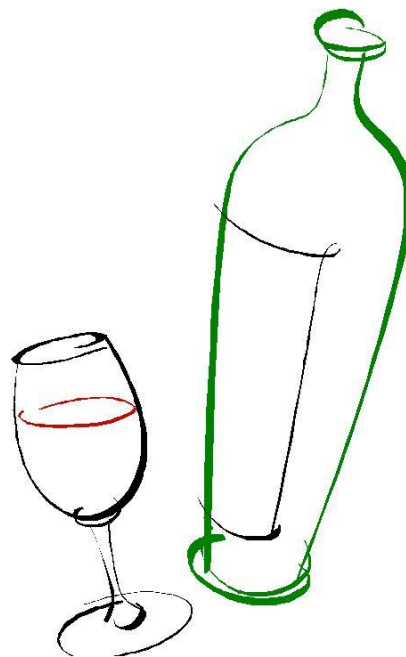




Le Ski Wine Lover's Pack

The Tasting Notes...



Domaine la Berthete Cotes du Rhone

Phonetics: Doh-mayne lah Bear-tett Coat-dju-Roan

Origin: France – Rhone Valley

Classification: AOC Côtes-du-Rhône

Grapes: Grenache, Syrah

One-liner

This midweight Côtes-du-Rhône delivers exactly what you'd expect from this ever-popular region: lots of spicy, peppery, dark fruit – perfect for winter drinking.

Summary description

With a brilliant and intense colour, this midweight Cotes-du-Rhone doesn't disappoint. A nose of typical Rhone dark fruits (blackcurrant and blackberry) is accompanied by strong hints of spice, pepper and herbs. It is not overpowering on the palate and works as an excellent accompaniment to many red meats, notably lamb.

What does it taste like?

This juicy Côtes-du-Rhône shows all the classic Rhône notes of dark berry fruits and spice, particularly pepper and Provençal herbs such as rosemary.

What does it go with?

Most red meats, though lamb is always a classic for Rhone wines.

Who makes it?

The domaine has been owned since 1993 by Pascal Maillet and his family. Soon after graduation, Pascal, who majored in computer science, decided to settle in at the domaine and produce his own wine. He has since planted new vines and invested in brand new equipment for the cellar in order to improve the vinification process.

The estate produces about 200,000 bottles a year. It contains traditional grape varieties averaging 32 years of age, such as Grenache, Syrah, Carignan, and Cinsault for the reds, and Grenache Blanc and Bourboulenc for the whites. Harvesting is done by hand. Bottling is done at the domain.

A bit of extra background

The Côtes-du-Rhône region stretches 200 km from Vienne in the north (just south of Lyon) to Avignon in the south; and from the foothills of the Massif Central in the west to the beginnings of the Alps in the east.

Ronan Sayburn's view

"Truffle, leather and meat flavours with soft tannins a lingering finish, perfect for venison or rich meats."

Manoir Grignon Cabernet Syrah

Phonetics: Man-waar Gree-nyon Cab-er-nay Sear-rah

Origin: France – Languedoc

Classification: IGP Pays d’Oc

Grapes: 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Syrah

One-liner

A real crowd-pleaser, this modern-style, medium-to-full-bodied wine has lovely sweet spice from the oak alongside lots of smooth, soft, dark fruit.

Summary description

Rich and velvety, with deep flavours of blackberry and chocolate, this is wine from the South of France that has ‘Made in the New World’ stamped all over it. It is dark and intense, yet immediately accessible and with some lovely sweet vanilla flavours from the oak. Always a very popular choice.

What does it taste like?

The wine combines the vanilla-like sweet spice of the oak with brambly, rich, dark fruit to give an almost chocolatey impression. Super-soft and smooth on the palate.

What does it go with?

Versatile companion to most red meats; also excellent with cheese.

Who makes it?

The wine is made by leading international winemaker, Xavier Roger, who is based in Carcassonne in the South of France. Xavier specialises in making modern, ‘international’ styles of wine in France – wines that can be enjoyed with or without food.

