



alcademics

### Cognac Tesseron Visit

While in France recently I visited the cognac house of **Tesseron**. This brand is notable for having probably the second largest collection of old cognacs in demijohns in all of Cognac.

Cognac can only age for so long in barrel before the spirit becomes flabby and loses its aromatic qualities. For cognac made from grapes grown in the Grande Champagne (the growing area producing grapes that age the longest), most cognac caps out at no more than 75 years in wood, though there are exceptions. After that point, the spirit is transferred to glass demijohns- round bottles about the size of a water cooler refill. These are stored in what is called the Paradis cellar at each house, and a visit to the paradis is a part of every cognac house tour.



The cellars at Tesseron date back to the 13th century and were once part of a crypt of the local church. We visited two cellars and saw rows and rows of cognacs dating to the 1860's- and were lucky enough to be able to sample some. This time is just as Phylloxera came to the region, destroying nearly all the vines in Cognac. These old grape vines were of a different variety than the Ugni Blanc planted today, so being able to taste them is quite special.



Like many brands, Tesseron has a long history of selling its unaged and aged eau de vie to the big houses, but then decided to sell some under its own name. The brand Tesseron was launched in 2003 and releases only products XO and above in age- no VS or VSOP.

Tesseron has several releases that would be vintage-dated but this is not legal in cognac unless the dates can be absolutely proven. (More on this in a future post.) Brands like Tesseron try to get around this by not labeling the bottles but letting people know what's in it. They label their bottles "Lot 90" "Lot 76" and so on, to imply the date of the cognac, but I did not verify with the brand that everything in the bottle comes from the year of the "lot" on the label and older.



**Tesseron** also sells cognac in 1.75 Liter bottles, which is fun. They have both the "lot" line and these sexy round "Extreme" line bottles shaped like a round demijohn. I think the black one would look particularly good in my apartment. (It's the holiday season coming up, I'm just sayin'.)

