

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to the product specification for a name in the wine sector, as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

(2021/C 282/05)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 17(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33 of 17 October 2018 ⁽¹⁾

COMMUNICATION OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT TO THE SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Cérons'**PDO-FR-A0668-AM02****Date of communication: 28 April 2021****DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT****1. Reference to the official code**

A reference to the official geographical code has been added for the geographical area. This addition does alter the boundary of the area in any way.

Point 6 of the Single Document has been amended accordingly.

2. Training system

In point VI(1)(a), the distance between the plants is reduced from 0,90 m to at least 0,85 m.

The aim is to harmonise the rules of the 'Cérons' designation with those of the specifications for designations whose geographical area covers the geographical area of Cérons. As this minimum distance has been decreased planting density, which is above 5 000 plants per hectare, can remain unchanged.

Point 5.1 of the single document has been amended.

3. Agri-environmental provisions

— in Chapter 1, point VI(1)(e), the words 'Dead vines must be removed from the parcels; any storage of such dead rootstock is prohibited in the parcels' have been added.

— the following point 2 has been added to Chapter 1(VI):

'(2) Other cultivation practices

Full chemical weed control of the parcels is forbidden.

All winegrowers must calculate and record their treatment frequency index (TFI).'

The requirement to calculate their TFI has been introduced with the aim of raising awareness among winegrowers and educating them on their cultivation practices and use of plant protection products.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

The ban on full chemical weed control seeks to reduce herbicides with a view to improving the protection of wine-growing soils and preserving their natural properties such as fertility, biodiversity and capacity for natural pest control. This will contribute to the wines' quality and authenticity.

These changes aim to reduce the use of plant protection products and to better respond to current societal demand.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

4. **Reducing the wines' ageing time**

The ageing of the wines is reduced by three months, so until 15 January (rather than 15 April).

This amendment also entails a change in the date the wines are released for sale, which is brought forward by three months.

Reducing the ageing time gives wines that are fresher and fruitier wines, which corresponds to market trends and consumer expectations without impairing the wines' character. The wines are increasingly produced without barrel ageing. Rather, they are aged in vats, the duration of which can be reduced considerably in order to preserve the wines' fresh and fruity characteristics.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

5. **Transport between authorised warehouses**

Chapter 1, point IX(5)(b) on the date when the wines may be transported between authorised warehouses has been deleted.

This amendment does not lead to any changes to the single document.

6. **Link to the origin**

The following sentence of the link: 'The fermentation of these wines is slow and often carried out in barrels. The wines must be aged until 15 April of the year following that of the harvest' is replaced by: 'The fermentation of these wines is carried out in a barrel or a vat, depending on the product profile sought. It may be slow for highly concentrated wines.'

This makes it possible to take account of recent practices and the amendment of the product specification with regard to the ageing time.

Point 8 of the single document has been amended.

7. **Reference to the inspection body**

The reference to the inspection body has been reworded to align it with the wording used in other product specifications. It is a purely formal amendment.

This amendment does not lead to any changes to the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Cérons

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. **Categories of grapevine products**

1. Wine

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

Brief written description

These are still white wines with fermentable sugars.

The wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 14,5 % and a minimum actual alcoholic strength by volume of 12 %. After enrichment, the wines' total alcoholic strength by volume must not exceed 21 %.

After bottling, the wines have a fermentable sugar (glucose and fructose) content of more than or equal to 45 grams per litre.

Every batch of wine sold has a volatile acidity of less than or equal to 25 milliequivalents per litre, or 1,5 g per litre expressed in acetic acid (1,225 g per litre expressed in H₂SO₄).

The total acid and total sulphur dioxide content are as laid down by EU legislation. The wines are made mainly from Semillon B, a grape variety originating from Sauternes, and from the Sauvignon B and Muscadelle B varieties. These varieties lend themselves particularly well to botrytisation, i.e. noble rot, and the production of great sweet wines. *Botrytis cinerea* is responsible for the biochemical transformation of the grape's aromatic compounds and the concentration of sugars in the grapes, giving the wines great sweetness and complex aromas, sometimes reminiscent of citrus fruit, honey and acacia.

Cérons wines are highly aromatic, subtle, fruity and fresh with a certain vivacity. They are full-bodied and have a lot of creaminess on the palate.

General analytical characteristics

General analytical characteristics	
Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum total acidity	
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	

5. **Wine-making practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

Specific oenological practice

After enrichment, the wines' total alcoholic strength by volume must not exceed 21 %.

In addition to the above provision, the oenological practices followed must meet the requirements laid down at EU level and in the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code.

