

In fine spirits with cognac

The French district of Charente, an hour's drive northwest of Bordeaux, on the Atlantic, is known for butter, cream, shellfish, casseroles and cognac.

"Cognac produced from grapes grown on chalky soil, double pot-distilled, and aged in oak, has the elegant, delicate aroma and smooth, silky taste of the finest distilled spirits," says Benedicte Hardy, international export manager for A. Hardy Cognac.

Hardy, the great-granddaughter of the founder Antoine Hardy, whose cognac house has borne his name since 1863, is on a mission to sell America on the pleasures of sipping cognac. Hardy received great attention in the United States last year because her family operated firm offers the world's most expensive spirit — Cognac Perfection, retailing for \$3,500 per bottle.

Consistent house style: the reputation of a cognac producer, falls largely on the nose of the master blender. The job of blending cognac requires years of training and experience as well as concentration, a sensitive nose and good taste memory.

For full enjoyment of a fine cognac, practice the following techniques when you taste.

THE GLASS: The glass to be used is not a snifter but one that is tall and slim on a short stem. The bowl is 3½ inches high by 1½ inches in diameter with a total volume of 4½ ounces. This tasting glass allows the cognac to present its perfumes in waves — the very volatile first, followed by less volatile components. A 1-ounce pour of cognac is ample for a thorough evaluation. In the case of cognac, tasting requires less drinking and more attention to aromas, flavors and sensations.

View the cognac against a bright,

WINE SELECTIONS OF THE WEEK

Although Hardy's Cognac Perfection is just that, not all A. Hardy cognacs are pricey. In fact, they are values when compared to many of the more heavily advertised brands. Delicate and smooth, A. Hardy cognacs are excellent examples of the region's finest spirit.

A. Hardy VSOP (\$30.97) represents a feminine style of cognac. It is delicate with a warm bouquet and a light, clean, smooth, flavorful finish.

A. Hardy Napoleon (\$37.40) fits into the "house" style between VSOP and XO. Lingered oak nuances are evident with the consistent essences of aroma and flavors established with the VSOP.

A. Hardy XO (\$57.32) illustrates how extended oak aging enhances a delicate cognac style. Hints of vanilla in the aroma and taste are indicative of artful distillation techniques.

A. Hardy Noces D'Or (\$95.56) is a superior cognac in every respect. Fruit essence and field violet aromas end with the velvety smoothness of chocolate cream.

white background to observe its color and brilliance. It should have a golden hue, without being too dark. Cognac's aroma can be evaluated in two steps. First, hold the glass at waist level and swirl it vigorously. Then, very slowly, raise the glass toward your nose. Breathe in deeply to determine at what maximum distance you can perceive the first per-



focus on wine

Eleanor and Ray Heald

tunes of the cognac. This will help you determine the vitality of the cognac, which is controlled by the more volatile elements of the spirit.

Repeat the process of swirling and inhaling while holding the glass a few inches from your nose. This "second nose" allows you to discover a new level of perfumes that are part of the less volatile components. This step helps assess the length of the cognac.

Raise the temperature of cognac by hand. Do not waste money on a warmer. Cognac is 40 percent alcohol and many desirable components are volatile. Heating the spirit only serves to evaporate volatile elements before you get to enjoy them.

TASTE is best appreciated in two steps also. Take a little drop of cognac on your tongue and let it diffuse through your mouth. Swallow it very

Take a little drop of cognac on your tongue and let it diffuse through your mouth.

slowly, detecting whether there is any bitterness or acidity. Note too the smoothness, roundness and balance.

Next, take a bigger sip. Rotate the cognac in your mouth so that your tongue is coated and simultaneously circulate air through the liquid. Your entire mouth and nasal passages will overflow with the aroma.

"Length is the most important characteristic of fine cognac," maintains Hardy. "Oak aging and the spirit give a perfect marriage that is evident even after the glass is emptied."

Herbs and spices spark roast beef

AP - With just a few herbs and spices, you can turn basic roast beef into a boldly flavored, company-special entree. To release the heady aroma and flavor of whole herbs and spices, crush them just before using. You can rub herbs in your fingers after measuring, but you will need a spice grinder or mortar and pestle to crush seeds and peppers.

In the recipe below, crushed fennel seed, mustard seed and peppers combine to make a flavorful rub-coating for roast beef. Serve thin slices of the roast with creamy mushroom-mustard sauce, boiled new potatoes and steamed green beans.

SPICED ROAST WITH DIJON SAUCE
 ½ teaspoon fennel seed
 ½ teaspoon mustard seed
 12 teaspoon whole black pepper
 One 2½-pound boneless beef round
 ramp-rose
 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
 1 tablespoon margarine or butter
 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 ½ teaspoon salt

1 cup milk
 2 tablespoons coarse-grain brown mustard
 1 teaspoon snipped fresh chives

Using a mortar and pestle, crush the fennel seed, mustard seed and pepper, set aside. Trim excess fat from meat. Place roast, fat side up, on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Rub half of the seed mixture over the top and sides of the roast. Insert a meat thermometer in the center of the roast. Roast, uncovered, in a 325-degree oven for 1½ to 1¾ hours or until meat thermometer registers 150 to 170 degrees. Let stand about 15 minutes before carving.

