Transmission of a  
 geographical indication for a spirit drink

Kirsch d’Alsace  
 No EU: PGI-FR-01983  
 Sent 21-12-2017  
 PGI

**1 Technical fiche**

1. Designation and type
2. Name (s)

Kirsch d’Alsace

1. Category

9. Fruit spirit

1. Country of applicant

France

1. Language of the request:

French

1. Type of geographical indication:

PGI — Protected Geographical Indication

1. Contact details

1.2.1Name and position of the applicant

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| **Name and position of the applicant** | Syndicat des Distillateurs et des Liquoristes d’Alsace |
| **Legal status, size and composition (in the case of legal persons)** | Trade association composed of fruit producers, fruit traders, brewers and distillers involved in the development of spirit drinks in Alsace. |
| **Nationality** | France |
| **Address** | 12 Avenue de la Foire des Vins  68000 Colmar  France |
| **Country** | France |
| **Telephone** | (33) (0) 783312437 |
| **E-mail address (es)** | [**syndicatdistillateuralsace@gmail.com**](mailto:syndicatdistillateuralsace@gmail.com) |

1.2.2Intermediary’s contact details

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| **Name of the intermediary** | Ministère de l’agriculture et de l'alimentation |
| **Address** | Direction Générale de la Performance Economique et Environnementale des Entreprises (DGPE)  Bureau du vin et des autres boissons  3 Rue Barbet de Jouy  75349 Paris Cedex 07 SP  France |
| **Country** | France |
| **Telephone** | (33) (0) 149554955 |
| **E-mail address (es)** | liste-cdc-vin-aop-DGPAAT@agriculture.gouv.fr |
| 1. Contact details of interested parties 2. Details of the competent supervisory authority | |
| **Name of the supervisory authority** | Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité (INAO) |
| **Address** | 12 rue Henri Rol-Tanguy  93555 Montreuil-sous-Bois  France |
| **Country** | France |
| **Telephone** | (33) (0) 173303800 |
| **E-mail address (es)** | [info@inao.gouv.fr](mailto:info@inao.gouv.fr) |

1. Detailed information on the inspection bodies
2. Description of the spirit drink

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| **Heading - Name of the product** | Kirsch d’Alsace |
| **Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics** | 1. Organoleptic characteristics:   This spirit is white with a clear, bright and transparent.  The olfactory and gustatory characteristics of this spirit refer to the cherries with an embedded mark.   1. Physico-chemical characteristics:   The volatile substances content shall be greater than 300 grams per hectolitre of pure alcohol.  At the time of marketing to the consumer, this spirit shall have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 45 %. |
| **Specific characteristics (in comparison with other spirit drinks of the same category)** | “Kirsch d’Alsace” is a spirit produced from cherries produced in the area, accepted as a fresh, healthy and whole product which is fully ripe.  The varieties used (guignes and merises), their integrity and maturity at harvest make it possible to obtain must with the very high aromatic potential.  The fermentation of the must without heating and without increasing the natural sugar content of the cherries preserves this aromatic potential which is fully expressed during distillation.  The types of stills used and the batch distillation method, with an alcoholic strength by volume between 60 % and 80 %, make it possible to concentrate the aromatic potential of the fruit mash.  The presence of copper in contact with vapours enables the removal of undesirable flavours.  Spirits are therefore characterised by a great aromatic richness. This wealth results in a high level of specific volatile substances, responsible for the aromatic complexity of the spirits.  Moreover, in order to make this power up to the consumer, spirits are presented at a minimum alcoholic strength by volume 45 %.  Finally, the spirits are not coloured to preserve the characteristics of white spirit and their clear, bright appearance and transparent. |

1. Define the geographical area

1.4.1Description of the defined geographical area

The production of the fruits, their fermentation, the distillation of fermented fruit mash, the rest period and the finishing of the spirits are carried out on the territory of all the municipalities of the Region of Alsace distributed over the two departments of Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin.

