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# Cahors

## World Capital of Malbec







# Cahors, The French Malbec

Savvy wine lovers know Cahors to be the historic and spiritual home of Malbec. And today, they know the region to be the grape’s epicenter of quality.

Here, in the unique *terroir* of southwest France, Cahors wines achieve their ultimate character and aging potential. Announcing themselves with aromatic complexity, full-bodied palates and firm and fruity tannins, the best Malbecs of Cahors enchant with flavors of violet, black currant, cherry and licorice, enhanced with maturity by notes of truffle and eucalyptus and hints of oak.

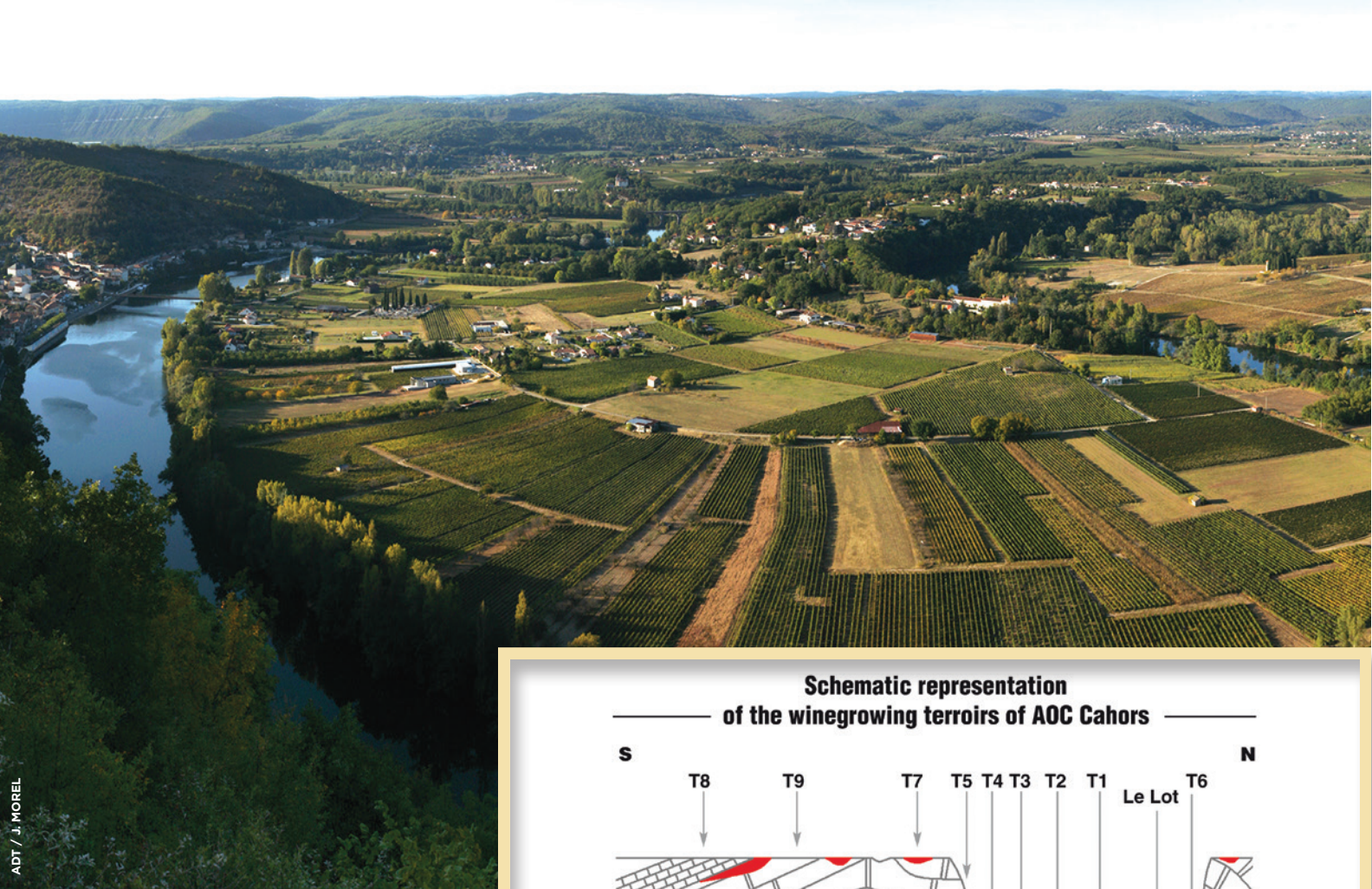
Indeed, wine drinkers around the world have rediscovered “The Black Wine,” whose vineyards are meticulously tended by an energetic new generation of winemakers who are matching modern enology to centuries-old traditions.

