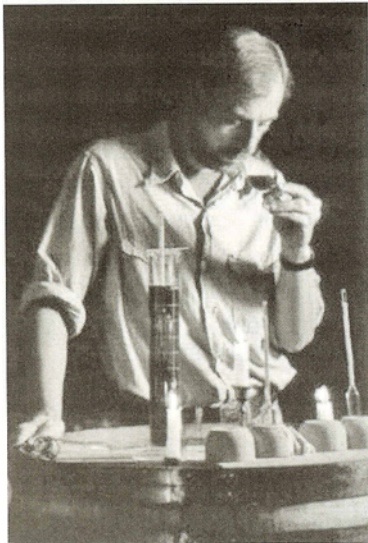


GERMAIN-ROBIN

Hand — Distilled Brandies



Where is the world's finest distilled spirit made? Is it among the misty limestone hills of Cognac? Or, as many experts believe, is it in California? Perhaps today's finest brandy is from the rich, complex Germain-Robin pot-still on Ansley Coale's Mendocino County ranch.

When *Los Angeles Times* wine writer Dan Berger headlined his Germain

Robin review "World's Finest Cognacs", when the *Robb Report's* expert panel named Germain-Robin Select Barrel XO "World's Best Spirit", Gallic eyebrows threatened to match the alcoholic vapours rising to heaven from their cognac aging cellars. But there is really little wonder. In a time when almost all of the world's spirits are made by huge entities -- venerable Hennessy now produces some 3 million cases of cognac as a minor arm of the French conglomerate LMVH -- Germain

Robin has returned to the roots of the ancient art of distillation.

The finest cognacs once came from tiny producers. But there are few of these ancient houses left. Timeconsuming and expensive craft methods have vanished under the impact of global marketing and production short-cuts compelled by the high cost of consumer advertising. In 1982, Hubert Germain-Robin, whose family produced cognac since 1782, brought an antique cognac still to California. But instead of using wines from the undistinguished grapes used in Cognac, Germain-Robin innovated with premium wine grapes. The first time that Mendocino pinot noir passed through their tiny still, Germain-Robin turned to Coale and said, "This is the finest I have ever seen." Reviewers agreed, and the microdistillery is now famous.