

Sauvignon Blanc



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Geography
France, New World,
especially New
Zealand.

**Flavour &
Character**
Sharp, tangy,
gooseberry is the
predominant
flavour. Also has
undertones of
grass, nettles,
elderflower and
asparagus.

Body, Dry/Sweet
Has a natural
acidity. Used in
dry, medium sweet
and sparkling
wines.

Viticulture
Enjoys a cool climate.
Ideal terroir—the Loire
and Bordeaux regions
of France.

Vinification
Californian
winemakers tend to
minimise the tart,
crisp characteristics of
European Sauvignon
Blanc by ensuring that
the grapes are very
ripe before harvesting
and then ageing them
in new oak.

Varietal/Blend
Found as a pure varietal in
the Loire, but often blended
with Sémillon in Bordeaux
and the New World.

Style
Depends a lot on the
country of origin, e.g., New
Zealand Sauvignon Blanc
tends to be tangy and
sharp; Chile produces
softer styles.

Notes
France's Loire region
Sauvignon Blanc has
achieved the elevated
status of "Noble Grape."

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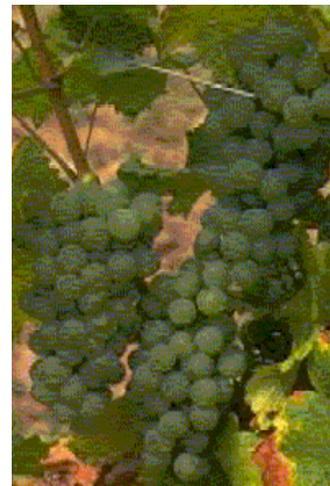
Sauvignon Blanc

The Sauvignon Blanc grape produces wines of distinction in most of the areas where it is grown. It can tolerate greater heat than many varieties. Sauvignon Blancs are higher in acid and often exhibit 'melon' in the nose and tastes. If grown in too cool a climate, it can develop an herbal ('grassy') character in its aromas. Sauvignon Blanc produces large crops and is a low cost variety.

It performs well in the Loire river and Bordeaux regions of [France](#). Because it can get overpowered by the oak flavors, it is not often aged in wood. It can gain additional complexity and richness with that treatment. In the U.S. it is often known as Fume Blanc. [New Zealand](#) is having notable success with this variety and produces wines that have very high levels of acidity.

Sauvignon Blanc is often blended with small amounts of [Semillion](#) in order to 'round-out' the taste of the wine.

Sauvignon Blanc is especially good when served with seafood.



Domaine de Saint-Laurent-l'Abbaye

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PRONUNCIATION

doe-MAIN duh sahn law-rahn LAB-bay

LOCATION

From the Loire Valley, just across the river from Sancerre, surrounding the village of Pouilly-sur-Loire.

WINES

White Wines

Appellation Contrôlée

- Pouilly-Fumé

CLASSIFICATION

Appellation Contrôlée

VINEYARD COMPOSITION/VARIETAL BLEND

100% Sauvignon Blanc

HISTORY

The Saint-Laurent-l'Abbaye vineyard is planted on a hillside of clay and chalk, perfect for allowing the Sauvignon Blanc its best expression. The estate, where the Chatelain family have been producing Pouilly-Fumé since 1630, has been handed down through eleven generations.

VINIFICATION

The winery is ultra-modern, with temperature-controlled fermentation and storage tanks. The bottling line uses inert gas to prevent oxidation during bottling.



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Wine: Best Producers: Loire, France

The Loire is a vast wine-producing region that broadly follows the river of the same name on its course to the south and west of Paris. The pastoral countryside is often referred to as the "garden of France." There are several distinct sub-regions of the Loire, each producing a unique specialty.

Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre are regions well known for producing snappy, clean, refreshing white wines from the sauvignon blanc grape. These wines tend to have a fresh, herbal pungency, though some examples are now aged in oak.

Chinon produces one of the Loire's few red wines. Made from the cabernet franc of Bordeaux fame, Chinon can tend toward the green and herbal side. In a ripe vintage (such as 1989, 1990, 1995, or 1996) from a good producer, however, the wine will be exotically aromatic and firm, with a racy edge of acidity.

Muscadet is another clean and snappy white that is renowned for its ability to go with shellfish. Very rarely oaked, it makes an excellent aperitif and should be consumed within a year or two of the vintage.

