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'Amazing value' from this
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Mâcon cru whites 2012

This is arguably Burgundy's most dynamic region, with producers raising the quality and complexity of their wines. It deserves to be better known, says Jasper Morris MW

ONCE UPON A time the Mâconnais was regarded as a source of mass-produced, modest wines to be drunk as early as possible – a white twin to the reds of Beaujolais. Most of the production came through the caves cooperatives, or from négociant houses who may have sourced their wine through the co-op system. The idea was to get something cheap and cheerful out to the market as rapidly as possible.

Recently it has arguably been the most dynamic part of Burgundy. There is a new generation of growers intent on making complex, barrel-fermented wines from low yields, stylistically different from those of the Côte d'Or but made with the same care and attention. Equally the co-ops have been raising standards for their (usually) less expensive wines. All that lags behind is market appreciation.

Yet Mâcon is the homeland of the Chardonnay grape – there's even a village of that name in the middle of the region. The soil is the same type of clay-limestone as the Côte d'Or, but here within the context of Burgundy we are in southern mode, tasted in the sunshine style of the wines.

The bulk of the region's wines are sold as either Mâcon-Villages or Mâcon with the name of a specific village. Since September 2005 there have been 84 communes entitled to Mâcon-Villages, of which 26 may now use the name of the commune after the word Mâcon on the label (see box, right).

Understanding the villages

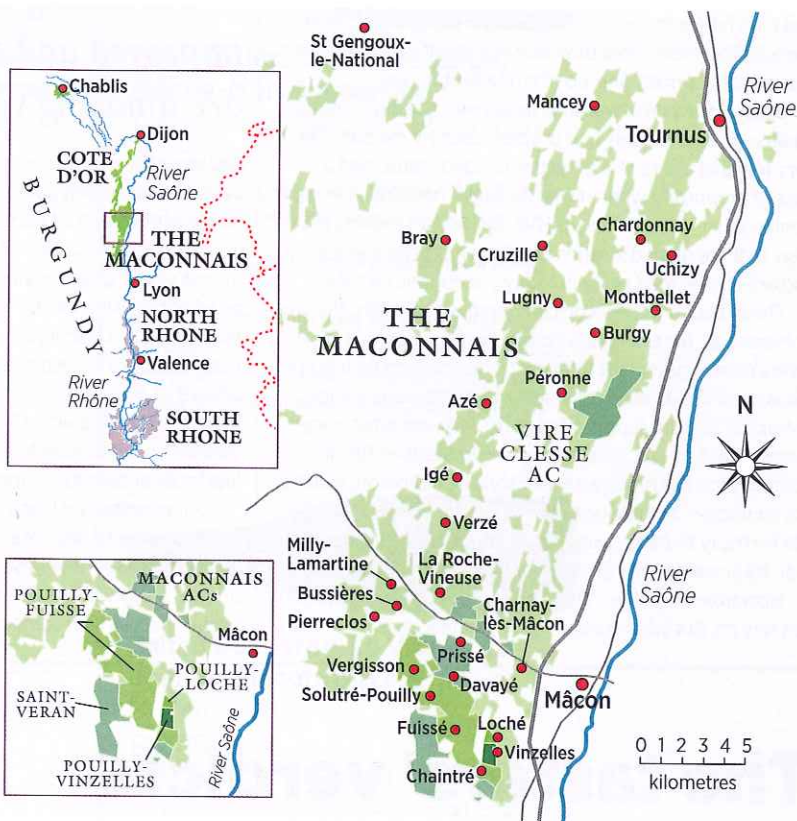
The most precocious of these are villages such as Uchizy, Montbellet and Charnay-lès-Mâcon on the eastern flank, enjoying the same exposition as the now separate Viré-Clessé appellation. Equally early ripening are communes which are also part of the Pouilly and St-Véran ACs: Chaintré, Davayé, Fuissé, Prissé, Solutré, Vergisson and Vinzelles.

Another group lies further up the valley towards Cluny: La Roche-Vineuse on the north flank, Bussièrès, Pierreclos and Milly-Lamartine on the south. Finally the communes which lie in the folds of hills moving west: Azé, Bray, Burgy, Chardonnay, Cruzille, Igé, Lugny, Mancey, Péronne, Verzé and, much further to the west, St Gengoux-le-National.

While production figures for these 26 Mâcon crus have been increasing, there's a tendency for the more talented and ambitious vigneron to offer single-vineyard wines. This ties in with discussions for creating premier cru vineyards in Pouilly-Fuissé and other appellations, though there's no suggestion that this will be expanded to include Mâcon.

Prices are mostly within the £10-£15 range, rising to £20 for a few top names, still very competitive by Burgundy standards, or when compared to many an artisanal, limited-production Chardonnay from New World producers, though inevitably undercut by high-volume lines.

While simpler Mâcons are designed for early drinking, those from the 26 crus should have greater staying power. They mostly will not reach the market until a year after harvest, will improve through the following year and, in the case of the best examples, develop favourably for a year or two thereafter. This should certainly be the case for 2012, a year more successful in quality than for quantity. The winter freeze, poor weather during flowering and considerable disease pressure reduced yields, but from August onwards the sun shone and ripened the grapes perfectly, in time for an early to mid-September harvest.



