The Loire Valley

The region produces more white wine than any other French region, and is second only to Champagne in sparkling wine production.

Principal Grape Varietals

White Varietals	Red Varietals
Chenin blanc	Cabernet franc (Breton)
Muscadet (Melon de Bourgogne)	Cabernet Sauvignon
Sauvignon blanc	Pinot noir
Chardonnay	Gamay
Chasselas	Groslot
Gros plant (Folle blanche)	Malbec (Cot)
Romorintin	Pineau d' Aunis

Pays Nantais

Has a cool, wet maritime climate planted primarily with the Muscadet (Melon de Bourgogne) grape.

There are four appellations:

Muscadet ,
Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire
Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu,
Muscadet de Sevre et Maine

All the Muscadet appellations specify a maximum alcohol content of 12%.

Muscadet AOC is the basic appellation, the wines are neutral, dry, high in acid, and designed for youthful consumption. The appellation is seldom used, as most producers qualify for one of the other three sub-appellations.

Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine wines, account for over 80% of Muscadet production, are sourced from 23 communes near the confluence of the Sèvre and Maine Rivers.
A range of soils including gneiss, silica, clay, and granite.
Approximately 50% of the production is bottled **sur lie**.
In order to label Muscadet as sur lie, the wine must originate from one of the three sub-appellations. The wines are aged on their lees over the winter, and are bottled directly off the fine lees (without filtering) between March 1 and November 30 of the year following the harvest. The process adds complexity, and richness to the wines.

Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire is a more northerly appellation, In warmer vintages the area is an excellent source of quality Muscadet

Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu is the newest appellation, created in 1994. The wines struggle to achieve quality beyond basic Muscadet.

Pays Nantais also contains several smaller AOP (formerly VDQS regions,)

Gros Plant du Pays Nantais
Fiefs Vendéens
Coteaux d'Ancenis.

Anjou-Saumur

Saumur is an eastern sub-region of Anjou, adjacent to Chinon in Touraine. and is the Loire's centre for sparkling wine production;
Anjou produces both sweet and dry Chenin Blanc, wines (Pineau de la Loire). 45% of Anjou's production is rosé, wines dominated by Grolleau grapes.
Approx 30% of Anjou's plantings are Cabernet Franc.

AOC Anjou,is the umbrella appellation for the region.
Saumur wines may be bottled as Anjou AOC, but not vice versa.

Savennières. Produced on the north bank of the Loire from 100% Chenin Blanc.
The vineyards are steep south facing across the river and have a soil structure of blue schist mixed with volcanic debris. Wines are dry sometimes austere but can develop great complexity and honeyed richness with age
There are 2 single vineyard appellations in Savennières:
AC Savennières La Roche aux Moines (17ha)
AC Savennières Coulée des Serrant, a 7ha monopole produced by biodynamic principles

Coteaux du Layon
Sweet wines are produced from Chenin blanc. Harvesting in ***tries*** is mandatory, resulting in either healthy late harvest grapes, or grapes affected by noble rot. Because of the microclimate in the area Passerillage is more common than Botrytis
Wines made from botrytised grapes can use the AC **Coteaux du Layon Sélection de grains Noble**

Quarts de Chaume Grand Cru
Quarts de Chaume is the Loire Valley's first Grand Cru (2011) The regulations will require Quarts de Chaume to limit yields to 20hl / ha with a minimum potential alcohol level of 18.5%

Chaume Premier Cru Layon
Also approved in 2011 Yields limited to 25hl/ha.
Wines must achieve 16.5% potential alcohol

Bonnezeaux Grown on south facing slopes in the commune of Thouarcé.

