

Loire Valley – Whites

- Region follows the Loire River and stretches over 600 miles from the Atlantic ocean in the west all the way into the middle of France, roughly two hours south of Paris
- Huge diversity of grapes, though main whites are Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc
- 4 *general* sub-regions: Pays Nantais (Muscadet), Anjou-Saumur (Chenin Blanc and Cab Franc), Touraine (Chenin and Cab Franc), Central Vineyards (Sauvignon Blanc)
- Style widely varies based on grapes, vineyard site and soil, vintage, winemaking
- Overall, very food-friendly wines and big value

1) **Domaine de la Pépière Les Gras Moutons '10 – Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, France**

- Muscadet is the appellation; it is within the Pays Nantais region, right by the Atlantic
- Sèvre et Maine is a specific, high quality sub-region near Sèvre and Maine Rivers
- Wide soil variation, including granite, clay, gneiss, silica
- Grape is technically Melon de Bourgogne, but goes generally by Muscadet
- Lees contact popular in region; contributes character and texture
- Typically high acid, light body, high oyster-shell-like minerality
- Pépière an advocate for more site-specific wines and super-extended lees contact

2) **François Chidaine Sauvignon Blanc '11 – Touraine, France**

- Touraine is a large region encompassing many specific appellations like Vouvray, Chinon and Bourgueil
- If labeled as Touraine, the fruit can come from anywhere in the region
- Loire Sauvignon Blanc tends to be more minerally with less extroverted fruit than its “New World” counterparts
- François Chidaine works with both Chenin Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc, focusing on very old vines and biodynamic practices



3) Lucien Crochet Le Chêne '10 – Sancerre, France

- Sancerre is in the Central Vineyards; the “Old World” hallowed ground for Sauvignon Blanc... though Sancerre can also be made from Pinot Noir (red and rosé versions)
- Sancerre is known for being very mineral-driven
- Often has flinty notes due to the *silex* soil; other main soil types are Kimmeridgian limestone and the stony, fossil-laden *caillottes*
- “Le Chêne” is from a plot that’s exclusively *caillottes* and has great exposure to sun, resulting in riper fruit and earlier harvesting

4) François Cazin Cour-Cheverny '09 – Cheverny, France

- Cheverny is in Touraine and makes mostly Sauvignon Blanc, Gamay and Pinot Noir...
- BUT! *Cour-Cheverny* is an appellation only for whites made exclusively from a rare, indigenous grape called Romorantin, which has high acidity and minerality
- Cazin is considered one of the best producers in the appellation, working old vines and known for wines with fantastic longevity
- In good vintages, there may be noble rot, which shrivels the grapes and concentrates the juice and sugar in them, making them great candidates for off-dry or sweet wines
- Cazin labels these demi-sec wines as “Cuvée Renaissance”

5) Château Soucherie Cuvée Les Rangs de Long Anjou Blanc '11 – Loire Valley, France

- Anjou is often referred to in conjunction with its neighbor, Saumur
- Area is known for Chenin Blanc that ranges from dry to very sweet, plus sparkling
- “Cuvée Les Rangs de Long” is one of Château Soucherie’s *lieu dit* or “named vineyard,” single site bottlings
- Sand, clay and limestone soils in vineyards leading right down to the Layon River

6) François Pinon Vouvray Silex Noir '10 – Vouvray, France

- Vouvray is the most renowned appellation in Touraine for Chenin Blanc
- Soil type is *tuffeau* (a soft limestone) along with flinty *silex* (hence the *cuvée* name)
- Vintage and possible noble rot affects the style
- *Sec* = dry / *Sec-tendre* or *Demi-sec* = off-dry / *Moelleux* = sweet
- *Mousseux* or *Pétillant* = sparkling
- This has a little bit of residual sugar left from the fermentation; a demi-sec style
- Pinon is considered one of the top producers of Vouvray across the range of styles