These 26 villages may append their names to Mâcon for white wines

Azé
Bray
Burgy
Bussièrès
Chaintré
Chardonnay
Charnay-lès-Mâcon
Cruzille
Davayé
Fuissé
Igé
Loché
Lugny
Mancey
Milly-Lamartine
Montbellet
Péronne
Pierreclos
Prissé
La Roche-Vineuse
St-Gengoux-le-National
Solutré
Uchizy
Vergisson
Verzé
Vinzelles

Mâcon whites: know your vintages

2013 Small and late crop but with some promise

2012 Small crop of excellent quality (see text for detail)

2011 Early crop, slightly lacking in character

2010 Excellent vintage, at its peak now

2009 Ripe, sunny wines, best are still good

2008 A late season, not for keeping

2007 Light but fine, drink up

Mâcon: the facts

(Source BIVB, 2011 vintage)

	Hectares	White (hl)	Red (hl)
Mâcon	409	5,870	16,676
Mâcon-Villages	1,885	130,388	-----
Mâcon + village name	1,573	93,557	10,313

Jasper Morris MW is the DWWA Regional Chair for Burgundy and author of the awarded Inside Burgundy ➤

The results

Forget about the confusing village names attached to Mâcon and focus on the fact these whites offer great immediate drinking at sensible prices, with a diversity of styles to suit all palates. Tina Gellie reports

GIVEN THE GOOD vintage conditions of 2012, our experts had high hopes for this tasting, and generally expectations were fulfilled from what they saw as a 'positive', 'interesting' and 'sensibly priced' line-up of white Burgundies.

Jasper Morris MW was impressed with the high average quality. 'There was only one properly faulty wine out of 66, very few that didn't reach Recommended status, and a decent proportion where I was thinking "I'd be really happy drinking that".' Andy Howard MW agreed: 'It confirms the view that the named villages of Mâcon have got some style and are pretty good value in today's economic climate.'

The difficulty with Mâcon compared with Chablis, Puligny, or Meursault, for example, said our experts, was that wine lovers didn't know what to expect when picking up a bottle, because of the diversity of styles within the many villages (24 of the 26 were represented here). 'We saw citric, racy wines as well as rich, creamy ones,' said Stephen Brook. 'Mâcon is too big to have its own stylistic definition, which is not a criticism, but a suggestion to *Decanter* readers that it can be tricky to pick a wine to suit your personal taste other than by knowing your growers or by trusting our ratings.'

Howard elaborated: 'There's not even a village style you can rely on. But what we can say is that Mâcon is more than

'Winemaking is much improved and these wines are amazing value' Stephen Brook

just straightforward, decent white wine. There is much more serious winemaking going than the average consumer might expect. Lots of good value here – very impressive.'

Morris said if this were a Chablis tasting, he and his fellow judges would give the wines marks based on their typicity as a Chablis. Whereas for Mâcon 'we almost don't want them to be too Mâcon, as we have this negative connotation that Mâcon is a bit heavy, short and clumsy'. He added that while that style still existed, there was a new one that was more like classical white Burgundy. He said while he wouldn't want Chablis to ever taste like white Burgundy, it's 'perfectly acceptable – impressive even' that Mâcons could.

Our experts said these Mâcons represented great buys. 'Even compared with international Chardonnays, in some cases these are more rewarding,' said Howard. Morris added: 'Many will age up to three years and even show better then, as now some of them are in a reductive phase.'

The scores

66 wines tasted

0

Outstanding

9

Highly recommended

50

Recommended

6

Fair

0

Poor

1

Faulty

The tasters' verdicts

Stephen Brook



Brook has been a contributing editor to *Decanter* since 1996 and has won a clutch of awards for his wine writing. The author of more than 30 books, his works include *Complete Bordeaux*, the definitive study of the region and in its second edition, and *The Wines of California*, which won three awards. Brook also fully revised the last two editions of Hugh Johnson's *Wine Companion*.

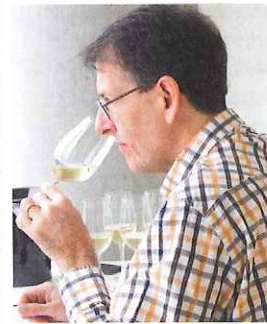
Brook's verdict

'A tasting of this calibre would not have been possible 15 years ago. White wines from Mâcon tended to be inexpensive but dull, though more characterful, complex wines were by no means rare in the more prestigious appellations such as Pouilly-Fuissé. Cooperatives ruled in the Mâcon appellations and the wines, while serviceable, were rarely exciting. Since then quality has improved almost beyond recognition.'

'The wines we tasted were almost without exception well made and honest, even if a handful still lacked flair. There was slight minerality in some wines, and considerable freshness and liveliness in many. It's unreasonable to expect the kind of complexity and intensity of flavour that one has the right to seek from the great white-wine zones of the Côte de Beaune, but then the prices in Mâcon are a mere fraction of those from Puligny or Meursault.'

