

Loire Valley

Recommended wines tasted at numerous venues in New York – Spring 2014

These wines have scored at least * (4 stars) out of 5
(see vintrinsic.com for explanation)***

Here are summary remarks regarding the last three vintages in the Loire Valley.
Examples of each year are found in the notes below.

2013 vintage: ** to ***

2013 started with a particularly cold winter, a cold June, and overall numerous challenges. The total harvest was of average size, 2.2 million hl, a 28% boost from 2012. In the Nantais there was delayed flowering, hot summer days and cool nights delivering aromatic, well-defined Muscadet. Chenins of Anjou-Saumur tended to be understated and dry while reds displayed sound phenolic maturity and seem fragrant, supple. In Touraine, sunny summer days allowing the vine to catch up from a 3-week delay, ending season only 10 days later than average. The reds possessed attractive fruit and elegance, with greater success in the best Chinon sites. On June 17, there was a violent hailstorm in Vouvray and Montlouis stripping flowering vines; volumes were dramatically reduced. The few still whites offer delicacy and finesse. Further east in the Centre, the weather was dry and hot from late June to mid-September. Picking was largely finished by the third week of October. Sauvignon Blanc realized good sugar maturity and the wines have developed well despite some early severity.

2012: * to ******

2012 saw a difficult cool, wet spring in the Loire. Yields were cut to 1.9 million hl, well below 5-year average. Good September weather rescued early-ripening varieties and locations. Cold, rainy weather returned in October. Muscadet stands out for its intensity, backbone and top cuvees should keep well. The volume was severely reduced. Anjou-Saumur, Touraine Chenins picked in good conditions. Reds are forward with attractive fruit yet tend to lack concentration and body.

2011: ***

The season began very early and well, but proved more difficult toward the end. There was cool weather in middle of the summer. Successful Muscadet and dry Anjou Chenins. Early harvest in Centre, with harvesting by mid-September. The Sauvignon Blanc whites were delicate and forward; acidities were lower. The Cabernets were generally ripe in Touraine and were picked starting in early September in Chinon, Bourgueil. Less well-placed sites did not ripen as successfully.

WHITES OF NANTAIS

Domaine La Haute Fevrie Muscadet Sur Lie 2013 ****

Transparent straw. Impeccably clean nose, youthful and subtly lemony. Precise, fresh taste, well-balanced, with a lasting saline finish.

Domaine du Haut Bourg Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu 2013 ****

Pale straw. Impresses with its clean, particularly pure nose characterized by youthfully expressive mix of white and stone fruits. The palate is precise, direct and linear, gaining in expression and intensity. Long, well-defined finish. Bottled two weeks earlier (mid-February '14).

Domaine du Haut Bourg Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu "Origine" 2003 **+**

Transparent straw gold. Gorgeous nose displaying a restrained richness and undertone of blanched macadamia nut. No sign of age. Caressing, understated taste, quite long and fine with subtle stony accents. This 10-year old white is delightful and makes a case for the potential longevity of Muscadet, nearly always drunk very young!

Domaine de l'Aujardière Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu Sur Lie "La Noë" 2012 *(*)**

Pale yellow gold. Lovely, delicate scent of varied white and yellow fruits. Restrained and youthful, faintly accented, with good intensity and a dry ending. Should show more by 2015. Vines up to 60 years old grown on granite. No racking or filtration.

Louis Métaireau Muscadet Sur Lie "Black Label" 2012 ****

Light straw yellow. Ultraclean aroma, atypically full and ripe with delicate white fruits. Ripe and tender on the palate with beautiful balance and harmony. Understated yet long with a racy, saline conclusion. Fine example.



WHITES OF ANJOU-SAUMUR

Château de Fosse-Sèche Saumur “Arcane” 2011 **+**

Pale yellow gold. Stunning nose, ideally clean, strikingly pure with great subtlety. This Chenin boasts enticing, scented yellow fruit and is precise and cool with fabulous focus. Incisive ending.

