

FRANCE - LOIRE

<p>SPECIFICATIONS (What you have to know)</p>	<p>DISTRICTS, COMMUNES AND VINEYARDS Loire: Rosé de Loire, Val de Loire IGP Loire Nantais: Muscadet, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu, Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire Anjou-Saumur: Anjou, Coteaux du Layon, Bonnezeaux, Quarts de Chaume, Savennières Saumur, Saumur-Champigny Touraine: Touraine, Bourgueil, Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil, Chinon, Vouvray, Montlouis Central Vineyards: Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé, Menetou-Salon, Quincy, Reuilly</p> <p>KEY LIGHT WINES Red Bourgueil, Chinon, Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil or Saumur-Champigny White Muscadet Sur Lie Savennières Vouvray Sec or Vouvray Demi-Sec Coteaux du Layon, Bonnezeaux, Chaumes or Vouvray Moelleux Pouilly Fumé or Sancerre Touraine Sauvignon, Menetou-Salon, Reuilly, or Quincy Rosé Cabernet d'Anjou or Rosé d'Anjou</p>	
<p>HISTORY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13AD: Romans planted vineyards in Pays Nantais but viticulture seem to started later on. ▪ 5th: written records of established winemaking on the upper Loire valley in Auvergne ▪ 11th: Loire wines exported to NL and UK thanks to great river & port connections; Sancerre already reputed. Also very popular in France thanks to the great links to Paris esp. St Pourcain. ▪ 18-19th: better transport links to Bordeaux, Rhone & S. France meant sales declined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1709: terrible winter (down to -20C) destroyed most of the vineyards ○ 1789: French revolution had a disastrous effect on the vineyards esp. in Vendée. ○ 1870s: phylloxera outbreak wiped out huge proportion of the vineyards ▪ 1936: Muscadet, Quincy, Sancerre and Vouvray become ACs; followed by Anjou, Saumur and Touraine. ▪ Post WWII: wine industry picking up again 	
<p>CLIMATE & WEATHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northern limit of Atlantic France for vine cultivation with various climates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continental in Central Loire (Pouilly-Fumé/Sancerre) ○ Maritime with Gulf stream warming effect from Orléans to Pays Nantais ▪ Generally cool – 19C avg temp in July; 750mm rainfall ▪ Unstable climatic conditions -> much more pronounced vintage variation (e.g. 2012: harvest -50% in Muscadet) ▪ Spring frost is the main viticultural hazard. 	
<p>SOILS & TOPOGRAPHY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centre Loire: kimmeridgian limestone soils (//Chablis soils) ▪ Touraine: sand, clay, gravel, tuffeau ▪ Anjou-Saumur: sandstone, tuffeau (limestone) ▪ Pays Nantais: schist, granite, gneiss, sand 	
<p>GRAPE VARIETIES</p>	<p>Reds</p> <p>1. Cabernet Franc – 18,000ha Well suited to cool inland climates Buds, matures earlier -> easier to ripen fully vs. Cab Sauv Less susceptible to poor weather at harvest Lighter in colour, the wines have berry fruits flavours, unobtrusive tannins and higher acidity vs. Cabernet Sauvignon</p> <p>2. Cabernet Sauvignon Small-sized thick blue berries with concentration of phenolics and tannins Extremely vigorous vine but susceptible to powdery mildew, eutypa and excoriose Ripens slowly Often blended with Merlot & Cabernet Franc Produces deep coloured, age-worthy reds with aromas of blackberries Slowly gaining ground in Loire</p> <p>3. Grolleau Everyday red grape of Touraine High yields for thin, acidic wines Being replaced with Gamay or Cabernet Franc Banned from Anjou, Saumur & Touraine ACs (except Rosé d'Anjou AC) Blended with Gamay in Rosé d'Anjou</p> <p>4. Gamay High yields -> usually grown in gobelet</p>	<p>Whites</p> <p>1. Chenin blanc / Pineau de Loire Most versatile grape in the world Early budding, late ripening High natural acidity & susceptible to botrytis Mostly vinified as varietal but up to 20% Sauvignon or Chardonnay allowed in Anjou and Saumur Appley, floral & honeyed flavours Mainly grown in Anjou</p> <p>2. Sauvignon Blanc Vigorous vine (-> use of low vigour rootstock + canopy management) Grassy, musky, green fruits, gooseberries with fresh acidity & mineral undertones Most designed to be drunk within 2 years but some examples of long lived Sancerre & Pouilly Fumé</p> <p>3. Melon de Bourgogne Imported from Burgundy in 17th Resisted the 1709 harsh winter Regular and high yields Importance only due to Muscadet</p> <p>4. Folle blanche Produces acidic & neutral wines</p>

