

STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS



The Loire

Great Value Discoveries

Muscadet

Sauvignon Blanc

Chenin Blanc - Dry

Reds

Sweet Chenin Blanc

Wines of the Loire

Unless one has to do the driving, one can forget how far it is from the windswept Atlantic vineyards of Muscadet to the sunny vineyards above Pouilly. The length and multiple micro-climates of this long band permits a hugely diverse range of wine styles, but almost all of the wines from the Loire - sparkling, white, rosé and red - exhibit freshness and grace and therefore make lovely summer drinking.

The best-known wines produced along the huge length of the river are the Sauvignon Blancs from Touraine and the central vineyards of Pouilly and Sancerre, but Loire reds (p.7), once an acquired taste, have become more consistently ripe and enjoyable over the last twenty years. Chenin Blanc (arguably better known in the Cape than its home in the Loire) also gives us undervalued oaked whites (p.6) and spectacular sweet wines in Anjou (back cover).

Last May we made our first Loire offer in many years, and its reception encouraged a repetition.

Simon Taylor
May 2020



MIXED CASES: WITH A SAVING OF AT LEAST 10% ON THE BOTTLE PRICES

VALLEY VALUES

£113.20 CODE L120

Two bottles of each of four whites and two reds

Mes Lies Melon, Vin de France,	2019
Forges, Chardonnay, IGP Val de Loire,	2019
Chauvinière, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie,	2018
Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, IGP Vin de Pays de Loire	2018
Forges, Anjou Rouge,	2019
Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Tradition,	2018

LOIRE WHITES

£148.50 CODE L220

Two bottles of each of six whites:

one Chardonnay, three Sauvignons and two Chenin Blancs

Forges, Chardonnay, IGP Val de Loire,	2019
Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon,	2018
Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernetts,	2018
Cherrier, Sancerre,	2018
Domaine des Forges, Anjou Blanc, L'Audace,	2019
Guilloterie, Saumur Blanc, Les Perruches,	2018

RIPARIAN TERROIRS

£176.45 CODE L320

Two bottles of each of four whites and two reds

Jérémie Huchet, Muscadet, Les Quinze Hommées,	2019
Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, L'Essentiel,	2017
Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Silice,	2018
Forges, Savennières, Le Clos du Papillon,	2018
Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Les Loges,	2016
Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre Rouge,	2017

We kick off with a couple of delicious, great value, discoveries...

MES LIES MELON, VIN DE FRANCE

BOTTLE £9.75



2019 | 12%

CODE MEL119

Case with 10% off £105.30

Made by the brilliant, entrepreneurial Jérémie Huchet - see opposite - who saw there was a gap in the market for a light wine made from blending halves of two grapes in plentiful supply in the Loire - the Melon of Muscadet and Sauvignon Blanc. This has an open, grassy SB aroma, and then delivers a zippy, lightly exotically fruited mouthful with plenty of drive and freshness. Ideal warm-weather quaffing. Now-2021

DOMAINE DES FORGES, CHARDONNAY, IGP VAL DE LOIRE,

BOTTLE £10.50

2019 | 13.5%

CODE FOR819

Case with 10% off £113.40

A decent Chardonnay from the Loire would have been unthinkable a generation ago - yet here's a terrific example, hand-picked, properly ripe, even offering hints of stone and tropical fruit, yet with enticingly moreish vivacity too. Perfect all rounder, as good on its own as with fish or chicken. Now-2021

JÉRÉMIE HUCHET, DOMAINE DE LA CHAUVINIÈRE & CLOS DES MONTYS

Muscadet has suffered terribly over the last decade: from falling demand and a series of harvests hit by frost - the 2019 crop was again dramatically reduced - or other extreme weather. Survivors (about a third of the appellation's growers have hung up their pruning secateurs and the quantity of wine produced has shrunk dramatically) are those making the best wine, often from old vines on the finest terroirs. Against this trend Jérémie Huchet, at Chauvinière and Clos des Montys and under his own name has expanded his vineyard holdings: he's a regional superstar.