Domaine Richard Leroy Anjou “Les Noël de Montbenault” 2011 ****

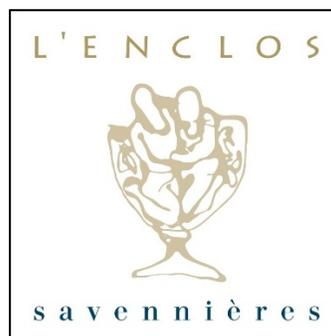
Pale gold. Pure, multifaceted aroma – almost Burgundian in personality – offering understated toast and faintly sweet white fruit accents. In the mouth, this biodynamically farmed Anjou is highly focused and precise. Light in weight yet concentrated and intense, with a racy finale displaying delicate aromatic lift. Still quite young and will keep.

Domaine Eric Morgat Anjou “Litus” 2010 ****

Pale yellow straw. Forthcoming, very attractive nose exhibiting concentration and pinpoint focus. Stone, stone fruit, white fruit accents mingle in the aromatics. The wine appears light and transparent in the mouth, displaying persistent and pronounced aromatic highlights.

Domaine Eric Morgat Savennières “L’Enclos” 2010 **(*)**

Pale yellow gold. Beautifully clean nose with impeccable purity. Intriguing suggestions of dried yellow fruits and quince with marked intensity. This Chenin delivers remarkable precision and finesse on the palate. Transparent and ethereal. There are elusive aromatic fruit highlights which persist through a complex, mouth-watering, faintly salty finish. A beautiful rendition of this classic appellation, still in an early phase of a long life. Aged for around 12 months in 400-liter casks, then another 10 months on the fine lees in tank.



WHITES OF TOURAINE

Domaine Paul Buisse Touraine Sauvignon 2013 ****

Transparent gold straw. Very clean, attractive scent of nuanced stone fruits, white fruits and ripe citrus. In the mouth, very expressive and forward with excellent volume for Touraine. Highly aromatic and persistent, ending clean and dry. An excellent example.

Domaine de la Chaise Touraine Sauvignon 2013 ** Value**

Transparent gold straw. High-toned nose displaying citrus peel and pith. Very clean palate, attractively textured with good persistence and subtle aromatic lift. Concludes with a marked spinal column. Outstanding value at around \$13 retail.

Domaine Bellevue Touraine Sauvignon 2013 **+ Value**

Pale yellow gold. Very clean, subtly accented fragrance of yellow fruit and citrus offering notable concentration and intensity. The taste is very fresh and also delicately creamy and understated. Finishes with citrus pith and clean, vivid definition. This over delivers for Touraine and a retail price of \$15.

Domaine de la Charmoise (Henry Marionnet) “Le Vinifera” Chenin Blanc 2012 ****

Transparent straw gold. Beautifully clean nose, very finely and subtly inflected powdered stone, green apple and citrus pith. Controlled intensity and exciting precision as well as pure and transparent in its taste. Mouth-watering acidity in the finale. From vines propagated by massale selection from pre-phylloxera plantings. The malo is blocked.

REDS OF TOURAINE, SAUMUR & OTHER DISTRICTS

Domaine de la Charmoise (Henry Marionnet) “Première Vendange” Gamay 2012 ****

Moderately dense plus very dark red with purple rim. Clean, ripe, youthful dark fruits in the aroma together with sweet berry highlights. The palate is medium-bodied and well-structured, with masked dark fruit and a dry aftertaste with notable grip. A “natural” wine: no sulfur, chaptalization, added yeasts, or fining.

Domaine de la Charmoise (Henry Marionnet) “Le Vinifera” Gamay 2012 ****

Moderately dense plus very dark red with purple rim. Attractive, unadulterated dark fruits in a pure, clean nose. The palate as well is clean and fresh, medium weight, with faint underlying sweet dark fruit. Taut ending framed by acidity and tannin. Hand harvested, carbonic maceration (no added yeast or sulfur).

Domaine de la Charmoise (Henry Marionnet) “Cépages Oubliés” Gamay de Bouze 2012 **+**

Nearly dense very dark red with purple edge. Reserved nose suggesting crushed dark berries and fruits and a sense of clean freshness. This “forgotten” Gamay boasts a gorgeous presence on the palate, showing depth, restraint and an undercurrent of sweet dark fruit. Fresh, gripping conclusion. Gamay de Bouze, a tenturier with tinted flesh, has practically disappeared. It fell out of favor with the authorities who preferred Gamay noir à jus blanc (with its white, uncolored juice). Vinified by carbonic maceration.



