

PRESS KIT

2019

LES VINS DU CENTRE – LOIRE

SANCERRE, POUILLY FUMÉ, MENETOU-SALON,
QUINCY, REUILLY, COTEAUX DU GIENNOIS,
CHATEAUMEILLANT, POUILLY SUR LOIRE,
COTES 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.

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.

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.

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.

SANCERRE (AOC IN 1936)

Dominating the Loire from high on its "piton" or hilltop, the vineyards of Sancerre were destined for great winemaking.

Sancerre vineyards spread through 14 villages over magnificent hills perfectly suited for the vine: well-oriented, exposed and protected with wonderful limestone and flint soils contributing to the marvelous quality of these wines. The two grape varieties that reign in Sancerre are the Sauvignon Blanc and the Pinot Noir. White wines are fresh, fine and fruity; rosés are tender and subtle, the reds aromatic and round.

A little history...

According to legend, vines have been planted in Sancerre since ancient times. Evidence of the existence of vines in Sancerre is given by Gregory of Tours in 582 in his *Historiae Francorum*. In the 12th century, cultivation of the vine was given added impetus through the combined efforts of the Augustine monks in St-Satur and the ruling counts of Sancerre. At that time Sancerre was famous for its red wine, produced predominantly from the Pinot Noir grape, and exported from the region along the river Loire. This wine is often mentioned in accounts of life at the royal court. The famous wine of Sancerre was, in the opinion of Duke Jean de Berry, indeed the finest wine to be found in the entire kingdom. In more modern times, cultivation of the vine has undergone some major changes. The original vineyards, which were predominantly planted with Pinot vines, were destroyed by phylloxera at the end of the 19th century. Sauvignon has since become widely planted and is particularly well-suited to the local climate. The natural advantage of terroir and the skill of local producers enable the region to produce great wines and these have born the AOC status since 1936. The red and rosé wines, made from the noble Pinot Noir, followed in 1959 when they were awarded AOC accreditation.

The Vineyard

The Sancerre vineyard extends over 3 000 ha (7 413 acres) on the left bank of the Loire into 14 villages:

Bannay	Sainte Gemme
Bué	Sancerre
Crézancy	Sury-en-Vaux
Menetou-Ratel	Thauvenay
Ménétréol	Veaugues
Montigny	Verdigny
Saint-Satur	Vinon

(To this list could also added three famous hamlets: Amigny, Chavignol and Maimbray.)

The Sancerre area is made up of many hills and valleys including the famous "piton of Sancerre" and the Loire valley. La Cuesta (356 meters altitude) is formed by layers of Jurassic superior to the west. Two geologic faults known as the Sancerre and Thauvenay faults run north-south. These faults bring into contact the subsidence layers of the Crétacé and the Eocène with Jurassic formations from the west. The intense erosion resulted in three soil types:

- "Terres blanches" or white soils, limestone-clay soils found on the westernmost hills of the Sancerre area.

- "Caillottes", pebbly-limestone soils.
- "Silex" Clay -flint soils found on the eastern slopes of the area.

Tasting

Sancerre white wines, alert and full of fruit flavors, mingle mineral and citrus aromas. The attack gives way to a rich, round palate.

Red Sancerre wines illustrate the virtues of Pinot Noir, offering bouquets of cherry and morellos. On the palate, the wines are firm, full and long.

Sancerre rosé wines give freshness and fruitiness. Perfect wines for summer and all exotic foods.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 189 789 hl

- Sauvignon Blanc 155 448 hl
- Pinot Noir (red) 20 218 hl
- Pinot Noir (rosé) 14 123 hl

Production Surface area: 3 003 ha (7 420 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 38% France, 62% export

308 winemakers, 21 wine merchant-producers, 1 cooperative

POUILLY FUME (OR « BLANC FUMÉ » OF POUILLY)

POUILLY SUR LOIRE

A.O.C. IN 1937

Located in Berry and Burgundy, in country Nivernais, the vineyard of Pouilly pride of two AOC's.

On 7 villages reign two grape varieties: the sauvignon blanc called locally Blanc Fumé and the chasselas which allow the production of AOC Pouilly sur Loire.

A little History...

The vineyard of Pouilly seems to be present for the first from the Vth Century.

Developed by the Monks starting from XIIth century (a parcel looking at the Loire is always called "La Loge aux Moines), the vineyard will see this monastic influence increasing during the transfer of the fief of Pouilly to the Benedictins of La Charité. The opening of the canal of Briare in 1642 allows the trade of the wines towards Paris. From 1860 to 1890, the vineyard turns to the production of chasselas in table grape supplying the "Halles" of Paris thanks to the railways arrived at Pouilly in 1861. After phylloxera, the delimitation of the production area is born in 1929 and the wines resulting from the two grape varieties (white Sauvignon for Pouilly Fumé and Chasselas for Pouilly sur Loire) will obtain the AOC in 1937.