1.4.2NUTS area

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| **FR** | **FRANCE** |
| **FR4** | **EAST** |
| **FR42** | **Alsace** |
| **FR421** | **Bas-Rhin** |
| **FR422** | **Haut-Rhin** |

**1.5. Method for obtaining the spirit drink**

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| **Title - Type of method** | Fruit varieties |
| **Method** | The cherries used belong to the Prunus avium species in the following varieties:  • guignes (soft and tender fruit);  • merises (small, dark red or black fruit, firm and very thin flesh, the nucleus of which detached badly).  The following are therefore excluded:  • within Prunus avium, the varieties of bigarreaux crispy cherry varieties;  • varieties of Prunus cerasus (sour cherries);  • varieties of Prunus acida (sour and sweet cherries). |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Orchards |
| **Method** | The orchard is defined as all the cherry trees that are exploited by the operator for the production of water, whether isolated, “pre-orchards” or specialised orchards.  Cherries intended for the production of ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ come from trees from orchards with a planting density of less than 300 trees/ha.  The orchards shall be grassed on at least 2/3 of their surface area. |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Yields |
| **Method** | The maximum average yield of the orchards in production shall be verified by the ratio of the quantity of fruit produced and the number of trees harvested.  The average tree yield shall not exceed 300 kg of cherries. |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Fruit harvest, transport and storage |
| **Method** | The fruit obtained by the distillery must have the following characteristics:   * the fruit is fresh: freezing or deep-freezing is prohibited; * the fruit has a good ripeness: the juice of the fruit must have a minimum sugar content of 140 grams per litre; * The fruits shall be accepted whole and shall not have been damaged by the kernel or microbial deterioration |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Fermentation procedure |
| **Method** | The fruits are stirred with care to prevent the crushing of the stones. The fruit is fermented without heating. Any addition or concentration to increase the natural sugar content of the cherries used shall be prohibited. The alcoholic yield is between 4.5 % and 8 % (between 4,5 and 8 litres of pure alcohol obtained per 100 kilograms of fruit). |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Distillation |
| **Method** | The distillation shall be carried out from fruit exclusively harvested during the last marketing year.  The fermented mash is distilled according to the principle of discontinuous distillation, either simple or multi-taped.  1 Simple unit distillation with ‘repasse’  The still consists of a ‘cucurbite’ boiler, a marquee, a swan neck, with or without a water condenser, and a coil with a refrigerating device.  All the parties in contact with the vapours upstream of the swan neck must be made of copper: Cucurbite and tent.  The total capacity of the still shall not exceed 25 hectolitres.  The presence of a copper catalyst is allowed in order to trap ethyl carbamate.  The fermented fruit mash is heated in the boiler to the naked light or by the introduction of water vapour in a double outer envelope.  The vapours from the fermented mash amount to and win the marquee where they condense partially. Part of the vapours are condensed into the ‘cucurbite’ while another part of the vapours goes through the swan neck and heads towards the condenser when the distillate is released (this is the phenomenon of downgrading).  This method consists of a sequence of two steps:  • the first one consists of distillation of the fermented mash enables to obtain the scrubs (‘brouillis’);  • the second part consists of the distillation of the scrubs and the way to obtain the spirit.  The alcoholic strength of the distillation plant is decreasing during distillation and fractions of the beginning and end of distillation may be separated according to the alcoholic strength by volume. In the second distillation, fractions of the beginning of distillation shall be systematically removed and distillation fractions shall be separated from the spirit and may be reintroduced with the fermented fruit mash or with the bush in one of the following distillations.  2 multi-stage graduated distillation with reflux  The distillation is carried out by stills consisting of a ‘cucurbite’ boiler and a column with a minimum of 3 trays. The column is topped by a water exchanger, followed by an swan neck connected to a condenser.  All the parties in contact with the vapours upstream of the swan’s gooseneck must be made of copper: cucurbite, column and trays.  The presence of a copper catalyst is allowed in order to trap ethyl carbamate.  The trays and heat exchanger can be disengaged and in this case, as the trays cannot retain liquid and enable vapours to be bubbled, owing to the cutting of the water supply into the condenser, the multi-stage distillation process turns into a simple distillation.  The total capacity of the still shall not exceed 25 hectolitres.  The fermented fruit mash is heated to the naked light or by the introduction of water vapour in a double outer jacket.  The vapours from the fermented mash amount to and earn the plateaux where they condense partially. The vapours are then moved to the swan neck, a part reflecting them to the water exchanger where it condenses and then goes down into the column, while another part of the vapours is heading towards the condenser that runs out of the distillate.  During distillation, the alcoholic strength of the distillate decreases. The fractions of the beginning and end of distillation shall be separated from the water/life stream. The distillation starting fractions shall be disposed of while the distillation end fractions may be returned to the fermented fruit mash in one of the following distillations.  On leaving the still and at the end of the distillation process, the spirit has an alcoholic strength by volume of at least 60 % and less than or equal to 80 %. |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Rest period |
| **Method** | The rest period lasts for at least 6 months from the date of distillation.  During this period, the spirit shall be stored in containers which are neutral, in tanks, in jars or in barrels. |