'Nor will the majority of these Mâcon wines have great longevity. They should, on the evidence of this tasting, be enjoyed for their sheer fruit within a few years of bottling. Some wines should cruise through to the end of the decade without difficulty, but these are not wines intended for serious cellaring. Instead they offer freshness, sheer drinkability, and increasing consistency and reliability.'

Andy Howard MW



Howard runs the wine consultancy *Vinetrades*, with Burgundy and Bordeaux his key areas of expertise. Previously he spent more than 30 years as a buyer for Marks & Spencer. In the wine category there, he was responsible for Burgundy among many other regions. He became a MW in September 2011, writing his dissertation on the UK wine trade's attitude to premier cru Chablis. Howard has a house in Gaillac, where he made wine for six vintages.

Howard's verdict

'2012 has a high reputation within the Côte d'Or so I was interested to see whether similar characteristics would be found further to the south. Given that Mâcon is fast developing as a source of some of the best value and most reliable wines within Burgundy, this was an enticing prospect.'

'I was delighted to see a very consistent result across the region which certainly lived up to my expectations. Although there were no wines that merited an Outstanding mark, there was a succession of wines which displayed the essence of Mâcon – fresh fruit, good acidity, ripe fruit flavours and, in certain cases, a very sensible addition of oak. Although none of the wines are for extended ageing, they should provide some great value and extremely enjoyable drinking over the next few years.'

'Within the villages, Mâcon Milly-Lamartine stood out, with a good showing from La Roche-Vineuse and Vergisson. What encouraged me was the diversity of styles, ranging from fresh, apple and citrus fruit-driven styles to those with greater richness, layers of complexity on the palate and (in most cases), restrained use of oak. Old-vine (*vieilles vignes*) wines also stood out with greater concentration, length and personality.'

While the village of Milly-Lamartine stood out thanks to the grapes' extra hang-time there, Lugny and Fuissé – two of the more well-known villages of Mâcon – were rather dull and disappointing. But the key point to come out of this tasting was how unimportant the village names were.

'They are pretty useless – and confusing. Even for professionals it's hard to pick one Mâcon from another,' said Brook. 'How do consumers grasp it?' asked Howard. 'It has many appellations, villages and vineyards – that's a lot of Mâcons! Yet people still think of it as just Mâcon with a weird name after it and they all taste the same.'

Morris said there was a move for producers to add a single-vineyard name to their wines which consumers could rely on for a style distinction rather than trying to understand the village distinction. 'There's a lot of education to be done, but as long as merchants, consumers and the press are prepared to follow them on this, there is much more to be discovered from the wines here.'

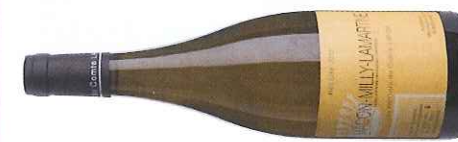
Howard felt the best-performing wines would 'happily stand up against the better communes like Pouilly-Fuissé or Côtes de Beaune'. Brook felt the wines were more exotic than Côtes de Beaune or Côte Chalonnaise, but thankfully not as many heavy, cloying or overoaked ones as 10 or 12 years ago. 'Winemaking is much improved and these wines are amazing value. High-scoring wines for £11 or £12 a bottle? You can't go wrong with that!'

Entry criteria: producers and UK importers were invited to submit white wines from the 26 named villages of Mâcon (not Mâcon-Villages), with only one wine per producer permitted

Mâcon cru whites 2012

Highly Recommended

17–18.25pts (90–94pts)



Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon, Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine

Decanter average score: 18.25/20pts (94/100pts)

Individual judges' scores: Stephen Brook 17.5
Andy Howard MW 18.5 Jasper Morris MW 18.5

£18–£19.95 Berry Bros & Rudd, Domaine Direct, Tanners

Bright Granny Smith nose with fresh and attractive fruit, good weight through the middle, and a lemon zest finish. Should show very well with a bit more time in bottle. **Drink** 2014–2018 **Alcohol** 13%



Julien Collovray, Le Vignes de Joanny, Mâcon-Davayé

17.5 (91)

SB 17 AH 17.5 JM 18

£12.95 The Vintner

Fresh and clean with notes of ripe stone fruit that are balanced with zippy acidity. Good length and minerality combine to give an interesting wine with the ability to age for several years. **Drink** 2014–2017 **Alc** 13%



Domaine Gérald Talmard, Mâcon-Uchizy

17.25 (90+) SB 16.5 AH 17 JM 18.5

£8.90 Justerini & Brooks

Complex aromas on the nose – ripe fruit characters with touches of butter and honey. Fresh attack, quite concentrated, with a slight asperity on the finish. Extremely fine wine with a future. **Drink** 2014–2017 **Alc** 13%



Les Grands Crus Blancs, Mâcon-Vizelles

17.25 (90+) SB 17 AH 17.5 JM 17.5

£10.95 Lea & Sandeman

Apricot, passion fruit and verbena aromas. Quite rich and sleek; a creamy, forward style with some minerality. Best drunk young for its appealing and seductive fruit. **Drink** 2014–2016 **Alc** 13%

Jasper Morris MW



Morris is the DWWA Regional Chair for Burgundy. He is also the Burgundy buyer for Berry Bros & Rudd, previously running importing business Morris & Verdin for 22 years. Lecturing globally on Pinot Noir and Burgundy, Morris also writes about wine and is responsible for all Burgundy entries in *The Oxford Companion to Wine*. In 2010, Morris published *Inside Burgundy*, which won the André Simon award for the best wine book of the year.

