

PRESS KIT

---



# CHINON

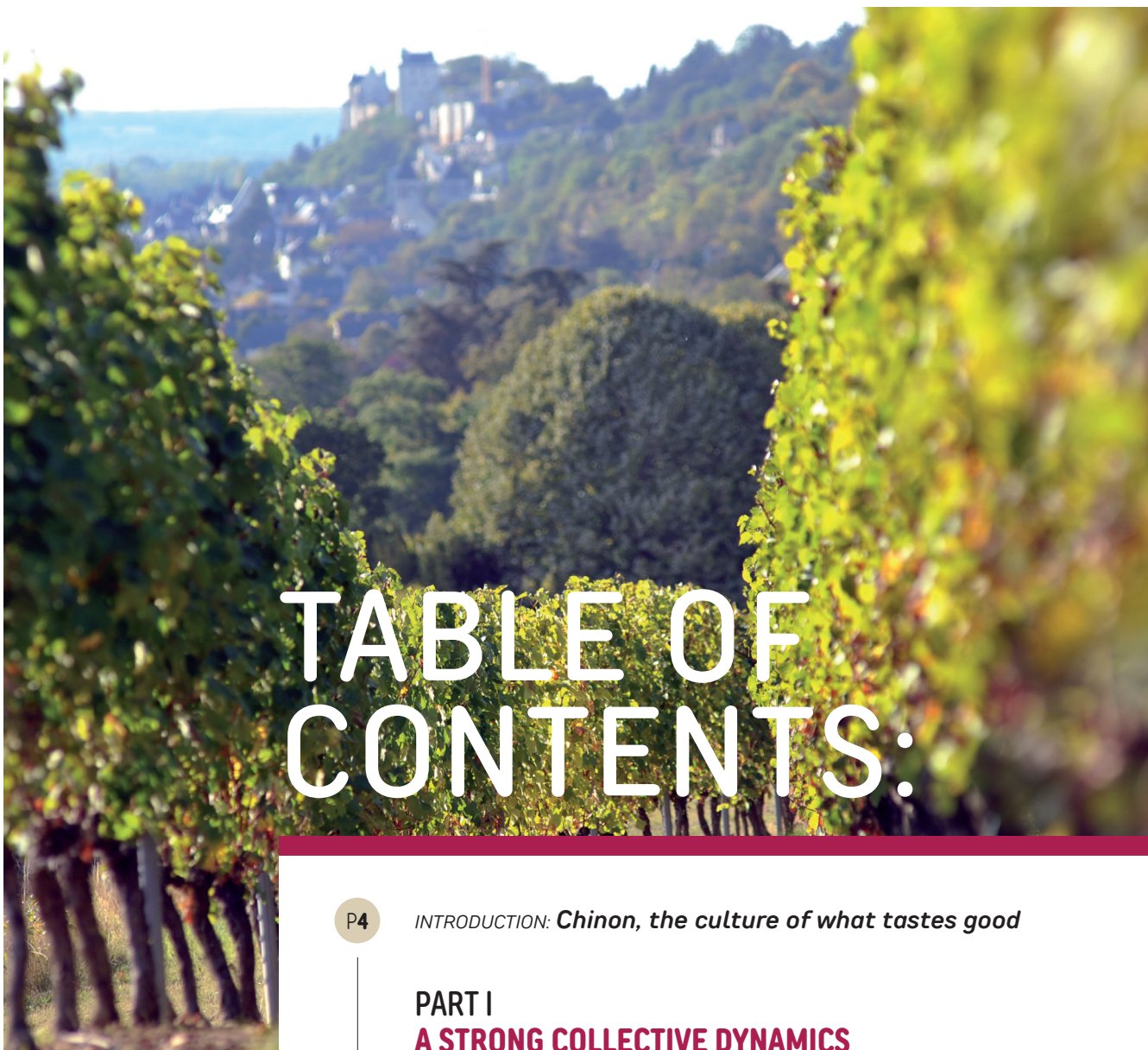
THE CULTURE OF WHAT  
TASTES GOOD



More than a wine,  
a philosophy

---





# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

P4

INTRODUCTION: *Chinon, the culture of what tastes good*

## PART I

### A STRONG COLLECTIVE DYNAMICS AT THE SERVICE OF THE LANDSCAPE

P6

#### Chinon, the ingenious landscape

- The vine
- The water
- The freestone
- The forest
- The troglodyte cellars
- The fortress
- The puits