	<p>Gamay de Touraine: light, slightly acid, cheaper alternative to Beaujolais Also used in IGP Loire Early budding and ripening (-> prone to spring frosts)</p>	
VITICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 50,000ha of vines (1/2 of Bordeaux; similar to Rhone) ▪ Avg holdings 20ha with high density planting at 4-5,000 plants/ha (up to 10,000plants/ha in Sancerre) ▪ Biodynamic farming on the rise but spraying frequent ▪ Mechanical harvesting common (excl. sweet wines of middle Loire) ▪ Vines trained in Cordon or Guyot systems 	
WINEMAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditionally: no MLF, no new oak but wines in inert containers and bottled early with some lees contact (e.g. Muscadet). Reds usually lack colour extraction. ▪ Since 80s: experimentation with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - barrel maturation and sometimes barrel fermentation for reds & whites - MLF for whites; pre-fermentation maceration introduced for some Sauvignons - longer skin contact, temperature control and pumping over to facilitate colour & tannins extraction for reds ▪ Chaptalisation common for both reds & whites to a max of +2.5% alcoholic strength of the finished wine ▪ Sur lie ageing consists in leaving the wine on its fine lees for min 4-5 mths over the winter in the tank or barrel where fermentation took place with only 1 racking allowed (to remove gross lees). ▪ Wine then bottled directly at specific dates: 1st March->30th June or 15th October ->30th November. ▪ Controlled by AC rules. Some 'terroir' wines go beyond required time & fall outside 'sur lie' labelling rules 	
WINE APPELLATIONS & STYLES	<p>All styles: 3 colours, dry, medium dry, sweet IGP Loire</p> <p>NANTAIS Gros Plant 950 000 HL. Mostly negociants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muscadet AC: white Basic regional appellation. Only Melon de Bourgogne authorised. Chaptalisation up to 12%. <i>Classic Muscadet sur Lie should have a pale lemon colour. Rather neutral (med intense) nose of yeast (lees), green apple, honeysuckle, gooseberry, asparagus. Dry palate with high ("eye watering") acidity, medium alcohol and light body. Medium + finish.</i> ▪ Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu AC: white On Southern bank of the Loire, Southwest of Nantes, close to the Atlantic; influence of Lac Grandlieu ▪ Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine AC: white Directly South-east of Nantes; largest AC with 80% of production; monoculture area Vineyards on rolling hills with some high quality sites. Ambitious wines from clay soils of schist & granite slopes. Vallet and Saint Fiacre are suitable for ageing. ▪ Muscadet Côteaux de la Loire AC: white On Northern bank of the Loire, northeast of Nantes; fuller bodied less acidic wines <p>ANJOU-SAUMUR Chenin + Cabernet Franc 850 000 HL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anjou AC: red + white + rosé Very large AC stretching from the borders of Muscadet to the town of Saumur Most of the production is rosé, whites represent 15% and reds continue to rise in quantity & quality Cabernet Franc = 1/3 of plantings. Only appellation that allows Grolleau. ▪ Cabernet d'Anjou: Medium sweet, cab franc + cab sauvignon, sweeter than rosé d'anjou and age-worthy ▪ Rosé d'Anjou AC: Medium-dry from Grolleau, Cab Franc & Gamay blend; quality improving ▪ Rosé de Loire AC: Dry, min 30% Cabernet grapes; can be produced in Touraine & Saumur too ▪ Savennières AC: dry white. Chenin blanc North bank of the Loire; immediately South-west of Angers Dry area with schist soils that slope to the river's edge; restrictive yields Can be perceived as steely & tart young; requires 4-5 yrs to mellow 2 sub-ACs: La Roche-aux-Moines (W) / Coulée de Serrant (W): south facing schist slopes near Angers; intense, complex & age-worthy whites. CdSerrant monopoly of Nicolas Joly, leading champion of biodynamics <i>Classic Savennières should have a pale lemon colour. Medium + intense nose of pineapple, passion fruit, chamomile, honeysuckle. Dry palate with medium + acidity, medium alcohol and medium - body. Long finish. Sometimes not enough SO2 giving oxidative notes.</i> ▪ Côteaux du Layon AC: sweet white. Chenin blanc Fresh fruit character and acidity of sweet German wines but with more body & alcohol. Key sub ACs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarts de Chaume (cru): extremely top quality & long lasting sweet wines from Chenin blanc - Bonnezeaux (cru): top sites for some of the world's greatest sweet whites ▪ Saumur AC: red & white & sparkling. Chenin blanc, Cab franc. Directly south of the town of Saumur; western extension of Touraine with Tuffeau soils ▪ Saumur-Champigny AC: red. Cab franc. Named after Champigny village; on a tuffeau plateau (hi limestone content); rich, fresh wines with great concentration. 	