The Vineyard

The Pouilly vineyard extends over 1 366 ha (3 375 acres) on the right bank of the Loire into 7 villages:

- Garchy
- Pouilly sur Loire
- St Laurent
- Tracy sur Loire
- Mesves sur Loire
- St Andelain
- St Martin sur Nohain

The oldest grounds belong to Jurassic and are old approximately 160 million years. They are marine deposits limestones in which fossils show the last life. At the end of the Cretacé, the region is subjected to a powerful erosive phase. The limestone deposits dissolve partially, giving up the residues more or less clayey (Clay-flints). An important tectonic phase then stretches Western Europe of west in is creating the ditch of the Loire. Many faults of north-western direction appear at the same time and carve the current broken relief.

We can finally distinguish on the vineyard's area 4 different types of soils:

- Limestones of Villers of Oxfordien (caillottes)
- Limestones of Barrois of Portlandien (caillottes)
- Marls with small oysters of Kimméridgien (Terres blanches)
- Clay-flints of the Cretacé (Flint)

Tasting

Pouilly Fumé very often gives in nose aroma of broom and grapefruit. The gun-flint is also present on the wines resulting from flint.

Wines with can be drink in their earliest youth but which present, for some vintages, very good potentials of guard.

Pouilly sur Loire are fresh, wines of thirst to the noble sense of term which give wines pleasant and easily accessible.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production of Pouilly Fumé: 87 100 hl

Total 2018 production of Pouilly sur Loire: 1 666 hl

Production Surface area: 1 366 ha (3 375 acres) for Pouilly Fumé and 27 ha (67 acres) for Pouilly sur Loire

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 53% France, 47% export

156 winemakers, 8 wine merchants-producers and 1 cooperative

M E N E T O U - S A L O N (A O C I N 1 9 5 9)

The hills of the Menetou-Salon vineyards are found near the cathedral city of Bourges.

A little history...

Menetou-Salon is an ancient vineyard according to the old writings concerning the châtelainie. We find acts from the years 1063, 1097 and 1100 in which the Lord of Menetou gave different properties to various religious orders. Most notably, he gave the vineyards located in Clos de Davet to the famous abbey of St-Sulpice-Lès-Bourges.

The history of Menetou-Salon is intimately linked with Jacques Coeur, Steward of the Royal Expenditures and Banker of the Court of King Charles VII. Jacques Coeur acquired the seigniorship of Menetou-Salon in 1450 and writings of the day relate how the wines of Menetou-Salon graced his table. It's said that Agnes Sorel, the king's favorite, would come to Menetou-Salon to rest under the ancient lime wood trees (still standing near the castle today) and enjoy the wine of Clos de la Dame.

The first wine producers' syndicate was established as early as 1890. In the 1970's, wine production was given new impetus and today vineyards cover an area of around 575 hectares (1,420 acres).

The Vineyard

Located near Bourges, the Menetou-Salon vineyard spread through 10 villages:

Menetou-Salon	Quantilly
Aubinges	Saint-Céols
Morogues	Soulangis
Parassy	Vignoux-sous-les-Aix
Pigny	Humbligny

The vineyards are planted on limestone sediment dating to the Jurassic superior period (Kimmeridgian). The soils of the well-adapted slopes are favorable to the production of Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir.

Tasting

Menetou-Salon white wines are fresh and fruity, spicy and musky, blending citrus and floral aromas. Pepper and menthol tones are apparent in a round, full palate with good length.

The supple and perfumed reds have an attractive ruby robe. Ripe cherry or plum aromas dominate. On the palate, the reds are expressive and rich with candied fruit finish.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 36 120 hl

- Sauvignon Blanc 25 743 hl
- Pinot Noir (red) 9 324 hl
- Pinot Noir (rosé) 1 053 hl

Production Surface area: 586 ha (1 448 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 88% France, 12% export

90 winemakers and 6 wine merchants-producers

Q U I N C Y (A O C I N 1 9 3 6)

Located in the Champagne Berrichone on the left bank of the Cher river, the Quincy vineyards grow on sand and gravel plateaus.

The Sauvignon Blanc grape reigns supreme and finds a unique expression here because of the special particularities of the local soil.

A little history...

It is said that Quincy was originally the estate of a certain "Quintius". It is also reputed that the Biturigians Cubi, whose territory included the village of Quincy, grew vines even in that ancient time and brought them to the Biturigians Vivisci in the Bordeaux region.