Morris' verdict

'This was a very good tasting. I have seen in recent years an explosion of quality from the leading Mâconnais producers, but didn't expect these higher standards to be evident in as many wines. The barrel-aged examples were on the whole successful, with oak supporting the wine, not drowning it. 2012 shows as quite a concentrated vintage here, but not blowsy. Nonetheless there were successful light and fresh wines as well as more complex, fuller-bodied offerings.'

'The wines were tasted from north to south, but within the villages there are sunnier spots and more sheltered ones. With global warming maybe the latter are coming to the fore. The handful from Mâcon-Lugny were by and large disappointing, while lesser-known Mâcon-Igé did very well, as did Uchizy and Milly-Lamartine. Of course, the defining factor is the quality of the vigneron, thus for several villages (Chardonnay, Bray, Cruzille) with just a pair of entries, I found one wine was clearly more successful than the other. Overall, the Mâconnais impressed for both quality and value from this tasting.'

Highly Recommended (continued) 17-18.25pts (90-94pts)



Christophe Perrin, La Montagne, Mâcon-Bray 17 (90) SB 16.5 AH 17 JM 17.5
N/A UK +33 3 85 50 05 23

Charming apple and apricot nose; lightly oaked. Vibrant and mineral with nice balance between ripe fruit flavours and cleansing acidity. A nice length on the finish. **Drink** 2014-2016 **Alc** 13%



Domaine du Château de Vergisson, Mâcon-Solutré 17 (90) SB 17.5 AH 16 JM 17.5
N/A UK +33 6 21 85 67 60

Weighty apricot bouquet with smoke and bacon fat notes. This has a bit less charm than some but still a well-made example with ripeness, slightly salty flavour, and fair acidity. **Drink** 2014-2016 **Alc** 13.5%



Domaine Perraud, Mâcon-La Roche-Vineuse 17 (90) SB 17 AH 16.5 JM 17.5

POA Carruthers & Kent, Liberty Wines
Rich, powerful nose behind some barrel toast; on the opulent side. Palate has freshness and minerality which add to levels of complexity and concentration. Nicely integrated with good length. **Drink** 2014-2018 **Alc** 12.5%



Fichet, Terroir de La Cra, Cuvée Prestige, Mâcon-Igé 17 (90) SB 16 AH 17.5 JM 17.5

£40 **Bibendum**
Complex and inviting aromas, redolent of high-quality oak. Cleansing acidity and a mineral drive to balance the ripe, weighty palate. Good length and harmonious. **Drink** 2014-2016 **Alc** 13.5%

It can be tricky to pick a wine to suit your personal taste other than by knowing your growers or by trusting our ratings'
Stephen Brook



Vignerons des Terres Secretes, Mâcon-Prissé 17 (90) SB 17.5 AH 16 JM 17.5

£11-£14 **Charles Taylor, Haynes Hanson & Clark, Hennings Wine Merchants, Montrachet Fine Wine Merchants, St Aubyn Leschallas**
Attractive, vigorous nose of lemon verberna. Quite rich and succulent, with good weight of fruit but no heaviness. A fine-boned wine with some staying power. **Drink** 2014-2018 **Alc** 12.5%

Recommended 15-16.75pts (83-89pts)

