# THE MASTER'S **NOSE CLUB**

66 The Loire Valley fresh, vibrant wines perfect for summer drinking

> THE LOIRE VALLEY IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING AND UNDERRATED WINE REGIONS IN FRANCE

SIX TOP QUALITY, FAMILY PRODUCERS FROM ACROSS THE REGION

SIX WINES WHICH PERFECTLY EXPRESS THEIR GRAPE VARIETY AND TERROIR

ALL PRODUCERS WORK ORGANICALLY OR BIODYNAMICALLY

GREAT VALUE AND PERFECT FOR SUMMER DRINKING









domaine Pellé













BACKGROUND THE REGION

# THE FASCINATING WORLD OF LOIRE WINES TODAY

The Loire Valley is one of France's most beautiful, historical and unspoilt regions, with a multitude of grand old chateaux and medieval towns dotted up and down its long and languid river. It is the "vegetable garden" of France and home to some of the country's most delicious, mineral and terroir expressive wines. Sadly, Loire Valley wines are too often underappreciated and overlooked outside of France, but for this reason they remain extremely fairly priced; the wines in this packet offer genuinely great value! Having travelled extensively in the region during the past year, I have been hugely impressed with what I have seen and tasted. I am convinced there has never been a better time to introduce you to a selection of the most interesting wines and producers from this fascinating region!

#### Why drink Loire Valley wines now?

The Loire wine region is historically cool in climate and lies at the northern limits of the ability to ripen the grapes for which it is most renowned – Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Melon de Bourgogne and the red Cabernet Franc. However, the effects of global warming over the past 20 years have, so far, been very

beneficial here. Warmer, sunnier. drier vintages are producing white wines with real fruit concentration and complexity, but which retain their hallmark freshness and acidity. And the Loire's signature red varietal – the Cabernet Franc grape – is producing fruitier and fuller bodied wines than ever before, without losing its cool climate elegance and finesse. Land prices in the Loire region are relatively cheap in comparison with Bordeaux, Burgundy or Champagne, so many young, passionate, sustainably-minded wine producers have bought vineyard land here or moved to this region from elsewhere in the past 30 years to live their vinous dream. This new generation has spearheaded the "green revolution" in the Loire Valley. No other wine region in France has such a high proportion of sustainable, organic and biodynamic wine producers.

Last but not least, Loire wines, with their moderate alcohol levels, freshness and minerality are extremely food friendly. They are rarely matured in new oak barrels so that they best reflect the myriad of different terroirs in this region. This style of wine is hugely popular with international sommeliers and wine buffs today.



# ABOUT THE LOIRE VALLEY WINE REGION Calcured Abjor Calcured Abjor



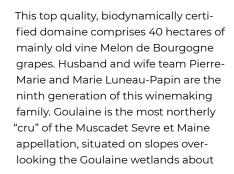
The Loire wine region stretches over 500 kms eastwards from the Atlantic Ocean near Nantes to the Central Loire appellations of Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé and Menetou Salon. It can simplistically be divided into three main regions and grape varieties. Muscadet, just south of Brittany near the mouth of the Loire and on France's Atlantic coastline, has a distinctly oceanic influence. Its cool sea breezes and relatively high rainfall produce wines which are light in body and fresh in acidity. The region's most important grape is the Melon de Bourgogne, which is generally fairly

neutral in flavour. However, when grown on the hillsides of Muscadet's superior quality "Crus Communaux" by quality-focussed producers, and given extended ageing on its lees after fermentation, it can produce wines of great finesse, subtlety and minerality, with a salty bite of acidity. Domaine Luneau-Papin is one of, if not the top producer in the Muscadet region, and their flagship wine "Excelsior" shows the pinnacle of quality this grape can reach.

The "Middle Loire" borders Muscadet to the east, as you travel upriver from the sea. This is a large wine region,



# DOMAINE LUNEAU-PAPIN, COULAINE MUSCADET SÈVRE & MAINE GOULAINE



45kms from the Atlantic Ocean. Their flagship "Excelsior" wine is made as naturally as possible using wild (native) yeasts from the vineyard for fermentation in underground glass lined vats. It then spends a further 20 months' ageing on its lees to add complexity and personality before bottling. Muscadet really does not come better than this!





This charming family domaine of around 28 hectares of vines is situated on a sandy, stony hilltop overlooking the Layon river, about 10kms due south of the River Loire and the Savennières wine appellation. The estate is now certified organic and the wines are made by Quentin Cailleau, third generation of the Cailleau family.

