

Muscadet with extended lees ageing

A move to recognise communes with specific soil types, aligned with wines that stay on their lees for a minimum of 17 months, has revived this Loire region, says Jim Budd

IN NEARLY 30 years of writing about wine, I've seen Muscadet go from huge popularity and success to crisis and popular scorn by consumers and now a gradual rehabilitation. Although the crus communaux represent a tiny proportion of total production, they are a very important factor in changing the image of Muscadet.

In 1989, Muscadet exported 2.2 million cases – 40% of production. The severe April 1991 frost and consequent price rises coupled with the arrival of wines from outside Europe, in particular Australia, ended its success. At the height of the boom, the area planted with Melon de Bourgogne (the grape used to make Muscadet) rose to about 13,000 hectares. This has now declined by nearly 40% to 8,075ha, which remains a very large area; Sancerre, for instance, is 2,900ha.

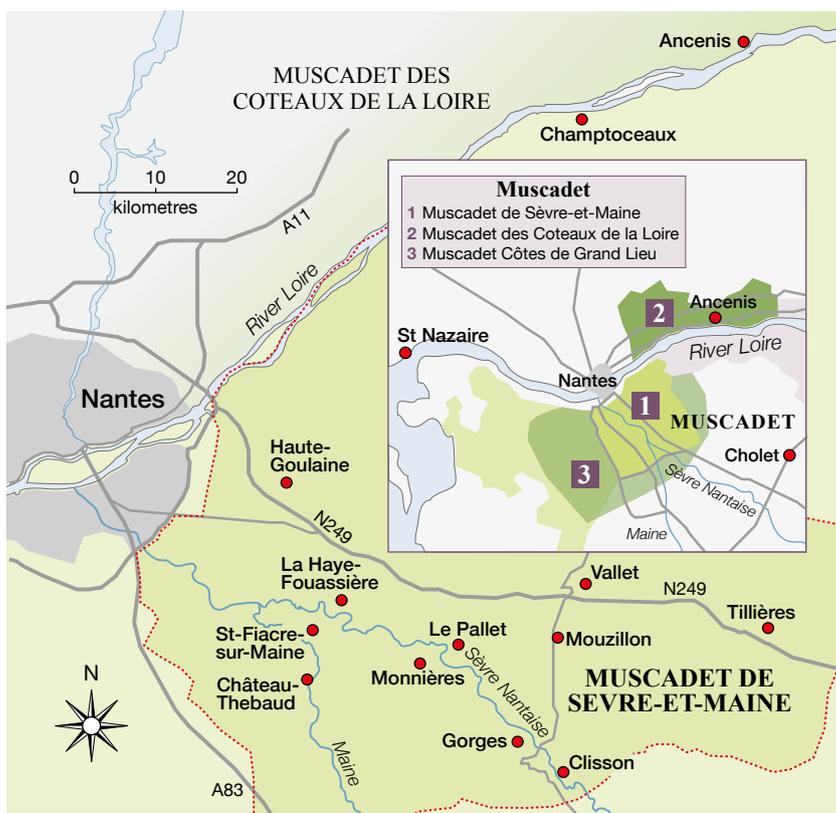
Producers' difficulties have since been exacerbated by a series of serious frosts – notably in 2008, 2012 and 2016 – allied with small crops from 2012 onwards.

Following the overdue tightening up of the sur lie regulations in 1994, there were long discussions over the next quality step up. Eventually it was agreed that long lees ageing associated with particular communes with specific geological type was the way forward. This was recognition of the growing practice by producers over the past 10 to 15 years to give a small proportion of their production extended ageing on lees. Muscadet is usually fermented and aged in large, shallow underground vats, though stainless steel vats are also used. Oak barrels are occasionally used but remain atypical.

The first three crus communaux – Clisson (granite), Gorges (gabbro) and Le Pallet (mix of granite, gneiss and gabbro) were approved in February 2011. Yields are limited to 45hl/ha. Wines from Le Pallet have to be lees aged for a minimum of 17 months, while the minimum for Clisson and Gorges is 24 months. Due to a quirk in the sur lie legislation these wines cannot be labelled sur lie as they are bottled after 30 November in the year following the vintage – the last date for bottling sur lie. Le Pallet cru wines tend to be fruity and forward; Clisson rich, full and flattering; and Gorges tighter and more restrained in character.

Four more cru communaux are due to be recognised: Château-Thébaud, Goulaine, Monnières-St-Fiacre and Mouzillon-Tillières – all in the Sèvre-et-Maine. Hopefully final approval will be given this summer. There are a further three crus in the pipeline – La Haie-Fouassière and Vallet (Sèvre-et-Maine), and Champtoceaux in Muscadet Coteaux du Loire. It is expected to be at least another two years before approval is given. In time there may be two – north and south – in the Côtes de Grandlieu.

Jim Budd is the DWWA Regional Chair for Loire who writes the award-winning Jimsloire.blogspot.co.uk



Map: Maggie Nelson

Muscadet: know your vintages

2016 Small but fine crop. Severe April frost, widespread summer mildew, heat and drought. Fine autumn with just enough rain.

2015 Rich wines of good potential, but not yet bottled.

2014 Wet, cold summer, harvest saved by warm and dry September. Balanced, ageworthy wines. Most should be kept at least another year in bottle.

2013 Very cold spring led to a late-

flowering vintage giving austere wines.

2012 Small crop from April frost. But very good wines starting to show well with very good potential to age.

2011 Early vintage starting with a warm dry, spring. Wet from mid-June with serious problems from rot.

2010 Less rich than 2009 but ageing fast.

2009 Ripe, rich grapes. Full-bodied wines with ageability.

Muscadet: the facts

Area under vine (2016)
Sèvre-et-Maine 6,400ha,
Grandlieu 230ha,
Coteaux de la Loire 145ha

Crus communaux 70ha from three recognised crus; close to 200ha when other crus recognised

Producers
500, plus two co-ops at Ancenis and Le Pallet

Annual production
Between 400,000hl and 450,000hl, though much less in frost years

Exports
15% to 20% of production ➤

The results

With 65% of wines scoring 90 points or more, including a perfect score from one of our experts, **this tasting confirmed that Muscadet is back.** Christelle Guibert reports

THE FACT THAT *Decanter's* last Muscadet panel tasting was back in the 1990s says much of the region's fall from fashion. But this long period in the wilderness may be about to change following this successful panel tasting.

With 63 of the 113 wines rated Highly Recommended, eight Outstanding and three Exceptional – including the first-ever 100-point wine from *Decanter's* Loire expert Jim Budd – the wines exceeded all expectations and the judges praised the tasting as their most exciting to date.

'It highlighted just how amazing the quality can be, not just in terms of winemaking, but terroir expression and differences between the crus,' said Ben Llewelyn. Chris Kissack said these results proved that Muscadet's perception as 'a simple wine you just knock back with oysters' was outdated and should be put to rest. 'You can still have your easy-drinking lunchtime wines, like your Petit Chablis or AC Chablis, but you can also step up to your 1er cru vineyards and have your grand cru vineyards for something even better.'