Cited in the Bulle de Callixte II in 1120, Quincy is without a doubt one of the oldest vineyards of the region. The Sauvignon Blanc grape variety was brought from the "Abbaye des femmes de Beauvoir" by the monks of the Citeaux order.

The Duke Jean de Berry and Charles VII recognized the excellence of the wines and conferred the title of noble wine to the Quincy Appellation.

After the re-plantings due to phylloxera, Quincy was the first of the Centre-Loire vineyards to obtain the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) status in August 1936.

The Vineyard

Situated to the east of Bourges, the Quincy vineyard grows along a plateau dominating the Cher Valley. The appellation zone in production comprises 300 hectares (741 acres) and extends into 2 villages: Quincy and Brinay. A small portion is located on the right bank of the Cher in an area known as Vilallin.

The vines are planted in an ancient terrace of the Cher river, made up of sand and gravel. This kind of soil warms rapidly. Three soil types are found here:

- Sandy-gravel on clay formation.
- Sandy soil and red sand formation.
- Silty-sand on sandy-clay or clay more or less sandy.

Quincy's climate is somewhat oceanic with regular seasonal rainfalls. Located in the Champagne Berrichone, it is relatively dry (<700 mm/year) and warm in summer.

Tasting

Quincy is characterized by fresh, ripe citrus tones. Grapefruit, menthol and pepper notes, acacia and white floral aromas are also present.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 20 143 hl

Production Surface area: 308 ha (761 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 90% France, 10% export

33 winemakers, 3 wine merchant and 1 cooperative

REUILLY (A O C I N 1 9 3 7)

In the heart of Berry, the Reuilly vineyard extends from the banks of the Arnon to the shores of the Cher. Given its superb well-exposed steep slopes and high quality soil and environment, Reuilly was destined to be a premier wine making region.

A little history...

The origins of the Reuilly vineyards can be traced back to the early 7th century. Dagobert I, King of the Franks, gave Reuilly – its pastures, fields and vines – as a gift to the Abbey of St-Denis. The Reuilly vineyard supplied wines to the medieval towns of Bourges and Vierzon and were transported along the tributaries of the Cher to the Loire and shipped as far as England and Flanders. In 1365 the Duke of Berry, son of the King of France, issued a charter governing wine production in Reuilly.

This charter fixed the dates of harvesting and established a levy on all wines sold. At the end of the 19th century, at a time when vineyards were being replanted after the devastation caused by phylloxera, the first producers' syndicates were set up.

After the lull of the following years, winemaking in the region underwent a new revival in the 1980's.

The Vineyard

The 260 hectares (642 acres) Reuilly appellation is southwest of Bourges and covers 6 villages between Indre and Cher:

- Reuilly, Diou in Indre.
- Lury-sur-Arnon, Chéry, Lazenay and Preuilly in Cher.

The vines are planted on medium steep limestone marl hillsides and on gravel and sand terraces.

The majority of wine produced here is white from Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir is used for red and rosé Reuilly. One may also find some rosé wine called "gris" produced here from Pinot Gris grapes.

Tasting

Fresh and fruity, the white wines reveal floral and vegetal aromas which melt into a rich round palate.

The reds are full, fleshy and light with plenty of fruit.

The rosé's from Pinot Gris are tender and delicate with a very pale pink robe.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 16 244 hl

- Sauvignon Blanc 8 744 hl
- Pinot Noir (red) 4 067 hl
- Pinot Gris (rosé) 3 433 hl

Production Surface area: 274 ha (677 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 85% France, 15% export

38 winemakers, 4 wine merchant-producer and 1 cooperative

C O T E A U X D U G I E N N O I S (A O C I N 1 9 9 8)

Growing on the hills along the Loire River between Gien and Cosne-sur-Loire, this is a rapidly developing vineyard producing authentic wines revealing the originality of its terroir.

A little history...

Grape pips found in archaeological digs at Cosne-sur-Loire have been dated to the 2nd century, suggesting that vines have been planted here for a considerably long time.

In 849, King Charles "le Chauve" (the Bald), confirmed that a donation of vines and property was made by the Bishop of Auxerre to the college of the Church of Saint-Laurent in Cosne. In 1218, it was recorded that wines from the Giennois vineyards were purchased by the Royal Court of King Philippe II Auguste in Paris. The castle of Cosne was built between 1254 and 1262 by the Bishop of Auxerre, and it included a vast cellar as well as vineyards. In January 1566, Charles IX and his mother, Catherine de Médicis, stopped in Cosne. Amongst the gifts they were offered were bottles of the finest local wines. The building of numerous abbeys in the region contributed greatly to the increase in the number of vineyards.

The Cistercian Abbey of Roche in Myennes and the Commandery of the Templars were particularly influential. Around this time, Coteaux du Giennois vines were also cultivated farther down the river Loire in the vineyards of the famous St-Benoit-sur-Loire Abbey and upstream on the grounds of La Charité Abbey.