Wine	Score	SB	AH	JM	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Château de Messey, Clos des Avoueries, Mâcon-Cruzille	16.75 (89)	17	17	16	Good complexity on the nose; aromas of ripe fruit and hints of grilled bread. Medium bodied, fully ready. Opulent but with some green fruit.	13%	2015-2017	N/A UK	www.demessey.com
Jean-Claude Boisset, Château London, Mâcon-Igé	16.75 (89)	17.5	16.5	16	Toasty nose of apricots and pineapple. Concentrated palate with good acid balance. A touch raw now but should settle down in the next two years.	12.5%	2014-2018	£16.99	Aitken Wines, Bentleys Wines, Gwin Llyn Wines, Harrison's Fine Wines, Lockett Bros, Vagabond Wines, The Wine Reserve
Louis Dorry, Les Collonges, Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine	16.75 (89)	17	17.5	16	Lush, tropical fruit nose. Lively attack with high acidity. Good intensity and a lovely stony finish. This has potential and personality.	13%	2014-2020	N/A UK	+33 6 11 65 11 56
Mallory & Benjamin Talmard, Mâcon-Uchizy	16.75 (89)	16.5	16	17.5	Refined nose by Mâcon standards. Soft, juicy and upfront; a fruity style with enough acidity to keep it balanced. A pleasurable but early-drinking style.	13%	2014-2016	£11.99	Bablake Wines, Inverarity Morton, Richmond Fine Wines, Satchells of Burnham Market, Vineyards of Sherborne
Maurice Lapalus & Fils, Enclos du Château, Mâcon-Pierreclos	16.75 (89)	17.5	17	15.5	Nose is restrained but correct with some liveliness to the fruit. Clean flavours with stone fruit character allied with a stony, mineral finish. Well made.	12.5%	2014-2020	N/A UK	www.domaine-lapalus.com
Rijckaert, Terroir de Bissy, Crays vers Vaux, Vieilles Vignes, Mâcon-Lugny	16.75 (89)	17	17.5	16	Powerful aromas of buttery oak combine with a layered palate displaying ripe tropical fruits. Citric and refreshing with some pungency and drive.	13%	2014-2018	N/A UK	www.rijckaert.fr
Sylvaine & Alain Normand, Mâcon-La Roche-Vineuse	16.75 (89)	15.5	17.5	17	Pure and attractive nose. Fresh, ripe fruits on the palate that are matched with cleansing, fresh acidity. Very well made in a clean, modern style.	13%	2014-2016	N/A UK	www.domaine-normand.com
Daniel et Julien Barraud, La Roche, Mâcon-Vergisson	16.5 (88)	16	17	16.5	Mild mango and apricot nose. Quite rich and soft; a forward style that is fruity rather than nuanced or elegant. A wine of impressive balance.	13%	2014-2017	£16.95	Lea & Sandeman
Domaine Jean Manciat, Francieu, Charnay-lès-Mâcon	16.5 (88)	17	16.5	16	Fresh lime nose with some stylish oak. Crisp fruit flavours and a stony finish means this will develop in bottle. An appealing raciness and energy here.	13%	2014-2018	N/A UK	+33 3 85 34 35 50
Albert Bichot, Mâcon-Chardonnay	16.25 (87)	16.5	15	17	Lean, citric nose, not very expressive but attractive. Palate has a mineral edge and a classy finish. A leaner style of Mâcon but with good vibrancy.	12.5%	2014-2015	£14.95	Inverarity Morton
Château de Chaintré, Mâcon-Chaintré	16.25 (87)	15.5	17	16	Good intensity on the nose with a complex and layered palate. Good fruit through the middle though not quite as persistent as some of the finest.	13%	2014-2017	£16-£18 (2011)	Eclectic Tastes, Slurp, The Drink Shop
Château de la Greffière, Les Ronzettes, Mâcon-La Roche-Vineuse	16.25 (87)	17.5	15.5	16	Bright apple and apricot nose with a light toastiness. Fresh, precise and focused, with a sleek texture and plenty of drive.	13%	2014-2020	N/A UK	www.chateau-delagreffiere.com
Christophe Cordier, Clos du Four, Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine	16.25 (87)	14.5	17.5	16.5	Rather heavy apricot nose; oaky. Interesting evolution on the palate: honey, and hints of orange blossom. Lovely mineral finish.	13.5%	2014-2018	£13.50	The Wine Society
Domaine Carrette, Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine	16.25 (87)	15	17	16.5	Delicious, grapey bouquet. Nice ripeness of citrus and apple fruit on the palate with fresh, cleansing acidity and a mineral streak on the finish.	13%	2014-2016	N/A UK	+33 6 71 58 90 50
Domaine de la Feuillarde, Mâcon-Prissé	16.25 (87)	16.5	16.5	16	Full-bodied, ripe stone fruit flavours and decent acidity combine to give an attractive, early-drinking example with freshness and purity.	13%	2014-2017	£14	Peter Watts
Domaine Fichet, Château London, Mâcon-Igé	16.25 (87)	16.5	15	17.5	Light but attractive fruit aromas and notably denser flavours. Has some spice and kick on the mid-palate. Best drunk young for the exuberant fruit.	13%	2014-2016	£25	Bibendum
Domaine Guerrin et Fils, Les Rochers, Mâcon-Vergisson	16.25 (87)	16.5	16	16	Juicy and grapey bouquet leads into a palate that is quite creamy and bright with appealing apricot flavours. This has zest and persistence.	13%	2014-2016	£10.95	Roberson Wine, Tanners

Recommended (continued) 15-16.75pts (83-89pts)

