



POUILLY-SUR-LOIRE AND ITS ENVIRONS

The name "Pouilly" is one of the most confusing in the wine world, not least because it can be used to refer to three different places and appellations. Pouilly-Fumé is an AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) for crisp dry wines made from Sauvignon Blanc on the eastern bank of the Loire in the commune of Pouilly-sur-Loire, that are generally noted for their gunflint, slightly smoky aromas. The AOC of Pouilly-sur-Loire itself, however, is made exclusively from the Chasselas grape, which is unusual in France and best known in Switzerland, especially on the western slopes of Lake Neuchâtel. These should never be confused with Pouilly-Fuissé which is a white wine appellation in the Maconnais region of Burgundy, located in the communes of Fuissé, Solutré-Pouilly, Vergisson and Chaintré, and is restricted to wines made from Chardonnay. This month's column focuses on the first two of these, as well as noting two nearby wine appellations that are largely unknown in the UK: the Coteaux du



Giennois AOC, including 233 ha of vineyards in 14 villages just to the north of Pouilly-sur-Loire, and the Côtes de la Charité IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée) just to its south, which consists of 45 ha mainly in six communes around La Charité-sur-Loire.

The amounts of wine made in these appellations are very small compared with their larger neighbours. In 2024, the much better-known Sancerre AOC, just to the north west, made wine from 3,053 ha, whereas the Pouilly Fumé and Pouilly-sur-Loire AOCs consist of only 1422 ha. What they may lack in total production, they make up for in quality and interest! 98% of their area is devoted to Sauvignon Blanc, and only 2% to Chasselas. Terroir and aspect have significant impact on the flavours of these wines, with four types of soil dominating the vineyards: sand, flint (silex), Kimmeridgian marl, and limestone. In his Pouilly Fume 3, the young and dynamic winegrower Philippe Seguin thus combines the fruitiness from grapes grown on limestone, powerful aromatics from the Kimmeridgian marl and minerality from the flinty soils. This wine is also aged in oak barrels to accentuate its characteristics, although most Pouilly Fumé is fermented and aged in stainless steel. So, by knowing the origin of the fruit, it is possible to choose



SUNSET OVER THE VINEYARDS OF POUILLY-SUR-LOIRE

wines from here that suit your own particular preferences. Look at the back labels where many producers give an indication of their terroir. In favourable years, the grapes can also be affected by noble rot (*Botrytis cinerea*) and this gives additional richness with aromas of candied fruit, quince jelly and dried apricots, although the palate remains dry. If you like such wines – and I do – try the exotic Les Filles 2020, from Serge Dagueneau & Filles, if you can find it!

The rare wines made from Chasselas in the Pouilly-sur-Loire AOC offer a very different, but still delicious, style of wine. These tend to be light and easy to drink, and go well as an aperitif or with a seafood platter. At their best, as with those made from vines more than 70 years old by the Jeannots at Domaine de Riaux, they have fresh fruit and floral aromas, and a delightful minerality in the palate.

Most wines in the surrounding areas are also made from Sauvignon Blanc, but some red and rosé wines from Pinot Noir and Gamay are also made in the Coteaux du Giennois, and the white wines of the Côtes de la Charité are made from Chardonnay and Pinot Gris, with the reds from Pinot Noir. These reds are quite light, but hugely quaffable and all the wines are very good value. The Les Pinottes, Côtes de la Charité, again from Serge Dagueneau & Filles, is definitely worth searching for, with its beautiful aromas of cherries, a touch of violet, rounded tannins, and surprising length!

WINES FROM THE SURROUNDING OF POUILLY-SUR-LOIRE

(please drink responsibly)

LOCAL FAVOURITES

☛ **Christophe Monget, AOC Coteaux du Giennois, 2023, 12.5%.** This dry white Sauvignon Blanc combines hay, pear, nectarine and white flower aromas, with steely minerality, and grassy, damp stone

flavours (Laithwaites, £16.99, **reduced to £15.99 if you present a copy of this magazine at the store**).

SLIGHTLY FURTHER AFIELD

☛ **Domaine Seguin Pouilly Fumé AOC, 2023, 13%.** A classic high quality Pouilly-Fumé, characterised by fresh citrus, pear and peach with a touch of minerality giving it the typical gunflint character of these wines (Morrisons, £14 with More Card).

☛ **Definition by Majestic, Pouilly Fumé, 2023, 14%.** Exclusive to Majestic, this wine is made for them by Domaine André Figeat, and has grapefruit, lemon and peach characteristics, set off by typical smoky notes (Majestic, £17 mixed six, **reduced to £16 if you present a copy of this magazine at the store**).

☛ **Pouilly-Fumé AOC, Clos du Matin, 2022, 12.5%.** White flower, citrus and mineral characteristics with subtle smokiness on the palate and good length. Goes well with smoked salmon (Waitrose, £15).

☛ **Domaine Serge Laloue, Côtes de La Charité, Chardonnay, 2021, 13%.** An excellent example of wines from La Charité, with subtle aromas of acacia, almond and honeysuckle, refreshing acidity, and a mineral, citrus and peach palate (General Wine Company Liphook, £19).

WORTH GOING FURTHER FOR

☛ **The Society's Exhibition Pouilly Fumé AOC, 2023, 13.5%.** An elegant wine made by Sophie Landrat-Guyollet, which blends grapes from flint soils that add smoky minerality, length and freshness, and sandy soils that bring some aromatic complexity. A fine dry wine to accompany grilled fish, asparagus, or poultry (The Wine Society, £19).

(Wine prices and availability correct at going to press, but are subject to change at short notice.)

☛ **Next issue:** Wine lists and sommeliers