While the crus communaux may account for only 2% of Muscadet's production, the panel was convinced they will raise the profile of the region and make consumers aware of the importance of terroir. Melon de Bourgogne may be a neutral grape variety, but it expresses its terroir well and the panel felt the relationship between the soil, grape and lees was the distinctive mark of the wines.

Gorges on gabbro soil and Château-Thébaud on granite seem to be our judges' favourite crus, showing great minerality but needing time to develop. Monnières-St-Fiacre (gneiss) gave a much more elegant style with floral characters, while Clisson (granite) showed a clear identity with its energy, broader and more powerful style. Kissack was pleasantly surprised by the freshness and minerality of the Mouzillon-Tillières wines (gabbro).

In terms of vintages, 2014 and 2012 showed best, Kissack describing both as having 'energy, acidity and fruit intensity'. Llewelyn was impressed by the older wines.

'Extended lees ageing gives this extra dimension, texture and energy which is unique' Ben Llewelyn

'It's very exciting to taste something from 2003 or 2006 which has been sitting on its lees for a long, extended period – this is Muscadet's real calling card. Extended lees ageing gives the wine this extra dimension, texture and energy which is unique.'

Perversely, the 113 wines tasted here cannot be labelled 'sur lie' despite having spent a minimum of 17 months on their dead yeast particles. According to appellation rules, this is too long. To qualify as 'sur lie', wines have to spend one winter on their lees and then be bottled between 1 March and 31 December.

These older, extended lees-aged wines demonstrate Muscadet's ageing potential, said Budd. 'Many will happily last to 2030, if not longer.' He also advised aerating the wines before serving, and not to chill them excessively: 'You want them at cellar temperature – the temperature you'd serve fine white Burgundy.' Grilled fish, seafood with white sauce, chicken or guinea fowl are more suitable accompaniments than oysters.

'These are exciting, versatile wines, especially for the UK market where people appreciate fresher, more mineral, lower-alcohol wines, said Llewelyn. 'Muscadet has everything: complexity, terroir characteristics and ageability – now it's just a question of getting people to buy the wines again.'

The panel said behind their obvious enthusiasm over the quality of these wines, the frustration is that very few are available in the UK. However, Llewelyn said this is slowly being rectified by savvy importers. 'And when the trade, press and consumers taste these wines, they will understand our excitement!'

The scores

113 wines tasted

Exceptional
3

Outstanding
8

Highly Recommended
63

Recommended
25

Commended
6

Fair
4

Poor
1

Faulty
3

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit wines with 17 months' minimum lees ageing from the crus and proposed crus of Le Pallet, Clisson, Gorges, Château-Thébaud, Goulaine, Le Have Fouassière, Monnières St-Fiacre, Mouzillon-Tillières, Vallet and Champtoceaux

The judges

Jim Budd



Budd is the DWWA Regional Chair for Loire and has written for *Decanter* since 1989. He writes the awarded Jimsloire.blogspot.com, is one of the members of the blog Les5duvin.

wordpress.com and was editor of the *Circle of Wine Writers'* newsletter from 1991-2015.

Chris Kissack



Kissack is author of *The Winedoctor.com*, which he has published since 2000. He has focused on the Loire for many years, and has made regular trips since 1993, visiting domaines and

vineyards, and meeting the winemakers and reporting on their wines throughout the year.

Ben Llewelyn



Llewelyn has worked in the UK wine trade since 1997, starting at Oddbins, and then at Enotria. He moved his family to France in 2007 and in 2008 set up the wholesale wine agency and importer

Carte Blanche, which leans towards producers who make wine as naturally as possible.

Exceptional 98-100pts



Decanter Exceptional
99 points

Pierre Luneau Papin, Excelsior, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2007

Decanter average score: 99/100pts **Individual judges' scores:** Jim Budd 100 Chris Kissack 98 Ben Llewelyn 98

£25.99 (2013) Hedonism, Indigo Wine

This family domaine has long been one of Muscadet's top estates. Pierre and Monique Luneau built its reputation, and today son Pierre-Marie and his wife Marie continue in the same tradition: careful work in the vineyard, the crus picked by hand, and meticulous winemaking using the traditional underground vats. They have long championed extended lees ageing for a small proportion of their wines and their top wines age brilliantly. The 2001 was the first vintage of Excelsior from vines planted on schist and mica-schist; the 2007 spent 36 months on its lees.

Jim Budd Pronounced toasty aromas followed by a richly textured and lightly honeyed palate with wonderful complexity and superb length.

Chris Kissack This has evolved beautifully: smoky fruit aromas and a substantial yet elegant palate with notes of truffle and white pepper enhanced by a vibrant seam of minerality. Bright, long and complete.

Ben Llewelyn A scintillating yet subtle, creamy nose of white fruit, plum and honeycomb. The beautifully formed palate glides between acidity and richness, finishing with a delicious lift. A lovely, complete wine.

Drink 2017-2033 Alcohol 12.5%



Decanter Exceptional
98 points

Vignoble Drouard, Les Templieries, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012

98 JB 99 CK 98 BL 97

N/A UK www.domainedelanoie.fr

This 74-hectare domaine is run by four brothers – Denis, Jean-Paul, Laurent and Pascal. The 2012 Clisson came from a 1ha parcel of 67-year-old vines planted on sand above granite. The 2012 was the first vintage of this cuvée with extended lees ageing; subsequently it has



Decanter Exceptional
98 points

Poiron Dabin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2009 98 JB 99 CK 97 BL 97

N/A UK www.poiron-dabin.com

Like many Muscadets, this cuvée is made a shallow underground vat no deeper than two metres so the lees are not compacted. Plus, being underground, the temperature is controlled naturally. The first vintage was 2007 and, like this 2009, the wine spent 84 months on its lees. The vines are planted on very thin soil above very flaky schist and granite, which always conserves moisture extremely well even in hot, dry summers. During maturation Jean-Michel Dabin gradually reduces the volume of wine until only 40 hectolitres is retained for the cru.

JB A rich and powerful style with lashings of lightly honeyed fruit. A clear demonstration of how a cru wine can be very different from 'normal' Muscadet. A fascinating wine, with the Melon de Bourgogne grape showing its Burgundian roots.

CK A rich and smoky nose amplified by a touch of brioche evolution, while the bold and polished palate boasts a broad substance with a maturing, rich fruit character. A mineral backbone fuels a pithy grip on the long finish.

BL Rich, complex aromatics lead to an intense palate with a broad texture, and the very long finish suggests pronounced lees influence. An impressive, thought-provoking wine.

Drink 2017-2029 Alc 12%

been made in 2013, 2014 and 2015. This vintage was fermented and aged in underground vats for 48 months with lees stirring twice a year – in spring and October before the start of winter.

JB A softly textured style with an exquisite harmony between rich, ripe fruit and precise, fresh acidity, allowing for its long finish. This is a great advertisement for its genre.

CK A subtle yet serious mineral nose augmented by notes of oyster shell. Weighty in the mouth with a pronounced thrust of minerality yet it maintains a very relaxed, bright and elegant poise throughout. Impressive and imposing.