AOC	Min Sugar gr/ltr must	Min alc content	Min RS gr/ltr	Other Requirements
Coteaux du Layon	221	12%	34	
Coteaux du Layon Villages	238	12%	34	
As above AC's+ Selection de grains noble	323			No chaptalisation allowed, must prove in tests that it has SGN character
Bonnezeaux	238	12%	51	Grapes must be overripe and may be affected by Botrytis or not
Coteaux de Layon Chaume Premier Cru	272	12%	68	Grapes must be Passerille or affected by Botrytis If must has a sugar content of 323gr/ltr naturally only 11% alc is required
Quarts de Chaume Grand Cru	238	12%	34	Grapes must be overripe and may be affected by Botrytis or not (Min potential alcohol 18%)

Coteaux du Layon Villages
Six villages are entitled to add their names to the basic Coteaux du Layon AOC .
Beaulieu-sur-Layon
Rablay-sur-Layon
Rochefort-sur-Loire
Faye d'Anjou
St-Aubin de Luigné
St-Lambert du Lattay

Coteaux de l' Aubance vineyards are planted on schistous soils alongside the river Aubance. Wines are similar in style to Coteaux du Layon produced from Chenin blanc Harvesting in Tries is compulsory.
Min sugar level 230gr /ltr (294gr/ltr for Sélection de grains noble)

Anjou Villages
A red wine only appellation. Wines produced from Cabernet franc & Cabernet Sauvignon.
Anjou Villages Brissac, a red wine appellation, covers the same ten communes that are authorized for Coteaux de l'Aubance.
Gamay, produces the region's lightest red but may not be blended in standard Anjou Rouge bottlings. (Varietal Anjou Gamay)

Saumur
The Appellation covers red, dry white, and sparkling white and rosé wines.
Saumur whites may contain an addition of up to 20% Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.
The soft tuffeau (Tufa) limestone soils of Saumur are ideal for sparkling wine production.

Saumur Rouge wines permit Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pineau d'Aunis.
Still Rosé wines are not authorised.
Wines may also be sold as Anjou AC (but not vice versa)

Over 50% of Saumur's grapes are made into Saumur AOC sparkling wines
Cremant de la Loire. Permits blending across Touraine and Anjou-Saumur while permitting fewer restrictions on grape usage.

Saumur Champigny
Near the commune of Champigny the limestone is harder, iron-rich and contains elements of shale. 8 surrounding villages may produce the red wine from Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon & Pineau d' Aunis

Touraine

Chinon Bourgueil St Nicholas de Bourgueil

Chinon soils are broadly divided into three types: tuffeau, clay, and varennes. The sandy, alluvial varennes soils are closest to the river Vienne whereas tuffeau is found on the slopes. The vins de tuffe originating from these limestone south-facing slopes have the depth and ageworthiness.

Bourgueil soils are divided between sand and limestone.
St-Nicolas de Bourgueil has lighter alluvial soils, with a corresponding lighter style of wine.
All three appellations are based on Cabernet Franc with up to 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.
Bourgueil and St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil offer only red and rosé wines.
Chinon produces a small amount of white wine from Chenin Blanc.

Vouvray
Touraine's largest white wine district. The area has a soft limestone subsoil (Tuffeau) . There are eight delimited communes of Vouvray.
The approved varietals are Chenin Blanc. Orbois (Menu Pineau) is allowed but rarely used Vouvray may be produced in a range of sweetness levels**: sec, sec-tendre (off-dry), demi-sec, moelleux, and liquereux.**
Vouvray is also authorised for sparkling wine production The wines are made by méthode traditionnelle and may be either pétillant or mousseux.

Montlouis sur Loire lies across the river from Vouvray and was formerly part of Vouvray, The wines are similar in style to Vouvray. (Orbois is not permitted in Montlouis)

Touraine AOC

Chenin Blanc currently dominates Touraine white wines, but a new encépagement permits Sauvignon Blanc and a maximum 20% Sauvignon Gris, This is scheduled to replace the older style entirely by 2016. Red and rosé varietials include Gamay, Groslot, Pineau d'Aunis and Cabernet Franc. In recognition of their superior wines, three villages are allowed to add their name to the basic appellation: Mesland, Azay-le-Rideau, and Amboise. Touraine pétillant and mousseux wines are made,
Touraine Noble-Joué.is a separate rosé appellation (a style of vin gris), A blend of Gris Meunier (Pinot Meunier), Malvosie (Pinot Gris), and Pinot Noir.