Finally, there are the great Loire wines made from the rich and aromatic chenin blanc, Savennieres, Vouvray, and Coteaux-du-Layon. Savennieres is well known for its dry to off-dry whites, which achieve amazing levels of richness and flavor intensity. The best have the ability to age for years. Vouvray, on the other hand, is often made in a semi-sparkling or sparkling style, a sort of semi-sweet French moscato. Some Vouvray producers will also produce a special and exotic dessert wine when the conditions are right. Coteaux-du-Layon is well known for producing one of the world's great late harvest sweet wines, with the ability to age for decades. These appellations go a long way to showing the amazing versatility of the under-appreciated chenin.

No matter what your tastes, the Loire is likely to have a wine that can meet at least some of them.

★★★★ PREMIER PRODUCERS	★★★ GREAT PRODUCERS	★ DEPENDABLE PRODUCERS
Couly-Dutheil (Chinon)	Domaine Henri Bourgeois (Sancerre)	Marc Bredif (Vouvray)
Didier Dagueneau (Pouilly-Fumé)	Domaine Cailbourdin (Pouilly-Fumé)	Chateau Favray (Pouilly-Fumé)
Serge Dagueneau (Pouilly-Fumé)	Jean-Claude Chatelain (Pouilly-Fumé)	Phillipe Foreau (Vouvray)
Chateau de la Genaiserie (Coteaux-du-Layon)	Domaine Cherrier (Sancerre)	Chateau de la Genaiserie (Anjou)
Charles Joguet (Chinon)	Domaine du Closel (Savennieres)	Domaine la Moussiere (Sancerre)
Pascal Jolivet (Pouilly-Fumé, La Grande Cuvée)	Comte LaFond (Sancerre)	
Nicolas Joly	Domaine Vincent	

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Destination: Sancerre

On the trail of Sauvignon Blanc and chèvre in France's Loire Valley

By William Echikson

About an hour and a half due south of Paris, traveling by car, the landscape turns flat and featureless. Many of the villages have emptied, their buildings decaying, as the inhabitants have left to search for jobs in the cities. Small farms, with a few cows, chickens and cereals, are shutting down. The land isn't rich enough to support modern, intensive cultivation. This is France's lonely heart. But suddenly, a dramatic hill looms ahead. There are ramparts, beautiful buildings and a town square full of hustle and bustle, with bars and restaurants. From on high, the view spreads across chalk ridges covered with vineyards, while in the distance, goats graze in fields beside the lazy Loire River.

This is Sancerre -- home to some of France's tangiest, most thirst-quenching white wines, made from [Sauvignon Blanc](#), and some of its tarest and tastiest goat cheeses, known as crottin de Chavignol. Though still a small town, Sancerre packs a gastronomic punch with its raucous bistros and romantic outposts of haute cuisine. Most of the restaurants in town and in the nearby villages offer numerous specialties that pair local wine and goat cheese.

Judging from the surrounding tables, sticking to the local products is the best way to eat. I order goat cheese croquettes and am pleased to receive a salad dressed with a hot chestnut sauce and topped with snapping hot, golden-fried morsels filled with creamy goat cheese. Heaven. The crisp, fresh white wine from Henri Bourgeois, one of the region's best producers, adds a bracing counterpoint. The Sauvignon Blanc, with its grassy bite, matches the creamy yet tangy cheese. Although this is close to wine-and-cheese nirvana, my investigation has only begun.

For the complete article, see the **May 31, 2000 issue of Wine Spectator, p.55.**

Check out the dynamic menu bar below the map for information about some places that William Echikson discovered on his quest. If your browser doesn't support this menu bar, use the one below.

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Winery: **Jean-Claude Chatelain**

Wine: **1998 Sancerre**

Score: **86**

Price: \$16

Country: France

Region: Loire

Issue: Jul 31, 2000

Add to Wine List

Lean and taut, with vibrant lemon zest and grass flavors, this racy Sancerre would provide an ideal foil for seafood on a summer day. Drink now. (JM)

[Search for user tasting notes](#)

Winery: **Jean-Claude Chatelain**

Wine: **1998 Pouilly-Fumé**

Score: **85**

Price: \$16

Country: France

Region: Loire

Issue: Jul 31, 2000

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Pretty straw and smoke aromas and flavors are the hallmarks of this lively white, which picks up a touch of green melon on the finish. Drink now. (JM)