BL A well-defined, concentrated nose welcomes a palate with an alluring harmony between the creamy lees, citrus intensity and the stony influence of the vineyard's granite soils. This has a real sense of place and is a joy to drink too.

Drink 2017-2029 Alc 12% ➤

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Outstanding 95–97pts**Bouin, Haut Clos de la Pierre, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2003**97 JB 98 CK 95 BL 98
N/A UK www.domaine-de-beaurepaire.com

This 2003 from Christine, Jean-Paul and Guillaume Bouin spent an extraordinary 12 years on its lees. The 1ha Haut Clos de la Pierre is on a southwest-facing ridge on gravel, not typical of Mouzillon-Tillières, so this vineyard cannot be classified as a cru. The grapes were machine harvested followed by a three-month slow fermentation and then 12 years' ageing with occasional lees stirring.

JB Opulent, toasty nose mirrors the rich style and evolved character on the palate. Very true to the heatwave vintage, but there is freshness on the finish and no lack of harmony. A compelling wine.

CK Intense nose of dried fruits, white peach and vanilla flower. In the mouth, it exhibits the richness of the vintage in substance and weight yet retains mineral freshness and uplifting acidity. Long, bright finish.

BL Intoxicating, impressive nose: fennel, honeycomb and floral notes. The palate is seamless and concentrated with broad fruit and a long, cool, mineral finish. Fascinating, highlighting Melon's ability to age.

Drink 2017-2026 **Alc** 12.5%

**Le Jardin d'Edouard, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2012**97 JB 96 CK 98 BL 96
N/A UK www.jardinededouard.vin

Since 2013 this 17ha domaine has been run by Edouard Massart. The 2ha parcel for this cru is planted on granite with the vines at least 60 years old. The grapes are picked by machine, and fermentation and maturation are in underground vats. Depending upon the vintage there is limited lees stirring. The first vintage of this cuvée was in 2009.

JB A touch of dry honey and evolved characters on the nose, followed by a richly textured, beautifully integrated palate with a satisfying, lingering finish. A very precise wine.

CK Classic, pure, smoky character on the nose magnified by notes of white peach and salty minerals. The palate is poised and vinous, with a rewarding zip of lychee and stone fruit, and a lifted acid freshness providing ample length.

BL Intriguing aromas of almond paste and white flowers lead to a soft, very well-formed palate with length and elegance in abundance.

Drink 2017-2026 **Alc** 12.5%

**Domaine David, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2012** 97 JB 98 CK 97 BL 97£13.50 **Domaine Direct**

Stéphane David and Sébastien Duvallet run this 30ha domaine founded in 1927. The 2012 Goulaine comes from a 1ha parcel of 45-year-old vines. Grapes were machine harvested (new rules for Goulaine entail hand harvesting from 2015 – this is done here by a team of handicapped workers). In December, after fermentation has finished, the wine is raked and returned to the fine lees for the remainder of its 36 months ageing. The first vintage of this cuvée was 2003.

JB Honey and citrus aromas lead to a richly textured and harmonious palate with pleasing length. A very fine example of a cru Muscadet.

CK A gently smoky nose ushers in a fresh, clean palate with a dense seam of fruit, salty minerals, real interest and bags of energy, persisting to a long finish. A wine with conviction and class.

BL Restrained nose with subtle aromas of white flowers and a touch of citrus, while the palate is refined and seamless with a fresh, clean finish. Further ageing will bring out even more – a terrific example of this cru.

Drink 2017-2030 **Alc** 12.5%

**Château de Briacé, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2009** 96 JB 96 CK 96 BL 95N/A UK www.chateau-briace.com

This cuvée was first made in 2005 when it spent 24 months on its lees. By contrast the 2009 had 48 months as the length of lees ageing depends upon the nature and quality of the vintage. This cuvée comes from Le Haut Clos, a parcel of 1.2ha planted on schist. The grapes are harvested by hand and fermented and aged in underground vats to preserve freshness and vibrancy. Lees stirring was only in the first year.

JB Attractive nose of ripe fruit, enriched by notes of brioche and honey that are mirrored on the palate. Refined and harmonious, with a long, graceful finish. Impressive!

CK A smoky, crushed-mineral character on the nose ushers in a fresh and pure palate that feels convincing and dense, with smoky minerality and tension too. This enralls with its energy, as well as its substance and fine length.

BL Elegant, restrained style – tense and tightly packed – finishing with a saline mineral character in a taut, lean style.

Drink 2017-2027 **Alc** 12.5%

Outstanding (continued) 95–97pts**Pierre-Luc Bouchaud, Pont Caffino, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2014** 96 JB 96 CK 95 BL 96N/A UK plbouchaud.free.fr/siteplb/accueil.htm

The grapes for Pont Caffino come from a 1ha parcel on this 20ha domaine where the vines, on the site of an old quarry, are between 70 and 80 years old. Although the 2014 was machine harvested, Bouchaud now harvests this parcel by hand. He uses underground vats with very limited lees stirring – just two or three times immediately after the end of fermentation.

JB Attractive citrus aromas lead to a lean, tense palate which unravels and opens out in the glass, hinting at development still to come from further bottle age.

CK Golden pear skin and a subtle struck-match aroma, while on the palate this feels alive, energetic, delicately poised, fresh and cool, yet substantial with plenty of concentration and length. Serious.

BL Fresh, aromatic nose with notes of orange blossom and bergamot – a very pretty wine with a cherry-like acidity and a fresh, sappy finish.

Drink 2018-2027 **Alc** 12%

**Cyrille et Sylvain Paquereau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012**

95 JB 95 CK 95 BL 96

N/A UK www.domainedelepina.com

This is a 40ha domaine (17ha planted to Melon de Bourgogne), which has been converting to organic viticulture since 2011. The Clisson cru wine comes from a 2.5ha, warm, early-ripening site with 70-year-old vines grown on gravel and sand with granite beneath. Vinification and maturation are in underground vats and native yeasts are used. The first vintage of this cuvée was 2001 and while it normally spends 28 to 30 months on its lees, the 2012 was particularly vibrant so had 36 months.

JB Ripe citrus fruit and quince aromas lead to a richly-textured palate with a delightful length of fruit, lifted and refreshed by bountiful acidity.

CK Intensely aromatic citrus, capsicum and lychee scents. The textured palate is similarly fresh and pretty, with substantial depth, framed by energetic minerality. Delightful quality here.

BL Full nose of citrus fruit and quince, very rich and broad. The palate is bright and focused, yet deep and textured, with cool mineral fruit.

Drink 2017-2029 **Alc** 12.5%

**Bernard Chéreau, Le Clos du Château l'Oiselinière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine La Haye-Fouassière 2009** 95 JB 97 CK 97 BL 92£13 **Peter Osborne**

This wine comes from a 2ha parcel of 60-year-old, very well-exposed vines on a dome of orthogneiss overlooking a bend in the River Maine. Hand harvested, the wine is fermented and aged in underground vats for 45 months. The 2002 was the first long lees-aged vintage with 2003 and 2005 following.

JB Restrained citrus aromas followed by finely textured, evolved flavours enhanced by a fresh, salty minerality on the long finish.

