

Terroir Spotlight

Macon, Burgundy, France (*white wines*)



Located 70 km north of Lyon on the right bank of the Saone river, Macon was founded 2 centuries BC and was called Mastico. Very quickly, the city becomes a crossroads of communication and flourished thanks to customs duties. Throughout its history, Macon built a rich heritage including the magnificent Saint-Pierre church, the museum of the Ursulines, and its medieval city center with its famous wooden house. Today Macon is a nice city with about 33 000 inhabitants. During your visit, take the time to stroll through its historic center and Saone river quays with their colorful façade buildings.

Separated by a series of parallel faults, the hills of the Mâconnais are linked along axes which give them either a north/north-westerly or a south/southeasterly exposure. The vines take readily to these hillsides. Limey or calcic brown rendzinas suit the long-keeping Chardonnay. Elsewhere, flinty sands and clays often mixed with calcium rich rocks or sandstone pebbles favor the ready to drink Chardonnay.

In this part of southern Bourgogne, the vines occupy a landscape of little hills and valleys that look as though they have been painted with a water-colorist's brush. The hills of the Mâconnais extend over some 40 km from the Côte Chalonnaise to the Rock of Solutr  and are bordered on one side by the river Sa ne and the Grosne on the other. Vines were first planted here in Gallo-Roman times and were fostered in the Middle Ages by the powerful abbeys of Tournus and Cluny. This charming landscape was celebrated by the poet Lamartine, one of its native sons. The town of M acon today maintains close connections with these serene and smiling vineyards. AOC M acon dates from 1937. White wines (Chardonnay) grown in the arrondissement of M acon and 11 neighboring communes are entitled to the appellations M ACON, M ACON VILLAGES, or M ACON plus the name of the village.

The M aconnais white wines are the colour of white or yellow gold or straw colored with gently glowing silvery or greenish highlights. To the nose, their aromas suggest broom, white roses, acacia, honeysuckle, fern, verbena, lemon-grass, and citrus fruits (grapefruit, mandarin oranges). In the mouth, the finish adds nuances of pine, quince and fennel. The impression on the palate varies according to each village and each terroir of origin. These wines are fresh and luscious as well as dry and well-fruited. They have good concentration backed by sufficient acidity to ensure their keeping qualities.

Their charm and lively approach make them perfect as a pre-dinner drink served with salty finger foods such as chips, crackers, peanuts and olives. Their perfect all-round balance of vivacity, fullness, and smoothness plus aromatic complexity makes them easy to match with food. Poultry or veal in cream sauce does them justice in the winter, as does creamy risotto with meat, poultry, or fish. In the summer, they do justice to grilled fish, cold antipasto, ratatouille, or mixed salads with onions. They are even capable of taking sushi and goat's cheese under their wing.

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