The Vineyard

The Coteaux du Giennois vineyard is situated on the hillsides along the Loire River in the administrative departments of Nièvre and Loiret. The 200 hectares (494 acres) of the appellation extend into 14 communities:

Beaulieu, Bonny, Gien, Briare, Ousson, Neuvy, St Loup, Alligny, La Celle-sur-Loire, Cosne-sur-Loire, Myennes, Pouigny, Saint Père.

The vines grow on flinty or limestone hills along the Loire. Some also grow on ancient terraces of the Loire in Gien. Still other vines grow on prolongations of the geological formations of Sancerre and Pouilly; mainly limestone east of the Cosne fault and flint to the west.

Tasting

The white wines have mineral tones with quince and white flower notes. Very good expression of Sauvignon Blanc with excellent freshness.

The reds are a Pinot Noir and Gamay blend, fine and fruity, with red fruit and pepper notes. The aromatic side of Pinot Noir and the vivacity of Gamay balance each other wonderfully.

The rosés, fine and delicate, have light pepper accents and exhibit aromas of vineyard peaches.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 11 124 hl

- Sauvignon Blanc 7 184 hl
- Red 3 075 hl
- Rosé 865 hl

Production Surface area: 202 ha (499 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 78% France, 22% export

33 winemakers, 3 wine merchant-producer and 1 cooperative

CHATEAUMEILLANT (AOC IN 2010)

Located south of Bourges, this ancient vineyard produces red and rosé wines from very unique soils.

A little history...

The origin of the Châteaumeillant vineyard can be traced back to the 5th century. Châteaumeillant was the Meylan of the Biturigians and home to the Biturican vines, the Médiolanum (the Roman name for Milan) of Peutinger, an important road junction between Rome and Gaul and a major storing ground for amphorae. Gregory of Tours confirms the existence of vines in this region in his *Historiae Francorum* of 582.

Between 1220 and 1275, a series of charters were issued relating to the means of production of quality wines and the labor which was enlisted under feudal rule, known as the "corvée". Amongst the governing principles established under these charters was the principle of the "ban des vendanges" or the announcement of the official start of harvesting, which exists even today.

In 1773, new vine stocks were brought from Lyons. By 1830, Gamay, the native variety of Beaujolais, had become the most widely planted vine in this area.

Châteaumeillant is especially renowned for its "vin gris", or grey wine, which is produced by pressing the Gamay grapes immediately after harvesting.

The wines of Châteaumeillant were awarded the AOC quality status in 2010.

The Vineyard

The Châteaumeillant appellation is just 80 hectares (198 acres) and is located in the communities of:

- Chateaumeillant, Reigny, Saint Maur and Vesdun in the Cher administrative department.
- Champillet, Feusilles, Néret and Urciers in the Indre administrative department.

The vines are planted on siliceous soils, mostly sandy and sandy-clay. The sub-soils are composed primarily of sandstone, micaschist and gneiss.

Tasting

The reds combine aromas of ripe fruit with a full mouth for a finish on fine peppery notes. The rosés, called "gris", present a freshness and fruitiness that is very original. White fruits and vineyard peach lead to more sweet notes. Fresh and lively on the palate, these are excellent summer wines.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 2 926 hl

- Red 2 100 hl
- Rosé 826 hl

Production Surface area: 82 ha (203 acres)

Percentage (by volume) of sales: 98% France, 2% export

23 winemakers

CÔTES DE LA CHARITÉ - IGP in 2011

The Vineyard

The vineyard of Côtes de La Charité is situated in the administrative departments of Nièvre. It extends over 50 ha (123 acres).

The grape varieties used for white wines are chardonnay and pinot gris. The reds come from the pinot noir grape variety.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 2 350 hl

- White : 1 500 hl
- Red : 750 hl
- Rosé : 100 hl

Production Surface area: 43 ha (106 acres)
15 winemakers

COTEAUX DE TANNAY - IGP in 2011

The Vineyard

The vineyard of Coteaux de Tannay is situated in the administrative departments of Nièvre. It extends over 30 ha (74 acres).

The grape varieties used for white wines are chardonnay, melon de Bourgogne, pinot blanc, pinot gris and auxerrois. The reds come from the pinot noir and gamay grape variety.

