



Three Tesseron Cognacs for Your Cigar

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Tesseron, the Cognac house that bills itself as "XO and beyond," has taken a couple of steps in the latter direction with a triple release, its new Signature Collection aimed at showcasing three distinct styles.

Until 2003, the house with its 12th-century cellars was little known beyond the trade as it acted as an exclusive supplier of Cognacs to other houses in the region. In that year, it began releasing product—all ranked at least XO—under its own label. Cognac maintains three age designations: VS (very special), VSOP (very special old pale) and XO (extra old). The last is the most matured: at least six years with some being decades old.

Alfred Tesseron, the third-generation custodian of the family-owned house created in 1905, regards the collection as the opportunity to savor "the style of Cognac established by my grandfather Abel, who secured our family's reputation." This set, however, really is a chance to try three different approaches. As Alfred Tesseron personally blended them, the first, XO Passion, is meant to show zest and fruit. The second, Extra Légende, is blended for elegance. The last, Trésor, is made to reflect richness.

XO Passion is made with a blend of 30 eaux-de-vie, created from Ugni Blanc grapes (the most commonly variety grown in Cognac) and aged for at least 10 years. The Extra Légende is made from a combination of Ugni Blanc and Folle Blanche grapes, with 50 eaux-de-vie. It is designated Grande Champagne as all its contents arise from the Grande Champagne, a region of Cognac marked by its chalky soil. Without putting a number on it, the company maintains that the blend is at least two generations old. Trésor is also a Grande Champagne, this one made up of Ugni Blanc, Folle Blanc and Columbard grapes. It is described as coming from eaux-de-vie stored in the family *paradis* (prized cellar) for two generations.

Tesseron is also known for its attention to elegant bottling. This collection's packaging was created by the French design agency Linéa to reflect small sample bottles traditionally presented to the company's prospective clients.

While it's odd to describe products of such high prices as bargains, it is often thought that Tesseron's decision to offer Cognac directly to the market as well as marketing to other houses as a merchant has created exceptional values because of their rarity and high quality.