Coteaux du Loir AOC North of the Loire Valley is the Loir tributary The red and rosé wines are based on Pineau d'Aunis and the white wines are produced from Chenin Blanc.
Jasnieres AOC is a sub-appellation and source of the Coteaux du Loir's best Chenin blanc wines.
Coteaux de Vendômois AOC is north east of the Coteaux du Loir. A newer appellation specializing in dry rosés made with Pineau d'Aunis.

Chevernay & Cour Chevernay AOC are located on the eastern edge of Touraine. Cheverny's light red wines are a Pinot Noir and Gamay blend, Whites are produced from Sauvignon Blanc. The Romorantin grape is bottled varietally as Cour-Cheverny.

Valençay AOC To the south of Chevernay. White wines are predominantly made from Sauvignon Blanc.
Red and rosé wines are based on Gamay, Pinot Noir, and Cot.

Central Vineyards

Sancerre & Pouilly Fumé

The two appellations provide the classic Sauvignon blanc style. steely, herbaceous, mineral rich. .
Sancerre, the vines are planted on three main soils**:**
silex*, *terres blanches*, *caillottes.

Terres blanches is a continuation of the Kimmeridgian clay that extends into Chablis,
Caillottes is a gavel with limestone.
Silex has a higher proportion of flint and continues into the communes of Pouilly Fumé.

Classic Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé are produced in stainless steel, but some producers have experimented with new oak.
Sancerre Rouge / Rosé are produced from Pinot Noir.

Pouilly Fumé wines from Sauvignon blanc (no red / rosé wines) From Pouilly sur Loire and 6 surrounding communes

Pouilly sur Loire, is reserved for whites produced from the Chasselas grape

Menetou Salon An AC for Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir. The wines are similar to those of Sancerre.

Reuilly Quincy Coteaux Giennois

These districts all produce varietal Sauvignon Blanc.
Coteaux du Giennois produces reds and rosés blended from Pinot Noir and Gamay. 8 of the 16 communes which are entitled to this appellation can also use the appellation **Côtes du Gien Cosne sur Loire**

Reuilly red wines are pure Pinot Noir, the rosés are *vin gris* wines produced from Pinot Gris**.**
Quincy is a white wine only AOC. From gravel soils on the river Cher.

Orléans AOC, lies east of Touraine and produces red, white & Rosé wines.
Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, respectively, for its reds and whites.
Orléans Clery AOC, is reserved for red wines produced from Cabernet Franc.

Smaller Appellations of the Loire

AOC / AOP	Sub AOC's	Principal varietals
Gros Plant	Gros Plant Gros Plant sur lie	Folle Blanche
Fiefs Vendéens	Brem Mareuil Pissotte Vix	**Blanc**- Chenin blanc, (Chardonnay & Sauvignon) **Rouge / Rosé** – Gamay & Pinot noir (Cabernet franc & Negrette)
Haut Poitou		**Blanc-** Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chenin blanc (max20%) Pinot blanc **Rouge/Rosé**- Pinot noir, Gamay, Merlot, Cot, Cabernet Franc / Sauvignon, Grolleau (max 20%)

Coteaux d'Ancenis		**Blanc**- Chenin blanc, Malvoisie **Rouge/Rosé**- Gamay (Cabernet Franc)
Côtes d' Auvergne	Boudes Chanturgue Châteaugay Corent Madargues	**Blanc** – Chardonnay **Rouge** – Gamay, Pinot noir Best red & Rosé wines are from Gamay & Pinot noir, carry the Chanturges appellation
Châteaumeillant		**Rouge/ Rosé** Gamay, Pinot gris, Pinot noir
Vin de Thoursais		**Blanc** – Chenin blanc, Chardonnay **Rouge/Rosé –** Cabernet franc/ Sauvignon, Gamay
Côtes du Forez & Côtes Roannaise		**Red / Rosé** Gamay
St Pourçain		Gamay, Pinot noir, Chardonnay & Tressalier (Sacy)