



QUALITY FACTORS

Sancerre and Pouilly from a terroir perspective

Sancerre is a quality wine region that was synonymous with the heyday of Parisian restaurants in the 1970s. Pouilly enjoys a similar reputation for its wines from the same Sauvignon varietal, better known locally as Blanc Fumé. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the concept of site selection has become extremely significant: whereas wine growers in the past would have made just one or two labels, they now offer consumers an extensive range of wines, sometimes labelled with the name of a single plot.

BY SYLVAIN PATARD



SANCERRE'S FAMOUS HILL
HAS A UNIQUE CHARM

The vineyards of Sancerre stretch over approximately 2,770 hectares and 14 districts in the Cher department: Menetou-Râtel, Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre, Bué, Crézancy-en-Sancerre, Montigny, Sainte-Gemme-en-Sancerrois, Sancerre, Chavignol, Saint-Satur, Sury-en-Vaux, Veaugues, Verdigny, Vinon and Thauvenay. Situated along the left bank of the Loire, the area covers the south-eastern edge of the Paris region. Its vineyards have spread over the hillsides with maximum altitudes ranging from 200 to 400 metres above sea level. The landform is characterised by rolling hills where vines grow mainly from 180 to 350 metres above sea level on inclines with a gradient of 50% or above.

Perched on a rocky outcrop, the village of Sancerre overlooks the Loire and its vineyards which have enjoyed fame since the Middle Ages. A magnificent chain of hills embracing 14 districts provides the perfect setting for wine growing due to their favourable aspect and sheltered position. The soils bear local names: 'terres blanches' (Kimmeridgian clay-limestone marl); 'caillottes' and 'grottes' (limestone); stony soils or silex (silica from the Tertiary period). Two grape varieties reign supreme in Sancerre: Sauvignon blanc (around 75% of total area) and Pinot noir. The former blossoms in fresh, young and fruity wines which take on different nuances depending on soil types; the latter fully reveals itself in soft, subtle rosés and light, perfumed and rich reds.

FRANCE'S BEST WHITE SAUVIGNON?

Making a superlative white wine from Sauvignon is challenging. The variety is a Period II ripening grape, close to the northern limit for growing vines at elevations of between 200 and 300 m. These have an even greater influence on the local climate and on soils that have some of the steepest gradients in the country. Similarly, fermentation occurs late in the season.

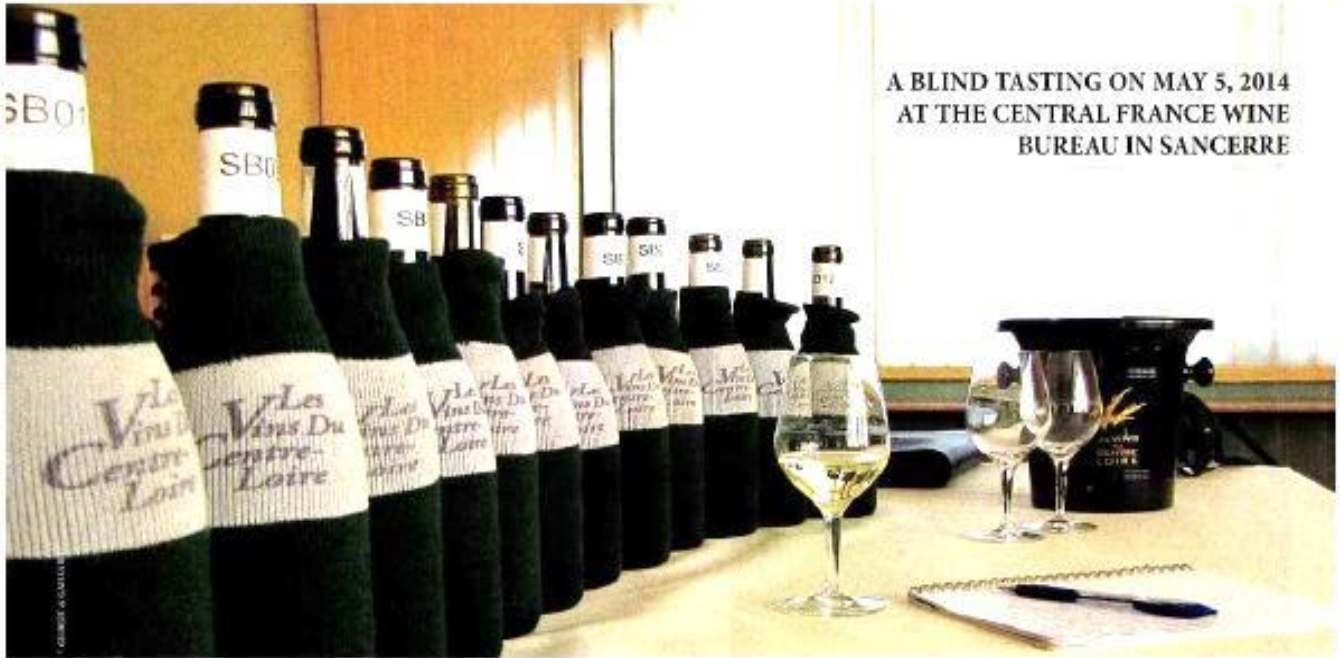
Soil types are generally divided into three main categories, from West to East: Kimmeridgian marl, extremely stony dry limestone ('caillottes') and silica soils with lots of flint. In



