

## Calibre cognac

Unless you're a cognac connoisseur, you won't have heard of Cognacs François Voyer. This niche producer from Cognac's Grande Champagne region, turns out only 50,000 bottles a year. A drop in the cognac ocean for big-league labels Courvoisier, Hennessy and Remy Martin. But to compare them is to miss the point, because Voyer is for the discerning drinker who eschews mass-production for a family-run traditional method, aimed at the likes of revered cognac collector Michel Gillet. The Voyer brand is also served in top restaurants from **Jules Vernes** and Lucas Carton to Alain Ducasse.



Vaudon personally controls the blends and quality of all François Voyer cognacs. We sample four Cognacs, from a no-frills VS François Voyer (40%abv) to the mellower VSOP François Voyer (40%abv), to the silk-smooth 50-year old vintage Hors d'Age (43%abv), a mahogany elixir of cinnamon, mocha and cigar-impregnated leather armchairs. This one requires no water reduction during production, for lasting power in the barrel. If you have to ask how much it is for the bottle, you probably can't afford it. (Ok, seeing as you asked, we're probably talking around £600rrp).

But it's Voyer's multi-award-winning, 25-year old XO Gold (40% abv) bestseller that titillates my tastebuds with its delicate start then heady punch of peach and exotic fruit

I can see this one slipping extremely smoothly down the throats of "the beautiful set" at the tropical-themed Kanaloa Club. It has a very slow reduction of just 1-2% a year, compared to the average cognac, which we learn evaporates at approximately a litre per hour – that's 2-3% per year of stock. What a waste! Enough to make a grown journalist weep in to her empty cognac glass. Vaudon