P9

#### Environment and climate change

- The climate
- The protection against frost
- The size
- Climenvi
- The 30,000 group
- The biodiversity

P12

#### The appellation, in figures

P14

The collective dynamics gives birth to the Maison  
des vignerons et des vigneronnes de Chinon





## PART II AOC CHINON, A HISTORIC APPELLATION

P17

### History of the Chinon vineyard

- Chinon, an ancient vineyard
- Which ancient grape variety is to be found in Chinon?
- The Cabernet franc is called “Breton” in Chinon
- Biturica, the ancestor of the Cabernet Franc
- Les Bituriges: watch this space!
- Discovery of a “biturige vineyard” in Bourges
- A new phase of knowledge about Chenin
- 18<sup>th</sup> century: the mystery of the color of Chinon wine remains intact

## PART III AOC CHINON, A CULTURAL APPELLATION

P24

### Rabelais, the enchanter

- Travel to the land of Rabelais
- Elemental Foods: A Contemporary festival
- Quotes from François Rabelais about wine
- The Brotherhood of the Rabelaisian Entonneurs

P30

### Terrestrial food

- Tasting of Chinon wines
- Chinon specialties

P33

### 10 good reasons to come to Chinon in the Loire Valley

P34

### Practical information



# CHINON, THE CULTURE OF WHAT TASTES



Uncorking a bottle of Chinon means accepting the immediate exchange that the wine initiates with the person drinking it: an almost innate dialogue, because Chinon wine has things to tell! Drinking a Chinon is not only making a pact with two thousand years of history... it is also tasting a landscape created over time, to the point of becoming sensory. The landscape is no longer seen only with vision; besides it is not useful to have seen it, you have to have drunk it!

Whoever tastes a Chinon experiences a certain nature: expressive and delicate, a little piece of paradise that the Vienne and the Loire elegantly structure, drawing a large isosceles triangle whose tip stretches as far as to Candes Saint Martin – one of the most beautiful villages in France – and whose base is closed by 5,000 hectares of forest which protect the vineyard from the northern winds. It is also the tufa stone, formed 90 million years ago, slightly «sienna» or even yellow when it comes to millarges whose shells still testify to the presence of the «sea of faluns», in what looked like a real “Gulf of the Loire”. Finally, it is the Cabernet Franc and Chenin vines nestled in the valleys, asserting themselves on the hillsides or spreading out into the plains, that the winegrowers of Chinon preserve by questioning their cultivation practices.

A Loire landscape that would almost resemble all the others, if the culture and humanism initiated by François Rabelais had not gotten involved! Rabelais, born a few kilometers from Chinon, wrote Gargantua in 1534. A major novel that he anchored in the Chinon landscape of his childhood, which through the genius of his writing became the scene of a global “picrocholine” war which began in Seully during the harvest! A work made up of five books laying the foundations of a humanist philosophy based on tolerance and good living, and which makes Chinon wine play the main role in symbolizing the quest for knowledge which leads Pantagruel, in the Fifth Book, to ‘the oracle of the “Dive Bottle”, located in the Caves Painctes of the city.

**An inspiring landscape with taste: like Gargantua, Chinon has swallowed all that is good in life! And Chinon wine is the most exact expression of this**

From this ingenious and cultural landscape, classified as a **UNESCO world heritage site**, the winegrowers of the AOC Chinon have extracted wines which look like them: between nature and culture, the final promise of a fulfilling wine.





PART I

CHINON<sup>AOC</sup>  
A STRONG  
COLLECTIVE  
DYNAMICS  
AT THE SERVICE OF  
THE LANDSCAPE





# CHINON, THE INGENIOUS LANDSCAPE

*"For a landscape to begin to exist, to flourish, and then to impose itself, the frameworks of nature had to be put in place."*<sup>1</sup> The spatial highlighting of nature helps to understand the dynamics of the practices of Chinon winegrowers and thus contributes to continuing the construction and history of an ingenious landscape which has granted it a world heritage Unesco classification as an exceptional cultural landscape. A sensory landscape that is embodied and tasted when a bottle of Chinon is opened to release *"a wine which has just the same look as the place and the year where it was born, and the guts of the guy who made it"* to use the famous expression of the oenologist Jacques Puisais who used to live in Chinon.