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| **Title - Type of method** | Finishing |
| **Method** | Sweetening is permitted up to a maximum of 10 g of sugar/litre expressed as invert sugar.  Colouring is prohibited. |

1. Link with the geographical environment of origin or geographical origin

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| **Heading - Name of the product** | Kirsch d’Alsace |
| **Detailed information on the geographic area or origin relevant for the link** | 1. Natural factors   The area in which the cherries are produced occupies the edge of the Alsace dig, which is made up of the sub-headings of the general eastern general guidelines.  The temperate semi-continental climate shows large amounts of temperature and rainfall. This Alsace climate is reinforced by the impact of the Vosges shelter, which aggravates the continental reach of the area and contributes to major changes in the ventilation conditions. This effect of shelter is accentuated in a particular meteorological phenomenon that limits rainfall: foehn “hot and dry wind” is created by the air traffic (wind) and relief (Vosges) chain.  Alsace has many sources and the largest nature reserve of water in Europe. The geological complexity of Alsace leads to the multiplicity of soils: calcareous, clay-limestone, marnous, marnous, maro-limestone, granitic, Schisteux, gresous, loess soils and lehms, alluvial soil.  2 Human factors  In the eighth century, Carolingian texts show that several cherry species were already being tested in Alsace. In the 16th century, cherries are very friable and have multiplied and diversified their recipes. In 1788, Jean Baumann, of Dornach, drew up a catalogue of fruit trees grown in Alsace, which then consisted of 12 varieties of cherries. The cherries are a primary fruit in Alsace, consumption directly, dried or intended for distillation. In 1933, Count of Andlau took the view that Alsace owns 350 000 cherry trees.  Arboriculture is a well-established agricultural activity in Alsace. Of the different varieties of stone fruit, cherries are very present in Alsace. The region makes a contribution to the varieties listed on French territory with a dozen local varieties, such as “noire d’Osenbach” or “noire de Westhooffen”, which has even the title of ‘Capital of the Alsace cherry’. This iconic fruit of Alsace is also celebrated in summer events organised in several Alsace villages: Westhoffen, Sickert, Thannenkirch, Pfastatt...  The cherries used for ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ belong to the tree varieties of the Prunus avium spirit (soft and soft fruit) and cherries (small, dark red or black fruit, with firm and very thin flesh, the kernel of which is detached badly).  The fruit sector is represented by a variety of operators, both professional and amateur producers. Cherries for the production of spirit come from isolated trees, ‘pre-orchards’ or orchards. The planting density is limited to 300 trees/ha. The orchards shall be planted over at least 2/3 of the surface. The load of the trees is limited to 300 kg/tree. The fruit chosen for distillation must be fresh, fully ripe and defined with a minimum sugar content of 140 g/L and be of integrity.  ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ is the oldest fruit spirit of Alsace. At the beginning of the 17th century, a monk from the East had the idea of “burning” fermented cherries giving birth to Kirschwasser, the Alsatian name, which means a kirsch water (wasser).  Distillers settle and develop their activities along the watercourses.  In Alsace, the inhabitants of the valleys, and in particular the valley’s inhabitants, have integrated the Kirsch in their daily diet. In 1838, during a conflict with the free movement of raw materials from the val of Villé, the sub-prefect of Sélestat points out that “Kirsch is usually used for consumption purposes. It is drank in large glasses, and the children’s bread for lunch is soaked in it. This is a basic necessity. Our people from the mountains live only with potatoes, curds and Kirsch.”  The transition from Alsace to German administration after 1870 will diversify the types of stills used and make it possible to keep distillation practices at home unlike many other French regions. This is the result of the large number of stills present on Alsatian farms and the control by operators of the know-how of distillation. It is estimated that a dozen individuals per village use their rights for their own consumption. Installed mainly in the Val de Villé and in the Colmar area, there are currently 21 professional distilleries in the Alsace region. Alsace distillers have been involved in a Syndicat des distillateurs et liquoristes d’Alsace,which was created in 1919.  The distillation tools used stem from this legacy. Traditional stills and stills are found double re-distillation and column stills, i.e. discontinuous multistaged stills, with a maximum of 3 plates. The parts in contact with the product are made of copper in contact with the product. They have a capacity of no more than 2500 litres. The period of rest of the spirit must last at least 6 months |