CK A smoky yet restrained nose welcomes a beautifully harmonious palate, showcasing the gentle but well-framed texture of the warmer vintage, set against a fine-boned central core of minerality, within a fresh acid frame. Classic, elegant and precise, with gratifying length.

BL Pine and white peach on the nose, while the palate builds and unravels through to the finish, suggesting a wine with still more to come from further ageing.

Drink 2017-2029 **Alc** 12%

**Domaine du Haut Bourg, Origine du Haut Bourg, Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu 2006** 95 JB 94 CK 95 BL 96£18 **Sommelier's Choice**

One of just two wines from the Grandlieu zone in this tasting. This estate, run by Nicolas and Hervé Choblet, is in Bouaye, in the northwest, the vines on schist and amphibolite. Origine (first vintage 1996) comes from their oldest parcel of vines (1.5ha) planted by their great-grandfather in 1944. The 2006 spent 120 months on lees in an underground vat where the lees were stirred once or twice in first year then left untouched.

JB Complexity and finesse on both nose and palate, with enticing bottle-age characters – wonderfully textured and long. Another example of the benefits of long lees ageing, still fresh on the finish.

CK Wonderful floral, lychee and mineral freshness on the nose with a pure, elegant, textured palate and an appealing salty-mineral streak.

BL Very complex nose, full of intrigue evolved from extended lees contact, while the palate showcases a broad and rich concentration of fruit. Engaging, seamless finish.

Drink 2017-2029 **Alc** 12% ➤

Highly Recommended 90-94pts



Blanchard, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013
94 JB 93 CK 95 BL 93

N/A UK gaec-blanchard.over-blog.com

A crunchy, saline nose expanded by a little dried citrus fruit. The palate has real elegance, with a charming layer of peach and lychee leading to a mineral-charged finish. Refreshing and engaging. **Drink** 2017-2027 **Alc** 12%



Charpentier Fleurance, Clos du Pâtis d'Enfer, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2012
94 JB 97 CK 93 BL 91

£12.54 Christopher Piper

Smoky, flinty, brightly scented nose acts as a fitting entrée to a complex, weighty yet poised palate with fresh citrus acidity lifting the mineral-infused fruit. A very complete wine with more to come. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 12.5%



Cormerais, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012
94 JB 98 CK 92 BL 93

POA Authentique Wines

A leesy, polished, richly fruited nose ushers in a creamy, toasty yet fresh palate with a mineral vein persisting through to a long finish. Impressive, and will gain more with further age. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12.5%



Cyrille et Sylvain Paquereau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2013
94 JB 93 CK 92 BL 96

N/A UK www.domainedelepinay.com

Broad, classic, mineral nose while the palate exhibits a rich, bold character of grilled lemon and orange with a gentle acid lift persisting to a long finish. A lovely wine true to its origins. **Drink** 2017-2027 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine des Cognettes, Tentation de Granite et Gabbro, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2009
94 JB 96 CK 92 BL 94

£16.50 Butlers Wine Cellar

Expressive, open nose with notes of peach, honey, greengage and creamy lees. The palate is richly layered with defined fruit that carries to the long finish. **Drink** 2017-2029 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine du Haut Bourg, Signature du Haut Bourg, Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu 2012
94 JB 95 CK 96 BL 92

£15 Sommelier's Choice

Toasty nose leading to an easy yet vibrant palate that dances across the tongue with a wonderfully fresh burst of minerality and juicy citrus fruit – superb. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12%



Les Frères Couillaud, Château de la Ragotière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Vallet 2012
94 JB 94 CK 92 BL 96

£9.95-£10.50 Georges Barbier, Gerrard Seel

Inviting, smoky nose magnified by pure citrus fruit. Sweet and concentrated fruit palate with vivacious minerality and fresh acidity; long and impressive. **Drink** 2017-2029 **Alc** 12%



Luneau Michel et Fils, Tradition Stanislas, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2010
94 JB 94 CK 94 BL 93

N/A UK www.closdesbourguignons.fr

Intense, mineral, creamy nose then a dried orchard fruit palate of substance and depth leading to a long, charged, mineral finish. Lots of potential. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12%



Rémy et Raphael Luneau, Domaine de la Grange, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2012
94 JB 94 CK 94 BL 94

N/A UK www.domaineraphaelluneau.fr

Minerally, expressive lemon aroma. Beautifully poised and elegant palate of real polish and gentle minerality. Fresh and pure, with a lively mouthfilling texture. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12%



Vignoble Barreau, Domaine de la Cornulière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2014
94 JB 96 CK 95 BL 90

N/A UK domainedelacornuliere.over-blog.com

Elderflower and nettle heightened by fine minerality. Breezy, elegant yet mouthfilling. Long, vibrant finish. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 12%



Auguste Bonhomme, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2014
93 JB 93 CK 94 BL 92

N/A UK +33 2 40 06 97 69

Delicate, expressive nose of green pear while the palate boasts an exquisite light-footed attack, though with no lack of energy and lift. Long, mineral finish. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 12%



Bernard Maillard, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2013
93 JB 90 CK 95 BL 93

£11.99 Top Selection

Smoky, mineral nose then a polished palate of serious weight, bolstered by invigorating acidity. Long, sappy and energetic, this has real character to it. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12%

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



Blanchard, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Vallet 2012
93 JB 96 CK 90 BL 94

N/A UK www.gaec-blanchard.over-blog.com/2015/05/le-vallet.html

Lightly baked citrus and elegant floral notes, finely textured thanks to the delightful softness of the lees, finishing with a seamless finesse. **Drink** 2018-2032 **Alc** 12%



Christophe Drouard, Les Hauts Pemions, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2012
93 JB 93 CK 93 BL 93

£8-£10 (2015) Thorman Hunt, Woodwinters

Smoky nose with toasted almond hints, then a substantial, polished palate of dried peach and apricot with a mineral bass note and fresh acidity. Really long. **Drink** 2017-2030 **Alc** 12.5%



Domaine de la Pépière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2012
93 JB 91 CK 95 BL 93

POA Les Caves de Pyrene

Intense, mineral nose precedes a rich, textured palate of white flowers, peach, lychee and orange zest, leading to a substantial and mineral-charged finish. Real character here. **Drink** 2017-2029 **Alc** 12%



Domaine La Haute Févrie, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2010
93 JB 96 CK 90 BL 94

POA Fields Morris & Verdin, Woodwinters

Pure, precise, floral and greengage aromas. Robust palate with a chalky-mineral spine, taut but textured and a dazzling fruit and acid interplay. **Drink** 2017-2029 **Alc** 12%



Domaine Ménard-Gaborit, Méganome, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Le Pallet 2012
93 JB 95 CK 92 BL 93

N/A UK www.domainemenardgaborit.com

Engaging lime and white flower nose, with crushed rock minerality. The palate is cool, mineral and taut with forthright acidity and a lip-smacking finish. **Drink** 2017-2027 **Alc** 12%



Domaine Michel Brégeon, Les Vigneaux, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013
93 JB 94 CK 90 BL 94

