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## How important is “spiritourism” in France? An exploratory study/Welche Bedeutung hat „Spiritourismus“ für Frankreich? Eine explorative Studie

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### Zusammenfassung

Die Bezeichnung „Spiritourismus“ kann für Besuche von Einrichtungen von Spirituosenproduzenten und für Besichtigungen von spirituellenproduzierenden Regionen verwendet werden. Spiritourismus kann außerdem eine gewinnbringende Alternative für Brennereien sein, die keinen Zugang zu traditionellen Vertriebswegen haben. Es erlaubt ihnen, die Konsumenten zu informieren und die Markenbindung ihrer Kunden zu verstärken. Ziel dieser Studie ist es, die Best-Practice-Methoden zu identifizieren, um anderen Spirituosen erzeugenden Gegenden in Frankreich und im Ausland zu helfen, mehr Besucher anzuziehen. Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass die meisten Unternehmen ein hohes Produktionsniveau von 1,5 bis 20 Mio. Flaschen aufweisen.

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Gewöhnlich verfügen sie über eine breite Produktpalette. Viele Standorte bieten heute auch sensorische Erlebnisse wie zum Beispiel „Espace Menthe-Pastille de Giffard“ und „La Grande Chartreuse“ in den Alpen. Sie setzen auf das Konzept der Erlebniswirtschaft, wie es von Pine und Gilmore (1998) definiert wurde. Manche Produzenten schaffen außerdem Museen, wie „Espace Menthe-Pastille de Giffard“, das anhand alter Werbemittel die Entwicklung der Firma und ihrer Produkte illustriert. Die meisten Firmen bieten verschiedene Arten von Spirituosenproben, mit Ausnahme der gehobenen Cognac-Marke Martell, die mit exklusiven Verkostungen zu einem Preis von € 280 aufwartet. Gemäß dieser Analyse scheint es ein großes Potenzial für Spiritourismus in Frankreich zu geben, da die Zahl der Konsumenten, die die Produktionsstätten besichtigen möchten, steigt. Dies kann man mit einer Suche nach Authentizität erklären. Immer mehr Destillereien werden der breiten Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht. Sie stellen eine Vielfalt an Aktivitäten im Bereich der sensorischen Analyse, interaktiven Museen, speziellen Verkostungen und Aktivitäten für Kinder bereit. Darüber hinaus können Synergien zwischen Spirituosevents und -festivals (sofern sie bereits existieren), Besichtigungen von lokalen Sehenswürdigkeiten, Weingarten- und Destillierführungen geschaffen werden. Dieses breite Angebot an Veranstaltungen wird die erzieherischen und unterhaltsamen Aspekte des Spiritourismus verstärken. Es wird außerdem gewährleistet, dass der Besuch zu einem unvergesslichen Erlebnis für die Spirituosenbesucher wird.

#### Keywords

Spiritourism · Spirits · Tourism · Calvados · Brandy · Rhum · Eaux-de-vie · Cassis · Best-Practices

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### 3.1 Introduction

Wine tourism has been widely studied by academics in France, yet researchers have never focused on spirits and tourism, or spiritourism, despite a potentially substantial market. French spirits are exported all over the world with more than 200 distilleries (composed of 90 % of SME’s) contributing to 100,000 direct and indirect jobs. Contrary to wine, spirits can be produced in all French regions (metropolis), but also in Martinique for the Rum category. The FFS (French Spirits Federation) estimated that in 2015 the spirit industry in France produced 600 million L, of which 426 million L were exported. In terms of raw materials, this represents 110,000 tons of fruit; 1,600,000 tons of grapes, 391,000 tons of sugar cane and 77,000 tons of grains. According to IWSR/BSI (2015), the consumption in liters of pure alcohol represented a total market size of 3.1 billion 9 L-cases. It also revealed that emerging countries are among the biggest consumers per inhabitant, whereas old world country consumption is declining.

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### 3.2 Definition

Spiritourism refers to tourist-based activities whose goal is to encourage tourists to discover regions where spirits are produced. Spiritourists are not only visitors who come to a spirits region to learn more about it. They can also be leisure or recreation seeking visitors. Many researchers have recognized the relationship between tourism, recreation and leisure in the past in the area of wine tourism (Hall and Page 1999; Hall et al. 2000). They have concluded that tourists have diverse motivations when choosing their destinations. This high-lights the importance for spirit regions and distilleries to understand the needs and expectations of their customers in order to better meet their needs (see articles in wine tourism from Hall et al. 2000; Bruwer 2003; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002). We can use the findings of Hall et al. (2000) and later Bruwer (2003) who identified the motivations of wine tourists by defining their ‘primary’ and the ‘secondary or peripheral’ motivations. Primary motivations involve tasting and purchasing wine (in our case spirits), whereas secondary motivations refer to socializing, education, entertainment, historical facts, etc. Thus, tourists travel to spirit regions for the spirits themselves but also for the surrounding elements which are separate from spirits and perhaps seen as ‘touristic’ activities.

