Transmission of a  
geographical indication for a spirit drink

Mirabelle d’Alsace  
No EU: PGI-FR-01985  
 Sent 21-12-2017  
 PGI

**1Technical Fiche**

1. Designation and type
2. Name (s)

Mirabelle 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 from 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of the intermediary | Ministry of Agriculture and Food |
| 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 competent regulatory body | 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Heading — Name of the product | Mirabelle d’Alsace |
| Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics | 1. Organoleptic characteristics:   ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ is a white spirit, clear, bright and transparent; it may take yellow reflections in a natural manner over time. The smell and taste of this spirit drink must evoke mirabelle with a mild and nutty note and great persistence.   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, ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ shall have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 45 %. |
| Specific characteristics (in comparison with other spirit drinks of the same category) | “Mirabelle d’Alsace” is a spirit drink prepared from Mirabelle fruits, accepted as fresh, whole and rightly ripe.  The varieties used to produce ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ (i.e. mirabelles de Nancy and mirabelles de Metz), their integrity and maturity at harvest make it possible to obtain must with very high aromatic potential.  The fermentation of must without heating, without increasing the natural sugar content of the mirabelles, 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.  The spirit drinks are therefore characterised by a great aromatic richness. This richness results in a high level of specific volatile substances, responsible for the aromatic complexity of the spirits.  Moreover, in order to make this aromatic richness up to the consumer, the spirits shall be presented at a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 45 %.  Finally, “Mirabelle d’Alsace” can take yellow highlights that appear naturally over time. They are due to the presence in the fruit of flavonols, which may be present in distillation, and after recombination, to bring the colour to the spirit. |

1. Define the geographical area

1.4.1Description of the defined geographical area

The fermentation of the fruits, the distillation of the fermented fruits’ must, 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