This is true Chenin Blanc territory, and their Clos des Sables vineyard gives the winery's most emblematic example of this grape. Grapes are picked at perfect maturity, then fermented naturally in a mix of different-sized casks and barrels. They spend 14 months on their lees to gain in richness and complexity before bottling.



stretching all the way east to Orléans, and is home to atmospheric, riverside towns dating back to the Middle Ages such as Angers, Saumur, Chinon and Tours. Here, the Chenin Blanc grape reigns supreme, producing white wines in many shapes and guises, from sparkling to bone dry to intensely sweet. Chenin Blanc is perhaps THE most underrated of the world's white wine grapes; when fully ripe it can produce wines with delicious ripe apple, pineapple and honey blossom flavours with excellent minerality and ability to age. Quality varies immensely throughout the region and depends primarily on the producer and terroir, but the grape reaches its apogee in the tiny appellation of Savennières and in the best vineyards of Vouvray.

The Middle Loire is also home to the Loire Valley's best known red wines, made from the Cabernet Franc grape. The reds from the appellation of Saumur Champigny are very trendy in Parisian bistrots, but the best quality

is to be found around the towns of Chinon, St.Nicolas de Bourgueil and Bourgueil, a little further up river. Here, from good producers such as Yannick Amirault and Fabrice Gasnier, you can find reds with deliciously ripe fruit and floral character, silky smooth tannins and just the right amount of freshness and finesse.

Further east – southeast of Orléans and about 200kms due south of Paris - are the wine villages of Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé and Menetou Salon. This is the "Upper Loire" wine zone, where Sauvignon Blanc is king and the Loire region's best known wines are grown. Here, in France's geographical centre, limestone and clay soils dominate, whilst the very best terroirs have a high component of flinty "silex", which gives an extra minerality and smokiness to the wines. The best producers' wines have purity, precision and minerality and reflect the different soils and terroirs of the area without any influence of oak.

#### ABOUT THE PRODUCERS AND WINEMAKING

## DOMAINE AUX MOINES, **SAVENNIÈRES**

This small, biodynamic-certified domaine is situated in the famous "Roche Aux Moines" cru of Savennières. right next door to cult domaine Nicolas Joly. The winery is owned, grapes grown and wines made by Madame Tessa Laroche, an impressive, superenergetic lady who one feels knows every vine in her vineyard like the back of her hand! The soils in her walled. 10 hectare Roche Aux Moines vinevard are a mix of volcanic rock and schist. which give a dynamic vibrancy and

minerality to the wines, as well as extremely long ageing potential. The grapes are hand-picked and fermented using wild veasts for 12 months in a mix of casks and barrels of different sizes, of which a very small percentage are renewed each vear. After a further 6 months in tank. they are bottled ready for sale. Volumes produced here are tiny, and even smaller than usual in the frostaffected 2021 vintage.

## DOMAINE HENRI PELLÉ domaine Pellé LA CROIX AU GARDE, SANCERRE

Situated in the village of Morogues, in the far eastern part of the Loire valley, the Pellé family are one of the best respected producers of Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir wines in the Loire region. Paul-Henry Pellé is the fourth generation of his family to tend these vineyards, which he does with extreme care for the environment and as naturally as possible.

Their Croix Au Garde vineyard in Sancerre comprises four hectares of 35 year old vines planted on pebbly clay and limestone soils. The grapes are carefully hand-picked and sorted, then fermented and matured on their lees in a mix of stainless steel tanks and wooden vats. These are wines of finesse and precision which beautifully reflect their individual terroirs.





## YANNICK AMIRAULT, BOURGUEIL \*\*\*

Situated on the right Bank of the Loire in Bourgueil, one of the best quality Cabernet Franc-producing villages in France, this 20 hectare estate makes some of the most impressive red (and rosé) wines in the Loire Valley. Organically certified since 2009, no sulphur is used in the winemaking process here.

Côte 50 is a blend of grapes from their

four vinevards on sandy-clay soils which acts as a perfect introduction to their range. All grapes are handpicked, sorted twice, then fermented in open top wooden vats. The wines then age for 12 months in a combination of large wooden vats, sandstone "eggs" and amphorae. The result is a fruit-packed, easy-pleasing wine with gentle, smooth tannins.