Some Statistics

Total 2018 production: 820 hl

- White : 650 hl
- Red : 120 hl
- Rosé : 50 hl

Production Surface area: 17 ha (42 acres)
7 winemakers

APPENDIX I

CENTRE-LOIRE WINE STATISTICS

Total surface area of Centre-Loire vineyards (in production in 2018): 5 916 ha (14 618 acres)

- Sauvignon Blanc: 4 812ha (11 890 acres)
- Pinot noir and Gamay (red): 752 ha (1 858 acres)
- Pinot noir, Gamay and Pinot gris (rosé): 353 ha (872 acres)

Average yield in 2018: 34.30 hl/ha to 65.37 hl/ha

8 Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée (A.O.C.): Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé, Menetou-Salon, Quincy, Reuilly, Coteaux du Giennois, Châteaumeillant et Pouilly-sur-Loire.

2 IGP : Côtes de la Charité, Coteaux de Tannay

690 declared winegrowers

390 wineries selling in bottles

87 wine merchant-winemakers

5 cooperatives

Total turnover of Centre-Loire wines: 300 million euros

Total production of Centre-Loire wines in 2018: 368 282 hl

- White : 307 793 hl
- Red : 39 654 hl
- Rosé : 20 450 hl

Percentage (by volume) of sales in 2018-2019 (end of march): 52% France, 48% export

THE FRENCH MARKET

Sales on the French market in 2018-2019:

Value: 142 million euros

Volume: 164 000 hl

Commercialization of Centre-Loire wines in the French market by volume:

Supermarkets: 15%

Restaurants: 25%

Wineshops: 30%

Private customers: 30%

EXPORT MARKET

Export sales by value and volume in 2018-2019 (end of march)

Value: 158 million euros

Volume: 151 400 hl

Evolution by volume compared to 2017-2018: +8%

Importing countries of Centre-Loire wines

	White	Rose	Red	Total	%
USA	41 260	4 150	960	46 369	33,0%
Great Britain	24 624	2 280	958	27 862	19,8%
Belgium	10 651	263	1 056	11 970	8,5%
Germany	6 550	743	67	7 360	5,2%
Nederlands	6 417	172	164	6 753	4,8%
Canada	5 181	207	216	5 605	4,0%
Norway	3 811	444	18	4 273	3,0%
Sweden	3 750	16	54	3 819	2,7%
Switzerland	3 480	51	69	3 600	2,6%
Ireland	2 577	248	69	2 895	2,1%
Denmark	1 805	25	86	1 916	1,4%
Japan	1 476	22	27	1 525	1,1%
TOTAL	126 600	9 200	4 500	140 300	100,0%

APPENDIX II

VINTAGES OF CENTRE-LOIRE WINES

2018: A RECORD YEAR FOR CENTRE-LOIRE

Having braved the unusual weather conditions, 2018 is a unique, early vintage - a vintage shaped by extraordinary extremes of weather, ranging from record levels of spring rainfall to summer heatwaves.

The Wine-Growing Year

Winter was dank and gloomy, with limited sunshine and abundant rainfall.

Spring started where winter left off – with pelting rain - and any longed-for improvement to the weather failed to materialise. The first 10 days of March were very cold, verging on freezing. After a brief respite in February, the rain came back with a vengeance. Unlike 2017, nature seemed reluctant to get going.

April was marked by unseasonably high temperatures. The warmer weather encouraged budbreak, which took place around mid-April.

From then on, things became frantic on the weather front. Temperatures soared; the period from 18th – 22nd April was marked by intense heat, with extremely hot days and mild nights.

April 21st went down as the hottest April day on record.

In the space of a few days, the vineyards had not only caught up on themselves compared to 2017, but had galloped ahead by a few days.

The end of the month saw a return to cooler temperatures, a painful reminder of 2016 and 2017's frosts. Winegrowers braced themselves to do battle with the elements yet again; but there was no need. The danger passed.

May also featured copious amounts of rainfall, predisposing the vines to mildew across all areas. Thankfully, in most cases the attacks were not severe.

We could tell even now that water shortages would not be a problem for this vintage. It was a record year for rainfall, and in some areas cumulative totals were already approaching the annual average.

The vines began to flower at the start of June. Conditions were good. It was clear that 2018 was to be an early vintage.

Mid-June saw a radical change in the weather. Summer arrived at last, with temperatures reaching heatwave proportions – the start of a new growing season. July brought more of the same, with temperatures again above the seasonal norm; summer 2018 was the hottest since the heatwave of 2003.

Prolonged drought was another feature of summer 2018, the driest since 1945; but low rainfall turned out to be an effective remedy for the continuing mildew, which was proving very stubborn.

Things eased a little towards the end of the growing season. The more sensitive vines continued to show signs of water stress, but on the whole the soils had retained enough water to ensure the vines were adequately supplied.

Such were the conditions at the start of veraison, which kicked off in the last few days of July in the earliest parcels. However, growth had not halted completely by then, so progress was slow.