## Cahors, The Malbec of Popes, Kings & Tsars

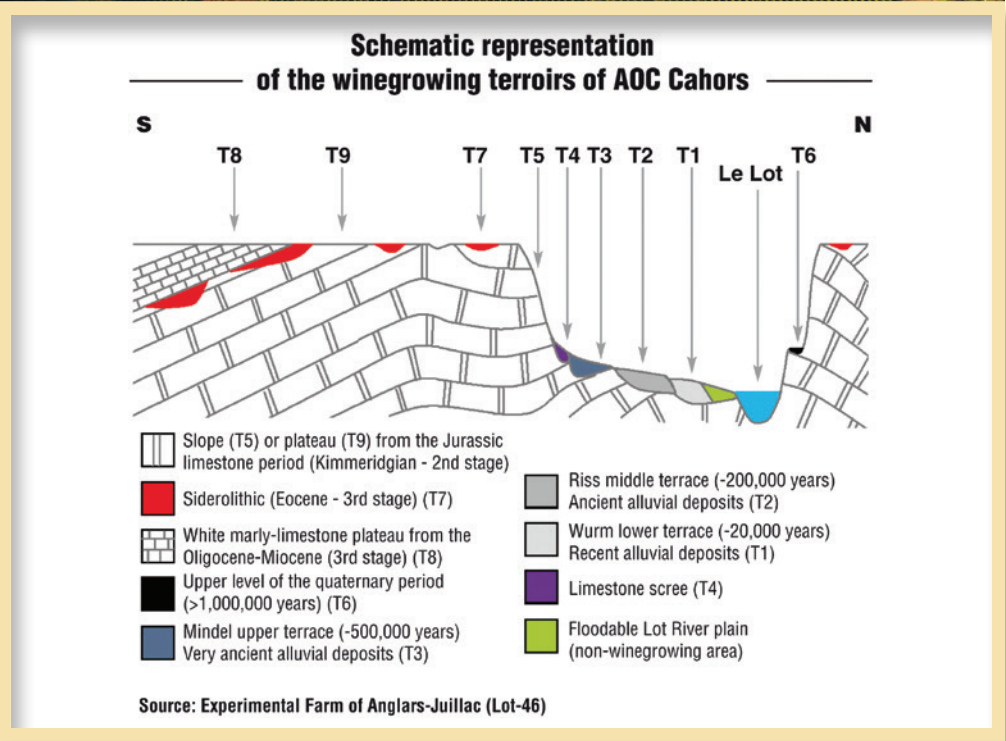
Long before the noble grape appeared in Bordeaux and other adoptive regions, Malbec made what wine-loving Englishmen came to call “The Black Wine of Cahors,” immortalized since the Middle Ages by pilgrims, popes, kings and tsars.

First planted by Romans some 2,000 years ago, word of the quality of Cahors wines spread through the known world. Voracious demand for exports of the wine spurred vast vineyard expansion in the region since the 12th century. Sadly, over time, a series of downturns, including competition from Bordeaux, heavy taxation and the arrival of phylloxera, brought The Black Wine’s centuries of success to a close. Though Cahors’ reputation lived on, the early 20th century found the region’s wines relying on hybrid grape types of mediocre quality.

Then, renewal! In the hands of dedicated group of local growers, Malbec was restored to the region’s clay and limestone-rich vineyards. In 1951, the wine of Cahors was named Vin D limit  de Qualit  Sup rieure. In 1971, the vineyards rose to the rank of Appellation d’Origine Contr l e (AOC). Today, of the 21,000 hectares classified AOC Cahors, 4,000 have been planted, 90 percent to Malbec. “The Black Wine” lives again, and is again capturing the world’s attention.



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“One thing is certain, you have to lose yourself in the thick and silent morning mist endlessly covering the meanders of the Lot River to gain access to the Quercy’s light. This impenetrable area skillfully hides many secrets, starting with the profound and ebony color of its wine. The region’s soil, men, history, ideas, labor and climate, are all clues to compare, to appreciate and to confound, in view of taking its pulse and of avoiding getting lost. This is a journey of discovery, taking us into the throes of time, into its never-ending cavities, nooks and crannies. It offers us a better comprehension of this Lot valley, which accumulates legends and mysteries as if they were stacked archives, tied up with spider webs.”

