

SOUTHWEST

DOMAINE BRANA
IROULEGUY


OVERVIEW | In 1897, led by his passion for the wines of the Basque, Pierre-Etienne Brana started his family's initial entry into the wine trade with a production and distribution company in the Pyrénées. His choice of a site along the historic travel route between Navarre and France catapulted his business to the forefront of the region's wine industry. Three generations later, the family would extend their operations, first to a distillery, and, ultimately to winegrowing and winemaking. Today, Brana is easily considered the benchmark producer in Irouléguay.

VINEYARD AREA: 23 hectares

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 7000 cases

SOIL TYPES: sandstone rich in iron

GRAPE VARIETIES: tannat, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, gros manseng, petit courbu

The appellation of Irouléguay is a small band of hillside vineyards in the Pyrénées within the French Pays Basque. The great majority of the vineyards were wiped out during the phylloxera plague over a century ago and when the Branans planted their vineyard in 1984, they were the first to do so on a meaningful scale. The vineyards are cut out of steep hillsides in very narrow terraces. Farming practices are non-interventionist and include biodynamic principles with harvesting done by hand. Jean Brana, the current proprietor, spent two years with Château Petrus before returning to the family estate to farm the 23 hectares. Red, rosé, and white wines are produced from the traditional Tannat, Merlot and Cabernet Franc (reds) and Gros Manseng and Petit Courbu (whites).

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES | The vineyards are planted on sunny slopes of Mount Arradoy which overlooks the valley of St Jean Pied de Port. The soils are made up of Triassic sandstone, rich in iron, and benefit from a South/South-West exposure. The mountainside terraces sit on a slope with an average gradient of 65%, covers 23 hectares. In 1991 the Branans built a new winery at the base of their vines, exhibiting a classical style of a Navarre monument on the outside, but filled with modern-day cellar equipment within. On the pediment of one of its doors, you can read: "The path of our ancestors is a monument to the grandiose proportions of hope and hard work."

In the vineyard, work is sustainable, done by hand and yields average a low 30hl/ha. Grapes are destemmed and vinified by variety in large vats. Wines are aged in a variety of containers from large stainless tanks to oak barrels - never using more than 20% new wood.

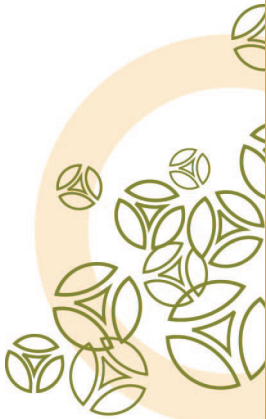
WINES | The Irouleguy Blanc "Ilori" is a blend of 50% Gros Manseng and 50% Petit Courbu. The Branans are one of the few families to continue with the Petit Courbu. It is a traditional variety of the region but has trouble with the wet and unpredictable spring weather and is not terribly productive. A selection "trriage" of the best grapes is made followed by a gentle maceration of the skins "maceration pelliculaire" and a settling of the must "debouillage". The wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks and bottled the following spring.

The Domaine Rouge is a blend of 60% Cabernet Franc and 20% each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Tannat. A "trriage" is made and fermentation/vatting lasts for three weeks. The wine is aged in barrels of one year for twelve months.

The Rouge "Ohitza" is made from 80% Tannat and 20% Cabernet Franc. The wine is aged in barrels of three years for twelve months.

The Harri Gorri Rosé is produced from 70% Tannat and 30% Cabernet Franc. Harri Gorri is Basque for red stones and refers to the red sandstone found locally in the Pyrenees.

The wine is produced using the "saignée" method with a maceration sufficient to give it deep color, good body and lots of spice.



trriage wines

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