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Winery: Alphonse Mellot

Wine: 1999 Sancerre Domaine La Moussi ère

Score: 88

Price: \$19

Country: France

Region: Loire

Issue: Aug 31, 2001

[Add to Wine List](#)

Shows more depth and texture than expression of Sauvignon character. Round, balanced and accented by vanilla, this exudes gooseberry and melon flavors, on a rich texture and firm backbone. Good length. Try with a roast chicken. Drink now through 2002. (BS)

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1997 *Estate Bottled* Sauvignon Blanc

Chalk Hill Sauvignon blanc has been a trendsetter, its unique style now often emulated in California. Our winemaking protocol emphasizes barrel fermentation, complete malolactic fermentation, and *sur lies* ageing in French oak, all of which result in a richly textured and ageable wine. The vines on our steep, rocky, and well-drained slopes provide fruit with complex flavors and aromas, perfectly suited to this style. The 1997 Sauvignon blanc is an excellent example. The vintage was reminiscent of 1995, with bounteous crops and a cool summer. An extremely early bud break and fruit set, however, guaranteed the long hang time needed to fully ripen the fruit, and by early September the grapes resounded with flavors of tropical fruits, apples and limes.

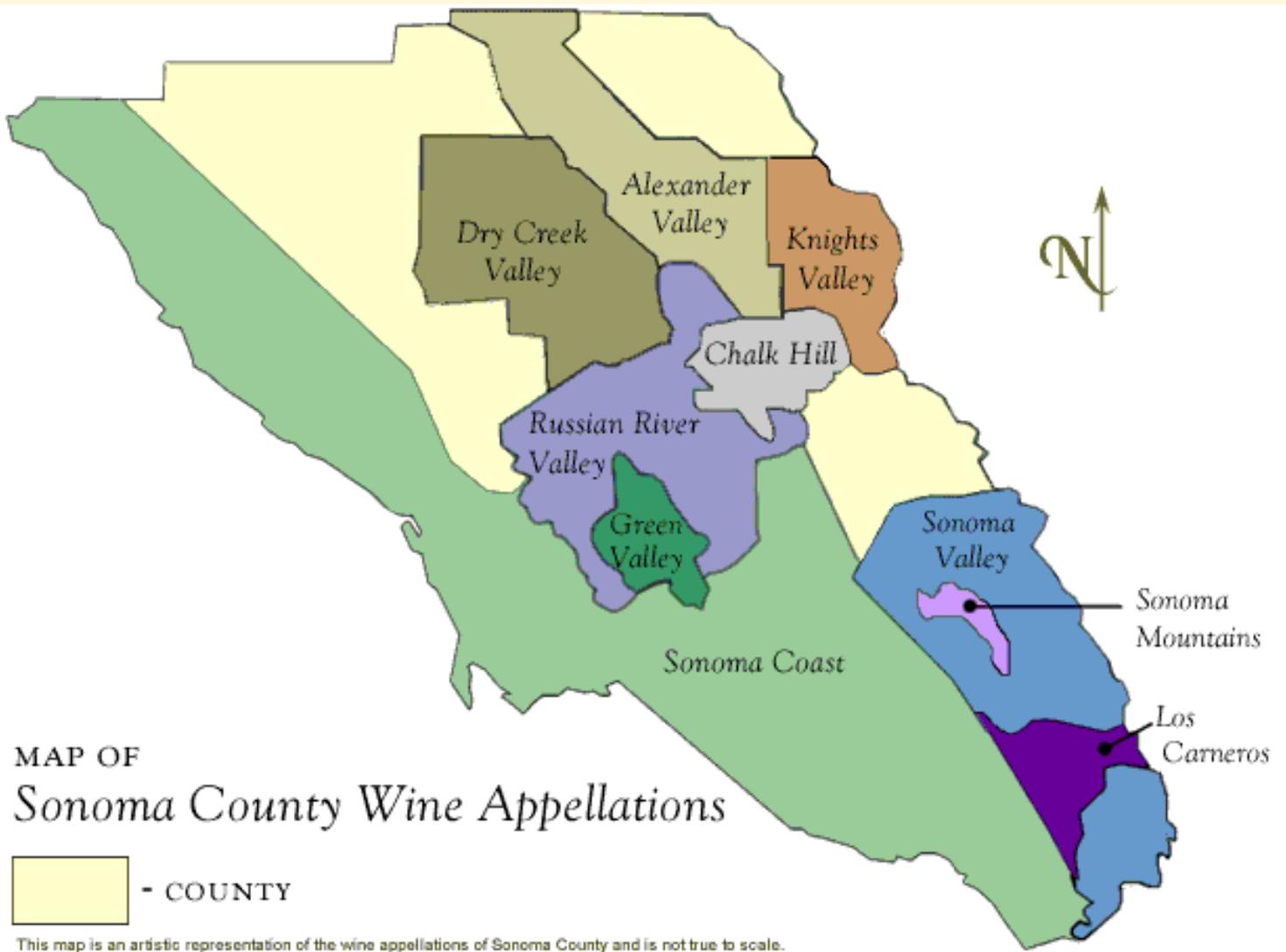
The wine was produced with a combination of New and Old World methods. The grapes were whole-cluster pressed and the juice was then fermented two different ways. Most of the juice was racked directly to barrels for fermentation with natural yeast. A small portion was held in tank for fermentation with cultured yeast to enhance aromas. This wine was racked immediately to barrel after fermentation. All of the new wines were stirred biweekly for the next four months until completion of natural malolactic fermentation, after which the lees were stirred monthly. The wine was aged *sur lies* for ten months. The final blend was assembled in late July, and the wine was bottled in August 1998.