▪ **Rosé de Loire AC:** Medium Dry. Cab franc, cab sauvignon, grolleau, pineau d'Aunis, gamay, côt
Classic Loire Rosé should have a medium salmon colour. Medium - intense nose of orange peel, raspberry, blackcurrant. Medium dry palate with medium + acidity, medium alcohol and medium - body. Medium finish. Fruit flavours and sweetness balancing acidity.

TOURAINE 750 000 HL Chenin + Cabernet Franc 750 000 HL

▪ **Touraine AC:** red, white, rosé

Large area stretching from Blois (east) to Chinon & Bourgueil (west)

Considerable climate variations w eastern vineyards continental & very cold winters; western vineyards more influenced by Atlantic (closer to Maritime climate)

Large array of grapes allowed:

Whites: Chenin blanc, Arbois, Sauvignon blanc & Chardonnay (max 20%)

Reds: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauv, Pinot Noir, Cot (Malbec), Gamay, Grolleau & Pineau d'Aunis

Rosés: same as reds + Pinot Meunier.

50% of the Touraine production; 50% whites (usually from east); 40% reds and 10% rosés

4 sub-ACs: Touraine-Amboise, Touraine-Azay-le-Rideau, Touraine-Mesland & Touraine-Noblé-Joué.

Classic Sauvignon de Touraine should have a pale lemon colour with clear Sauvignon characters: Medium + intense nose of yellow peach, pink lady apple, chamomile, pineapple, asparagus, gooseberry. Dry palate with medium + acidity, medium alcohol and medium - body. Medium finish.

▪ **Vouvray:** white sweet, dry, sparkling.

Named after town on Northern bank of the Loire; northeast of Tours

Mid-continental, mid-maritime climate -> considerable vintage variation

Unique feature: cool cellars carved in tuffeau allow for wine 2nd fermentation for sparkling.

Largest and most recognised Chenin blanc appellation; comes in dry, medium dry, sweet & sparkling

Sparkling 40% of production; produced in larger quantities in leaner years. Still = 60%.

Classic Vouvray should have a pale lemon colour. Medium – intense nose of green apple, quince, lime, linden. Medium dry palate with high acidity, medium alcohol and medium + body. Medium finish.

▪ **Montlouis-sur-Loire:** white dry & sweet

Southern bank of the Loire; other side of Vouvray

Lighter, sandier soils for less defined and earlier maturing wines. Less weight & intensity vs. 2-3 years to reach potential

▪ **Chinon AC:** red + white + rosé

South of Loire river, on the Vienne river, South-west of Tours.