Domaine C & P Breton Bourgueil “Nuits d’Ivresse” 2011 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense dark red purple. Restrained aroma hinting at dark fruit and a suggestion of ink. Clean and fresh taste with attractive youthful expression. Lingering if undeveloped dark fruit and ink in the aftertaste. 50-year old vines on clay-limestone. No sulfur is used at any point.

Domaine C & P Breton Bourgueil “Franc de Pied” 2011 *(*)**

Pale very dark red purple. Attractive purity, still young and masked dark fruit and inkiness. Fresh, well-defined palate, medium weight, with good concentration and a clean bite of acidity and moderate tannin. Faintly herbaceous aftertaste. Ungrafted Cab Franc vines of 12 years planted in sand with gravel.

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

Domaine Yannick Amirault Bourgueil “Les Grand Clos” 2010 *(*+)**

A very youthful and vibrant moderately dense dark red purple. Largely undeveloped aroma marked by ripe dark fruit and notable concentration. The wine’s taste is focused and fresh with a particularly clean impression. Medium-bodied, juicy at the center and quite dry, imparting a chalky aftertaste and fine though elevated acid spine at the very end. Young and in need of several years in bottle to show more of its innate quality.

Domaine C & P Breton Chinon “Beaumont” 2012 *(*)**

Moderately dense dark red purple. Youthful, clean, healthy red and dark fruits to the nose, muted at present. Fresh and also textured taste profile, well-balanced and dry. Has reserve and good mid-term potential (2017-2019).

Domaine Grosbois Chinon “La Cuisine de ma Mère” 2012 *+ Value**

Pale dark red purple. Clean, inviting, accessible aroma of youthful unadulterated dark fruit. The palate boasts a clean freshness, medium weight, and has subtle dark fruit and inky notes. Thoroughly enjoyable early drinker and good value under \$20 retail.

Domaine du Raifault Chinon Tradition 2012 ** For Value**

Pale very dark red with purple. Forthcoming, attractive aroma dominated by ripe, nuanced red and dark fruits. The taste is fresh and balanced with a soft underlying texture, ending with a clean dry bite. Excellent value for near-term consumption selling for under \$20 retail.

Luc Sebillé Chinon “Les Debonnaires” 2011 ****

Moderately dense very dark red with clear purple rim. Open, highly expressive nose revealing dark fruits, ink and spice notes. This medium-bodied Chinon has ample charm and immediate appeal, possessing a core of sweet dark fruit. Has a natural, unforced feel. Delicious now.

Domaine Gouron Chinon 2011 *+ Value**

Nearly moderately dense dark red with clear purple rim. Very fragrant red fruit nose, clean with a touch of ink and Cab Franc dusty note. In the mouth, this Chinon is fresh and alive with bracing acidity. Medium-bodied. Finishes with nuances of sweet red fruits and ink. Exceptionally well-priced Chinon retailing below \$15, for near-term drinking.

Domaine Charles Joguet Chinon “Les Petites Roches” 2009 *(*)**

Nearly moderately dense very dark red with purple rim. Held back, still surprisingly youthful, with muted though mature red and dark fruits. Has good depth and hidden strength. This Chinon is fresh and chiseled on the palate. Largely closed and quite backward. Needs softening in bottle until 2016-2018.

Domaine Les Clos Maurice Saumur-Champigny Vieilles Vignes 2011 ****

Pale dark purple red. Muted, youthful nose, hints of red fruits and berries with flinty and dusty highlights. The palate is focused and tightly wound with an etched conclusion. Red fruits and berries come up in a rather intense ending. Still young and reserved, has the concentration to develop until 2017-2019. 40 to 60 year old vines, raised in concrete.