Production Details

Blend: 93% Sauvignon Blanc,
7% Semillon
Vineyard: Estate
Appellation: Chalk Hill
Fermentation: 82% in barrel
77% native/23% cultured yeasts 100%
natural malolactic
Ageing: Ten months *sur lies*
25% new oak

Analytical Data

Harvested:
September 5 – 11, 1997,
September 17 (Semillon)
Brix 23.2°
T.A. 6.9 g/l
pH 3.34
Bottled: August 1998
T.A. 6.1 g/l
pH 3.33



MAP OF
Sonoma County Wine Appellations

 - COUNTY

This map is an artistic representation of the wine appellations of Sonoma County and is not true to scale.

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Winery: Chalk Hill

Wine: 1996 Sauvignon Blanc Chalk Hill

Score: 88

Price: \$19

Country: California

Region: Sonoma

Issue: Jun 15, 1999

Fresh and lively, with bright grapefruit flavors and a firm, focused texture. The finish is long, with hints of mineral and herb. Distinctive and assertive. Drink now.

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The Wines



2000 Sauvignon Blanc

Renewing aromas of springtime are alive in this fully sun-ripened Sauvignon Blanc. Orange blossoms, zesty lemons and lime abound. Lively and long lasting flavors invigorate the senses!

The blend is 89% Sauvignon Blanc, 7% Viognier, 4% Malavasia Bianca.

750 ml - \$14.00 a bottle

\$79.80 - 6 bottles

\$151.20 - case



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Winery: Turnbull

Wine: 1999 Sauvignon Blanc Oakville

Score: 86

Price: \$14

Country: California

Region: Napa

Issue: May 15, 2001

Add to Wine List

Apple, tart lime and grassy notes are nicely integrated with the subtle oak tones. Drink now. 3,400 cases made.