**DOMAINE DE LA CHAUVINIÈRE,
MUSCADET SÈVRE ET
MAINE SUR LIE,** 2018 | 12%
BOTTLE £10.25 CODE HUC118
Case with 10% off £110.70

From low yielding vines on the estate's classic granite soils. Open, generous mouthful with stone fruit, textbook zest and balance, and a dry, gently saline finish. Drink this year.

**CLOS DES MONTYS, MUSCADET
SÈVRE ET MAINE
SUR LIE,** 2018 | 12%
BOTTLE £11.25 CODE CDM118
Case with 10% off £121.50

A superior Muscadet, from ancient vines, mostly 80-100 years old, grown on thin, sandy soils over hard metamorphic rock. Apricot and melon permeate the wine, alongside hints of hay and white pepper.
Now-2021

**JÉRÉMIE HUCHET, MUSCADET,
LES QUINZE HOMMÉES,** 2019 | 12%
BOTTLE £13.95 CODE HUC419
Case with 10% off £150.66

One of Jérémie's "parcelles", organically farmed, single vineyard wines, from vines in meagre sandy and stony soils over granite bedrock - known as the granite of Clisson. This is so exciting - ripe and rounded, but also with a mineral vein, almost an effervescent bite. Intense.
Now-2022

**CLOS DES MONTYS, VIEILLES
VIGNES 1914, MUSCADET
SÈVRE ET MAINE SUR LIE,** 2017 | 12%
BOTTLE £16.50 CODE HUC317
Case with 10% off £178.20

From a vineyard planted 106 years ago on a well sited plot of sandstone over amphibolite soils. A Muscadet with a completely unfamiliar depth and concentration: subtle mineral and pear flavours; and a lingering finish. This keeps too.
Now-2022 Limited stock

Sauvignon Blanc

2018 and 2019 were both unusually hot vintages in the Loire, leading to great ripeness and higher alcohol levels than usual in the Sauvignons. Many people drink Sauvignons on their own, but the dry and intense



LES CHARDONS, SAUVIGNON BLANC, IGP VIN DE PAYS DE LOIRE,

2018 | 13%

BOTTLE ~~£9.95~~ £9.50 CODE AUM318

Case with a further 10% off £102.60

Surprisingly tropical aroma. In this hot vintage this is riper and more rounded than usual, with ripe citrus and hint of pineapple. Refreshing finish. The 2019 vintage follows at £9.95.

Drink this year

DOMAINE DE L'AUMONIER, TOURAINE SAUVIGNON,

2018 | 13.5%

BOTTLE £12.50 CODE AUM118

Case with 10% off £135.00

From organically farmed vines, this is a long-established best-seller here, admired for its overt fruitiness, which is particularly pronounced in the hot 2018 vintage. Well delineated ripe citrus with more tropical fruit hints. Makes a relaxing aperitif. The 2019 vintage follows shortly.

Drink this year

FRANCIS BLANCHET, POUILLY-FUMÉ, LES PERNETS,

2018 | 12.5%

BOTTLE £15.95

CODE BLA118

Case with 10% off £172.26

The Blanchet's wine is so authentic, true to the appellation, with real bite and stony character, and always at a very fair price. Bright citrus over a mineral acid thread. Fresh and bone dry on the finish. Pair with anything from simply prepared white fish to smoked salmon or eel.

Now-2022

CHERRIER PÈRE ET FILS, SANCERRE,

2018 | 14%

BOTTLE £16.25

CODE ROS118

Case with 10% off £175.50

The latest vintage of this Loire classic from the Cherrier family in Verdigny is as crisp and bright as ever, despite the unusual summer heat. Intense, irony depth behind ripe citrus. The 2019 vintage follows shortly at the same price.

Now-2021

wines from the central vineyards are arguably better drunk with food. Bearing in mind the time of year it's worth pointing out that Loire Sauvignon Blanc is arguably the best pairing for asparagus.