A bit of extra background

The Cabernet/Syrah blend is unusual in France. Cabernet hails from Bordeaux in the Southwest, Syrah comes from the Rhone Valley. But in countries like Australia or Chile, the blend is very popular. When they are capable of producing wines like this, it’s easy to see why more and more French producers are looking elsewhere for ideas.

Ronan Sayburn’s view

“Lovely floral nose, showing hints of violet, liquorice and deep smoky dark tobacco. Very rounded and ripe on the palate, with firm tannins well integrated into deep layers of soft fruit. Nice length.”

Chateau Goumin

Phonetics: Shat-oh Goo-man

Origin: France – Bordeaux (Right Bank)

Classification: AOC Bordeaux

Grapes: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

One-liner

Brilliant classic red Bordeaux – restrained and elegant, yet with plenty of delicious blackcurrant fruit.

Summary description

Château Goumin is owned by one of the big names of Bordeaux, André Lurton, who releases his wines onto the market only when they are ready to be drunk. Made principally from the Merlot grape, with a bit of Cabernet Sauvignon for company, it has really soft tannins and a medium weight - perfect for drinking with a piece of steak or a decent plate of charcuterie.

What does it taste like?

The wine has a classic Bordeaux profile: it is medium-bodied and combines blackcurrant notes with green pepper overtones.

What does it go with?

Beef is the classic companion for Bordeaux wines, whether roasted or in a stew. But – being quite restrained in its weight – it makes a great partner for charcuterie, too.

Who makes it?

Château Goumin is owned by one of the big names of Bordeaux, André Lurton, who releases his wines onto the market only when they are ready to be drunk. The vineyards surround the chateau, which is located 35km east of Bordeaux and just 15km from Saint Emilion. The estate covers approximately 30 hectares, mostly under vine, the greater part red varietals, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with some whites (Muscadelle, Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc). The history of the chateau can be traced back to the 18th century.

A bit of extra background

When people talk about 'Right' and 'Left' Bank in the context of Bordeaux wines, they're referring to the right and left banks of the Gironde estuary, upon which the city of Bordeaux lies. The Right Bank sits to the north of the Gironde (it's on the right-hand side as the river flows out to sea) and includes famous appellations such as St Emilion, where Merlot is the dominant grape in the blends. The Left Bank sits to the south of the Gironde and includes such famous appellations as Pauillac and Margaux, where Cabernet Sauvignon is top dog.

Saumur Cuvee Signee Eric Laurent

Phonetics: So-moo-er Ku-vay Seen-yay Air-EEK Lo-rong

Origin: France – Loire Valley

Classification: AOC Saumur

Grapes: Chenin Blanc

One-liner

A beautifully balanced, highly versatile, medium-weight white wine from the Loire Valley, made with the Chenin Blanc grape.

Summary description

A beautifully balanced, medium-weight white wine from the Loire Valley, made with the Chenin Blanc grape, with aromas of crushed white fruits, white flowers and a light honeyed freshness. On the palate, it sits in the middle of the park: it has some of the freshness that we associate with Sauvignon Blanc and some of the ripeness we seek from Chardonnay. It's remarkably versatile with food - fresh enough not to overpower a light fish dish, yet with enough body to stand up to a creamy chicken recipe.

What does it taste like?

Aromas of crushed white fruits, white flowers and a light honeyed freshness lead into quite a full, oily, waxy palate, showing flavours of white fruit and a slight creaminess.

What does it go with?

Very versatile with food - fresh enough not to overpower a light fish dish, yet with enough body to stand up to a creamy chicken recipe.

Who makes it?

The Cuvee Eric Laurent is produced by the Cave de Saumur, a large producer based in the town of Saumur on the River Loire. As well as still white and red wines, they are a leading producer of sparkling wines from the region (most notably Cremant de Loire). They export a large part of their production.