Personal pleasure is a key factor sought out by spiritourists. The simple fact of going to a region which is praised for its spirits provides an initial pleasure. This will be heightened by visiting distilleries, where they will discover the history and the distillation process of spirits they like, in addition to activating their senses during tastings. Specialized spirits bars and spirits training programs are additional motivating factors to engage visitors in spiritourism, like those in wine tourism (Getz 2000; Hall and Mitchell 2000; Hall et al. 2000; Bruwer 2003).

Hall et al. (2000) identified wine tourists' overall experience as another aspect that influences their motivations. This can also be applied to the spiritourism industry as a whole. Their experience is driven by personal development according to Beames (2003). Recent research has pointed out the relative importance of differing motivations between first-time and repeat visitors (Charters and Ali-Knight 2002; Hall et al. 2000; Bruwer 2003).

Another aspect to be taken into account is the physical environment, which influences the perceived quality and satisfaction of an experience. Originating from the servicescape theory (Bitner 1992), this concept is called "winescape" but could also extend to spirits. Peters et al. (1997) cited in Hall et al. (2000) and Alebaki and Iakovidou (2011) define winescape as a broader concept referring to it as "the attributes of a grape wine region" and "the whole region and its attributes" respectively. Winescape characterizes tourists' experience in an appealingly natural environment and physical nature (Bruwer and Lesschaeve 2012). In spiritourism, the concept could be extended to "spiritscape".

Spiritourism can be a profitable alternative for distilleries that do not have access to traditional retail channels. It gives them direct access to final consumers, thereby eliminating intermediaries and resulting in the increase of their gross margins. Knowing their customers is also a good opportunity to introduce new products, limited editions, or rare vintages.

Moreover, producers can build brand loyalty by sharing their philosophy and educate consumers (Dodd 1995).

Spiritourism not only benefits producers but also the entire community with a 'multiplier effect' in the production region. The macro and microeconomic advantages of spiritourism could be similar to those of wine tourism. Many researchers have identified them as the 'bundle-of-benefits'. At a macroeconomic level, visitors come to spirits events and festivals, visit local attractions and museums, and take guided vineyard or distillery tours. They enjoy accommodations and local restaurants as well. At a microeconomic level, they visit distilleries, take part in spirit tastings and purchase spirits directly at the estate. Overall, spiritourism stimulates the regional economy and contributes to its development by creating jobs and increasing tourism in general (Hall et al. 2000; Charters and Ali-Knight 2002).

However, as Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) posit, in order for a distiller to successfully develop spiritourism, it is important to understand its process, which starts with the behavior of spirit tourists in the wine tourism area. Lee and Chang (2012) add that the marketing strategy regarding wine tourism is also an essential part of the process.

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### 3.3 Objective

The objective of this study is to identify the best-practices in order to help other spirits production areas in France and abroad attract more customers. The FFS (Memo Spiritourismé 2015) estimates that one million tourists visit more than one hundred production sites every year. Based on their data, the following sites are the most visited:

- Le Palais Bénédictine (110,000 visitors) in Haute-Normandie Region (in the area of Le Havre, in the north of Paris);
- La Chartreuse (70,000 visitors) and its museum (40,000 visitors), located South Lyon, next to Chambéry;
- Cassisium for blackcurrant liquor (cream) in Nuits-Saint-Georges in Burgundy;
- Château du Breuil for Calvados in the Caen area, Northern Paris, Calvados Department;
- Espace Menthe-Pastille Giffard in the Angers area in the Loire Valley;
- Le musée de l’Alambic (Still Museum) in Saint-Désirat (Southern Lyon);
- Nusbaumer in Alsace;
- Carré Cointreau next to Angers in Loire Valley;
- and the huge diversity of visits given in the Cognac region.

Moreover, different events such as the Absinthiades (35,000 visitors in 10 years) or Journée du Patrimoine (National Heritage Day) or Fête de la Gastronomie (Gastronomy Festival) or the Liquor Festival (10,000 visitors) have attracted several thousand visitors each. Other events used to attract tourists include the celebration of Jubilees like 250 years of Char-treuse, 300 years of Martell, 250 years of Saint-James Rhum and 170 years of Isautier (Rhum).

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### 3.4 Material & Methods

In order to collect data, an observation grid was first used. Then, based on the analysis of four websites, we were able to fill the grid in. This analysis grid was designed to analyse the main elements that make up the offer of each production site. The next step of this study will be to analyse other websites and subsequently interview some key stakeholders in spiritourism in France, such as wine-growers, distillers, orchard managers, wine merchants, and to visit center managers and bartenders, among others.