25% Cabernet Sauvignon theoretically allowed but usually 100% Cabernet Franc; some use of new oak

3 styles of red:

i. Light & fruity in the sand & gravel soils of the Vienne River Valley, west of Chinon

ii. Fuller bodied w firm tannins on the plateau north of Chinon

iii. Finest on hillside slopes

2% of whites from Chenin Blanc

▪ **Bourgueil AC:** red + rosé

South facing slopes on Loire's northern bank; sand & gravel w chalky substratum

Gentle climate w low rainfall

25% Cabernet Sauvignon theoretically allowed but usually 100% Cabernet Franc

More powerful and tannic wines vs. Chinon

▪ **Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil AC:** red + rosé

Most westerly red AC; northern bank of the Loire

Lighter soils for fruity reds and rosés best drunk young.

Classic St Nicolas de Bourgueil should have a medium ruby colour. Medium intense nose of stalk, grass, bell pepper, mint, blackcurrant, raspberry, blueberry. Dry palate with medium + acidity, medium – grippy tannins, medium alcohol and medium - body. Medium finish.

CENTRAL VINEYARDS Sauvignon Blanc + Pinot Noir 280 000 HL Mostly growers

▪ **Quincy AC:** white

○ South-West of Sancerre; Sauvignon blanc grown on sandy gravel soils for fruity, aromatic & soft whites

○ Slightly more rustic vs. Sancerre & better prices -> fast growing area

▪ **Reuilly AC:** red + white + rosé

○ Produces fine austere whites from Sauvignon blc; light reds from Pinot Noir and rosés from Pinot Gris

○ Gamay sold as VdP red.

▪ **Menetou Salon:** white, red, rosé

○ Just west of Sancerre with limestone & flatter landscape

○ Whites from Sauvignon blanc (60% of production) and Reds & Rosés from Pinot Noir.

○ Similar style to Sancerre & better prices -> fast growing area

▪ **Sancerre:** white, red, rosé

○ 15 villages on low south-east or south-west facing slopes w 3 different terroirs:

○ Extreme west: clay soils & chalk marls -> strongest wines

○ West of Sancerre: gravel and limestone

○ Around Sancerre: flinty soils for flinty, mineral wines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mostly fermented and aged in stainless steel; rarity and international success since 70s -> high prices ○ Pinot Noir grown on lesser vineyards for light reds & rosés ▪ Pouilly Fumé: white <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eastern bank of Loire river; facing Sancerre; slightly flatter vs. Sancerre ○ Limestone soils -> flinty, mineral notes ○ Higher proportion of cask ageing makes for less herbaceous character & more rounded vs. Sancerre. <p><i>Classic Pouilly Fumé should have a very pale lemon-green colour. Medium intense nose of flint, lemon, grapefruit. Dry palate with high acidity, medium alcohol and medium body. Long finish.</i></p>
<p>PRODUCTION & BUSINESS</p>	<p>50% whites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #3 wine production area with 4million hl; #1 producer of AC white wine; 87 ACs + 1 VdP • 55% whites; 21% reds; 17% rosés; 7% sparkling. 13,000 family estates but growing consolidation of family holdings • Examples of producers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Domaine Yannick Amirault – Bourgueil – 80,000btl <p>18ha of Cabernet Franc only; different cuvees, all w purity of fruit. Top wines: Les Malgagnes, La Petite Cave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Couly-Dutheil – Chinon Xbtl ○ Clos Rougeard – Anjou-Saumur – 20,000btl <p>Owned by Foucault brothers; from old Cab Franc vines + low yields + oak barriques ageing -> concentrated Saumur-Champigny. Top wines: Les Poyeux, Le Bourg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chateau La Roche-aux-Moines- Coulée de Serrant – Savennieres -14.5ha <p>Acquired by ex-banker Nicolas Joly in the 70s; became the leading champion of biodynamic viticulture by applying Rudolf Steiner principles from 84 in his vineyards & publishing the results in 1997.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Domaine de l'Écu - Muscadet – 120k btl <p>Guy Bossard's biodynamic domain; full fragrant complex Muscadets that can be aged. Top wines: regular Muscadet Sevre et Maine sur lie; cuvée 'terroir' wines e.g. Expression de Gneiss</p>

