

# WINES OF CENTRE - LOIRE REGION

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**SANCERRE  
POUILLY-FUMÉ  
MENETOU-SALON  
QUINCY  
REUILLY  
COTEAUX DU GIENNOIS  
CHATEAUMEILLANT  
POUILLY-SUR-LOIRE  
CÔTES DE LA CHARITÉ  
COTEAUX DE TANNAY**

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# THE VINEYARDS OF CENTRE – LOIRE

The vineyards of Centre-Loire grow on hills dominating the Loire and the Cher valleys in the "Heart of France". Grapes have been grown here for more than 2000 years. Today, the vineyards extend over 5 900 hectares giving birth to 8 Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée (A.O.C.) Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé, Menetou-Salon, Quincy, Reuilly, Coteaux du Giennois, Châteaumeillant and Pouilly sur Loire and 2 IGP: Côtes de la Charité and Coteaux de Tannay: each has its own personality and typicity.

The wineries of the Centre-Loire have preserved their family-owned and operated character, thus their authenticity and roots. Within this respect for tradition and the environment, the winemakers have developed their cellars and vineyards with the shared goal of achieving the very best expression of each terroir composing the vineyards of Centre-Loire.

In this landscape of gently rolling hills and plateaus sculpted by the Loire and Cher rivers grow the vineyards of the Centre-Loire. These hills and valleys which mark the region create microclimates from which spring the diversity of expression in wines from one place to another.

The climate here has a continental tendency with strong temperature variance from -1°C in winter to 26°C in summer. Total rainfall is around 600 to 800 mm annually.



## Wines of Pleasure...

In tasting the wines of these 9 appellations, we embark on a voyage across the different expressions of the same grape variety. Sauvignon Blanc is king in this region and reveals the diversity of the Centre-Loire terroirs. Pinot Noir is our ambassador of red wines, displaying its lightness, its red fruit aromas and lightly-spiced notes. Gamay and Pinot Gris grape varieties complete the ampelography of the region. In the heart of France, these wines form a family with the common traits of freshness, finesse and fruitiness. They are above all, Wines of Pleasure.



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# THE GRAPE VARIETIES OF CENTRE-LOIRE

## SAUVIGNON BLANC

The Sauvignon, which is particularly sensitive to the quality of the terroir, achieves its more complex aromas in the vineyards of Centre-Loire. The origin of this grape variety is much debated (Centre or perhaps Southwestern France).

It presents characteristic bunches with coned-shaped, very tight berries, a thick skin, a firm and crisp flesh. It has characteristic aromas marked by the soil and the climate.

The character of wines is expressed more rapidly when they are grown on chalky soils. Marls and flinty-clay strata produce wines that need more time to develop and that are long-term cellaring wines (from 2 to 5 years or even 10 years).

The range of aromas developed in the Sauvignon wines is particularly rich and complex: the great taste of "flint" but also fruity notes (blackcurrant, passion fruits, lychee, orange, grapefruit, guava), floral notes (iris, elder, rose, acacia, linden), vegetal notes (box, broom, rhubarb, asparagus) and others such as musk or roasted meat.

The Sauvignon represents 70% of the surface areas and 75% of the production of Centre-Loire vineyards.



## PINOT NOIR



Known in the region of Burgundy since the XIVth century, this grape variety is certainly more even older. The bunch of the Pinot Noir is small and compact (pinecone-shaped) with little tight berries (ovoid-shaped) and with a thin and smooth blue-black-colored skin.

The juice of the Pinot Noir is colorless. The maceration of the skin (that contains the colored-pigments) with the juice during the alcoholic fermentation gives the Pinot Noir its nice cherry-red color with a slightly purple tinge.

Because of its relative "fragility" it requires very specific production conditions including a climate neither too warm nor too cold and well drained soils (particularly chalky ones) in order to achieve its best expression.

For young wines, the bouquet is marked by morello cherry, violet, wood notes and with aging it is marked by aromas of game, truffle and cherries in brandy.

Grown in Centre-Loire for a very long time, the Pinot Noir now represents 20% of the area planted with vines. It is the grape variety of Sancerre, Menetou-Salon and Reuilly wines. It also enters in the blending with the Gamay of Châteaumeillant and the Coteaux du Giennois.