Ripening

The grapes ripened in sunny, summer conditions. Good moisture levels helped the vines cope with the dry weather, save for a few parcels with particularly free-draining soils or shallow-rooted vines. The wet spring had its advantages after all!

One of the consequences of heatwave temperatures during ripening was a reduced level of malic acid in the fruit, which also ensured the absence of unwanted 'green' flavours. Sugars continued to accumulate well and the 2018 vintage began to take on its own distinctive character.

The vigneronns were generally in good spirits, their main worry being the potential impact of the summer drought on berry weight.

Harvests

September's fine weather helped to maintain the quality potential of the harvest. No substantial changes were predicted, and vigneronns could look forward to optimum ripeness across the whole vineyard.

Harvesting started early, with Pinot Grigios being picked in Reully at the end of August. For reds, picking started on September 5th. High temperatures at the beginning of the month had caused the berries to start shrivelling; sugar concentration rose rapidly, and the speed of harvesting rose accordingly

Sauvignons were picked from September 10th. Harvesting in Centre-Loire was staggered this year due not only to differing ripeness levels, but also to harvest potential.

Another major feature was that harvesting took place in unusually sunny conditions, the sunniest since 2003. Temperatures were well above the seasonal norm, regularly reaching 28 and 29°C, and the afternoon sun proved exhausting for both grapes and harvesters. Schedules were rearranged, and night-time or early-morning harvests became the new norm.

First Impressions

2018 shows every sign of being a sun-driven vintage.

Whites are still a little reticent but show fruity aromas, including distinct notes of pear and mandarin. They are supple and delicate, balancing sweetness with freshness; aromatic profiles are already beautifully precise. Texture and mouthfeel may need tweaking, but all in all, the 2018s are already very pleasing.

All we need now is a bit of patience.

Rosés are intensely coloured with well-expressed aromas of fresh red fruit and a deliciously refreshing palate.

Reds are both smooth and powerful, showing a deep ruby-red colour with a hint of violet.

Ripe red fruit is the overriding flavour, with a note of spice giving them the distinctive freshness of a Loire red. The palate is structured, with well-rounded tannins.

In conclusion, the 2018 vintage is set to be all about elegance.

2017 IN CENTRE-LOIRE – A YEAR OF CONTRASTS

2017 is the latest in a succession of early harvests.

As winter drew to a close with temperatures worthy of late spring, nature snowballed ahead. The vines continued to reach each milestone early, right up until harvest - despite very variable conditions which changed month by month and area by area.

The 2017 growth cycle

Winter 2017 was cold and dry, with rainfall some 60% lower than the norm. Temperatures varied, starting out lower than the seasonal norm in January, then rising in February ready to usher in an unseasonably warm spring. By the end of March, and for the first few days of April, temperatures were worthy of mid-May. Vine growth surged ahead, and the first buds began to appear at the beginning of April, 8 – 10 days earlier than the 10-year average.

Unfortunately, the second half of April was blighted by freezing weather, and growers spent around 10 nights battling the frosts. Temperatures plummeted to lows of -5°C; it was an unequal struggle.

Centre-Loire's vineyards, like vineyards throughout France, are now paying a heavy price. Damage levels vary, but every vineyard has been hit to some extent. Châteaumeillant was decimated, and Pouilly-Fumé was again seriously affected.

April will be memorable not only for its heavy frosts, but also for low rainfall, some 70% below the seasonal norm; but once again, our growers picked themselves up, dusted themselves off and got back to work.

Growers spent 2016 battling with record levels of rainfall; May 2017, by contrast, was dry: cold and grey for the first couple of weeks, then the exact opposite towards the end of the month, with temperatures reaching record highs on May 27th and 28th.

Conditions such as these encourage growth, and the vines began to develop rapidly. Nature set a blistering pace, and growers had no choice but to keep up. There was no time to relax as the frozen vines made up for lost time.

Mildew made only a tentative appearance at the end of May, and oidium was also relatively understated; favourable conditions in winter and spring followed by rapid vine growth had played a major part in mitigating the dangers. This again was in complete contrast to last year, and proof that weather is not always the enemy.

Flowering started at the beginning of June under favourable conditions – warm temperatures with limited rainfall. The vines raced through their phenological milestones, and it looked as if ripening would be fairly uniform.

Then came the heatwave. For the entire two weeks between July 10th and 25th, temperatures regularly soared to 30°C and above, while water was in short supply – down by 40% compared to the norm. Although not critical, the situation gave cause for concern. Vine growth slowed.

The hot weather persisted throughout July, with two peaks in temperature from July 4th – 7th and July 17th – 19th. Rainfall varied across the different areas, and cumulative totals were, in many cases, the results of heavy storms, some even including hail. This also had an impact on production potential.

The rainfall brought much-needed water to some areas, but other sectors – those which had escaped the storms – were beginning to show signs of hydric stress.

