

# Domaine Estrade

## Côtes de Gascogne



Domaine Estrade occupies the hills above Fourcès, deep in Gascony, a rolling countryside of small polyculture farms. Fourcès is a fortified village dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, one that's rather unique in having been built in a circle instead of a grid, originally surrounding a castle and now a common, with arcades along the inside of the circle of half-timbered houses and a protective wall along the exterior. These days there's a lord's chateau immediately outside the wall, alongside a small river, but this chateau dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The one that was there earlier had been the home of a lord who backed the English in The 100 Years' War, and when the French finally won the war, this lord had his digs burnt down.

The Estrade family has been farming a mix of grains and grapes here since 1962, and the domain has estate-bottled a portion of its production since 2003. Today brothers Rémy and Eric, representing the third generation, manage affairs. They farm 170 acres of grapes and roughly the same acreage in grains. For white varieties, there's Colombard, Sauvignon Blanc, and Ugni Blanc. These vines average thirty to forty years of age and are harvested at night when temperatures are coolest, which preserves fresh aromatics and avoids having to artificially chill down the grapes. Much of the electrical power at the domain comes from solar panels, and water used in cellar operations is recycled.

The domain is located in the Ténarèze zone of Armagnac. Fortunately, all of the Estrade's grapes go into their wine, and that's a really good thing considering the demand the family handles every year. Their Côtes de Gascogne is a great value.

### The Wine

*Côtes de Gascogne*: Colombard 40%, Sauvignon Blanc 30%, and Ugni Blanc 30%. Refreshingly low in alcohol, this is a fragrant, fresh, crisp dry white wine that excels as an apéritif.