Globally, Broom (2006) distinguishes two main categories in spirits:

- 1) Spirits made with sugar which is naturally available for fermentation with 2 sub-families:
  - a) Sugar cane (juice/molasses): Rum
  - b) Fruits
    - i) Grapes (Brandy, Cognac, Armagnac, Grappa)
    - ii) Apples (Calvados)
    - iii) Cherries (Kirsch)
- 2) Those needing conversion of starch into fermentable sugar with 2 sub-families
  - a) Grains
    - i) Mixture of grain: vodka
    - ii) Malted barley: Malt whisky

- iii) Corn/maize: bourbon
- iv) Rye: whiskey-vodka
- b) Vegetables:
  - i) Agave: tequila
  - ii) Potato: vodka

According to the FFS (French Federation of Spirits), spirits in France are linked to terroirs and regions of production (see Appendix 1 for a list of distilleries per category):

- Apples in Normandy in Calvados
- Fruits like cherries (Griottes) or plums (mirabelles) in Eastern France where they produce fruit-based spirits called Eaux-de-Vie
- Juniper in the North for Genièvre (Gin)
- Blackcurrants in Anjou (Loire Valley) and Burgundy for Crème de Cassis
- Plants from areas like in the Alps (Génépi)
- Grapes for Cognac and Armagnac but also in all wine-regions
- Sugar cane in Martinique for Rhum Agricole

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### 3.5 Results

Tab. 3.1 will allow us to compare some of the most visited sites.

It can be noted that the activity of spiritourism is relatively new despite the size of the distilleries, their international recognition and the depth of product portfolio.

Most companies have a substantial production level which ranges from 1.5 million to 20 million bottles. They offer a wide range of products from liqueurs, to crèmes de fruits, marcs, fines, etc. Many sites now offer sensorial experiences, such as “Espace Menthe-Pastille de Giffard” and “La Grande Chartreuse” in the Alps. Some of them even have created museums, like “Espace Menthe-Pastille de Giffard” with old advertisements which illustrate the evolution of the company and its products.

Most companies provide different kinds of tastings with the exception of the upmarket brand of Cognac Martell, which offers an exclusive tasting for € 280. In addition, half of them have a museum: only one is open all year round and half of them are only open during the tourist season. According to this analysis, there seems to be a big potential for spiritourism in France as the number of consumers wanting to visit the production sites is growing. It corresponds to a desire for authenticity. As a result, more distilleries are opening their doors to the public and offer a wide variety of activities from sensorial analysis, interactive museums, special tastings to activities for children.

**Tab. 3.1** Comparison of most visited websites

Company	La Grande Chartreuse – Voiron	“Espace Menthe-Pastille” de Griffard	Cassium (Védrenne)	Martell
<b>I. ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION SITE</b>				
<b>Size</b>	1.5 million bottles (50 % exports)	5 million bottles (50 % exports)	5 million bottles	20 million bottles
<b>Products</b>	1. Liqueur de Chartreuse Verte 2. Liqueur de Chartreuse Jaune	1. Liqueur Spécialité, 2. Liqueur Premium, 3. Liqueur Classic, 4. Crème de Fruits, 5. Sirop, 6. Alcool du monde, 7. Eaux de vie, 8. Gamme Bigallet	1. Crèmes de cassis, crèmes de fruits 2. Crèmes et liqueurs cocktails 3. Apéritifs et vins aroma- tisés 4. Marcs, fines, eaux de vie 5. Sirops de fruits 6. Gin & Absinthe 7. Pagès, Salers & Dolfi	Cognac with different levels of ageing
<b>Date of 1st spiritourism activities</b>	1935	Created more than 125 years ago Based in Avrillé since 1972 • Open to the public since May 2012	2001	1935

(Continued)

Tab. 3.1 (Continued)

Company	La Grande Chartreuse – Voiron	“Espace Menthe-Pastille” de Griffard	Cassisiium (Védrenne)	Martell
<b>II. SERVICES</b>				
<b>Tastings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visit of cellars with free tasting</li> <li>• exceptional visits with tasting: “dégustation privilège de grands produits de la Chartreuse”, € 10 per person with a historic visit &amp; sensory discovery. Largest liquor cellar in the world (160 m)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bar des senteurs</li> <li>• Bar à cocktails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasting of blackcurrant &amp; fruit liquors</li> <li>• Tasting of syrup with water for children</li> <li>• Tasting of cocktails made by a mixologist every weekend in summer</li> </ul>	3 visits on cognac-making <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Martell Découverte € 12</li> <li>2. Visite Martell Prestige € 18</li> <li>3. L' Art de Martell for 300 years € 280</li> </ol>
<b>Distillation process</b>	YES through payable or free visits	Discovery of the company through old advertisements, bottles, original documents Discovery of the know-how with sensory approach (visit of the distillery & maceration room, bottling room) Presentation of the local production of fruits (berries of blackcurrant, blackberries, etc.) Bien plus qu' un espace d' exposition et de dégustation:	Visit of the distillery	

