



## ENGLISHMAN PIONEERS BORDEAUX SPIRITS

24th June, 2013 by Rupert Millar

An Englishman is attempting to preserve Bordeaux's distilling heritage with a range of traditional and more innovative spirits.



The range is based around traditional French brandies that are now in decline, particularly Fine de Bordeaux, as well as a gin and vodka.

Speaking to *the drinks business*, Simon Thompson, founder of "An Englishman in Bordeaux" said he had asked himself, "why isn't there a spirit linked to Bordeaux as there is elsewhere?"

"And then someone said, 'yes there is, Fine de Bordeaux'."

Production of Fine de Bordeaux – and indeed most Fines around France – is in serious decline, particularly as the regional wines become more valuable.

Thompson, who grew up in Cognac, said he was "lucky enough" to find one of the largest surviving stocks of the eau-de-vie while exploring Bordeaux and immediately bought as much as he could.

As well as producing his own Fine de Bordeaux, the old stock has meant he is able to offer 25 and 30-year-old Fine as well as the last few bottles of the 1979 and 1986 vintages.

Although he hopes to build a following in Bordeaux once again, he added that he is also hoping to attract spirit drinkers who've, "been there, done that. People who have tried things already and are looking for something different."

He is currently seeking distributors in the US as he already has sales in Europe.

A vodka has also been produced and there are plans to distil a grape-based gin as well. If all goes well in Bordeaux he added that he is quite keen to expand the range to include other neglected French Fines, he already has a prototype for a Fine de Bourgogne and there are many other obscure Fine *appellation d'origine réglementée* that can be produced

Finally, he has procured some stocks of Isle of Arran Scotch which he is aiming to age in Sauternes barrels, "just to keep that Bordeaux link."

Fine is a distilled wine, which has been made from Ugni Blanc and Colombard, and aged in Limousin oak.

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