**CHERRIER PÈRE ET FILS,
SANCERRE, L'ESSENTIEL,** 2017 | 13.5%
BOTTLE £16.95 CODE ROS417
Case with 10% off £183.06

L'Essentiel is a selection from a vineyard farmed bio-dynamically, made naturally, left for an extended time on its lees and then bottled without filtration. Explosively open scent of ripe citrus and white flowers; and then an exotically flavoured mouthful of greengages, grapefruit and orchard fruits. In some ways akin to a very lightly oaked white Bordeaux, this is a fascinating and exciting bottle. The 2018 follows at the same price.
Now-2021

**FRANCIS BLANCHET,
POUILLY-FUMÉ,
LES SILICE,** 2018 | 13%
BOTTLE £16.95 CODE BLA218
Case with 10% off £183.06

From a small block on very flinty soils in the heart of the appellation, this is an intense and ageworthy wine. Smelling of citrus peel and hawthorn blossom, it's intensely grapefruity. A splendidly long, steely finish, with a peppery sense of minerality, indicates its class.
Now-2022

**CHERRIER PÈRE ET FILS,
SANCERRE,
LE GRAND PICOT,** 2017 | 13.5%
BOTTLE £17.50 CODE ROS517
Case with 10% off £189.00

This is the family's oaked cuvée, which we have only shipped once before, but the sheer quality and depth of this wine (like all their 2017s) demanded we buy some. About a fifth goes into barrel, some new, giving a creaminess and intensity rather than "oakiness". Delivering, lime and greengage flavours with a custardy richness, elegantly textured, this is fine and gastronomic - think quite richly sauced fish, chicken or veal.
Now-2022



Chenin Blanc - Dry

Chenin Blanc is the dominant grape of the middle Loire, around Tours and Angers. All too many of the tank (i.e. unoaked) Chenins we taste are a little weedy and characterless, but even the shortest barrel ageing in old oak lends real character. These wines make an excellent alternative to oaked white Burgundy at a fraction of the price. This year we have again shipped the great value, lightly oaked L'Audace from Forges; the Saumur from Guilloterie is subtle and classy; but the ultimate expression of dry Chenin unquestionably comes from Savennières, a tiny appellation of about 80 hectares of vines on schistous south-facing hillsides on the north side of the Loire just west of Angers. Here yields are severely restricted by the appellation rules, the grapes are late picked, and usually fermented bone dry to over 13.5%.

**DOMAINE DES FORGES, ANJOU
BLANC, L'AUDACE,** 2019 | 14%
BOTTLE £12.95 CODE FOR419
Case with 10% off £139.86

This is a wine from a humble appellation but ambitiously crafted: the vineyard is managed for low yields and quality, with short pruning, debudding, a thinning of the harvest and canopy management to expose the bunches to the sun - and then the grapes are picked at perfect ripeness in several passages through the vines. It's also 100% Chenin (when most Anjou Blanc includes up to 20% Chardonnay or Sauvignon), barrel-fermented and inspiringly full flavoured - bittersweet Seville oranges. It's a dry and penetrating example with commendable volume and weight at the price.
Now-2022

**DOMAINE DE LA GUILLOTERIE,
SAUMUR BLANC,
LES PERRUCHES,** 2018 | 13.5%
BOTTLE £14.50 CODE GUL618
Case with 10% off £156.60

We thought the last vintage of this barrel-fermented Saumur Blanc from 50 year old vines was impressive, but the 2018 is a step up. It's aged in egg-shaped tanks, good for the distribution of the fine lees. Lovely scent of honey and spring white blossom. This builds expansively on the palate, with notes of mandarins and stone fruit. There's an incisive mineral vein too.
Now-2022

**DOMAINE DES FORGES,
SAVENNIÈRES, LE CLOS
DU PAPILLON,** 2018 | 14.7%
BOTTLE £18.75 CODE FOR918
Case with 10% off £202.50

From the family's three Savennières, this year we chose the Clos du Papillon, from a celebrated south and south-east facing vineyard shared only by Closel and Baumard. Here there's sand and clay sprinkled with varied volcanic stones and plenty of schist. That favourable exposure, 30-45 year old vines, a hot summer and careful picking in successive passes through the vines have delivered a really ripe and powerful example. After scents of wet wool (a classic Chenin marker) and sandalwood this opens out dramatically, with flavours of apricots and cream. Very, very long. Excellent match for richly sauced ocean fish or salmon.