Veraison began in the first days of August, under these very divergent conditions. Vine growth had not stopped completely, however, and veraison got off to a slow start.

Ripening

Ripening progressed in very distinctive weather conditions: light August showers alternating with sunshine and giving way to more heatwave temperatures towards the end of the month. This weather encouraged the berries to swell, and helped develop sugar levels. The few extremely hot days reduced acidity and ensured the absence of unwanted 'green' flavours. Meanwhile, nights remained cool, helping to preserve fruity flavours.

Low rainfall affected certain areas throughout the season, and in these zones lack of water began to have a major impact. In areas with plentiful rainfall on the other hand, berries began to bloat and burst, or were damaged by wasps, raising concerns that the fruit may rot. Vigilance on the part of the growers went up a notch with every passing day – as did their unease.

September arrived – and so, suddenly, did autumn. Temperatures fell, bringing a return to normal conditions. Grape health stabilised, and growers were given the chance to wait for their fruit to reach optimum ripeness.

Harvesting

The grapes continued to ripen under close scrutiny, and there was tension in the air as harvesting started. Picking began with Pinot Gris in Reuilly in the final days of August. In other appellations, Sauvignon harvests started on September 12th, while red varieties were mainly picked between September 19th and 22nd. Once again, Sauvignon Blancs didn't disappoint – grapes were healthy and quality was excellent. For red varieties the situation was a little more variable, and grapes needed rigorous sorting to maintain wine quality.

Harvesters finally laid down their secateurs in October – this is one of the rare vintages where Centre-Loire harvests have been spread over 3 months.

First Impressions

This year's whites are very elegant, with notes of citrus and white-fleshed fruit; minerality and a touch of liquorice add to their charm. They are full and rounded, underpinned by an appealing edge of freshness.

Rosés are generally fairly pale in colour, their dominant flavours of grapefruit and blood oranges beautifully balanced by a delightful edge of vivacity on the palate.

Reds are intense in colour, and show flavours of red berry fruits. Extraction and vinification has been tailored to suit the needs of this year's vintage; the results are well-honed, smooth, supple tannins.

In short – Centre-Loire's 2017 wines are made for enjoyment.

2016 IN CENTRE-LOIRE: GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT

2016 has been giving our winegrowers a run for their money. Weather conditions were difficult; growers have had to contend with rain, humidity, frost and even sunscald, but have carried on regardless. Luckily nature rallied at the eleventh hour, and the vintage will be an excellent one after all.

2016 in the Vineyard

The beginning of 2016 was excessively mild, but also excessively rainy. In fact the weather bared its teeth on only two occasions - once to celebrate St Vincent's Day in January, and again in the first weeks of March. It ended on the same note as winter 2015 - without even a hint of frost. There was excessive rainfall throughout the winter.

The growing cycle started late - in April, a month marked by alternating periods of very mild and very cold weather. From April 18th, vines were exposed to sub-zero temperatures at night, with the worst of the damage occurring during the night from April 26th to 27th. Weather conditions were unpredictable – on some evenings, rain left the buds wet, leaving them even more susceptible to the night-time cold.

The extent of the damage is difficult to estimate, but we already know that the effects are likely to be serious in Coteaux du Giennois, Menetou-Salon, Pouilly-Fumé and Quincy, and to a lesser extent Sancerre.

May started – and finished – on a cold note, and will no doubt stay in our memories as a month of exceptionally heavy rainfall (15% above the norm); this made access to some plots particularly difficult. The first few days of June were cold and damp; there followed a period of calm from June 5th - 9th, only to be disrupted again later on. As we know all too well, cold, wet weather encourages disease, especially downy mildew, and diseased grapes, naturally affect production potential. Weather can cause stress not only for the vine, but also for the winegrowers!

Flowering started during the second half of June, but the weather continued to be difficult, and coulure and millerandage were rife. Nature rallied for the first time on June 23rd: the sun came out, temperatures rose – and given these newly favourable conditions, vines continued to flower rapidly.

Summer made its first tentative appearance - and the rain stopped. Cumulative rainfall for July and August was less than 90% of the thirty year average. On July 15th, temperatures began to rise, culminating in a late heatwave at the end of August. The warm spell also left its mark, and by the end of August the vines were showing early signs of hydric stress - and more notably, the effects of sunscald. Veraison started in the second half of August, somewhat hampered by the very dry conditions. Things moved along slowly – but prevailing conditions ensured that at least the fruit was in excellent health.

Ripening

The start of September brought summery conditions, with sunshine and temperatures of over 30°C. Significant differences of temperature between day and night promote ripeness in the grapes, both phenolic and aromatic, by balancing out any touches of overly-vegetal flavour. Meanwhile, lack of water was really beginning to make its mark.