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Wine	83% Sauvignon Blanc and 17% Viognier. Understated aromas and flavors of herbs, of herbal grassiness and stone fruit. Starts out citrus crisp, but turns soft on the finish, like a low acid lemon. This promising combination of grapes somehow lacks complexity and intensity of flavor and just doesn't work. About \$17.		
IRON HORSE 1998 Fume Blanc T-T Vineyards			
Rating	Quick Notes	Date Tasted	Notes By
	Citrus on the finish	04/03/00	Tom
Wine	Grapefruit citrus, with creamy vanilla notes, make up a restrained bouquet. They reveal themselves more fully on the attack, with smooth, oaky vanilla leading the way. Ripe melon and apple come forth at mid palate, yielding to the crisp grapefruit citrus on the finish, cleaning things up nicely. Around \$14.		
MURPHY-GOODE 1997 Reserve Fume Blanc Alexander Valley			
Rating	Quick Notes	Date Tasted	Notes By
	Well Done	04/27/00	Tom
Wine	Delightful aromas and flavors of gooseberry and quince, all framed by lemon-lime citrus. Spritzy and crisp in the mouth, it lingers nicely on the palate. A well done rendition of the Sauvignon Blanc grape and a Sauvi lover's prize at \$8.		
GEYSER PEAK 1999 Sauvignon Blanc Sonoma County			
Rating	Quick Notes	Date Tasted	Notes By
	A Great Sauvi	07/20/00	Tom
Wine	Citrus, ripe apple and pear abound. Ripe pear is dominant at mid palate, but a note of orange peel reveals itself not long after. While being soft, at the same time it embraces a core of spritzy grapefruit, seemingly lurking behind the scenes. Then, the grapefruit citrus, with the memory of orange peel, carries onto a lingering finish. It's hard to be objective about this wine because Turnbull makes a great Sauvi vintage after vintage. This one is no exception. Around \$14.		
TURNBULL 1998 Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley			
Rating	Quick Notes	Date Tasted	Notes By
	Delicate	07/18/00	Tom
Wine	Delicate and understated, sedate flavors of tart apple and grapefruit citrus provide a dash of spritzy acidity. The bouquet carries notes of smoke and butter, tell tale signs of some wood fermentation or aging, which explains its slightly softened style. Not of the "in your face" Kiwi ilk, but deserves some attention. About \$10.		
HUSCH 1998 Sauvignon Blanc Mendocino			
Rating	Quick Notes	Date Tasted	Notes By
	Exquisite	07/27/00	Tom
Wine	Rich and luxurious, buttery honey is the yin and bracing citrus is the yang. Tropical fruit and ripe pineapple flavors give way to lemon lime citrus notes, the total being wrapped in butter and honey. This flavor tug of war is not discordant. Rather, everything flows together harmoniously, resulting in a very refreshing impression. And, somehow, it projects a dichotomy of both softness and crispness. Sophisticated and exquisite. Around \$21.		
CHALK HILL 1997 Sauvignon Blanc Chalk Hill Sonoma County			

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Winery: Andrew Rich

Wine: 1999 Sauvignon Blanc Willamette Valley Les Vigneaux Croft Vineyard

Score: 87

Price: \$15

Country: Oregon

Region: Oregon

Issue: Dec 15, 2001

Add to Wine List

Crisp, with pretty fig and citrus flavors on a round frame, finishing with a tang of lime and rosemary. Drink now. 200 cases made. (HS)

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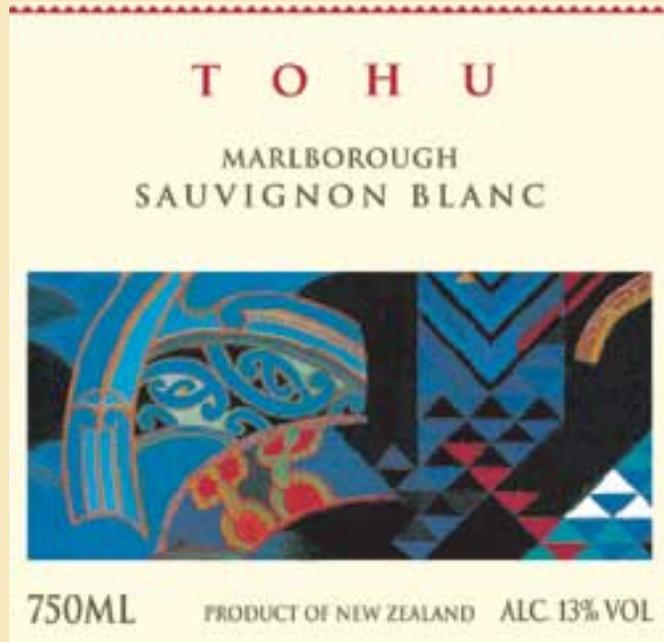
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Order Now



Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc



A hot dry season in Marlborough has produced a ripe herbaceous Sauvignon Blanc displaying all the typical characteristics of tropical fruit and capsicum, finishing with fresh acidity.

This wine is a style best appreciated when youthful, however may be cellared for up to two years.



Tohu Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc brings together the softer classic gooseberry dominated flavours of the Wairau Valley. Our single vineyard is harvested and fermented prior to blending and early bottling.

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Winery: Tohu

Wine: 2000 Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough

Score: 87

Price: \$16

Country: New Zealand

Region: New Zealand

Issue: Nov 30, 2001

Add to Wine List

Crisp and lively, with a green olive note that lingers over the citrus and mineral base of flavor. Drink now. 1,800 cases made. (HS)

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