A bit of extra background

Most people's experience of the Chenin Blanc grape these days is with South African wines. South Africa indeed possesses the largest volume of Chenin Blanc vines in the world. But its original home was the Loire Valley, where its extraordinary versatility means that it is used to produce dry wines such as this one, off-dry (sometimes sparkling) wines from famous appellations like Vouvray, as well as sweeter dessert wines such as Coteaux du Layon that are capable of very long ageing.

Ronan Sayburn's view

"A complex nose, typical Chenin bruised appleskin characteristics, honeysuckle, very fresh appley acidity on the palate along with a round waxy feel. Would be great with pork and apple sauce among a wide range of things."

Domaine Guenault Sauvignon de Touraine

Phonetics: Doh-mayne Gay-noh So-veen-yon duh Tour-enn

Origin: France – Loire Valley

Classification: AOC Sauvignon de Touraine

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc

One-liner

Beautiful Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire Valley, just down the road from Sancerre. Lots of citrus and elderflower notes, along with riper tropical hints. Delicious.

Summary description

A bright but fruity Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire Valley's famous Touraine region, with depth, elegance and a grassy, lemony, elderflower-like freshness. In style, it offers a nod towards the New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs, with hints of passion fruit and mango. A great balance of New and Old World. A baby Sancerre meets Marlborough!

What does it taste like?

It is elegant, grassy, lemony and fresh, with lots of ripe elderflower, citrus and even tropical fruit flavours.

What does it go with?

Goat's cheese is the classic Loire Valley partner for the region's Sauvignon Blancs, but this wine will also make a great partner for grilled salmon with chilli.

Who makes it?

Domaine Guenault is owned by the Bougrier family, a successful négociant company in the Loire Valley, founded in 1885 and now run by the fifth generation of Bougriers. The domaine is one of the family's own properties and situated on steep slopes overlooking the Cher river, which gives the grapes excellent sun exposure.

A bit of extra background

The Touraine's wine-growing area takes its name from the city of Tours on the River Loire and extends over 5,300 hectares across the départements of Indre-et-Loire, Indre and Loir-et-Cher. It offers wonderful wines that share much in common with its more illustrious neighbours of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fume, though without the same price-tag.

Ronan Sayburn's view

"Lemon zest, grapefruit and hedge flowers on the nose, very ripe fruit on the palate (pineapple, limes, passion fruit); well-rounded, good weight and length – a real triumph."

Marillier Macon Les Crays

Phonetics: Ma-rill-ee-er Ma-con Lay Cray

Origin: France – Burgundy

Classification: AOC Macon-Villages

Grapes: Chardonnay

One-liner

Classic, midweight, unoaked Chardonnay from southern Burgundy – creamy, buttery yet fresh. Perfect with chicken and pork.

Summary description

The southern end of Burgundy's vineyards lie to the west of the city of Macon. Here, the climate is sunny and warm and most vineyards lie on hillsides, giving good sun exposure and air circulation. The result is a fuller, richer, creamy, more opulent style of Chardonnay - smooth and refined, creamy and buttery. This midweight wine is a perfect example. It is unoaked to retain its freshness.

What does it taste like?

This wine takes you on a stroll through a summer meadow. Floral notes on the nose are followed by lemon, apple and a cosy vivacity on the palate. No need to food match if you don't feel like it - you can just crack open the bottle and enjoy it for what it is.

What does it go with?

Chicken tends to be put forward as the best accompaniment for wines of the Maconnais – especially if in a creamy sauce. But you could also enjoy it with pork and cheese.

A bit of extra background

The Macon-Villages appellation is given to white wine produced entirely from Chardonnay in the vineyards of the Maconnais region of Bourgogne (Burgundy) in France. The AOC covers an area of 1336 hectares, spread over 40 towns. The world-famous Chardonnay grape is right at home here – indeed it takes its name from a village in the area!

Ronan Sayburn's view

“An almost Chablis-like style, not oaky, limestoney, rounded, with soft creamy fruit and balanced acidity. Great with dishes such as pork with pine nuts and apricot stuffing, also with hard cheeses like Comte or Cheddar.”