



WINE MERCHANTS

THE LOIRE Sparkling wine & Champagne Beaujolais

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Wines from the Loire

Think summer drinking and think Loire – in particular refreshing Muscadet, bright Sauvignon Blancs and perfumed Cabernet Francs – but don't ignore the brilliant dry and sweet Chenins. See our accompanying list for two Loire rosés.

Sauvignon Blanc

There's no question that a series of hot summers have resulted in Loire Sauvignons becoming richer and less steely than of old. The frostblighted and then cooler 2021 vintage sees a return to lower alcohol levels and a more traditional bite.

Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, IGP Vin de Pays de Loire, 2020, 13%

Bottle £10.25 6 bottles with 5% off £58.42 Case with 12% off £108.24 Code AUM320 An open, simple and immediately appealing bottle of ripe Loire Sauvignon. Surprisingly tropical aroma. In this hot vintage this is fuller and more rounded than usual, with ripe citrus and hint of pineapple. Refreshing finish. Drink this year.

Domaines des Forges, Sauvignon, IGP Val de Loire, 2021, 12.2%

Bottle £10.95 6 bottles with 5% off £62.42 Case with 12% off £115.63 Code FOR721 Classic Sauvignon aromas of nettles. Greenfruited, lively and crisp but not in the least over-acidic. Perfect summer aperitif. Now-2023.

Le Colombier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2021, 12.5%

Bottle £11.95 6 bottles with 5% off £68.12 Case with 12% off £126.19 Code COL121 Gooseberry scent – and gooseberry on the palate too, along with notes of crisp pineapple and kiwi fruit. With a lemony finish, this is correctly zippy. Now-2023.

Domaine de l'Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2020, 13.5%

Bottle £13.50 6 bottles with 5% off £76.95 Case with 12% off £142.56 Code AUM120 From organically farmed (and certified) vines, this is a long-established best-seller here, admired for its overt fruitiness – so there are tropical fruit notes alongside the more typical citrus flavours. Plenty of volume and mouthfeel. This makes a relaxing aperitif. Now-2023.

Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernets, 2020, 13.5%

Bottle £16.50 6 bottles with 5% off £94.05 Case with 12% off £174.24 Code BLA120 The Blanchet family make such an authentic wine, so true to the appellation, with 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-2023.



Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Silice, 2020, 13.5%

Bottle £17.50 6 bottles with 5% off £99.75 Case with 12% off £184.80 Code BLA220

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. In this hot year it's smoother and rounder than usual, but with a splendidly long, steely finish. Now-2023.

Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, 2021, 12.5%

Bottle £17.95 6 bottles with 5% off £102.32 Case with 12% off £189.55 Code ROS121 The Cherriers were badly frosted in 2021, but the low yields from their vineyards on the gentle slopes around Verdigny have given us an intense and powerful example. Smelling of citrus zest, it's lemony but shows hints of tangerine. A full-flavoured mid palate gives way to a dry and steely finish. Now-2023.

Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, Cuveé Grand Picot, 2019, 13.5%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11-- Code ROS519 This is the family's oaked cuvée. About a fifth goes into barrel, some new, giving a dairy richness and intensity rather than "oakiness". Rounded, voluminous, with a palate cleansing pithiness, this is fine and gastronomic – think quite richly sauced fish, chicken or veal. Now-2023. Limited stock.



Domaine de la Chauvinière, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2020, 12%

Bottle £10.50 6 bottles with 5% off £59.85 Case with 12% off £110.88 Code HUC120 From low yielding vines on the estate's classic granite soils - with a little clay. Open, generous mouthful with lemon and pear fruit, crisp and mouthwatering with textbook zest and balance, and a dry, gently saline finish. Now-early 2023.

Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc is the dominant grape of the middle Loire, around Tours and Angers.

Domaine des Forges, Chenin de Loire, 2021, 13.5%

Bottle £11.75 6 bottles with 5% off £66.98 Case with 12% off £124.08 Code FOR821 Apple-scented; and red-apple flavoured. Dry but juicy; and flowers on the palate. An unexpected delight, delivering fruit and weight. Now-2023.

