producing spirits. She studied white wine vinification at Bordeaux University because she felt that the quality of the wine would determine the quality of the spirit. We won't argue with that -- the brandy from Domaine d'Esperance is sublime.

Claire tells us where her inspiration stems, “To discover a completely different world from the one I have been brought up in, makes every day interesting. To grow vines means to be linked to the earth and its beauty. Walking through the vines everyday is bliss.”

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