Now-2023



Sparkling Wine

DIAMANT DE LOIRE, CRÉMANT DE LOIRE, BRUT, FRANCE, NV | 12.5%
BOTTLE ~~£12.95~~ £12.50 CODE DIA1NV
Case with a further 10% off £135.00

This is an easy-drinking, light, perfectly clean and fresh sparkling wine from Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay - produced in the same way as Champagne (i.e with a secondary fermentation in the bottle to create the fizz). Ripe, gently appley fruit, lightly creamy, with a little structure too. Easy to like.
Now-2021



DOMAINE DES FORGES, ROSÉ DE LOIRE,

BOTTLE £10.25

Case with 10% off £110.70

2018 | 11.5%

CODE FOR519

The previous vintage of this was hugely popular last summer so we have shipped more this year. It's a dry rosé made from 100% Grolleau, given a slow, gentle pressing in a pneumatic press, arguably a better way to make quality rosé than bleeding off a tank of red wine. Very pale pink, it has a charming perfume of crushed red fruits; and a subtle flavour of cranberries, redcurrants and fraises des bois. Crisp, with some finesse, this is excellent as an aperitif or for a cold lunch - and note the lowish alcohol level too. Now-2021

Reds

Traditionally Loire red grapes only ripened perfectly about three times a decade, but now, with longer and warmer summers - and more sophisticated viticulture - the reds are can be made from perfectly ripe grapes almost every year. The first four wines are from Cabernet Franc. Cabernet Franc can be served slightly chilled; and goes very well with all ham, charcuterie and pork dishes, as its natural bite cuts any fattiness.

DOMAINE DES FORGES, ANJOU ROUGE,

BOTTLE £9.95

Case with 10% off £107.46

2019 | 12.5%

CODE FOR119

Pure Cabernet Franc, unoaked - we enjoy this wine for its honest, slatey character (weirdly enough it's grown on greyish shale), that mineral expression of Loire Cabernet Franc. So correct and juicy. Bring on some cold cuts and charcuterie.

Now-2021

DOMAINE DE LA GUILLOTIERIE, SAUMUR-CHAMPIGNY, TRADITION,

BOTTLE £12.95

Case with 10% off £139.86

2018 | 14%

CODE GUL318

This is the Duveau family's principal wine at Guillotierie: unoaked, enticingly dramatic purple, with a perfume made up of berries and roses, this is richly black-fruited, silky, with attractive chalky and leafy hints. Long and complete, a winner again. A match made in heaven for jambon persillé.

Now-2022

DOMAINE DE LA GUILLOTIERIE, SAUMUR-CHAMPIGNY, LES LOGES,

BOTTLE £14.50

Case with 10% off £156.60

2016 | 13.5%

CODE GUL416

From a plot of 50-55 year old vines. This is attractively aromatic, offering archetypal Loire Cab. Franc flavours of black berries and cherries. With pleasing fat and considerable depth this will keep well too.

Now-2024

WILFRID ROUSSE, CHINON, LES BOIS DE BEAUMONT,

BOTTLE £16.50

Case with 10% off £178.20

2014 | 12.5%

CODE ROT114

Wilfrid Rousse makes exemplary Chinons from his 18 hectares of organically farmed (and certified) vines. This is from 50 year old vines on argilo-calcaire soils on the slopes, aged in old barrels. With bottle age this has taken on good weight and depth, plus secondary savoury hints.