Cultivation method

The minimum vine planting density is 5 000 plants per hectare. The spacing between the rows of these vines must not exceed 2 metres, and the spacing between plants in the same row must be at least 0,85 metres.

Pruning is mandatory before 1 May. Vines are pruned with a maximum of 12 buds per plant, using the following techniques: pruning to double Guyot, single and mixed Guyot, Bordeaux-style pruning, bilateral Royat cordon pruning and fan pruning.

The wines are obtained from grapes harvested when they are overripe, botrytised and/or raisined on the vine, and are obtained exclusively from grapes harvested by hand in multiple passes.

5.2. Maximum yields

44 hectolitres per hectare

6. Demarcated geographical area

The grapes are harvested and the wines made, developed and aged in the following municipalities of the department of Gironde, as based on the *Code officiel géographique* [Official Geographical Code] in force on 26 February 2020: Cérons, Illats and Podensac.

7. Main wine grape variety(-ies)

Muscadelle B

Sauvignon B – Sauvignon blanc

Sauvignon gris G – Fié gris

Semillon B

8. Description of the link(s)

The geographical area of the 'Cérons' controlled designation of origin is included in the Graves designation of origin. Located 35 kilometres upstream of Bordeaux, the Cérons plateau is separated from Barsac by a small tributary stream of the Garonne, the Saint-Cricq. The geographical area covers three municipalities in the department of Gironde (Cérons, Illats and Podensac) on the left bank of the Garonne,

The region of Cérons, like all the Graves, is the result of a very long geological history. On a substratum of limestone and marl (corresponding to marine carbonate sedimentation in the Tertiary era) material deposits formed in close conjunction with the birth of the Garonne, changes in its course and successive glacial episodes in the Quaternary era, and were accompanied by erosion phenomena, tectonic movements and highly complex climatic variations.

Consequently, the Cérons designation boasts a wide variety of soils comprising soils typical of the Graves designation to the north, soils with a high concentration of gravel, soils of the Barsac designation to the south, and clay-limestone soils on the limestone subsoil in Astérie. However, some soils can only be found in this designation. They consist of ridges of residual gravel on a more or less sandy clay-limestone base, separated by largely sandy basins, aligned on the left bank of the old Ciron and the Saint-Cricq stream.

Close to Barsac, Cérons chiefly owes its characteristics to its particular climate and meso-climate: the ocean, the Garonne and the extensive forest of the nearby Gironde *landes*, together serve to moderate the temperature such that the area is suitable for vineyards. Mild and wet winters and moderately hot summers allow for slow ripening, which is beneficial for white grapes. In the autumn, the confluence of the Garonne and the tributaries produce morning mists that enshroud the vineyards and lift during sunny afternoons and by aeration and natural ventilation, which dries and concentrates the grapes that are already very ripe. These particular climatic conditions led to the development of a tiny fungus on the grapes called the *Botrytis cinerea*. This symbiosis of the fungus and the grapes, called 'noble rot', causes the sugars and aromas to concentrate and the original substances to synthesise, lending their specific character to the wines.

Covered with vineyards, ruled by a few old mills and dotted with limestone villages, the Cérons landscape alternates between river and acacia or pine forest, with the '*Sable des Landes*' (Quaternary aeolian sand) covering all the area to the west and between the gravel hillocks. There are also traces of old stone or gravel quarries, some still operational.

Cérons has the same etymological root as the Ciron river formerly flowing into the Garonne in Cérons. Sirione, in Latin, is the only name of the region mentioned on Antonin's map, a road network under the Emperor Caracalla (211–217) and on the Peutinger Table (3rd century). The existence of a ford during low tides could explain the reference to this military and trading landmark.

The presence of grapevines was reported as early as in the Middle Ages; however, it was trade with the Netherlands during the late sixteenth and, in particular, the seventeenth century that steered the region's production towards sweet white wines with residual sugars. Under the Royal Provost of Barsac, the vineyard gradually grew in size, and the wines were shipped through the port of jurisdiction in Barsac.

The end of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century saw a growth of know-how regarding the choice of grape varieties and the techniques for selecting only the most overripe or botrytised grapes for the Sauternes and Barsac designations, which was also employed in the Cérons region.

The very ripe grapes are covered with a down of *Botrytis*, which pierces and thins the skin of the grapes. Scattered off the stony ground, the sun gently dries the grapes, which turn brown and wrinkled, concentrating the sugars and aromas. The grape pickers proceed to select these 'roasted' grapes with scissors, from plant to plant. That is the first, highly concentrated, selection. This is followed by two or three subsequent rounds of selection; possibly even more, depending on the climatic conditions favouring the development of the fungus and the concentration of the grapes. The harvests are performed solely by hand. The pressed grapes ferment very slowly; their richness eventually brings the fermentation of the wines – still full of sugars – to a natural halt as the alcohol content kills the yeasts.

