Chapter 18:
The Loire Valley

Four main areas; **Central Vineyards, Touraine, Anjou-Saumur, Nantais**
No regional generic appellation - there is an IGP - **Val de Loire** - covers whole region
Rosé de Loire (Anjou)/ **Crémant de Loire** (Saumur)

CLIMATE AND GRAPE GROWING	Overall **cool climate** but varies depending on the area: ● Central vineyards (inland) - **continental climate** ● Nantais (coastal) - **maritime climate** ● Anjou - slightly warmer and drier than expected - protected by the **Mauges Hills** - warm stony soils ● Touraine - further in - cooler/wetter/clay soils Varying weather - vintages differ Risks; **fungal disease** (due to rain) Best sites; mid-slope/S-facing/sunny/dry

WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES AND WINE STYLES	<u>Sauvignon Blanc</u>
	❖ **Sancerre/Pouilly-Fumé** (central vineyards)
	   ➢ Chalky, well-drained soils
	   ➢ Wine = dry/high acid/green apple/wet stone/smoke (fumé)
	   ➢ Individual villages - **Chavignol/ Les Monts Damnés** = high rep
	   ➢ Some can evolve - no ageing most cases
	   ➢ WM techniques vary:
	      ■ Fresh + fruity = pneumatic press (gentle) + stainless steel (temp controlled)
	      ■ Some ferm + mat in old oak + lees = broader texture (few use new oak)
	      ■ MLF in cooler vintages - to lower acidity
	❖ **Menetou-Salon** (W of Sancerre/near Loire tributaries)
	   ➢ Moderately priced, same style as San/PF
	❖ **Touraine** (generic appellation)
	   ➢ SB - White Touraine - varietal label 'Sauvignon de Touraine' - less concentrated/simple/fruity
	
	<u>Chenin Blanc</u>
	❖ High acid, non-aromatic
	❖ Grapes reach different ripeness levels throughout the season
	   ➢ Green, herbaceous = if unripe
	   ➢ Several harvesting sessions
	   ➢ Ripeness relates to style (ie, barely ripe = sparkling/ sweet = passilerage/noble rot)

	➢ Style change - even dry wines make with ripe grapes = high alcohol + some residual sugar
	❖ (Dry) Fresh apple → tropical fruit/ steeley and smokey.
	❖ (Sweet) Apricot/citrus → honey, toast, hay with age.
	❖ **Vouvray** (E of Tours)
	    ➢ Still → sparkling/ dry → sweet depending on the vintage
	    ➢ Cool climate/clay soil = light-med body/fresh, fruity and floral.
	    ➢ Rarely fermented/matured in oak
	❖ **Samaur/Anjou**
	    ➢ Similar climate/soil to Vouvray
	    ➢ Saumur - traditional method sparkling
	    ➢ Anjou - dry wines, matured in oak
	❖ **Savennières**
	    ➢ Full-body Chenin (dry)
	    ➢ Well-circulated vineyard, prevents Noble Rot - allows for ripe grapes
	    ➢ Can evolve in bottle
	❖ **Coteaux du Layon**
	    ➢ Sweet wines
	    ➢ In the sheltered valley of **River Layon** (S of Loire) - Noble Rot develops well
	    ➢ **Quarts de Chaume/ Bonnezauex** - own appellations - high rep sweet wines
	
	Melon Blanc ('Musacadet' / 'Melon de Bourgogne')
	❖ **Ripens early + frost resistant** (good for cool climate)
	❖ Grown in Nantais - S. of Loire, near Atlantic
	❖ Muscadet appellation (largest area)
	❖ **Muscadet Sèvre et Maine**
	    ➢ Dry, medium alcohol (12% max)
	    ➢ Ferm in stainless steel (traditionally old oak)
	    ➢ High acid/light body/green fruits (drink young)
	    ➢ **Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie** (speciality wine)
	        ■ Bottled spring following vintage, winter on its lees (richer texture)
	        ■ Handled carefully - retain delicacy/freshness

RED GRAPE VARIETIES AND WINE STYLES	Cabernet Franc
	❖ **Flowers and ripens early**
	❖ Grown in **Chinon, Bourgeuil and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgeil**
	    ➢ Light, sandy soils = light, fruity wines (drink young)
	    ➢ S. facing slopes + limestone, clay soil = fuller-bodied, more tannic wines
	    ➢ Some oak maturation - can evolve in bottle

❖ **Saumur + Saumur-Champigny**
  ➢ Lighter-body/tannin/juicy berry/floral - drink young/serve chilled
  ➢ Some producers making fuller-bodied for ageing

Other black grape varieties
  ❖ Mainly produced Anjou-Saumur, Touraine, Sancerre
  ❖ **Anjou-Saumur**
    ➢ **Rosé de Loire** (also from Touraine)
      ■ Dry, min 30% Cab Franc or Cab Sauv in blend
    ➢ **Cabernet d'Anjou**
      ■ Medium-sweet, blend of Cab Franc + Cab Sauv
    ➢ **Rosé d'Anjou**
      ■ Less sweet, made from **Grolleau** (local, high yielding black grape), Cab Franc, other varieties
  ❖ **Touraine**
    ➢ A wide array of varieties
    ➢ Dry, fresh, fruity
  ❖ **Sancerre**
    ➢ Rosé must be from Pinot Noir
    ➢ Pale, light-body, delicate fruit
    ➢ WM; either direct press or short maceration / stainless steel, temp controlled (to retain fruit flavours)