N/A UK +33 2 40 06 93 19

Salty, crunchy, mineral-laden nose leads to a polished palate of tangerine softened by the creamy lees, and fresh, vibrant acidity. A fine example of the cru. **Drink** 2017-2033 **Alc** 12%



Domaine Salmon, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2012
93 JB 95 CK 92 BL 93

£15.20 Joie de Vin

Toasty, brioche aromas augmented by preserved lemon. Palate of delicacy and finesse – no heavyweight but still with juicy, energetic fruit and a long, fine, pithy finish of real character. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12%



Les Bêtes Curieuses, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2009
93 JB 95 CK 92 BL 92

N/A UK www.lesbetescurieuses.fr

Very pretty nose: pure, cool and mineral with a preserved citrus note. Quite an opulent style but with a touch of zesty bitterness on the finish adding freshness, energy and lift. Offers real appeal. **Drink** 2017-2029 **Alc** 12.5%



Luneau Michel et Fils, Tradition Stanislas, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2003
93 JB 93 CK 92 BL 93

N/A UK www.closdesbourguignons.fr

Evolved nose of truffle, dried fruit and honey leads to an opulent palate showing the weight of the vintage, though with still fresh acidity and fine minerality. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 13%



Michel Bedouet, Expression du Pallet, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2014
93 JB 94 CK 93 BL 91

N/A UK www.bedouet-vigneron.fr

Floral, flinty nose leads to a polished palate with a touch of dried citrus fruit partnered with a leesy influence, culminating in a lovely, breezy finish. **Drink** 2018-2026 **Alc** 12%



Topaze, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2012
93 JB 90 CK 94 BL 95

N/A UK www.topaze-monnieres.com

Expressive notes of wild flowers, greengage and bergamot. Beautifully defined palate with vigorous acidity and a bright, clean, long finish. **Drink** 2017-2027 **Alc** 12%



Véronique Günther-Chéreau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2013
93 JB 90 CK 94 BL 96

£24 Winestory

The integrated palate offers up juicy white peach, pear and florals enriched by a mineral, leesy vein. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 12% >

Highly Recommended 90–94pts



Vignoble Drouard, Les Garis, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2012

93 JB 93 CK 90 BL 97

POA Daniel Lambert

Intensely smoky, mineral nose. The palate shows real evolution: dried fruit with real richness and creamy weight freshness and purity too. **Drink** 2017-2029 **A/c** 12%



Bernard Chéreau, Le Clos du Château l'Oiselinière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine La Haye-Fouassière 2013

92 JB 91 CK 93 BL 93

£10-£13 Peter Osbourne, The Wine Society

Pure, lifted peach nose with an enticing saline note. Purity and precision of stony white floral flavours – real energy and lift here; a triumph for the vintage. **Drink** 2017-2028 **A/c** 12%



Château de Briacé, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2010

92 JB 94 CK 93 BL 90

N/A UK www.chateau-briace.com

Lean, mineral nose leading to a fresh, breezy palate with an appealing saline edge and plenty of energy on the long, cool, mineral finish. **Drink** 2017-2026 **A/c** 12.5%



Domaine de Guérande, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2013

92 JB 92 CK 94 BL 91

N/A UK www.domainedeguerande.com

Energetic, appealing nose of zesty citrus fruit, while the palate manifests a corresponding energy with fabulous fresh citrus fruit and white flowers in a tightly-wound frame. A wine of fine quality. **Drink** 2018-2026 **A/c** 12%



Domaine de la Foliette, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2013

92 JB 91 CK 93 BL 92

POA Les Caves de Pyrene

Opulent, smoky nose leads to a compact palate showcasing a polished and rich patchwork of citrus fruits and sea salt, remaining bright and fresh throughout. Will continue to age well. **Drink** 2019-2027 **A/c** 12%



Domaine de la Pépière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2014

92 JB 92 CK 93 BL 92

POA Les Caves de Pyrene

Striking nose with a dried citrus fruit and barley sugar note. Composed and confident in the mouth with firm acidity, pronounced minerality and lots of grip on the finish. Great potential for ageing. **Drink** 2018-2026 **A/c** 12%



Domaine Henri Poiron, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2012

92 JB 88 CK 94 BL 94

N/A UK +33 2 40 54 60 58

Delicate nose of elderflower and citrus pith. The palate is delicately poised yet vigorous with notes of peach and lychee, supported by a mineral backbone, building to a long, energetic finish. **Drink** 2017-2023 **A/c** 12%



Jean Aubron, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Vallet 2012

92 JB 95 CK 91 BL 91

£11.95 Spoonful, Waud Wines

Restrained toasty and citrus pith aromas lead to a finely textured though mouthfilling palate with tantalising orange citrus notes, pretty floral elements and a cool freshness persisting throughout the long finish. Very attractive. **Drink** 2018-2029 **A/c** 12%



Laurent Perraud, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012

92 JB 89 CK 94 BL 92

N/A UK www.muscadet-perraud.com

Rich, evolved style from long lees ageing, with overt acacia and honeysuckle aromas. Serious, intense and beautifully textured with creamy citrus and orchard fruit wrapped around a firm mineral vein. **Drink** 2017-2026 **A/c** 13%



Les Bêtes Curieuses, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2013

92 JB 95 CK 91 BL 90

N/A UK www.lesbetescurieuses.fr

Concentrated dried apple aromas, intensified by white pepper and salt, followed by a broad, mineral palate of real energy yet still has a light texture. **Drink** 2017-2026 **A/c** 12.5%



Pierre Luneau-Papin, Excelsior, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2014

92 JB 93 CK 92 BL 90

£25.99 (2013) Hedonism, Indigo Wine

Pungent, mineral and intense. Fine weight and substance, with a crunchy mineral vein, as well as incisive acidity to fuel the lip-smacking finish. **Drink** 2018-2025 **A/c** 12.5%



Pierre-Luc Bouchaud, Pont Caffino, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2009

92 JB 93 CK 93 BL 90

N/A UK plbouchaud.free.fr/siteplb/accueil.htm

Expressive bready aromas pave the way for a vibrant, precise, mineral palate drawing out the finish. Elegant. **Drink** 2017-2029 **A/c** 12.5%

Highly Recommended (continued) 90–94pts



Chatellier et Fils, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2010

91 JB 88 CK 92 BL 92

N/A UK muscadet.clavelliere.free.fr

Pretty nose of peach and pineapple welcomes a precise palate with a lees evolution allied with a crunchy mineral coolness and an acid freshness that furnishes a long finish. A very good example. **Drink** 2017-2026 **A/c** 12.5%



Domaine de la Chauvinière, Jérémie Huchet, Granit, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2010

91 JB 91 CK 93 BL 90

POA Enotria

High-toned smoky nose, while the palate has freshness and zip with creamy peach and pear fruit kept in check by fresh acidity and a firm, mineral bite. **Drink** 2017-2026 **A/c** 12.5%



Domaine de la Foliette, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine La Haye-Fouassière 2010

91 JB 93 CK 90 BL 90

N/A UK domaine-foliette.com

A pure, fresh nose with a delicate floral character leads to a concentrated, robust palate with citrus and greengage running through it, bolstered by a firm mineral thread. Solid and assured. **Drink** 2017-2025 **A/c** 12%