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur Blanc, Les Perruches, 2018, 13.5%

Bottle £14.95 6 bottles with 5% off £85.22 Case with 12% off £157.87 Code GUL618 Barrel-fermented Saumur Blanc from 50 year old vines; 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 minerally vein too. Now-early 2023. Limited stock.

Domaine des Forges, Savennières, Le Clos du Papillon, 2019, 14.2%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11 Code FOR919 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%. Le Clos du Papillon is 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 (in a good way, it's a classic Chenin marker!) and sandalwood this opens out dramatically, with flavours of apricots, oranges and cream. Penetrating and very, very long. Excellent match for richly sauced ocean fish or salmon. Now-2024.



Late Harvest Chenin Blanc

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. It's the thrilling balance of sugar and acidity (as with top 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. Autumn 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; they accompany cheese, especially blue cheese (salty and sweet together, oh yes); or the richer examples can match fruit desserts (the Branchereaus at Domaine des Forges recommend rhubarb or apricot tart).

Domaine des Forges, Coteaux du Layon St Aubin, 2021, 12.5%

Bottle £15.25 6 bottles with 5% off £86.93 Case with 12% off £161.04 Code FOR621 Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné lies between the Loire and Layon rivers. Golden tone. Not as rich as some vintages, rather gently honeyed, showing tangerine and fresher citrus notes. A perfect accompaniment to foie gras or any rich pâté; although the French would also drink this as a delectable aperitif. Now-2025.

Domaine des Forges, Coteaux du Layon 1er Cru Chaume, 2019, 11.5%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11 Code FOR019 Mid gold. Exotic crystallised fruits leap out of the glass – passionfruit and pineapple. Beautifully textured and expansive. Exciting; and rich enough to accompany not too sweet puddings. Now-2027.

Loire Reds

Traditionally Loire red grapes only ripened perfectly two or three times a decade, but now, with longer and warmer summers - and more sophisticated viticulture - the reds are made from perfectly ripe grapes almost every year. These are 100%, or based on, 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, 2021, 12.5%

Bottle £10.95 6 bottles with 5% off £62.42 Case with 12% off £115.63 Code FOR121 Pure Cabernet Franc, unoaked. We always enjoy this wine for its honest, slatey character (weirdly enough it's grown on greyish shale), that mineral expression of Loire Cabernet Franc, but this vintage it seems to have an extra dollop of juicy black fruit. Deeply hued, offering a primary fruit perfume of cherries and plums, it's supple, and surprisingly ripe and fleshy for the price. Lightly chill and bring on some cold cuts and charcuterie. Brilliant at this price. Now-2024.

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Tradition, 2018, 14% Bottle £12.95 6 bottles with 5% off £73.82 Case with 12% off £136.75 Code GUL318 This is the Duveau family's principal wine at Guilloterie: 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 match made in heaven for jambon persillé. Now-2023.



Domaine des Forges, Anjou Villages, Les Trois C, 2019, 13%

Bottle £14.50 6 bottles with 5% off £82.65 Case with 12% off £153.12 Code FOR319 From 70% Cabernet Franc with 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, grown on clay and sand over schist; fermented and aged in barrel. Very deep purple. Sumptuous black cherry and plum fruit tinged with milk chocolate notes from the barrels. Youthful, ripe and punchy. Now-2024.



Diamant de Loire, Crémant de Loire, Brut, France, NV, 12.5%

Bottle £13.50 6 bottles with 5% off £76.95 Case with 12% off £142.56 Code DIA1NV 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, and classier than a lot of Prosecco. Now-2023.

Drusian, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore, Extra Dry, Veneto, Italv. NV. 11%

Bottle £15.25 6 bottles with 5% off £86.93 Case with 12% off £161.04 Code DRU1NV A wonderful, much praised Prosecco from a family owned producer with vineyards in the heart of the Valdobbiadene. Fine mousse. Deliciously sherberty, light, and with the merest hint of fruity sweetness, this makes a perfect aperitif. Now-2023.

