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August 2004

Decanter

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GREATEST
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and whites at £5-15

The must-buy
Mâcon 2002s

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121 Brunello 1999s
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Chianti Classicos

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Maçon commune 2002 – Recommended Wines



Domaine Bicheron
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UK Agent: Richards Walford. T 01780 460 451



Domaine Lalande
T +33 (0)6 09 93 15 33
UK Agent: Bibendum. T 020 7449 4120



Nicolas Maillet
T +33 (0)3 85 33 46 76
UK Agent: R S Wines. T 0117 963 1780



Domaine Fichet
T +33 (0)3 85 33 30 46
UK Agent: Stone, Vine & Son. T 0845 061 4604



R & G Sallet
T +33 (0)3 80 40 50 45
UK Agent: Roger Harris Wines. T 01603 880 171



Joseph Burrier
Château de Beauregard, 71960 Fuissé
T +33 (0)3 85 35 60 76. No UK Agent

Decanter | buying guide

GUIDE TO:

Mâcon (+commune) 2002

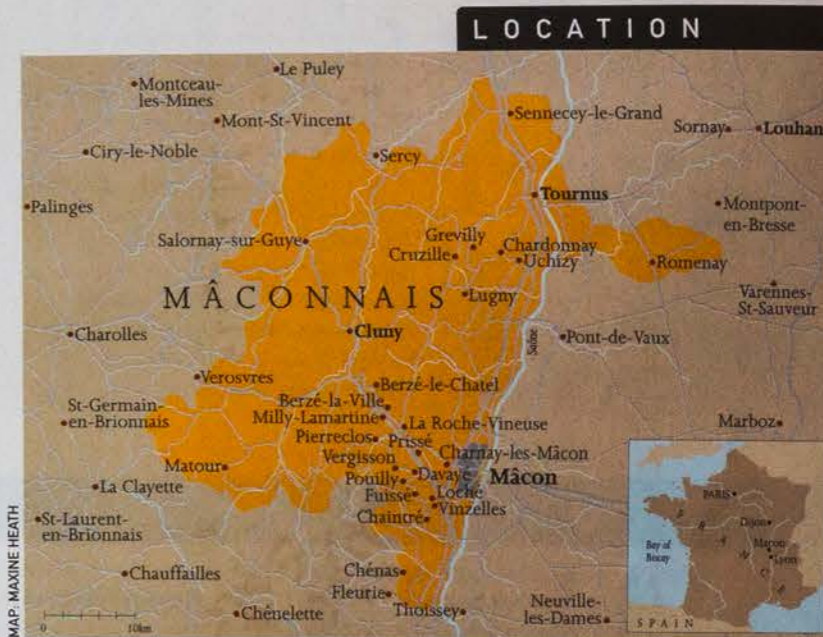
The Mâconnais, as the Côte d'Or's younger, less expensive sibling, produces light, lively white wines. Vintage 2002 was rated exceptional, writes PATRICIA STEFANOWICZ MW

For many of us wine lovers, Burgundy provides the benchmark in dry white wines. The finest examples from the Côte d'Or show glorious, rich, ripe fruit and creamy texture with fresh acidity giving the bone structure for graceful ageing. But what of the lesser wines?

White wines carrying the appellations Mâcon, Mâcon-Villages or Mâcon plus a commune name are made exclusively from Chardonnay. There are 43 communes that qualify: the most common are Lugny, La Roche Vineuse, Fuissé and Chardonnay. Their wines are delicious: light, lively and charming, with floral, fruity aromas and citrus character. Ripe years produce exotic, almost tropical, fruit flavours. The best wines are younger siblings to the great whites of the Côte.

The Mâconnais, south of Chalon-sur-Saône, is a relatively small area, 50km long but only 10–15 km wide. It comprises a chain of rolling hills, 400–500m high, running from north-northeast to south-southwest, parallel to the Saône.

The area is a geologist's dream. The bedrock is a continuation of the Jurassic limestone of the Côte d'Or, but tectonic movement in the south has caused erosion and partial exposure of ancient granite and schist. Surface limestone



MAP: MAXINE HEATH

has survived, too, in the dramatic outcrops of Solutré and Vergisson.

The regional climate is continental, but warmer than the Côte d'Or. The area has hot summers and cold winters with snow and ice prevalent in February. Frost is a risk until mid-May. In the north, the vineyards are cooler, and wines from communes such as Lugny, Azé and Igé are aromatic, mineral and elegant. The most impressive slopes, and the richest wines, are in the south. So it's worth looking for wines labelled Fuissé, Loché, Pierreclos or Solutré for honeyed, buttery styles. In between, the wines from communes such as La Roche Vineuse and Davayé combine perfume and body.

Vintage 2002 is rated exceptional by the Bureau Interprofessionel des Vins de Bourgogne and most experts concur that it is a four-to-five-star vintage for white wines. The year was relatively easy for

growers although there were pockets of late frost, reducing yields locally. An early spring encouraged flowering, and July was especially hot and sunny, favouring concentration. After some cool and cloudy conditions, sun and breezes returned for the vintage, and grapes were harvested in near-perfect conditions.

THE FACTS

THE DISTRICT: 43 communes in the Mâconnais département of the Saône et Loire
AREA UNDER PRODUCTION: 3,358ha
PRODUCTION: 163,175hl (2003)
AVERAGE HOLDING: 5.44ha
GRAPE VARIETY: Chardonnay
YIELDS: 60hl/ha max (best producers less)
CLASSIFICATIONS: Mâcon AC, Mâcon-Villages AC, Mâcon+commune name AC

VINTAGE GUIDE

2002 Drink/keep. Exciting. Full bodied but elegant. Lovely ripe fruit and lively acidity
2001 Drink/keep. Exotic, upfront fruit. Round
2000 Drink/keep. Elegant, floral, harmonious.
1999 Drink. Supple and fruity. Charming at best
1998 Drink. Delicious, juicy and creamy
1997 Drink up. Perfumed, soft textured, easy to drink
1996 Drink. Aromatic with good fruit and racy acidity
1995 Drink. Rich, full, generous
1994 Drink up. Soft and honeyed. Most past their prime
1993 Drink up. Austere, lean. Past their best