Wine	Score	SB	AH	JM	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Domaine Olivier Fichet, Les Verchères, Mâcon-Burgy	16.25 (87)	16	17	16	Delicate pear nose that is very pretty. A full-bodied palate showing good ripeness, fresh acidity and a terroir-driven style. A pleasure to drink.	13.5%	2014-2016	£20	Stone Vine & Sun
Domaine Paquet, Mâcon-Fuissé	16.25 (87)	16.5	16.5	15.5	A light, fresh nose, with an easy, attractive and rounded palate that displays some spice and stone fruits. A long, mineral finish.	13%	2014-2016	£13.06	Exel Wines
Domaine St-Denis, Mâcon-Lugny	16.25 (87)	15	17	16.5	Restrained nose with hints of pear, apple and touch of wet stone. Lean and zesty with impressive density of fruit. A balanced wine with verve and style.	12.5%	2014-2017	N/A UK	domaine.saintdenis@wanadoo.fr
Domaine Vincent Girardin, Vieilles Vignes, Mâcon-Fuissé	16.25 (87)	15.5	17	16	Both zesty and floral on the nose with notes of apricot and orange rind. A serious style, reminiscent of Chassagne-Montrachet.	13%	2014-2018	N/A UK	www.vincentgirardin.com
Joseph Burrier, Mâcon-Solutré-Pouilly	16.25 (87)	16.5	16	16	Waxy, apricot nose that has charm. Fleshy, medium-bodied stone fruit flavours with medium acidity. Ripe, balanced and long, with a citric finish.	13%	2014-2017	£13.40	Bottle Apostle (2011), Domaine Direct
Nicolas Maillet, Mâcon-Verzé	16.25 (87)	16	16.5	16.5	Delicate quince nose. Fresh, appealing style with good intensity on the palate. A long lime-zest finish with plenty in reserve.	13%	2014-2016	£14.95	H2Vin
Ropiteau, Sous La Roche, Mâcon-Igé	16.25 (87)	15.5	17	16	Warm, toasty oak characters on nose with a fleshy and plump palate. Has a little spritz on finish to keep it fresh.	13%	2014-2017	N/A UK	www.caves-ropiteau.com
Denis Bouchacourt, Mâcon-Solutré	16 (86)	16	17	15	Sweet, ripe, apple and peach nose. Full and rounded palate with fresh acidity, good texture and structure. Finishes with a long, stony character.	13%	2014-2017	£12.55	Vinothentic
Domaine Bourdon, Mâcon-Vergisson	16 (86)	15.5	16.5	16	A little closed on the nose. But the palate has nice purity and good concentration with fair acidity and a zippy, long finish.	13%	2014-2016	£9.80	Carte du Vin, Nickolls & Perks
Dominique Cornin, Serreudières, Mâcon-Chaintré	16 (86)	16.5	16.5	15	Hefty stone fruit nose, with good purity and crystalline fruits on the palate; well-made. Long and vibrant finish that is appealing now or in a few years.	13%	2014-2017	N/A UK	www.cornin.net
La Soufrandière, Le Clos de Grand-Père, Mâcon-Vinzelles	16 (86)	14.5	17	16.5	Ripe, luscious, honeyed fruit characters on a weighty palate; good length and complexity. Generous and full but well-balanced with zippy acidity.	13%	2014-2016	£17	Berry Bros & Rudd
P Ferraud & Fils, Cuvée Marie-Joséphine Ferraud, Mâcon-Fuissé	16 (86)	15.5	16	16.5	Discreet but oaky nose with notes of lime and apricot. This has heft rather than finesse, though there is some tangy acidity on the finish.	12.5%	2014-2017	£24	Firth & Co
Vergat, La Roche, Mâcon-Vergisson	16 (86)	15.5	17	15.5	Toasty oak flavours dominate the nose and palate but underneath there is fine fruit and structure, with good acidity and fleshy ripeness.	13%	2014-2016	£10.50	Farr Vintners
Collin-Bourisset, Les Monts, Mâcon-Fuissé	15.75 (85+)	16	15.5	15.5	Opulent nose of apricots and tropical fruits. Surprisingly tangy and citrusy, given the exoticism of the nose.	13%	2014-2017	N/A UK	www.collinbourisset.com
Domaine de la Garenne, Mâcon-Azé	15.75 (85+)	16.5	15	16	Subdued nose. Delicious fruit on the palate, though a softness suggests this is for drinking sooner rather than later. Quite good acidity and length.	13%	2014-2017	£13-£22	Charles Taylor, Millésima, Montrachet Fine Wines
Domaine de la Sarazinière, Cuvée Claude Selgneuret, Mâcon-Bussièrres	15.75 (85+)	14	16.5	17	Weighty and full-bodied palate; a luscious example with ripe stone and melon fruit characters. Medium acidity and hints of overripeness on the finish.	13%	2014-2015	N/A UK	www.domainedelasaraziniere.com