J. Laurens, Blanquette de Limoux, Le Moulin, Brut, France, NV, 12%

Bottle £15.50 6 bottles with 5% off £88.35 Case with 12% off £163.68 Code LAU1NV From 90% Mauzac, the traditional variety of Limoux, with 10% Chardonnay. This has the crispness of the Mauzac grape, but is also appealingly rounded. There's lots of interest: ripe pear, white flowers and stone fruit. Our current shipment is definitely tastier than previously. Now-2023.

Drusian, Rose Mari, Spumante Rosato, Extra Dry, Italy, NV, 12%

Bottle £15.95 6 bottles with 5% off £90.92 Case with 12% off £168.43 Code DRU5NV

From Pinot Noir grown in the cool hills of Alto Adige - so on that basis not pink Prosecco - but made in the same way as Prosecco (i.e. in a closed tank). A gently fizzy, pale pink glass showing redcurrant and white peach flavours. Very lightly savoury, but with red fruit returning on the finish, this makes a perfect sunshine apéritif, and a bottle vanishes very quickly indeed. Now-2023.



Apaltagua, Costero, Extra Brut, San Antonio, Chile, NV, 12.5%

Bottle £16.50 6 bottles with 5% off £94.05 Case with 12% off £174.24 Code APA8NV 60% Chardonnay, 40% Sauvignon Blanc, from cool, coastal fruit with a secondary fermentation in bottle. Appley, nutty, with a gentle savouriness. Classy Chilean fizz. Now-2023.

J. Laurens, Crémant de Limoux, Les Graimenous, Brut, France, 2019, 12%

Bottle £16.95 6 bottles with 5% off £96.62 Case with 12% off £178.99 Code LAU319 A blend of 60% Chardonnay with 30% Chenin, 5% Pinot Noir and 5% Mauzac, this is a dead ringer for Champagne, racy and vital, showing ripe orchard fruits but with some bready complexity too. Now-2023.

Domaine des Dieux, Méthode Cap Classique, Brut, Claudia, Cape South Coast, South Africa, 2015, 12%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11 Code DDD415 One of the top MCCs in South Africa – borne out by top awards: a previous vintage won two major awards: the Amorim MCC (Methode Cap Classique) Challenge in Cape Town; and the trophy for best South African Sparkling Wine in the prestigious Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships 2018. From 82% Chardonnay and 18% Pinot Noir, made in the Champagne method, with four years on its lees and another under cork, it stands comparison with plenty of far more expensive vintage Champagnes: yeasty, creamy and with great breadth on the palate. Now-2023.

Domaine des Dieux, Méthode Cap Classique, Rosé, Rose of Sharon, Walker Bay, South Africa, 2011, 11.5%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11 Code DDD411 Named after the biblical story of Solomon, from 58% Pinot Noir and 42% Chardonnay, given six years ageing on the lees before release. Very pale partridge eye hue. There's gentle red fruit, but it's otherwise refined, dry and savoury. "Pale, orangey pink. Real substance here. Earthy, sous bois and Baharat spice. Dried roses, touch of saffron, spicy apple, tangy. This is a very serious and seriously exciting pink sparkling....Superior to many champagne rosés. 17.5/20. VVGV", Tamlyn Currin, jancisrobinson.com, 14th April 2021. Now-2023.

Clotilde Davenne, Crémant de Bourgogne, Extra Brut, France, NV, 12.5%

Bottle £18.95 6 bottles with 5% off £108.02 Case with 12% off £200.11 Code CLO1NV A superb zéro dosage Crémant: 60% from Chardonnay, 40% from Pinot Noir (planted in 1973), both off Kimmeridgian soils west of Chablis; and based on the 2018 vintage.

Some yeastiness on the nose; and fine mousse. Classical, super-clean example, wholly dry and lightly chalky. This makes a deliciously refreshing aperitif – or would be brilliant with fish and chips. Now-2024.



Thomas-Hatté, Champagne, Tradition, Brut, NV, 12%

Bottle £27.95 6 bottles with 5% off £159.32 Case with 12% off £295.15 Code HAT1NV Half bottle £14.50 6 half bottles with 5% off £82.65 Case (12 x 37.5cl.) with 12% off £153.12 Code HAT2NV Magnum £59.50 3 magnums with 5% off £169.58 Case (6 x 150cl.) with 12% off £314.16 Code HAT9NV Double Magnum £145.00 Our "house" Champagne, crafted by fifth generation champagne grower Franck Thomas from 70% Pinot Meunier, 20% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Noir, wins many friends. Splendidly rounded, creamy and mature. Now-2023.