MISCELLANEOUS WHITES OF THE CENTRE LOIRE

Domaine Nebout Saint-Pourçain “Le Tressallier des Gravières” 2011 ****

Pale straw gold. Distinctive aromatics marked by star fruit and citrus overtones. Focused, direct palate with wonderful tension and notable concentration. Racy ending. This is an unusual and thoroughly enjoyable wine made entirely from the Tressallier grape.

Domaine de Loye Menetou-Salon 2013 *(*)**

Transparent gold straw. Ultraclean nose, very appealing and restrained with notes of sweet white fruits and citrus. The palate is engaging and shows attractive nuance. Has poise, charm and balance. Subtle inflections of white fruits in the finish.

Domaine Fournier Menetou-Salon “Côtes de Morogues” 2012 ****

Transparent straw. Noteworthy aromatic intensity, high-toned lime and white fruit scent. Focused, precise palate with lovely subtlety and nuance, ending clean and elegant.

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

Domaine Alain Assadet Menetou-Salon 2011 ****

Pale pronounced yellow gold (touch of bottle age). Subtle, clean nose offering delicate yellow fruits and herbal notes. In the mouth, the wine delivers more expression and intensity. Well-integrated, clean and dry with a lingering dusty overtone and good length.

Domaine Pierre Duret (Joseph Mellot) Quincy 2013****

Transparent straw gold. Very clean to the nose with delicate inflections of citrus and stone. Clean, direct, racy palate with a hint of white pepper at the end.

Domaine Sylvain Bailly Quincy 2013 ** (+)**

Pale straw. Still primary (tasted 4 March 14), offering exotic yellow fruits, ripe kiwi. Vivid and fresh with excellent follow-through and harmony. Salty, racy conclusion. A very appealing example.

Domaine du Tremblay Quincy 2013 ****

Pale straw. Wonderfully clean, open and highly expressive aroma dominated by citrus and fresh grass. In the mouth, the wine is direct, alive and racy. Delicious.

Domaine Philippe Portier Quincy 2012 ****

Pale gold straw. Very clean expression revealing herbal-citrus accents. The palate is balanced with lasting aromatic highlights dominated by stone and citrus pith.

SANCERRE

Le Roi des Pierres Sancerre 2013 ****

Pale gold straw. Very attractive, particularly clean nose exhibiting a delightful ripe white fruit perfume. The palate similarly delivers engaging white fruit highlights and possesses an appealing and lingering polished feel. There are herbal, dusty and stony accents in the finale.

Domaine Sylvain Bailly Sancerre “Terroirs” 2013 **(+)**

Pale straw. The young nose is held back, very pure, with subtle inflections of stone and grass with a sweet note. The palate is still rather closed yet delivers wonderful texture and persistence. There is hidden flesh and richness and marked acid definition. Tank sample tasted 4 March 14.

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

Domaine des Vieux Pruniers 2013 **(+)**

Pale straw. Focuses, very youthful, stony-flinty nose showing restrained intensity. The palate is tightly wound and very long with an intense ending with lovely accents of stone and fresh grass. Racy and alive. Delicious.

Domaine Fournier Sancerre “Les Belles Vignes” 2013 **(*)**

Transparent straw gold with a green cast. Ultraclean, multidimensional fragrance of varied yellow fruits, ripe citrus and spice accents. The palate is highly focused and shows impressive precision, with a beautiful, elegant structure. Long, intricate, etched conclusion.



Domaine Gérard Millet Sancerre 2013 ****

Very pale straw gold. Lovely, inviting and expressive aroma mixing white and yellow fruit notes with lime extract and stony accents. The nose shows depth and dimension and is impeccably clean. The wine's entry is soft and ripe, and there is good weight. Subtle, with very finely calibrated acidity and notable restraint in the aftertaste.

Domaine Cédric Martin Sancerre 2013 ****

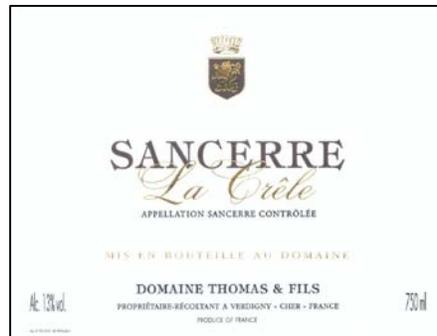
Transparent gold straw. Very clean scent offering delicate nuances of white and yellow fruits. The wine is focused and highly aromatic on the palate as well as poised and persistent, concluding with elegant, pointed acidity.