Domaine du Clos des Rocs, Mâcon-Loché	15.75 (85+)	16.5	15	16	A fresh fruit bouquet that is also quite floral. Ripe and lush but has good acidity too, though it shows little complexity.	13%	2014-2017	POA	Flint Wines
Domaine Jean-François Gonon, Mâcon-Bussièrres	15.75 (85+)	16.5	15	16	Perky lime nose with a touch of oak. Sleek attack, silky and fresh, with a slight sweetness that is balanced by good acidity.	13%	2014-2017	£10.49-£11 (2011)	Fraziers, The Wine Co
Domaine Sangouard-Guyot, La Roche, Mâcon-Vergisson	15.75 (85+)	16	16.5	15	Rich and creamy, with some underlying acidity to keep it fresh. A concentrated wine with some flair.	13.5%	2014-2016	N/A UK	www.domaine-sanguoard-guyot.com
Domaine Yves Giroux et Fils, Mâcon-Fuissé	15.75 (85+)	14.5	16	16.5	Lush passion fruit nose. Quite full bodied with hints of stone and tropical fruit flavours balanced with a lick of citrus acidity at the finish.	13%	2014-2016	N/A UK	domainegiroux@wanadoo.fr
Georges DuBoeuf, Mâcon-Chaintré	15.75 (85+)	15.5	15	16.5	The nose is heady with a bit of spicy bacon fat; you can feel the sunshine. Suave texture and abundant fruit, though it lacks some flair and vivacity.	12.5%	2014-2016	N/A UK	www.duboef.com
Les Vignerons de Mancey, Les Essentielles, Mâcon-Mancey	15.75 (85+)	15	16	16	Quite forward aromas of ripe pear and quince. Medium to full bodied with enough acidity behind it. Nice complexity with a clean mineral finish.	12.5%	2014-2016	£8.95	Jeroboams
Louis Latour, Les Genièvres, Mâcon-Lugny	15.75 (85+)	15	16	16	Mango and apple on the nose; quite exotic. Good acidity and additional layers of flavour. A nice mineral length on the finish.	13%	2014-2016	£8.95-£11.95	Bon Coeur, Francis Fine Wines, Hennings Wine, Southwell Vintners, Worsley Wines
Auvigüe, Le Moulin du Pont, Mâcon-Solutré	15.5 (85)	15.5	15.5	15.5	Buttery, lactic notes on the nose and palate. Though the wood doesn't mask the vivid fruit, it dominates the finish too much.	13%	2014-2017	£17.95	Corney & Barrow
Domaine du Bicheron, Cuvée Vieilles Vignes, Mâcon-Peronne	15.5 (85)	15.5	15	16	Pronounced aromas of later-harvested grapes, with hints of Muscat and ripe melon. Good attack with rather fierce acidity.	13.5%	2014-2017	£13.70	Thomas Peatling
Bouchard Père et Fils, St-Pierre, Mâcon-Lugny	15.25 (84)	15.5	15	15	Broad apricot nose with a touch of oak. A touch of bacon fat on the palate which is of fair length, though it could use an ounce more complexity.	12.5%	2014-2016	£10.95-£11.99	Amps Fine Wines, Lancelot Wines, Last Drop, Partridges, TJ Wines, Whitley Wines
Collovray & Terrier, Grand VA, Mâcon-Chardonnay	15.25 (84)	15.5	16	14	Aromas of nuts, honey and warm toasty oak. Broad and rounded palate, which has more acidity and zest than the nose suggests.	13%	2014-2015	£12.95	The Vintner
Domaine Cordier Père et Fils, Mâcon-Fuissé	15.25 (84)	15.5	15.5	15	Upfront, ripe, stone fruit on the nose. Very ripe but balanced by acidity; however, it lacks the complexity of other examples.	13.5%	2014-2016	£16.55	Bancroft
Domaine du Château de Pierreclos, Mâcon-Pierreclos	15.25 (84)	15	16	15	Apricot and mango nose; solidly fruity. Broad and lush, with ample fruit but few nuances. Perky acidity on the finish.	13%	2014-2016	£13.50	Robert Rolls
Domaine Marcel Couturier, Les Longues Terres, Mâcon-Loché	15.25 (84)	16	14.5	15.5	Roasted pineapple nose. Warm, honeyed fruit characters on the palate though lacks some finesse.	13%	2014-2016	£12-£18	Bennets, Ten Acre
Jacques Charlet, Château de la Tour Penet, Mâcon-Peronne	15.25 (84)	15	16	15	Rich apple compote nose. Mineral and firm palate with nice weight and concentration. This lacks a bit of vibrancy, warmth and pleasure.	13%	2014-2017	N/A UK	www.jacques-charlet.fr
Jean Loron, Château de Loché, Mâcon-Loché	15.25 (84)	16	14.5	15.5	Slightly heavy nose, but there is good weight of fruit behind this. Assertive and needs time to settle down and become more expressive.	13%	2014-2017	N/A UK	www.loron.fr
Louis Max, Le Clos, Mâcon-Bussièrres	15 (83)	15.5	14.5	15	Toasty, apricot nose. Quite rich and sleek but straightforward. A broad, fruity style rather than one that's nuanced or subtle.	13%	2014-2015	N/A UK	www.louismax.com