Hardly daring to complain, the winegrowers begged for just a drop of rain - and rain it did, on the 14th and 16th of September; a little miracle in an otherwise tough year. At last the berries started to swell, sugars continued to develop and declining acidity was checked.

Cool nights alternated with sunny days, giving perfect ripening conditions – and winegrowers felt safe enough to wait until both whites and reds reached the peak of ripeness

Harvesting

The weather remained completely dry during harvesting, and for the fourth month in a row there was little rain. The very cold mornings are likely to become a hallmark of this year's harvest.

First Impressions

Just like 2015, 2016's wines are expected to show good purity of flavour; and as with all late vintages, they have plenty of freshness and a crisp texture.

While still slightly reticent on the nose, the white wines hint at notes of white flowers and white-fleshed fruit, with a base of underlying minerality. Rosés have a lovely intense colouring, and fresh fruit aromas such as blood orange and raspberry. The reds, with their deep, intense colouring, are expected to be the belle of the ball this year. They are showing aromas of red fruits including blackcurrant and raspberry, mixed with florals. Mouthfeel is fresh, underpinned by velvety-smooth tannins.

2016 will be remembered as a year of frost, and of high quality wines. And for Centre-Loire this year - all's well that ends well.

2015 IN CENTRE-LOIRE: HOT, DRY WEATHER MAKES FOR A PROMISING VINTAGE

Just as any other northern region, the Centre Loire is profoundly affected by vineyard conditions in any given year – and 2015 will be no different. The weather has been rather distinctive this year, and has resulted in wines with very pure flavours.

The Winegrowing Season

There was nothing particularly exceptional about the year. Winter 2014-2015 was one of the least cold for 100 years. After a mild start followed by a somewhat cooler February (but still no frosts), winter came to an end in March. Temperatures were well within seasonal norms. Until the end of February winter rainfall was higher than average, helping to build up a good reserve of water in the soils and subsoils ready for spring.

The growth cycle kicked in slightly late, but mild temperatures from April 8th onwards quickly made up for any delay. Warm weather coupled with good water availability encouraged bud break, which progressed evenly and without any major problems. Sunshine was the order of the day – until the last week in April, which brought back chilly temperatures and poorer weather. The first days of May were also cold and rainy – but spring arrived at last on May 4th, and this time it was here to stay. In fact it was more like an early summer, with only small amounts of infrequent rainfall. A modest hailstorm on May 20th in parts of Sancerre, Quincy and Reuilly brought back bad memories, and caused localised damage in Reuilly.

Flowering started in the first half of June. Conditions were good, with temperatures slightly higher than average and little rainfall, although there was still some incidence of coulure in the Sauvignons. Some rain fell on June 12th and 14th – and then the drought set in. The first week of July brought scorching temperatures; the younger parcels were first to experience the effects of the drought, with hydric stress making itself apparent around mid-July. Elsewhere, very pale green foliage was a sure sign that vine development was slowing down.

Veraison started at the beginning of August, but the extremely dry conditions slowed progress down considerably; however, a rainy episode in mid-August changed everything, and veraison finished very quickly.

The dry weather acted as a natural suppressant for pests and diseases. Powdery mildew was closely monitored and kept under control.

Ripening

Ripening conditions were very good. Given the summer weather, we were expecting smallish berries with low acidity – it was to be part and parcel of the year's experiences.

However, a final period of rainfall at the end of August was of great benefit to the vines, which still needed a little more water. The berries started to grow at last, and the rain had little effect on the speed of ripening. Sugar content rose rapidly and any reduction in acidity levels was contained. Technological and phenolic ripeness was quickly reached, and the fruit remained in excellent health. Harvest dates could be decided by tasting alone, and all the different components came together in a well-balanced, harmonious way.

Harvest

Harvesting started calmly - on September 7th with Pinot Gris in Reully. Sauvignon harvests started on September 14th for the other appellations, while red varieties were picked mainly between September 17th and 20th. Minor episodes of sleet in September did nothing to dampen spirits; they even had the added benefit of softening the grapes' rather tough skins.

First Impressions

Grape juices showed excellent purity of flavour, and this is set to be one of the 2015 vintage's major features.

The whites are full and elegant with complex aromas of white fruit. They are dense and warm, offset by a refreshing tang of acidity.

Red wines meanwhile show an appealing ruby red colour and aromas of red fruit (strawberries, cherries and raspberries) with underlying floral notes. Rounded, silky smooth tannins are testament to good ripeness, and give freshness and elegance.

2015 is an excellent vintage. The wines are already well-flavoured, and, as in any high-sunshine vintage, their youthful character will stay with them for a long time to come.