Domaine Fournier Sancerre “Cuvee Silex” 2012 **+**

Transparent gold. Captivating, expressive nose with impressive layering and stony-citrus notes. Highly focused in the mouth as well as precise, racy and particularly elegant, leaving intriguing spice hints. Lovely example.

Domaine Thomas & Fils Sancerre “La Crête” 2012 **+**

Transparent straw gold. Inviting pure aroma, wonderfully clean, exhibiting restrained complexity, with notes of white fruits and citrus accents. The palate is fine, elegant and particularly refined, delivering a long line and textural finesse. In the finale, there is a very fine, well-embedded acid frame.



Domaine Yves Martin Sancerre (Chavignol) 2012 **+**

Transparent straw gold. Striking purity and subtlety in the aroma, which displays delicate nuances of white fruits and sweet notes. Precisely calibrated with a long line and incisive, perfumed finish of white fruits and fresh green herbs. Wonderful finesse.

Domaine Lauerjat Sancerre “Perle Blanche” Vieilles Vignes 2012 ****

Very pale straw gold. Ultraclean nose boasting delicate inflections of white fruits, stone and citrus pith. Direct, incisive palate with a lovely, subtly perfumed aftertaste. From 55-year old vines.

Domaine Laporte Sancerre “Le Rochoy” 2012 ****

Pale straw. Clean, highly aromatic nose boasting inflections of grapefruit pith. Precise and linear in its taste profile. Delicate and precise yet still energetic with a pronounced spinal column.

Langlois-Château Château de Fontaine-Audon Sancerre 2011 ****

Pale gold straw. Clean, lifted aroma marrying sweet yellow fruit notes with herbal and dusty accents. The wine has presence and polish on the palate. Long, fine, inflected, with above average complexity. Drinking perfectly right now.

Tasting Notes of Roger C. Bohmrich MW

Domaine Jean-Max Roger Sancerre “Les Caillottes” 2011 ****

Transparent straw gold. High-toned aroma dominated by fresh hay and herbal notes. Precise and inflected on the palate. Very fine and persistent finish with noteworthy complexity and final saline note.

Domaine Jean-Max Roger Sancerre “Cuvee C.M.” 2011 **+**

Transparent straw gold. Very subtle aromatics, pure, inviting and perfectly clean. There are stony, white fruit and herbal notes. The palate is polished and poised, with a sense of maturity, finishing with subtle, elegant nuances. Drinks perfectly now.

Domaine Fournier Sancerre “Grande Cuvee” 2010 **(*)**

Very pale gold. Stands out for its concentration and intensity, with a background of herbal, grassy, and citrus inflections. This Sancerre is far more controlled on the palate, with concealed layering. A style demanding further bottle age to be revealed fully. A serious rather than typical Sancerre.

POUILLY-FUMÉ

Domaine Chatelain Pouilly-Fumé “Les Charmes” 2011 ****

Pale yellow gold. Subtle, ripe and attractive nose offering yellow fruits and herbal accents. The palate possesses above average complexity and dimension. Long, inflected and very well-balanced. At its best now.

Domaine Fournier Pouilly-Fumé “Les Deux Cailloux” 2012 *(*+)**

Very pale yellow gold. Perfectly clean aroma displaying depth, restraint and lovely citrus and herbal notes. The taste is held back but shows evident richness and length. There is masked intensity and herbal highlights at the end. Needs another year in bottle to show its full qualities.

Domaine Fournier Pouilly-Fumé “Grand Fumé” 2009 **+**

Very pale yellow green with gold highlights. The nose is quite rich and shows evident fruit maturity, with a mélange of citrus, yellow fruit and a faint touch of honey. The palate as well exhibits richness and dimension of flavor as well as length. The aftertaste offers subtle inflections. A flavorful, generous style departing from the typical. One-fifth fermented in barrel.