Thomas-Hatté, Champagne, Rosé, Brut, NV, 12%

Bottle £29.95 6 bottles with 5% off £170.72 Case with 12% off £316.27 Code HAT5NV Based on Pinot Meunier. Mid rosy pink. Red fruit and creamy nougat notes. Gentle and elegant: very good value indeed; and a perfectly hedonistic drop for a summer evening Now-2023.

Thomas-Hatté, Champagne, Brut, Millésime 2014, 12%

Bottle £32.50 6 bottles with 5% off £185.25 Case with 12% off £343.20 Code HAT614 50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir and 20% Pinot Meunier: open, full-flavoured and rich; and attractively bready. Extraordinary value. Now-2024.

The Grange, Pink, Dry English Sparkling Wine, Hampshire, NV, 11.5% Bottle £35.50 6 bottles with 5% off £202.35

Bottle £35.50 6 bottles with 5% off £202.35 Case with 12% off £374.88 Code GRA5NV The Grange rosé fizz comes from one well-sited, south facing slope above the river Itchen near Alresford, just a few miles away as the crow flies from our warehouse. From about 52% Pinot Noir and 48% Pinot Meunier, including 13% reserve wine, based on the 2017 vintage. Very pale salmon. Stunning fruit, hinting at white peach and redcurrants. Of course this is pretty sprightly - as almost all English fizz is - but it's elegant and attractively long. Now-2023.



Beaujolais

First a white: this is the first time we have shipped Didier Lagneau's Chardonnay.

Domaine Lagneau, Beaujolais-Villages Blanc, 2021, 12.9%

Bottle £13.95 6 bottles with 5% off £79.51 Case with 12% off £147.31 Code LAG521 Pure Chardonnay but so different from a crisp Mâcon grown on calcareous soils; on the granitic soils of the Beaujolais hills the expression of the grape is much more exotic, showing tropical fruit and a pleasant weight; but also benefitting from fresh, spring-like aromatics. Now-2023.

Gamay

Red Beaujolais continues its revival from the dark days of the Nouveau phenomenon. These are wines to drink all year round (though of course they are great in summer – but, please, no more than lightly chilled). If you can't face red Burgundy prices anymore do consider switching to Beaujolais from the ten named Cru villages. As well as being far more affordable - prices have only risen very slightly in many years - they are arguably more reliable. Furthermore, after about five to eight years, the top wines may subtly transform themselves into Pinot Noir look-alikes. The locals even have a verb for this: "pinoter", i.e. to become more Pinot-like with time in bottle. The wines begin to smell farmyardy, like mature Pinot Noir; they develop a svelte texture, and show gamey and truffley depths.

Domaine Montangeron, Beaujolais-Villages, 2020, 14%

Bottle £11.25 6 bottles with 5% off £64.13 Case with 12% off £118.80 Code MON120 New model Beaujolais – fully ripe and easydrinking but with inimitable local character too. Juicy, red and black-fruited, spot on. Now-2023.

Domaine Lagneau, Beaujolais-Villages, Cuvée Jeannine, 2020, 13.3%

Bottle £12.95 6 bottles with 5% off £73.82 Case with 12% off £136.75 Code LAG120 This is from ancient (60-100 year old) vines on steep schist and granite slopes in Quincié-en-Beaujolais, in the line of the Cru Villages and one of the best terroirs for Beaujolais-Villages. All black cherry and blueberry, juicy, but with remarkable substance too from the old vines. Crisp, alive and energetic. Now-2024.

Domaine Montangeron, Chiroubles, La Grosse Pierre, 2019, 14%

Bottle £13.50 6 bottles with 5% off £76.95 Case with 12% off £142.56 Code MON319 Chiroubles is the highest of the Cru Villages, and as such is usually known for a lighter expression of Gamay; but this is well-textured, with red cherry and blueberry flavours. Now-2023.