| **Specific characteristics of the spirit drink attributable to the geographical area** | “Kirsch d’Alsace” is a clear, bright and transparent white spirit.  The olfactory and gustatory characteristics of this fruit spirit refer to cherries with a nutty persistent mark.  The volatile substances content shall be greater than 300 grams per hectolitre of pure alcohol. At the time of marketing to the consumer, ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ shall have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 45 %.  ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’, to release the delicacy of the perfume from the cherries, is often consumed, either cold or, the old way at the temperature of a cup of coffee. “Kirsch d’Alsace” may also be consumed in long drinks, cocktails, fine liqueurs.  ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ shall also be regarded as a culinary ingredient. The flavours of the “Kirsch d’Alsace” are perfectly aligned with chocolate. “Kirsch d’Alsace” is used in the “Forêt Noire” chocolate cake, chocolate chips, candied cherries and cream. Alsace chocolate makers also make use of it, for example, in the case of Chocolaterie Antoni, which in 1950 created a chocolate with cherry and ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’. Finally, it combines with salt dishes, such as “Kirsch d’Alsace” fondue, or “Kirsch d’Alsace” duck mousse. ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ is often cited in culinary guides, which confirms its reputation.  ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’ is part of the food culture of Alsace, as illustrated by its description in the Inventory of Culinary Heritage in Alsace |
| **Causal link between the geographical area and the product** | The special environmental conditions (topography and climate) of Alsace are conducive to the cultivation of cherry trees.  The deep and well-drained soils that exist in Alsace are conducive to cherry growing. The presence of water in the region prevents trees from suffering drought conditions. On the other hand, this abundance of surface waters has led to the significant development of the know-how of the distillation.  The semi-continental temperate climate and the general exposure to the east contribute to the long ripening of the fruit. The Foehn effect accentuates this ripening and preserves the health status of the fruit. As a result, the quality of the fruit aromas, which are expressed by harvesting at full maturity on trees whose production has been controlled through strict production conditions, makes it possible to obtain a spirit of very high quality.  The passage under German administration after 1870 and a specific Alsace scheme dating from 1930 maintained the practice of home-distillation as a result of the maintenance of a strong distillation activity. The quality of the cherries for processing by water- spirit has led to the development of distillation techniques by small mobile operators and by professional distillers throughout Alsace.  The stills used and the distillation method are specific to the Alsace region. The size and presence of copper for certain parties, the still makes it possible to preserve the quality of the fruit mash. As a result of the very old distillation heritage in the region and influenced by the proximity of Germany, the high degree of control of their tool by the Alsace distillers is able to obtain a water/life association with the specific characteristics and persistence of the aromas. The temperature differences peculiar to the alsacien climate are conducive to a good maturation of the “Kirsch d’Alsace”.  The content of volatile substances laid down in the specification and the degree of consumption make it possible to establish the aromatic expression linked to the fruit of the spirit ‘Kirsch d’Alsace’.  The reputation and prosperity of the “Kirsch d’Alsace” is based on this historical regional anchor. Moreover, the region has a very rich culinary culture and has been able to incorporate this spirit in its gastronomy as a digestive drink but also as an ingredient in recipes |

1. European, national or regional requirements
2. Additional element for geographical indication
3. Specific rules on labelling

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| **Title** | Eau-de-vie de merises |
| **Description of the rule** | The words ‘Eau-de-vie de merises’ may be added to the name of the GI when the fruit used is exclusively ‘merises’ (geans). |

**2**Additional **information**

2.2Link to the product specification

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| **Link:** | https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document\_administratif-fc7fd2b1-c176-439d-ab5e-10fa851ccbd4 |