## GAMAY (CHÂTEAUMEILLANT AND COTEAUX DU GIENNOIS)

Vinified into a rosé, the resulting wine is fresh and aromatic. In traditional fermentation on the skins, it yields a red wine with very ripe fruit aromas, fresh and easy to drink.



## PINOT GRIS (REUILLY)

Vinified into a rosé, it is characterized by a pale rose color, mild aromas and astonishing finesse.



## CHASSELAS (Pouilly sur Loire)



Grape cultivated in Pouilly sur Loire in order to supply the "Halles" of Paris in the middle of XIXth century. It subsists on about 30 ha and gives a wine fresh and light.

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# THE VINE



The vines are grown on trellises. The kind of pruning employed is the single Guyot cut which consists of leaving one cane and a renewal spur with two buds which will serve the following year for the new pruning.

The Royat cordon pruning which consists of leaving 5 renewal spurs of two buds each has returned to fashion because of its usefulness in combating wood diseases.

More and more winemakers are rejecting the use of herbicides sprayed on the bare ground to prevent the sprouting of weeds and are opting instead for hoeing, plowing and new contact-type herbicides which are applied directly to the weeds. By new appellation regulations, winemakers have decided to discontinue using certain chemicals. To help in that goal, groups have formed to develop more environmentally-sound vineyard protection.



## HARVESTS AND VINIFICATIONS

In Centre-Loire wine harvest begins, according to the vintage, between the last week of September and the first week of October. It ends in the last two weeks of October. It starts with appellation of Quincy and Reuilly and goes on with Menetou Salon and after Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé, Coteaux du Giennois and Châteaumeillant. Date of grape harvest is determined in order to obtain ripe and healthy grapes. Average yields are between 40 and 60 hectolitres per hectare.

### WHITE WINES

The harvest, as healthy and ripe as possible, is pressed as soon as the grapes arrive. The resulting must is sulphited in order to prevent oxidation problems. After a must racking of 12 to 24 hours, the must is placed into a fermentation tank where it will ferment at a temperature of 18°C.

The control of fermentation temperatures has been one of the most significant developments of the last 30 years. It permits longer fermentations and gives more intense and delicate aromas.

At the end of the fermentation period, a racking is made to remove the first particles of the lees. The maturing begins in the tanks in which the wine generally stays on the thin lees of fermentation.

Between March and September the first vintages will be bottled, after the operations of clarification and stabilization. Some vintages will wait more than a year before being bottled and marketed.



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## RED WINES

The healthy and ripe grapes are partially or totally de-stemmed. After having passed through the crusher, they are placed into the maceration and fermentation tanks. The maceration permits contact of the grape skins (that contain the coloring pigments) with the grape juice. To obtain a fully extracted color, a temperature of 25°C to 30°C must be reached.

In the event of a cool autumn the grape harvest will be heated up in order to set off the fermentation process. Pumping and treading the must once or twice a day from the bottom to the top of the fermentation tank ensures its homogeneity and an optimum contact of the juice with the grape skins forming the cap. When the desired color and body have been obtained, the must is drawn off and pressed. A press juice and a free-run juice are obtained and put into tanks or barrels.

As soon as the alcoholic fermentation is completed, the malolactic fermentation begins. This is a natural loss of acidity. Once completed, a first racking is made and a sulphite treatment will stabilize the wine. Maturing begins and many rackings will take place under the different phases of clarification. The first wines will be bottled in spring. Wines matured in oak barrels will wait one year before being bottled.



## ROSÉ WINES

These wines can be obtained by two methods.

The first one consists of a straight pressing of the grapes as soon as they arrive in the cellar, just as for white wines. There will be a short time of contact between the grape juice and the skin. Consequently the color of these wines is lighter. This is called pressed rosé:

The second method consists in starting off maceration and then in racking some wine when the desired color is obtained. Consequently, it will be stronger and the wine will be full-bodied. This kind of rosé is called a bled rosé.

The following methods of vinification, i.e., maturing, stabilization and clarification, will be the same as those used for white wines.



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