THE GRAPE VARIETY WITH
TWO IDENTITIES: LEFT BANK SAUVIGNON
AND RIGHT BANK BLANC-FUMÉ

actual fact though, there are myriad variations on this due to the infinite range of components that make up a site. Wines from limestone soils rarely come from areas that are 100% consistent. You may find limestone from Bourges - with few stones and a top layer of quite shallow soil - interspersed with Buzançais limestone or bedded limestone, both of which are deeper with much higher stone content.

The same is true of the marl, where clay content varies and limestone beds also alternate with layers of clay. These differences have an impact on wine styles and, above all, their capacity to age.



A BLIND TASTING ON MAY 5, 2014
AT THE CENTRAL FRANCE WINE
BUREAU IN SANCERRE

Our selection

2012 SANCERRE

Limestone soils

- 90/100 Jean P...
- 90/100
- 88/100
- 86/100
- 86/100 C...
- 86/100 P...
- 85/100 Girault - Chêne blanc
- 83/100 Domaine de la Villaudière - Héritage

Clay-limestone soils

- 91/100 Matthias et Emile Roblin - Ammonites
- 91/100 Michel Vattan - L-O
- 91/100 Paul Prieur et Fils - Monts Damnés
- 90/100 Pierre Prieur et Fils - Les Monts Damnés
- 89/100 Henri Natter - Les Classiques d'Henry
- 89/100 Philippe Raimbault - Les Godons
- 89/100 Serge Laporte - Mages
- 88/100 Roger et Didier Raimbault - Côteline
- 88/100 Serge Laloue - Le Gul de Beaujeu
- 87/100 Domaine Martin - Le Cul de Beaujeu
- 87/100 Hubert Brochard - La Côte des Monts Damnés
- 85/100 Alban Roblin - Héritage

Clay-silex soils

- Domaine de la Chézatte - Traditionnelle
- Thomas et Fils - Grand'Chaille
- Gitton - X-elis
- Maxime
- Le Manoir
- Wacheron - Les Romains

2012 POUILLY-FUME

Limestone soils

- 87/100 Domaine Jeannot et Fils - Auguste
- 86/100 Jean-Pierre Bailly - Rabatelleries
- 86/100 Château Favray

Clay-limestone soils

- 90/100 Domaine Chauveau - Sainte-Clélie
- 88/100 Domaine de la Loge - Les aveillons
- 88/100 Jonathan et Didier Pabiot - Eurythmie
- 84/100 Dominique Brisset - Bois Cailloux

Clay soils with silex

- 90/100 Château de Tracy - 101 Rangs
- 90/100 Domaine Cailbourdin - Tryptique Vieilles vignes
- 88/100 Michel Redde et Fils - Les Bois de Saint-Andelain



83/100

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