(Continued)

**Tab. 3.1** (Continued)

<b>Company</b>	La Grande Chartreuse – Voiron	“Espace Menthe-Pastille” de Griffard	Cassisiium (Védrenne)	Martell
<b>Museum</b>	YES Musée de la Grande Chartreuse (18 rooms)	NO	Yes Interactive museum	–
<b>Events</b>	June 22–26 Les Fêtes Vertes & Or	NO	–	–
<b>Other Complementary activities: hotels, restaurants, walks, shop, founder’s estate, etc</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop on enluminures; picnic baskets</li> <li>• In July/August</li> <li>• Theatricalisation of visits for children</li> </ul>	Shop open from Tuesday to Friday (2 p.m.–6 p.m.)	–	Visit of the founder’s estate
<b>III. OPENING HOURS</b>				
	Year round	Guided group visits. By reservation only (minimum 8 people)	March 28–November 11 Open everyday (including Sunday & holidays) from 10 a.m.–1 p.m. & 2 p.m.–7 p.m.	April 1–September 30 (everyday) With regularly scheduled visits
<b>IV. VISITORS</b>				
	70,000 visitors	Forecast of 10,000 visitors in 2017	42,000 visitors per year	
<b>V. WEBSITE</b>				
	<a href="http://www.chartreuse.fr/visites/caves-et-distillerie/">http://www.chartreuse.fr/visites/caves-et-distillerie/</a> <a href="http://www.rhonealpes.fr/1125-la-chartreuse-verte.htm/">http://www.rhonealpes.fr/1125-la-chartreuse-verte.htm/</a>	<a href="http://www.gififard.com/">http://www.gififard.com/</a>	<a href="http://www.vedrenne.fr/">http://www.vedrenne.fr/</a>	<a href="http://www.martell.com/en-ww/">http://www.martell.com/en-ww/</a>

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### 3.6 Discussion

Wine tourism has been widely studied in academic literature. Spiritourism should model itself after wine tourism's best-practices, especially by extending the scope of its activities to local leisure and recreative activities. It is therefore important to better understand the needs and expectations of spirits consumers and distillery clients to develop better adapted offers. This can be done through primary motivations with different tasting which could lead to spirits purchases. Furthermore, secondary motivations are also important and can be implemented through spirits education for instance. As in the wine field, experience is a key dimension. Consequently, the different tasting offers, meeting with staff members or visiting founders' estates could enhance this experience. Finally, the physical environment, or the spiritscape, could also enhance the experience as it is composed of the attributes of a given spirits' region in addition to those of the entire region. In this context, synergy can be developed between spirits events and festivals (if they exist) and visiting local attractions, museums and guided tours. The quality of hotels and restaurants will also improve the comfort of the tourists and attract more of them.

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### 3.7 Limits

This work-in-progress should consider the following steps to increase the body of knowledge: 1) improve the grid; 2) analyze the following distilleries (le Palais Bénédictine, Habitation Clément, Château du Breuil, le musée de l'Alambi, Nusbaumer and Carré Cointreau); 3) interview spirits industry stakeholders.

These steps are necessary to identify the best-practices in order to better attract tourists to any given production site.

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## Appendix 1: List of Some Important Players in France

Brandy (grape spirits):

- Cognac (Hennessy, Remy Martin, Martell, Courvoisier, Delamain, Hine);
- Armagnac (Laberdolive, Laubade, Tariquet);
- Fine (Jacoulot);
- Marcs: Mont-Redon (Châteauneuf-du-Pape); Désiré Petit (Jura), Virgile Joly (Languedoc), Cartron (Burgundy), Védrenne (Burgundy), Metté (Alsace), Moutard-Diligent (Champagne), Sipp and Goujot (Lorraine); Nusbaumer in Alsace

Whisky: Guillon (Champagne), Couvreur (Burgundy)  
Eaux-de-vie

- Calvados (Père Magloire, Drouin, Grout, du Breuil)
- Framboise: Metté
- Kirsch Cherry: Devoille
- Plum: Brana

Fortified wines (Banyuls, Maury, Rivesaltes, Muscat)

- Mas Amiel, Rectorie
- Vins de liqueur (liquor wine): Macvin (Jura), Pineau des Charentes (Cognac), Floc de Gascogne (Armagnac), Ratafia (Champagne)

Aperitives (Vermouth): Lillet Blanc, Saint-Raphael, Byrrh

Pastis: Ricard, Pernod.

Gin

Liquor of cognac: Mandarine Napoleon; Orange Boudier

Cream (Boudier, Héritier-Guyot, Védrenne, Cartron, etc.)

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**Teil II**

**Culinary and Wine Touristen/Tourists**