#### DOMAINE FABRICE GASNIER, FABRICE GASNIER **CHINON**

This small, organic and biodynamic certified family domaine is one of the rising stars of Cabernet Franc production in the Loire Valley, situated just outside Chinon in the sleepy village of Cravant les Coteaux. This is one of the best quality areas for growing Cabernet Franc in the region; top producer Philippe Alliet is just down the road. The soils here are a mix of sand and

clay with limestone subsoil. Yields are generally very low - around 30hl/ha – and the grapes are handpicked. Fermentation takes place in large concrete vats using native yeasts, then the wines are matured for 14 months in oak barrels, 50% of which are new each year. All wines from this producer are excellent value and very easy to enjoy!



### **OUR EXQUISITE SELECTION**



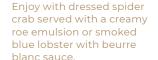


(one bottle)



"Excelsior" is the flagship wine of this top quality estate, made from 100% Melon de Bourgogne grapes grown on vines planted in 1936 at the heart of the Goulaine cru.

This is pure, restrained and mineral on the nose. On the palate it is elegant and fine, with amazing concentration, intensity and length and juicy, saline acidity. This is a true "terroir wine", a wine which perfectly expresses its schistous soils and its vineyard site overlooking the expansive Loire river and Goulaine marshes. As Tamlyn Currin writes on Jancisrobinson.com, "it tastes of the wide sky above it and of tangerines and tangerine peel and beeswax candles. And it feels utterly, utterly alive." She awarded the 2017 vintage 18.5/20pts



Drink as an aperitif or with

shellfish, lobster, or refined



550 cases were produced.

Drink now – 2040.

cheeses



Domaine
Sauveroy Clos
Des Sables 2021,
Anjou Blanc
CHF 19.90/bt
(one bottle)

This dry Chenin Blanc has ripe, powerful fruit which smells and tastes rich and exotic – pineapple, peach and apricot – and seems quite full and dense on the palate. Yet the cool 2021 vintage has given a refreshing bite of acidity which prevents it from being overpowering and gives a fresh, salty bite of minerality on the finish. This is an uncomplicated and unpretentious example of the Chenin Blanc grape which gives great pleasure at a very reasonable price.

Drink now – 2030.



Domaine Aux Moines Savennières 2021 CHF 49/bt (one bottle)

From 45 year old Chenin Blanc vines grown biodynamically on one of the best terroirs for this grape in the world, this wine shows the heights of finesse and minerality the Chenin Blanc grape can achieve.

It is crystal pure with wonderful freshness and vibrancy, like a Grand Cru Chablis in its tension and almost steely minerality. It has gentle aromas of white flowers and flavours of stone fruits with hints of orange peel. Its maturation in old oak casks has added impressive structure and helped give a very long and complex finish.

1,660 cases were produced.

Enjoy with shrimps, scallops and lobster or a risotto with white truffles.

Drink 2024 - 2031.

#### **ABOUT THE WINES**









CHF 24.90/bt (one bottle)





The warm and sunny 2022 vintage has given this racy, pure and precise Sancerre an extra dimension of ripe, almost tropical passion fruit flavours, making this more immediately enjoyable than in cooler years. This is deliciously fresh and mineral and finishes with a bite of saline acidity; no hint of oak flavours, just clarity, precision and

delectable fruit flavours. 1,660 cases were produced.

"Superbe de tension et de maturité, avec une pureté en bouche au niveau du fruit, dans un esprit cristallin. Un très grand vin. Les derniers millésimes du cru sont de haut vol." – 96/100 pts Bettane+Desseauve

Enjoy with shellfish, oysters or goats cheese.

Drink now - 2026.



Domaine Yannick Amirault Côte 50 2022, Bourgueil CHF 19.90/bt (one bottle)

Côte 50 is this excellent estate's most consumer-friendly Cabernet Franc. Deep purple in colour, it has a beguiling mix of spice and violet/floral aromas, and beautifully ripe, purple berry fruit flavours. The 2022 vintage was hot and sunny, giving full and generous body and extrovert fruit character. The tannins are smooth and silky but give just enough structure on the finish to allow this to drink well for three to five years.

2,500 cases were produced.

Enjoy with most red meats.

Drink now - 2027.



Domaine **Fabrice Gasnier Signature Chinon Rouge 2020** CHF 24.90/bt (one bottle)

Made from very low-yielding, 80 year old vines, this 100% Cabernet Franc has impressive richness and concentration of fruit, combined with elegance and finesse. The warm and sunny 2020 vintage has given lovely floral aromas and ripe, purple fruit flavours together with impressive weight and opulence. This is already drinking very nicely but has the structure to improve in bottle for the next 10 years. 13% alcohol.

500 cases were produced

Enjoy with roasted meats (lamb, beef or game), barbeques or couscous.

Drink 2023 - 2035