Domaine Henri Poiron, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2012

91 JB 89 CK 91 BL 92

N/A UK +33 2 40 54 60 58

Well-defined nose with a strong terroir vein. Then a charmingly reserved palate with fresh mineral poise and just the right amount of lees-aged texture. Delightful, elegant and energetic. **Drink** 2017-2024 **A/c** 12%



Domaine Martin, Le Rochils, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2010

91 JB 88 CK 89 BL 95

N/A UK www.martin-bernard.com

The palate boasts softness, suppleness and composure, with an elegant yet substantial middle and very decent length. Has the minerality to age. **Drink** 2017-2027 **A/c** 12%



Famille Lieubeau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2014

91 JB 90 CK 90 BL 93

POA Oddbins

Intense, lemon-cordial nose kicks off a palate with a solid weight of fruit fused with citrus acidity and a cool mineral groove, finishing taut and long. **Drink** 2018-2027 **A/c** 12%



Gilles Luneau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013

91 JB 89 CK 91 BL 94

N/A UK +33 2 40 54 05 09

Restrained but defined nose makes way for a taut, mineral-fresh palate with peach and orange zest characters peppered with mineral dust. Finishes long and pithy, with the weight to age. **Drink** 2017-2024 **A/c** 12%



Libeau, L'Astrée, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2009

91 JB 95 CK 91 BL 87

N/A UK domainelandelle@hotmail.fr

Creamy nose with a hint of russet apple leads to a textured palate of rich fruit and a firm acid backbone. This fits out the finish with a rolling, mineral, saline length. **Drink** 2017-2027 **A/c** 12%



Martin-Luneau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2013

91 JB 90 CK 94 BL 89

N/A UK www.martin-luneau-muscadet.fr

Subtle, cool nose ushers in a beautifully composed palate that is polished yet vinous and integrated. Vivacious wine with well-judged substance, great acid lift and good length. **Drink** 2017-2024 **A/c** 12%



Patrick Lebas, Vieux-Moulin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2009

91 JB 93 CK 92 BL 89

N/A UK +33 2 40 36 40 01

Restrained, smoky nose while the palate has fine weight and energy with a floral lift and a mineral backbone backed by great acidity. Still youthful. **Drink** 2017-2025 **A/c** 12%



Vignerons du Pallet, Jubilation, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Le Pallet 2014

91 JB 95 CK 89 BL 89

N/A UK www.vigneronsdupallet.com

Attractive dried fruit aromas lead to a richly textured, precise, polished palate with zippy length. Drinking well now but likely to gain from further age. **Drink** 2017-2024 **A/c** 12.5%



Château de La Cormerais, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2013

90 JB 92 CK 94 BL 85

£18 The Butlers Wine Cellar

Compact nose and a palate brimming with dried stone fruit and a hint of sea salt, with a fine energy. **Drink** 2017-2024 **A/c** 12.5% >

Highly Recommended 90–94pts



Christian Pineau, Domaine de la Perrière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2010 90 JB 92 CK 89 BL 89

N/A UK www.domaine-de-la-perriere.net

Fresh, bright, smoky nose while the palate reveals more of the same, with an attractive bitterness, pithy substance and cool, mineral depth. Drinking nicely now. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 12%



Domaine Christian Gauthier, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012 90 JB 91 CK 88 BL 92

N/A UK +33 2 40 54 42 91

Broad, open style with honey and toasty aromas leading to a soft yet weighty palate with an appealing purity of white peach fruit. Marked acidity endows the finish with long, pithy length. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12%



Domaine de la Bareille, Les Grands Brosseau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2013 90 JB 93 CK 89 BL 89

N/A UK +33 2 40 80 07 07

Dried pear and citrus aromas welcome a broad and rich palate with a slight wet wool note lifted by acid brightness. Finishes long – a good example. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 12%



Domaine des Tilleuls, Les Quatre Châteaux Vieilles Vignes, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2013 90 JB 92 CK 89 BL 90

£15 Peter Osborne

Classic, mineral nose leads to a balanced palate with just the right amount of pithy citrus fruit and mineral undertow to match pronounced acidity. **Drink** 2018-2026 **Alc** 12%



Domaine des Tilleuls, Les Quatre Châteaux Vieilles Vignes, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2014 90 JB 89 CK 90 BL 90

£15 Peter Osborne

Attractive wild flower nose then a taut entry to the palate which holds the fruit well. Creamy edge partners seamlessly with acidity. Has a cool, long finish. **Drink** 2018-2023 **Alc** 12%



Domaine du Colombier, Jean-Yves Bretaudeau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2012 90 JB 90 CK 91 BL 90

N/A UK www.muscadet-sur-lie.com

Fine-boned, mineral nose with a citrus hint. Zesty palate with an acid frame conferring a real sense of energy and freshness; should develop further. **Drink** 2018-2027 **Alc** 12.5%



Dominique Hardy, Le Rubis de Sanguèze, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2012 90 JB 94 CK 90 BL 87

N/A UK www.dhardy.fr

Aromas of dried lemons and berry leaf unveil a light-framed though composed palate with a gentle lemon fruit substance. Pleasant and well thought out. **Drink** 2017-2030 **Alc** 12%



Gilles Luneau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2013 90 JB 89 CK 89 BL 93

N/A UK +33 2 40 54 05 09

Beautifully defined floral and citrus aromas lead to a bright palate with a sappy, chalky, minerals that has a nervous energy to it. This will benefit from age although it is delicious now too. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12%



Guilbaud Frères, Le Clos du Pont, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2009 90 JB 88 CK 92 BL 89

N/A UK www.guilbaud-muscadet.com

Initially discreet nose, opening out to reveal preserved fruit and a little white truffle, with the palate offering texture, freshness, decent weight and substance. A robust style but with energy and form. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12.5%



Héraud, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012 90 JB 92 CK 87 BL 90

N/A UK www.vallon-des-perrieres.fr

Broad nose with hints of honeycomb and brazil nut. Richly textured, weighty palate with creamy honeyed fruit and a praline finish, yet not without length and finesse. **Drink** 2017-2028 **Alc** 12%



Jo Landron, Le Fief du Breil, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine La Haye Fouassière 2012 90 JB 91 CK 92 BL 88

£41 Les Caves de Pyrene

Rich exotic, waxy nose then honeyed, toasty flavours. A creamy style, but not without the required acid energy. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 13%



La Haute Févrie, Coteaux de L'Ebeaupin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2014 90 JB 89 CK 92 BL 90

POA Fields Morris & Verdin, Woodwinters

Reserved, solid style with a composed yet weighty palate of satisfying purity, polish and a mineral texture. **Drink** 2018-2026 **Alc** 12%

Highly Recommended (continued) 90–94pts



Vignerons du Pallet, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Le Pallet 2014 90 JB 90 CK 90 BL 89

£11.99 Majestic

Expressive nose of white-flower and peach-skin, leading to a full, rich, vinous palate with an energetic edge keeping softness in check and ensuring a vivacious finish. Solid and well made. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 12.5%