Domaine Lagneau, Regnié, Vieilles Vignes, Cuvée Gerard, 2020, 13.7%

Bottle £14.25 6 bottles with 5% off £81.23 Case with 12% off £150.48 Code LAG320 One of our long-term favourites, from 60-100 year old vines on the granitic hills just to the south of Morgon. Gérard is the father chez Lagneau. As ever, this is terrific: with an extraordinary, Cabernet Sauvignon-like depth of colour; a heady scent, hinting at roses; a voluptuous intensity of bramble and black cherry flavours; and the supple silkiness of a black labrador's ear. This would convert anyone to the virtues of Beaujolais. Now-2025.

La Chapelle des Bois, Fleurie, Grand Pré, 2021, 13%

Bottle £14.50 6 bottles with 5% off £82.65 Case with 12% off £153.12 Code CHB121 Fleurie has an association with "flowery" – but the best wines can have substance too. Bright youthful purple. Vibrant red-berried and black-cherried fruit. Very traditional example, showing a lively crispness and enough fruit tannins to accompany food well. Now-2024.

Lagneau, Morgon Vieilles Vignes, Cuvée Didier, 2019, 13.9%

Bottle £14.95 6 bottles with 5% off £85.22 Case with 12% off £157.87 Code LAG619 Stunning Gamay: has that lovely vanilla scent of ripe stems. Gush of black cherries and mulberries; joyous, deep and silky; and very long. The quality of the family's ancient vines shines though. The 2020 vintage follows at the same price. Now-2025.

Domaine Montangeron, Moulin-à-Vent, En Brenay, 2020, 15%

Bottle £15.50 6 bottles with 5% off £88.35 Case with 12% off £163.68 Code MON420 Moulin-à-Vent ranks amongst the finest of the Cru villages, with vines growing on distinctive soils of crumbling pink granite cut by manganese seams and quartz. En Brenay is a lieu-dit, a recognised sub-division. Extraordinary lushness of dark fruit - cherry, blackberry and plum - intense and velvety. Already delicious, this could be kept for years. Now-2026.

Domaine Lagneau, Morgon, Cuvée Prestige, 2017, 14%

Bottle £19.95 6 bottles with 5% off £ Case with 12% off £210.67 Code LAG617 If oaked Beaujolais is your bag, you will find this to your taste, displaying a Turkish delight-like quality of black cherry and chocolate. Inky, concentrated, bittersweet and different. Now-2023. Limited stock.



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Mixed Cases

Each case includes two bottles of each of the six wines listed with a discount of at least 12.5%

Spring into the Loire

(Three dry whites, two reds and a sparkling wine)

Le Colombier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2021	p.2
Chauvinière, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2020	
Forges, Chenin de Loire, 2021	
Forges, Anjou Rouge, 2021	p.6
Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Tradition, 2018	p.6
Diamant de Loire, Crémant de Loire, Brut, France, NV	p.7

Loire Sauvignons

(Six whites)

Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, IGP Vin de Pays de Loire, 2020	2
Forges, Sauvignon, IGP Val de Loire, 2021p.i	2
Le Colombier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2021p.i	2
l'Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2020	
Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernets, 2020	
Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, 2021p.	



(Six red Beaujolais)

Montangeron, Beaujolais-Villages, 2020p	.10
Lagneau, Beaujolais-Villages, Cuvée Jeannine, 2020p	.10
Montangeron, Chiroubles, La Grosse Pierre, 2019 p	.10
Lagneau, Regnié, Vieilles Vignes, Cuvée Gerard, 2020 p	.11
La Chapelle des Bois, Fleurie, Grand Pré, 2021p	.11
Lagneau, Morgon Vieilles Vignes, Cuvée Didier, 2019p	.11

May Medley

(All French: three whites, a sparkling wine and two reds)

Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Silice, 2020
Forges, Savennières, Le Clos du Papillon, 2019
Forges, Anjou Villages, Les Trois Cp.6
Laurens, Blanquette de Limoux, Le Moulin, NVp.7
Lagneau, Beaujolais-Villages Blanc, 2021p.1
La Chapelle des Bois, Fleurie, Grand Pré, 2021p.1



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