Meanwhile, for sauce, in a medium saucepan cook the mushrooms in margarine or butter until tender. Stir in the remaining seed mixture, flour and salt. Add milk all at once. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 1 minute more. Stir in mustard and chives. Heat through. Carve roast and serve with sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Your hometown

EXTRA CAR IN DRIVEWAY
CAR GETTING ON NERVES? TAXES TOO HIGH?
 Help us help those in need
 By donating your used car, boat, real estate, and receive fair market value as a tax deduction when you itemize.
CALL 373-9000
 VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Are you tired of Cold Car Seats, Sloppy Roads, Shoveling Sidewalks, and winter in general?
 For One Week--Think SPRING!
STORM COATS
 With Fur Lining
 Starting at \$297
LEATHER JACKETS
 With removable Fur Lining
 Starting at \$297
FOX JACKETS
 Starting at \$397
FOX CAPES
FLINGS
 Starting at \$197*

Dittich
 BLOOMFIELD HILLS 482-2881
 1235 N. Woods and Avenue
 South of Town Lake
 *Not Pictured

THINK SUMMER!
ROEPER SUMMER PROGRAM
ORIENTATION & OPEN HOUSE
 MARCH 23, APRIL 27, MAY 4 & MAY 18
 10 AM & 11 AM
RECREATIONAL DAY CAMP
 FOR AGES 3 THROUGH 11
 1991 SESSION: JUNE 24 - AUGUST 16
 *Arts • Music • Campfire • Movies • Summer Fun • Sports • Games • Crafts • Science • Forestry • Photography • Fishing • Gardening • Hiking
SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR AGES 12-14, JULY 1-24
 NEW THIS SUMMER: HEARING IMPAIRED PROGRAMS, AGES 5-11
CALL NOW regarding OPEN HOUSE or information: 642-1500
ROEPER CITY AND COUNTRY SCHOOL SUMMER DAY CAMP
 2190 N. WOODLAWN • BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48304

The sale worth waiting for... is here at last!
 Our annual **BUILDER SHOW SALE** is now in progress and we've really dropped our prices.
 Now you can save on the spas featured on the PBS "HOME TIME" show, Hot Spring Spas, without the lowest prices of the year. See our booth at the show or visit one of our showrooms. You won't want to wait any longer!

HotSpring
 Available Spas
CALL: 1-800-878-SPAS
 ANN ARBOR: 3885 Varsity Dr.
 ROCHESTER: 5310 S. Rochester Rd.

UGLY KITCHEN CABINETS?
DON'T REPLACE... 'REFACE'
MODERN & EUROPEAN STYLES
 FORMICA Solid Colors and Woodgrain
 SOLID WOODS Oak, Cherry, and Birch
SERVING WAYNE, OAKLAND & MACOMB
 • FACTORY SHOWROOM
 • FREE ESTIMATES
 1642 E. 11 Mile Rd., Madison Hgts. Since 1966
 1 Block W. of Dequindre Daily 9-5, Sun. 10-4
Cabinet Clad...541-5252

Fannie May Candies
CREAM EGG SALE
\$6.25
 per pound
 On Sale March 18 thru March 24, 1991
 Wonderland Mall - Livonia
 501 W. 14 Mile Road - Madison Heights
 Summit Place Mall - Waterford; Twelve Oaks Mall - Novi
 Lakeside Mall - Sterling Heights
 Frenchtown Square - Monroe
 Fairlane Town Center - Dearborn; Universal Mall - Warren
 Laurel Park Place - Livonia
 To send candy to someone special or to receive a free Catalog
 Call 1-800-333-FMAY

BEAR HUGS FOR EASTER
 Lots of Dolls
 Bunnies
 Rabbies
 Bunnies
 Baskets
 Easter Basket
 Fillers
 Soft
 Animals at
 Every
 Description
 In every
 Price Range
 Madame Alexander Dolls
 Hello Wonders Toys
 Playmobile
 Breyer Horses
The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop
 3947 W. 12 Mile, Berkley
 Mon-Sat 10-5, Fri 10-4 543-3115

HONEYBAKED
 The original spiral sliced ham
 Since 1947

Easter Tradition
 Spiral cut for your serving convenience • Serve the best for family and friends.
 Fully cooked and ready to serve • A family favorite for over 45 years.
 • Discover a tasteful tradition •

Imitations Can't Compare To Our 44 Years Of Tradition!
 Available Only At Our Nine HoneyBaked Ham Co. Store Locations In Michigan
 DETROIT ROCHESTER TROY LIVONIA IN ARBON HEIGHTS
 3131 E. 12 Mile 313-7877 313-721-2094 313-721-2094 313-721-2094 313-721-2094
 TAYLOR BIRMINGHAM WEST BLOOMFIELD GRAND RAPIDS
 313-721-2094 313-721-2094 313-721-2094 313-721-2094

Hertz
PENSKE
Truck Rental
 is having a
MOVER'S SPECIAL
\$399⁰⁰
 Bring this coupon in and you'll get this great rate to any Eastern Coastal State on any size truck.
Call These Convenient Locations Today.
 LUTZ TRUE VALUE
 2892 E. Maple • Troy • 588-7737
 MAIL STOP
 771 E. B Mile • Detroit • 544-8170
 Prices based on availability
Hertz
PENSKE
 Truck Rental