Vignobles Chéneau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2012 90 JB 87 CK 89 BL 94

N/A UK www.vignoblescheneau.bzh

Bright citrus with a bit of custard cream on the nose, giving way to a relaxed yet lively palate with zesty fruit and a fine-grained mineral seam running through to the compact, creamy-edged finish. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 12%



Vincent Rineau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2012 90 JB 87 CK 91 BL 93

N/A UK www.domaine-de-la-poitevineiere.fr

Stony, citrus aromas with a hint of the lees. Palate confers a supple weight with notes of preserved lemon and apricot skin, with a pithy element supplying a grippy, forceful finish. Has potential. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12%

Recommended 86–89pts

Wine	Score	JB	CH	BL	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Bonnet-Huteau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2013	89	88	90	90	Typically taut nose with notes of angelica and coriander, while the fairly robust palate delivers fresh, herbal fruit, finishing with a chalky texture.	12.5%	2018-2026	POA	Raeburn Fine Wines
Christian Gauthier, Roches Exception, MSM Clisson 2010	89	97	83	87	Fresh lemon aromas give way to a bright, open-knit palate with warm, broad fruit joining cool mineral acidity and finishing with a vibrant burst of citrus.	12%	2017-2026	N/A UK	+33 2 40 54 42 91
Domaine de l'Écu, Taurus, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2012	89	94	83	90	Warm, nutty, honeyed nose mirrors the palate. The bold texture integrates nicely with toasty wood notes, lifted by vibrant acidity. Atypical but good.	12%	2017-2027	£24	H2Vin
Gadais Père et Fils, Perrières Monopole, Muscadet 2009	89	88	90	89	Gentle brioche and honeyed aromas lead to a voluptuous palate with uplifting minerality and acid core. The oak meshes well with the concentrated fruit.	12%	2017-2023	N/A UK	www.gadaisereetfils.fr
Gadais Père et Fils, Perrières Monopole, Muscadet 2014	89	90	83	93	Immediately aromatic, typical of gneiss, with floral and greengage fruit. Composed palate with oak giving breadth and harmony.	12%	2018-2025	N/A UK	www.gadaisereetfils.fr
Libeau, LM, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2014	89	89	91	86	Pure nose with preserved lemon hinting at freshness to come on the palate. Bright and refreshing with a pithy substance and a long, zesty finish.	12%	2018-2023	N/A UK	www.muscadet-libeau.com
R&R Luneau, Dom de la Grange, MSM Goulaine 2010	89	94	85	88	Nose of candied lemon and toast, opening out to a palate with richly textured fruit running in parallel with fresh acidity, leading to a gently saline finish.	12%	2017-2025	POA	Caves de Pierre
Ménard-Gaborit, Méganome, MSM Monnières St-Fiacre 2012	88	84	90	90	Leesy, mineral aromas with a dash of lemon fruit. The palate is fresh, bright, pure and lightly dusted fine chalk. Has the potential to evolve further.	12%	2017-2024	N/A UK	www.domainemenardgaborit.com
Morilleau, Muscadet 2013	88	91	86	86	Well-formed, clean and precise with a fairly rich palate, satisfying energy, complexity and length, with potential to age and develop.	12.5%	2017-2025	N/A UK	+33 2 40 26 60 95
C&P Luneau, Nuance, MSM Mouzillon-Tillières 2010	87	90	84	86	Evolved, toasty aromas with the palate presenting evolved but fresh citrus fruit and a creamy bite within a seductive, open-knit texture.	12%	2017-2020	N/A UK	www.muscadetluneau.fr
C&B Boucher, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2012	87	90	89	83	Appealing lemony intensity on the nose, while the palate is fresh, clean and lifted with a bayleaf character. Robust yet charming with fine potential.	12%	2017-2025	N/A UK	www.earlboucher.com
C&B Boucher, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013	87	84	88	88	Nose of preserved lemon and pine needle, mirroring the palate and cast against a bed of zesty lemon and lime fruit, with an fine acid bite on the finish.	12%	2017-2024	N/A UK	www.earlboucher.com
Dom de la Coche, Rochettes, Muscadet C de Grandlieu 2015	87	87	89	84	Salty, seashell nose with peach skin and orange zest, while the palate is clean and precise with citrus pith and a lightly saline mineral bite. A classic style.	12%	2018-2022	N/A UK	www.domainedelacoche.com
Domaine de la Grenaudière, MSM Clisson 2013	87	92	86	83	Rich, oxidative style of Muscadet with toasty notes and an evolved lees character adding complexity, yet with enough acidity to hold it all together.	12%	2017-2024	N/A UK	+33 2 28 01 07 07
Dom des Galloires, Roche de Loire, MCL Champcoceaux 2010	87	87	89	86	An intriguing wine, showing rich fruit intensity rather than the more mineral style. Broad, toasty flavours with smoky lemon and confit pear fruit.	12.5%	2017-2024	N/A UK	www.galloires.com
Domaine JL Viaud, Fleur de Panloup, MSM Goulaine 2010	87	87	88	85	Fresh citrus nose leads to a seductively textured, fairly evolved palate with a delicate beeswax and pithy, mineral character. An attractive style.	12%	2017-2025	N/A UK	www.domainejeanlucviaud.fr
Domaine JL Viaud, Fleur de Panloup, MSM Goulaine 2012	87	85	89	88	Rich, toasty almond nose. The palate feels fresh and confident, with a textural weight within which is wrapped a mineral vein and a touch of wild honey.	12%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.domainejeanlucviaud.fr
Frédéric Guillbaud, Château de La Bretonnerie, Muscadet 2014	87	86	89	86	Evident quality oak on the nose. The palate is soft and supple with a dried citrus fruit concentration that finishes well, with mouthwatering zip.	12.5%	2018-2023	£12.99	Prohibition Wines, Red Squirrel Wine

Recommended (continued) 86-89pts

Wine	Score	JB	CH	BL	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Le Jardin d'Edouard, Trésor, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine NV	87	88	84	88	Baked ginger and honeyed aromas indicate extended age. The palate is soft and rounded with a plush feel, yet with a lick of acidity on the finish.	12%	2017-2020	N/A UK	www.jardinedouard.vin
Martin-Luneau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013	87	88	85	88	Intense aromas of peach skin and flint lead to a polished yet easy-going palate with taut green fruit and a touch of lime on the pleasant finish.	12%	2018-2024	N/A UK	www.martin-luneau-muscadet.fr
Poiron Dabin, Hte Résolution, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2013	87	83	88	89	Sumptuous nose of golden fruit and sweet pear, leading to a complex lychee and pear palate with a delicious freshness. Well made and finishes well.	12%	2017-2026	N/A UK	www.poiron-dabin.com
Véronique Günther-Chéreau, Ch Gravelle, MSM Gorges 2013	87	83	90	88	Reserved nose gives way to an open palate with a fairly rich dried peach and apricot fruit character. Charming in its attractively bitter, bright, pithy way.	12%	2017-2023	£24	H2Vin, Winestory
Vincent Caillé, MSM Monnières St-Fiacre 2012	87	85	86	90	Scented, lightly honeyed, easy-going aromas, while the palate is an extension of the nose with supple, mellow fruit and a chalky textured finish. Charming.	12%	2017-2023	POA	Carte Blanche, Woodwinters
Bruno Cormerais, Maxime, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2010	86	92	85	82	Richly textured, concentrated fruit with evolved bready flavours from the very long lees aging, and a satisfying saline finish. Some complexity here.	12.5%	2017-2026	N/A UK	www.domaine-bruno-cormerais.com
Vincent Caillé, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2012	86	88	83	88	Rich, slightly oxidative style where a concentration of zesty citrus fruit is to the fore, with toasted almond nuances running through the middle.	12%	2018-2028	POA	Carte Blanche, Woodwinters

