



The Lure of Loire 2014 – A Great Vintage

Richard Hemming, MW

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As joyfully trumpeted by Loire champion Charles Sydney last month, 2014 is reputed to be an outstanding vintage for the wines of the Loire Valley. From the evidence I recently tasted, those trumpets were not blown in vain.

Standards appear to be very high for all the styles I encountered: Muscadet, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc (though I didn't taste any sweet examples) and Cabernet Franc. In particular, the baseline for quality is way above average, meaning that inexpensive, everyday examples of these wines have great fruit definition, fine balance and excellent typicality. They therefore deliver exactly what the Loire is famed for: refreshment, lightness and purity.

As price and appellation increases, so does quality - however, this tasting doesn't include the most fêted names of each appellation. Without wishing to put too much emphasis on scores, I would expect the best 2014s to be capable of scoring comfortably above 18, based on those wines that I scored 17.5. I am particularly keen to try more

Cabernet Francs, since the few that I tasted were so extremely promising. The Muscadets encapsulate everything unique and delicious about that appellation, making leesy, citric, fulsome wines. Sauvignon Blancs offer precision and minerality while the Chenins range from waxy and rich to compressed and austere.

In short, it is a vintage to buy indiscriminately, and should please all palates.

Vincent Pinard, Cuvée Flores 2014 Sancerre

Apple, lemon juice, floral perfume - much daintier than their Clémence cuvée. Just as lengthy, though, and with more mineral character showing through. (RH)

17.5

Vincent Pinard, Cuvée Nuance 2014 Sancerre

Smoky, citric, bright and insistent on the palate. Compressed core fruit with loads of aging potential. Massive persistence and concentration. (RH)

17+