The 'Cérons' designation was recognised by Decree of 30 September 1936, which regulated local practices: "Article 6 – The wine must be made from grapes that have been over-ripened (left to rot on the vine) and harvested in successive selections."

The demarcated area of the Cérons designation is 2 089 hectares, but is now only claimed by about twenty producers over 30 to 80 hectares depending on the vintage. The harvest takes place much later than elsewhere in the Gironde. It rarely begins before October and often lasts until November. During this season, periods of wet weather caused by the autumn Atlantic depressions may jeopardise the concentration and noble rot of the grapes, which explains the fluctuating productions of this designation. Ultimately, Cérons producers may also produce dry white wines and reds with the Graves and Graves supérieur designations in this area, and the vineyards have been largely adapted to the production of red wines over the last fifty years, going from 95 % of white-wine production fifty years ago to 40 % today.

Cérons wines are still white wines with residual sugars.

The wines are made mainly from Semillon B, a grape variety originating from Sauternes, and from the Sauvignon B and Muscadelle B varieties. These varieties lend themselves particularly well to botrytisation and the production of great sweet wines. *Botrytis cinerea* is responsible for the biochemical processing of the aromatic compounds of the grapes and the concentration of sugars in the grapes, giving the wines great sweetness and complex aromas, sometimes reminiscent of citrus fruit, honey and acacia.

The Cérons wines are highly aromatic, fine, fruity and fresh with a certain vivacity. They are full-bodied and have a lot of creaminess on the palate.

The production parcel area excludes land located on thick clay subsoil or land with a homogeneous cover of aeolian sands (*sable des Landes*), as this land has high hydromorphic indices and is generally covered with forest. Land on modern alluvial deposits (*palus de la Garonne*) is also excluded. The other areas, although diverse, are suitable for the production of Cérons, as this diversity adds complexity to the aromatic expression of the vintages.

If the establishment of the vineyard follows the same rules as for the production of Graves, the care taken during harvest will make it possible to produce these sweet wines. The yields are low, limited to a maximum of 40 hectolitres per hectare, as the wines come from grapes that are overripe, botrytised and/or raisined on the vine. In addition, the number of buds left after pruning may not exceed twelve per plant and the average maximum load on the parcel is set at 8 000 kilograms per hectare before overripening, i.e. a maximum of 12 bunches per plant. The wines are obtained only from grapes harvested by hand in multiple passes. The pressing of these highly concentrated grapes is slow and delicate, and the use of a continuous press with a non-endless screw is prohibited. As a result of over-ripening, the wines have a minimum average natural alcoholic strength by volume of 14,5 %.

The fermentation of these wines is carried out in a barrel or in a vat, depending on the product profile sought. It may be slow for highly concentrated wines.'

The reputation of Cérons wines was established early on in history. Paguierre, a wine broker, pointed out in an English edition of 1828 that these wines 'distinguish themselves by a fine flavour (*jolie sève*) and a rich taste, and are firm and highly mellow (*moelleux*)'. In his book *Les Appellations d'Origine Bordelais*, in 1932, Pierre Célestin wrote this about Cérons wines: 'There has never been any dispute about this delimitation, which is more than a century old; consequently, no legal decision has had to determine its scope'.

Nowadays, although competing with the possible production of another great Bordeaux designation, the Graves, a few producers keep this production alive, which is often of very high quality, as it results from a rigorous selection of overripe grapes in these areas, which are exceptionally suited to the production of great wines.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Derogation concerning production in the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

The area in immediate proximity, defined by way of derogation for the making, development and ageing of wines eligible for the controlled designation of origin 'Cérons', consists of the territory of the following municipalities of the department of Gironde, as based on the *Code officiel géographique* [Official Geographical Code] in force on 26 February 2020: Arbanats, Barsac, Béguey, Cadillac, Gabarnac, Haux, Ladaux, Landiras, Langoiran, Loupiac, Monprimblanc, Portets, Preignac, Pujols-sur-Ciron, Rions, Saint-Selve, Sainte-Croix-du-Mont, Toulence, Villenave-de-Rions and Virelade.

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

Wines with the controlled designation of origin may specify on their labels the broader geographical unit 'Vin de Bordeaux' or 'Grand Vin de Bordeaux'. The size of the letters for the larger geographical unit must not be greater, either in height or width, than two-thirds of the size of the letters forming the name of the controlled designation of origin.

Link to the product specification

http://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document_administratif-93e93fda-2aa5-49a1-85e4-b0bb4dcbfc88