Commended 83-85pts

■ Bouin, Domaine de Beaurepaire, Cuvée Baptiste, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Mouzillon-Tillières 2013 85, 12.5%, 2017-2022, N/A UK www.domaine-de-beaurepaire.com ■ Domaine Martin, Le Rochils, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Monnières St-Fiacre 2011 85, 12%, 2017-2022, N/A UK www.martin-bernard.com ■ Jo Landron, Haute Tradition, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2014 85, 12%, 2018-2024, £22 Les Caves de Pyrene ■ Château Cassemichère, Cuvée 1601, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2014 84, 12%, 2017-2025, N/A UK www.chateaucassemichere.fr ■ Bonnet-Huteau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2010 83, 12.5%,

2017-2023, POA Nothing but the Grape ■ Landron, Révélation, Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire Champtoceaux 2014 83, 12%, 2017-2023, POA Under the Bonnet

Fair 76-82pts

■ Les Frères Couillaud, Château de la Ragotière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Vallet 2014 82 ■ Ollivier, Domaine de la Grenaudière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2011 82 ■ Domaine de l'Ecu, Orthogneiss, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2014 80 ■ Landron, Le Ponceau, Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire 2013 77

Poor 70-75pts

■ Barreau, Domaine de la Cornulière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2012 70

Faulty

■ Auguste Bonhomme, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Gorges 2013 (unclean) ■ Domaine Michel Bregeon, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2014 (reduced) ■ Famille Lieubeau, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2012 (TCA)

For full UK stockist details, see p114

Expert summary: Jim Budd

There were no real conclusions to be drawn between crus, vintages, time on lees or established and lesser-known producers – it was just a great line-up of quality wines



Jim Budd is the DWWA Regional Chair for Loire, and writes the awarded Jimsloire.blogspot.com

THE RESOUNDING SUCCESS of many Muscadets in this tasting does not come as a surprise, although the full depth of quality perhaps does.

It is encouraging that there are a number of lesser-known producers in our top 11 wines, as well as well-known names like Bernard Chéreau, Haut-Bourg and Luneau-Papin. There was also a range of vintages from 2003 to 2014 with three from 2009 and four from 2012. A number of the 2014s are still quite closed having just been recently bottled. It is clear that these cru wines benefit from further bottle age – this is underlined by the Luneau-Papin's top-scoring 2007 Excelsior, which was bottled in November 2010.

Six different terroirs featured among our Exceptional and Outstanding wines: Goulaine (3), Château-Thebaud (3), Clisson (2), La Haye-Fouassière (1), Bouaye (1) and Mouzillon-Tillières (1). All, with the exception of Bouaye (Côté de Grandlieu), are in the Sèvre-et-Maine.

Interestingly, of the three currently officially recognised crus, only Clisson featured among these top scorers.

Time on lees for our top 11 ranged from 28 months to 144 months. This suggests that there isn't any optimum

duration, except that for most, at least 24 months is required to gain extra complexity. Optimum time on lees depends on the vintage and how the wine matures.

Although these long lees aged wines represent a very small proportion of Muscadet produced, they should play a very important role in changing wine drinkers' perceptions. The results show that these wines can be exceptional – special-occasion bottles at very affordable prices and best served with fish such as turbot and sole as well as lobster. Many will also age exceptionally well. To benefit from their full complexity, these wines should not be served too cold; many may well also benefit from being decanted.

Regrettably a number of these wines are currently unavailable in the UK. Hopefully this tasting will persuade merchants to look again at the Pays Nantais. ■

'These wines should play a very important role in changing wine drinkers' perceptions'

My top three

Jim Budd

■ Pierre Luneau Papin, Excelsior, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Goulaine 2007 Knowing the Luneau family for nearly 30 years, I have huge respect for them. This is richly textured with great complexity, length and balance. Great value too! 100 Drink 2017-2033

■ Poiron Dabin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2009 My first experience of Jean-Michel Poiron's long-aged wines was the impressive 2004 Haute Résolution. This powerful 2009 has rich, lightly honeyed fruit showing how very different cru wines can be from 'normal' Muscadet. 99 Drink 2017-2029

■ Vignoble Drouard, Les Templieries, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012 I met Pascal Drouard in London when I tasted his fine 2008 Granite aged 63 months sur lie. The 2012 is softly textured with rich fruit allied with precise, fresh acidity. A great advert for the cru. 99 Drink 2017-2029

My top three

Chris Kissack

■ Poiron Dabin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château Thébaud 2009 I wasn't surprised to see Jean-Michel Poiron's wine ranked so highly in our blind tasting. Keep an eye out for his Grande Réserve cuvée too. 99 Drink 2017-2029

■ Domaine du Haut Bourg, Origine du Haut Bourg, Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu 2006 The Choblet brothers prove the wisdom of looking beyond Sèvre-et-Maine. Their 2012 Signature is also worth a look – it may be the greater wine, given time. 95 Drink 2017-2029

■ Domaine de la Pépière, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château Thébaud 2012 You can't go wrong with Marc Ollivier! This is one of the region's leading domaines, frequently turning out some of the best wines in the Muscadet region. 95 Drink 2017-2029

My top three

Ben Llewelyn

■ Bouin, Haut Clos de la Pierre, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine 2003 This is a great example of how Melon de Bourgogne can age, either in bottle or tank – and how extraordinarily good value Muscadet is. 98 Drink 2017-2026

■ Poiron Dabin, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Château-Thébaud 2009 This was one of a handful Château-Thébaud wines that really impressed. Its typicity and concentration made it stand out just a little from the rest. 97 Drink 2017-2029

■ Vignoble Drouard, Les Templieries, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson 2012 Clisson was one of the most expressive crus in this tasting and this wine typified that more than the rest. Buy a few cases and put them away for 10 to 30 years, opening a bottle each year. 97 Drink 2017-2029

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors

DISCOVER THE FINEST FRONSAC WINES FROM THIS PROUD BORDEAUX APPELLATION ...

Château Barrabaque
Château Dalem
Château Fontenil
Château Gaby
Haut-Carles
Château de La Dauphine
Château de La Rivière
Château La Vieille Cure
Château Les Trois Croix
Château Moulin Haut-Laroque
Château Moulin Pey-Labrie
Château Villars

Expression de Fronsac

GRANDS VINS DE BORDEAUX

12 OUTSTANDING PRODUCERS