Now-2021

Limited stock

CHERRIER PÈRE ET FILS, SANCERRE ROUGE,

BOTTLE £16.95

Case with 10% off £183.06

2017 | 13%

CODE ROS617

The Cherriers' pure Pinot Noir, half aged in old barrels, is no thin and wan example, but a really fruity wine which looks good value in comparison to Burgundies from over the hills to the east: intense red fruits, bright and jewel-like, a bite of fresh acid and attractive length.

Now-2022



Late harvest, sweet Chenin Blanc

Are these sweet wines the greatest made in the entire Loire Valley? Certainly they offer unbelievable value for their concentration and finesse - and the labour involved, as the Chenin grapes are picked in a succession of tries, passages through the vineyards in autumn, to hand-pick bunches. Chenin Blanc has brilliant attributes as a grape for late harvest, sweet wine production: it's thick-skinned, so it holds its integrity even in equinoctial rain; and it also retains its acidity even as sugar levels rise in the autumn sunshine. It's the thrilling balance of sugar and acidity (as with German Rieslings) which makes these wines so appealing. Secondly, the combination of climate and local topography encourages the growth of botrytis cinerea, the "noble rot" fungus, which both concentrates the grape juice by leaching out water and also lends a particular honeysuckle and barley sugar flavour to wine made from affected grapes. Autumnal morning fogs, held in the sharply cut valleys of the Layon river and side streams, offer perfect conditions for the fungus to thrive.

Be aware that because of the relatively high levels of acidity these wines are not "pudding" wines to be paired with sweet desserts. They are lovely to sip on their own; the lighter examples are superb with rich pâté or foie gras; all accompany cheese, especially blue cheese (salty and sweet together, oh yes); and the richer examples can match light fruit desserts (the Branchereaus at Domaine des Forges recommend rhubarb or apricot tart).

DOMAINE DES FORGES, COTEAUX DU LAYON ST AUBIN,

2017 | 12%

BOTTLE £14.50 CODE FOR617

Case with 10% off £156.60

Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné lies between the Loire and Layon rivers. This offers absurdly good value for a wine of such richness and weight; and from vines with an average age of forty years too.

Pale gold. Wonderfully honeyed nose. Very sweet attack, showing honey over stone fruit, but with marmalade botrytis character too. Concentrated but finishes with authentic acidity. Much richer than usual for this cuvée. Last summer this wine went down very well at a dinner held at Windsor Castle - drink like a prince! The splendid 2018 vintage follows at the same price.

Now-2024

DOMAINE DES FORGES, COTEAUX DU LAYON CHAUME, LES ONNIS,

2016 | 11.5%

BOTTLE £23.50 CODE FOR216

Case with 10% off £253.80

From a steep, grassed vineyard beside Quarts de Chaume and near the river, so open to botrytis; and always a long-lived, luscious, barrel aged wine with high levels of residual sugar. Dramatically bittersweet, with barleysugar and pure honey laced with rapier acidity. Very intense, already complex, yet so well balanced, and so long.

Now-2027

DOMAINE SYLVAIN GAUDRON, VOUVRAY, GRAIN D'OR, 1ER TRI,

2010 | 11% (50cl.)

BOTTLE ~~£23.95~~ £17.50 CODE GAU410

Fine, dry weather at the end of October and into early November allowed this careful selection of individual berries affected by noble rot. This mid-gold coloured wine has 115g/l residual sugar, so is not that sweet; but it is wonderfully rounded and delicately textured, with honey and ripe orchard fruit flavours.

Now-2022

Very limited stock

CHÂTEAU PIERRE-BISE, QUARTS DE CHAUME,

2006, 11% (50cl.)

BOTTLE £27.50 CODE CPB206

Quarts de Chaume (literally the best quarter of the village of Chaume) is, along with Bonnezeaux, one of the top two sweet wine appellations in the whole of the Loire. Lustrous gold. This is superbly smooth and honeyed, delivering a lovely (and dangerously more-ish) gush of quince and stone fruit. Drinking perfectly but will keep, such is the balance and purity.

Now-2022

Very limited stock

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Opening times: Weekdays: 9.00am-6.00pm Saturdays: temporarily closed