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

**1.5 Method for obtaining the spirit drink**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title — Type of method | Raw material |
| Method | The fruits used, of the species Prunus domestica, belong to the mirabelle varieties of Metz and mirabelle from Nancy. These are small, round, flavoured and yellow plums. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title — Type of method | Fruit harvest, transport and storage |
| Method | Fruits accepted by the distillery must have the following characteristics:   * Fruit is fresh: freezing or deep-freezing is prohibited; * Fruit is ripe: the fruits show a golden yellow skin with reddish lights and a yellow flesh, the kernel easily separates from the flesh; * the fruits shall be accepted whole and shall not have been subject to any deterioration or microbial deterioration |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title — Type of method | Fermentation |
| Method | The fruits are stirred with care, in particular to prevent the crushing of the stones.  The fruit is fermented without heating.  Any addition or concentration to increase the natural sugar content of mirabelles shall be prohibited.  The alcoholic yield is between 4% and 7% (between 4 and 7 litres of pure alcohol obtained per 100 kg of fruit). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 batch distillation  \* Description of distillation equipment  The still consists of a so-called ‘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 marquee.  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.  \* Heating method  The fermented fruit mash is heated in the boiler to the naked fire or by the introduction of water vapour in a double outer envelope.  \* Description of the process  The vapours from the fermented mash elevate to the marquee where they partially condense. Part of the vapours are condensed into the ‘cucurbite’ while another part of the vapours enters 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 and makes it possible to obtain the scrubs;  - the second is the distillation of the scrubs and enables the spirit to be obtained.  \* Maximum alcoholic strength by volume  The alcoholic strength of the distillate decreases during distillation and fractions from the beginning and end of distillation may be separated according to the alcoholic strength by volume. In the second distillation, the distillation fraction is systematically removed and the distillation end fractions are separated from the spirit and can be reintroduced with the fermented fruit mash or with the scrubs in one of the following distillations.  2 Multi-staged distillation with reflux  \* Description of the distillation apparatus  The distillation is carried out by stills consisting of a so-called ‘cucurbite’ boiler and a column with a minimum of 3 trays. The column is topped by a water exchanger, followed by a swan neck connected to a condenser.  All the parties in contact with the vapours upstream of the swan neck 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.  \* Heating method  The fermented fruit mash is heated in the boiler to the naked fire or by the introduction of water vapour in a double outer envelope.  \* Description of the process  The vapours from the fermented mash amount to the trays where they partially condense. 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.  \* Maximum alcoholic strength by volume  During distillation, the alcoholic strength of the distillate decreases. The fractions of the beginning and end of the distillation process must be separated from the spirit drink. The starting fractions shall be disposed of while the end fractions may be returned to the fermented fruit mash in one of the following distillations.  On the outlet of the still and at the end of the distillation process, the spirit has an alcoholic strength by volume of not less than 60% and not more than 80% of pure alcohol. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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, jars or barrels. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Heading — Name of the product | Mirabelle d’Alsace |
| Relevant detailed information on the geographical area or on the origin for the link | 1 Physical factors of the link  The temperate semi-continental climate shows large amounts of temperature and rainfall. 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.  Alsace has many water sources and the largest nature reserve of water in Europe.  2 Human factors of the link  Horticulture in Alsace has directly influenced the diversification of spirits, including ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’. The mirabelles chosen for distillation must be fresh, have a good maturity, which is defined through visual and organoleptic criteria, and must be fit.  The mirabelles used for “Mirabelle d’Alsace” belong, within the species Prunus domestica, to the mirabelle varieties of Metz and mirabelle de Nancy. These are small, round, flavoured and yellow plums.  Distillers settle and develop their activities along the watercourses. In the city of Colmar, production of spirit drinks is regulated since the beginning of the 16th century: in 1506, the city’s records of expenditure and revenue refer to a control of the Wynnbrenner by the magistrate.  The distillation of mirabelle dates back to the 18th century in Alsace, however, it was only in the 19th century that the production of spirit drink “went beyond episodic production” and that Mirabelle spirit became a real “market commodity”, according to Paul Eschbach (“Les Eaux-de-vie d’Alsace et d’ailleurs”, 1993).  In between World Wars, the reputation in France of “Mirabelle d’Alsace” is very important since, in1933, Curnonsky and Croze include it among the Alsatian products which deserve a place in France’s famous gastronomic heritage.  The German administration of Alsace to after 1870 will diversify the types of stills used and make it possible to keep home distillation practices unlike in 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 used their rights for their own consumption. Installed mainly in the valley of Villé and in the area of Colmar, there are currently 21 professional distilleries in the Alsace region. Distillers in Alsace have federated themselves in 1919 as “Syndicat des distillateurs et liquoristes d’Alsace”.  The distillation tools used stem from this legacy. One finds traditional stills, double re-distillation and column stills, i.e. discontinuous multistage stills, with a maximum of 3 trays. The parts in contact with the product are made of copper. 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 | White spirit drink having a clear, bright and transparent appearance, ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ may take natural yellow reflections over time.  The olfactory and gustatory characteristics of this fruit spirit refer to mirabelle with a mild and nutty note and a great persistence.  The volatile substances content shall be greater than 300 grams per hectolitre of pure alcohol. At the time of marketing to the consumer, ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ shall have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume of 45%.  ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’, in order to liberate the delicacy of the perfume from mirabelles, is often consumed either chilled or, the old way, at the temperature of the cup of coffee. ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ may also be used in cocktails, and is also reputed for its use as a culinary ingredient.  ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ is part of the food culture of Alsace, as shown by its description in the Inventory of Culinary Heritage in Alsace.  The quality of ‘Mirabelles d’Alsace’ is regularly highlighted through the prices obtained in different national competitions, in particular in the Concours Général Agricole where, in 2016, ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ won 2 gold medals against the 3 gold medals distributed in the spirit drinks category of mirabelle. Furthermore, in its edition of 3 March 2017, Revue des Vins de France highlighted five ‘Mirabelles d’Alsace’ among the 7 spirits of mirabelles selected in its classification of the 50 best spirits drinks in France |
| Causal link between the geographical area and the product | The diversity of fruits in Alsace and the abundance of surface water have led to the considerable development of distillation know-how. The quality of the fruit aromas, which are reflected in the requirements to accepting the fruit, makes it possible to obtain a spirit of very high quality.  The German administration of Alsace 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 fruit for spirit production, 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. By means of the size and presence of copper for certain parties, the still allows the quality of the fruit mash to be preserved. 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 production tool allow Alsace distillers to obtain specific characteristics and persisting aromas. The temperature differences peculiar to the Alsace climate are conducive to a good development of the ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’.  The volatile content of substances laid down in the specification and the degree of consumption make it possible to establish the aromatic expression linked to the fruit of ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’.  The reputation and prosperity of ‘Mirabelle d’Alsace’ are linked to this historical regional anchorage. 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

2 Other **information**

2.1. Supporting documents

2.2 Link to the product specification

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Link | https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document\_administratif-6217be6b-b986-446c-a41e-cc28b1aed435 |