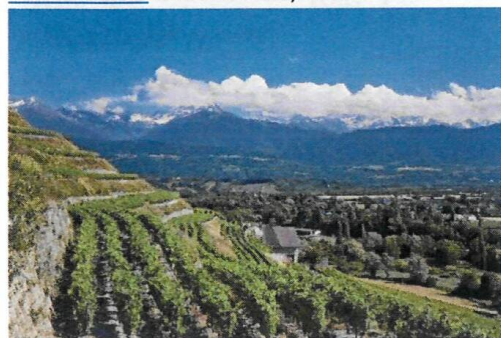


[https://www.decanter.com/premium/experts-choice-savoie-492402/?utm\\_source=Selligent&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=20221208\\_XDC-D\\_NWL\\_NW\\_daily&utm\\_content=20221208\\_XDC-D\\_NWL\\_NW\\_daily&utm\\_term=6776854&m\\_i=fM1eqNliS1IMmVWpcN7IAqrPZMwZNBtGzcD%2BQPFgo7E\\_e3GUC8LP4b\\_d2dcNCKg%2B1\\_X7DVFV0HOS5dAchhX4lmgGoGSVIK&lrh=9317b45dd3a31d052535a7ef5629357b682c09e2165daa63bd56e372665db317&M\\_BT=22963922104797](https://www.decanter.com/premium/experts-choice-savoie-492402/?utm_source=Selligent&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20221208_XDC-D_NWL_NW_daily&utm_content=20221208_XDC-D_NWL_NW_daily&utm_term=6776854&m_i=fM1eqNliS1IMmVWpcN7IAqrPZMwZNBtGzcD%2BQPFgo7E_e3GUC8LP4b_d2dcNCKg%2B1_X7DVFV0HOS5dAchhX4lmgGoGSVIK&lrh=9317b45dd3a31d052535a7ef5629357b682c09e2165daa63bd56e372665db317&M_BT=22963922104797)

## Expert's choice: Savoie

This beautiful pre-Alpine region is home to a surprising wealth of sub-regions and grape varieties, making its wines a voyage of discovery – from fresh sparklers and crisp whites to ageworthy reds.

[Wink Lorch](#) December 8, 2022



The steep slope of Domaine André et Michel Quenard's Les Terrasses vineyard, Chignin. Credit: Mick Rock / Cephas

The tiny Savoie wine region in eastern France seems to have everything going for it: a range of indigenous grapes; light, acidity-driven wines; ambitious, young producers; and those chocolate-box images of steep vineyards, with a backdrop of snow-capped Alpine peaks.

On a map, its 2,100ha of vineyards appear scattered in islands or clumps, stretching from the southern shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva) to just south of Chambéry.

Many vineyards lie on steep, limestone-based slopes above glacial river valleys; others benefit from the warming influence of nearby large Alpine lakes like Léman and Lac du Bourget, or lie high above the banks of the Rhône. Surprisingly, the altitude is not that high, with few vineyards reaching 500m. They lie mostly between 250m-440m, similar to [Alsace](#), [Jura](#) or [Burgundy](#)'s Hautes Côtes. Yet the mountain weather systems play a big part, bringing welcome cool nights in summer, but unwelcome storms.

### Alpine specialities

The influence of climate change in this region is dramatic. On the one hand, damaging spring frosts have become more frequent, and storms more violent; on the other, ripening the grapes is no longer a problem, and previously unloved indigenous varieties are in great demand. In the past, Jacquère, the most planted white grape, and Mondeuse, the best-known red grape ([Gamay](#) remains the most planted), rarely achieved more than 9.5% alcohol and wines could be thin.

Today, the warming climate, combined with lower yields and better vine farming, results in higher natural sugar levels, proper physiological ripeness and greater balance. Additionally, an exciting move to re-plant rare local varieties – such as the fascinating red Persan grape – has brought even greater diversity.

The main Savoie regional appellation has a plethora of sub-appellations and grapes. For reds, representing one-third of production, you will mainly find juicy, fruity styles from Gamay, [Pinot Noir](#) or Mondeuse (a close relative of Syrah), but the latter also gives more intense, structured and ageworthy wines.

For whites, labels do not always announce the variety, but Jacquère is a requirement for wines labelled under Apremont, Aymes, Chignin, Cruet or Jongieux, among others – these whites sing of mountain meadows and have leapt up in quality. Jacquère-dominated Crémant de Savoie is a relatively new sparkling appellation (the first wines having been released in late 2015)



which offers excellent value, often eclipsing more traditional Seyssel sparkling. Chasselas is a focus in the Léman part of the region and Gringet a rare speciality grown in Ayze, made famous by the late, lamented Dominique Belluard (who died in June 2021).

A separate regional appellation, Roussette de Savoie, is exclusively for whites from the high-quality indigenous Altesse variety: one that expresses its terroir well. Chignin Bergeron is from the Roussanne grape, which gives the richest whites, yet still with hallmark mountain acidity so that, like Roussette de Savoie, it benefits from ageing.

Exports have developed in the past decade and the selection that follows represents most Savoie styles. Inevitably, many of the very best wines, usually organic, are made in such small quantities that they could not be included. Missing, for example, are the fabulous sparkling and still Ayze wines from Belluard. Grab them if you find them.

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## Tasting notes and scores for 18 Savoie wines to try

### André & Michel Quenard, Les Terrasses, Chignin-Bergeron, Savoie, France 2019

Run by Guillaume Quenard, son of Michel, grandson of André. From a high-terraced slope above the Isère valley, Roussanne grown here gives a consistently fine, rich and complex wine. Honeyed and stony on the nose, it tastes unctuous, yet with balancing acidity and hints of apricot and saline character towards...

Points 94



### André & Michel Quenard, Allobroga Mondeuse, Chignin, Savoie, France 2020

The Quenards named this wine in reference to the 'Vitis allobroga' mentioned by Pliny 2,000 years ago, today believed to be a genetic forerunner of Mondeuse. Guillaume Quenard has made a refined, sun-infused Mondeuse with a black cherry aroma. The vibrant, juicy fruit joins with soft, ripe tannins that are...

Points 90