Fair 13-14.75pts (76-82pts)

■ Antonin Rodet, En Thuzot, Mâcon-Igé 14.75 (82)
■ Bouchard Aîné & Fils, Le Chaillou, Mâcon-Igé (14.75 (82))
■ Domaine Guillot-Broux, Les Perrières, Mâcon-Cruzille 14.75 (82)
■ Domaine Sophie Cinier, Mâcon-Fuissé 14.75 (82)
■ Cave de Lugny, La Carte, Lieu-Dit,

Mâcon-Lugny 14.25 (80+)
■ Domaine Porcheron, Les Essards, Mâcon-Bray 14.25 (80+)

Faulty
■ Raphael Sallet, Clos des Ravière, Mâcon-Uchizy (oxidised)

For full UK stockist details, see p110

My top three

Stephen Brook

■ **Jean-Claude Boisset, Château London**

Mâcon-Igé Grégory Patriat makes a range of wines for this négociant house, from grands crus to lowly village wines. As an example of the latter, this is impeccable: fresh, lightly exotic, and racy. **17.5/20 (91/100)** Drink 2014-2018

■ **Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon, Mâcon-Milly-Lamartine**

For some years Dominique Lafon has been making simply delicious wines from a handful of sites in Mâcon, and this is no exception. He brings out a vividness and precision that few can match, without striving to express more than the terroir can deliver. **17.5 (91)** Drink 2014-2018

■ **Domaine du Château de Vergisson**

Mâcon-Solutré Château de Vergisson makes good Pouilly-Fuissés, but this lesser appellation shows that you don't always need to go for the more prestigious big brothers. This is lush, fruity and thoroughly enjoyable, but not without finesse and length. **17.5 (91)** Drink 2014-2016

My top three

Andy Howard MW

■ **Verget, La Roche, Mâcon-Vergisson**

The richer, riper fruit character here blends beautifully with oak to give a different, weightier style of Mâcon. Very thoughtfully made, this is no overoaked heavyweight but a classy, interesting alternative to Pouilly-Fuissé. **17/20 (90/100)** Drink 2014-2016

■ **Vincent Girardin, Vieilles Vignes**

Mâcon-Fuissé Subtle oak from *foudres* add an extra dimension to this. A serious style, somewhat reminiscent of Chassagne-Montrachet, although perhaps lacking a bit of joy at the moment. However, it was one of the few wines with the capacity to age for several years. **17 (90)** Drink 2014-2018

■ **Julien Collovray, Le Vignes de Joanny,**

Mâcon-Davayé Bright, fresh style with purity, stone fruit characters, excellent length and a delicious mineral finish have created an exciting Mâcon with a sense of excitement and verve. Perhaps not such a well known producer but a name to look out for in the future. **17.5 (91)** Drink 2014-2017

My top three

Jasper Morris MW

■ **Christophe Perrin, La Montagne,**

Mâcon-Bray This producer is new to me and I can't even remember tasting a Mâcon-Bray before, tucked away as it is in the hinterland. It's a tiny domaine but evidently promising. I loved the balance between weight of fruit and refreshing energy. **17.5/20 (91/100)** Drink 2014-2016

■ **Domaine Gérard Talmard, Mâcon-Uchizy**

A well-known name in this part of the Mâconnais, Talmard evidently knows what he is doing. His Uchizy (the domaine also makes a Mâcon-Chardonnay) is a joy to drink now but clearly capable of ageing well. **18.5 (95)** Drink 2014-2017

■ **Fichet, Terroir de La Cra, Cuvée**

Prestige, Mâcon-Igé The Fichets of Igé make several different cuvées according to individual terroirs. This is the top wine and was convincing as such. Any vineyard called Crâ or Cras should show good minerality! **17.5 (91)** Drink 2014-2016

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

Expert summary: Andy Howard MW

From humble co-ops to well-known producers, quality – and value – was impressive in these approachable whites, showcasing the merits of this often-ignored region



Andy Howard MW runs the wine consultancy Vinetrades, with Burgundy and Bordeaux his key areas of expertise. Previously, he spent more than 30 years as a buyer for Marks & Spencer

EXPECTATIONS WERE HIGH for this tasting of what has been hailed as a great Burgundy vintage. The hype was generally justified, with nine wines out of 66 gaining a Highly Recommended rating, and a further 50 Recommended (90% of the total). Consumers should consider these Mâcons as more than just a source of reasonable quality, good value and rather predictable wines for early consumption.

Though some communes fared better than others, there was no real geographical link between appellation and performance. Producer style seemed a more dominant factor. The highest-rated communes were Milly-Lamartine, Davayé, La Roche-Vineuse and Uchizy (despite one badly oxidised example). Davayé and Uchizy showed a little more richness as befits their earlier-ripening locations whereas Milly-Lamartine, a later-ripening commune, displayed a leaner, tighter, more precise style. Communes performing less strongly were Loché, Bussièrès, Lugny, Péronne and Bray, although these all averaged at least 15.4/20 points.

A range of producers were on show, from cooperatives such as Cave de Lugny and Vignerons des Terres Secrètes, négociants (Louis Max, Georges DuBoeuf) and a large number of domaines. Of the more well-known domaines, a number had high-scoring wines – Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon (Milly-Lamartine), Talmard (Uchizy) and Fichet (Igé). Sadly, no wines were submitted from Olivier Merlin, one of

the leading producers, with vineyards in La Roche-Vineuse. The Cave Co-op at Prissé achieved a Highly Recommended score at excellent value with its Mâcon-Prissé.

Also noticeable were some styles where oak played a much more dominant role (Verget, Rijckaert). This tended to split the panel – some found the oak excessive and dominant, while others enjoyed the extra complexity and layers of flavour. Alcohol levels were well-controlled with most wines declaring 13%. Of some concern was the dearth of screwcaps, with only one wine bottled under Stelvin. At this level, more producers should consider using them to lock-in the vibrant flavours and early drinking qualities of Mâcon and to preserve as much freshness as possible.

Mâcon 2012s provide some excellent examples of good-value Burgundy – itself a rare statement. Although the wines are not for extending ageing, they will provide lots of pleasure over the next one or two years and provide a great alternative and challenge to the wines from Chablis, St-Véran and Viré-Clessé. **D**

'At this level, more producers should consider using screwcaps to lock-in the vibrant flavours'