—from *Cahors, The Black Wine Novel*, by Jean-Charles Chapuzet, historian, author and journalist

## Cahors, The Terroir Malbec

Triangulated by the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees, the vineyards of Cahors stretch along the banks of the Lot River. Vineyards here are able to ripen fully, providing balanced Malbec, mellow Merlot and mature Tannat for the blends. All AOC Cahors wines must contain at least 70 percent Malbec. Merlot and Tannat are the only other permitted grapes.

Studies in the region have identified nine separate *terroirs*, based on geology, depth of soil, site altitude, proximity to the river, and degree of slope of the terrain. These *terroirs* can be grouped into three main categories: the “Vall e,” the “Coteaux” and the “Plateau.”

**The Vall e & Coteaux:** The banks of the Lot River rise in terraced vineyards, planted on alluvial deposits from the Massif Central mountains. Terraces close to the river produce supple and fruity wines; mid-level sites produce fleshier reds. The upper terraces produce the richest examples, suitable for aging. Also notable are the terraces of the coteaux; these *terroirs* feature limestone subsoils, rich with alluvial deposits from the river and its tributaries. Rarer in number, these sites produce elegant wines.

**The Plateau:** Towering over the valley at an average of 980 feet, Cahors’ limestone plateau is less fertile than the terraces and receives less moderating influence from the river. Wide diurnal temperature swings ensure slower ripening and later harvests here, making wines of great finesse.



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- ### CAHORS MALBEC FACTS

  - AOC since 1971
  - Red production only
  - Maximum yield : 50hl/h; (average: 40hl/h)
  - Minimum percentage of Malbec: 70% (possibility to blend it with Merlot and/or Tannat)
  - 4,000 hectares planted (potential 21,000/h)
  - 10% of the world’s Malbec production
  - 80% of AOC wines produced by independent growers (240 domaines/ch teaux) and 20% by the local cooperative
  - 30% of total export to U.S. (2<sup>nd</sup> importer of AOC Cahors)





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## Cahors, The Romantic & Gastronomic Malbec

Not just a beautiful wine to drink, Cahors is a wine country destination full of pleasures and surprises. Ideal for hiking, biking, boating and other outdoor activities such as paragliding and hot-air ballooning, Cahors' vineyards, villages and storybook landscape are also the backdrop for a rich gastronomic culture. Cahors and its surroundings boast seven Michelin-starred chefs, and local menus groan with roasted and grilled game, lamb and duck, seasonal vegetables and cheeses—and, of course, satisfying Malbecs to wash it all down.

A visit in any season is worthwhile, but on several occasions each year Cahors comes alive with festivals centered around its gastronomic bounty and sharing its cultural pride.

In January and February, food and wine lovers from around the world (and their palates) arrive to savor the Cahors Malbec & Truffle Festival, a unique experience to discover fantastic dishes specially created by local chefs and perfectly matched to wines of Cahors.

In June, the region ushers in the young growing season with Cahors Malbec Days, complete with vineyard tours, seminars, walk-around, formal and festive tastings, and exceptional dinners inspired by global cuisines. On this occasion, the best Malbec producers in the world (Argentina, U.S., Chile,



"Cahors is a superb appellation. Many of its producers approach winegrowing in a highly serious manner. I am often asked, 'What are the features of Malbec from Cahors?' In my opinion, Cahors wines are often very subtle, very elegant, extremely refined and the most gastronomic Malbecs. They pair perfectly with sophisticated terrines, delicate tartares, grilled meat, game birds or Scottish lamb. With age, some are wonderfully harmonious with truffles.

Cahors Malbec is a gourmet Malbec, belonging to the realm of refined gastronomic food and wine pairings."

—Philippe Faure-Brac, Best Sommelier of the World, Bistrot du Sommelier, Paris

South Africa and more) are invited by the wineries of Cahors.

In July, the Cahors region celebrates all local products, with food prepared by the world's top chefs during The Lot of Saveurs Festival.

And—wink to America!—Cahors is not only the mythical road to Malbec but also to the blues, with the famous Cahors Blues Festival.

**Cahors invites you to come, sip and savor—and rediscover the heart and soul of Malbec.**

## Cahors Malbec Information



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