## VINE

Like an impressionist painting in small, delicate touches, vine is everywhere, in every corner of the Chinonais, covering 2,400 hectares of production: small enclosures, vineyards of castles or large mansions, plots on terraces and hillsides and even in the city center of Chinon as well as in the heart of the 26 villages which constitute the appellation such as Savigny-en-Véron, Cravant-les-Côteaux and Ligré. This specific spatialization still stems from the medieval heritage of a very active and long-coveted city where everyone produced their own wine, even in their own garden!

The largest parcels of the vineyard, several hectares in size and in one piece, are often close to different watercourses. However, we cannot speak of a "sea of vines" as in other municipal appellations.

The Chinon vineyard is a mosaic of contrasting plots with authentic charm. If the wines of Chinon are made from single grape varieties, Cabernet Franc and Chenin, this plot with its **microclimates** and its geological variations plays, here, an essential role in the production of wines of Chinon winegrowers.



## WATER

The Loire and its affluent, the Vienne, as well as numerous small rivers cross the Chinonais forming a substantial hydrographic network largely cut over geological time by soft rocks. Two important river axes which meet at Candes-Saint-Martin and mark the confluence, in this delta called the "Véron" made up of filtering alluvial soils. **A river and a stream which once encouraged the development of the Chinon vineyard**, playing, during the old regime, a preponderant role in the country's economy, allowing local winegrowers to export their best wines in neighboring provinces or distant countries. In the North, it is the Indre which underlines the appellation. The Vienne which runs along the entire vineyard is also a major asset in the Chinon landscape because it protects the vines from frost thanks to the practice of sprinkling on the nearest plots.



<sup>1</sup> Nadeije Laneyrie-Dage, *The invention of nature*, Flammarion 2008, p6





The **tuffeau** here is warmer and less austere, less white, than its neighbors in Saumur.

## THE TUFFEAU

Formed 90 million years ago, the Chinonais rests on a limestone base around a hundred meters thick. A limestone plateau from the Upper Cretaceous period cut by two valleys: one in the South formed by the Vienne, the other in the North-West, wider, eroded by the Loire. The two hydrological axes fragment the landscape and induce the relief with well-marked hillsides. **The tuffeau here is warmer and less austere, less white, than its neighbors in Saumur.** On this mainly clay-limestone plateau, we find locally clay-sandy formations, containing siliceous conglomerates (clays with flint, stoops) subsequently deposited during the Senonian and Eocene periods.

Ravished by the rivers, the deep chalky layers of the tuffeau have been covered with alluvium in the valleys, creating over the ages sandy-gravelly terraces with great wine-growing potential, allowing people and crops to settle in the valley, above the flood level and the whims of the watercourses.



## THE FOREST

The Vienne and the Loire join at Candes-Saint-Martin and form the tip of an isosceles triangle whose base is closed by the forest. **The forest, in all its components, is one of the major elements of the territory,** it structures the Country, highlights its valleys, influences the temperance of the winds. It is imposing and dominates the top of the plateau to the northeast. It extends over 5,140 hectares and presents great continuity of forest areas: a formidable rampart against the northern winds and the cold, which protects the Chinon vines whether they are on the plains, on the terraces or on the hillsides. To the west, the Fontevraud forest also moderates the air mass.



## TROGLODYTE CELLARS

The extraction of tuffeau from the hillsides and plains of Chinon, to build castles and houses, left cellars and underground areas, some of which extend over several kilometers. The Caves Painctes located under the Chinon fortress are a completely exceptional example of this. They surprise with their imposing dimensions. **The Chinon region has hundreds of troglodyte cellars which favor the aging of Chinon wines and provide all the ideal conditions for their conservation:** a constant temperature, ideal hygrometry, half-light, perfect for the aging of Chinon. Many Chinon winegrowers own them and happily show them to wine lovers.





## THE FORTRESS

Built in white tuffeau stone, the castles of the Loire have become, in the eyes of the world, the symbol of elegance and French art of living, with a particular concentration in Touraine where more than a hundred castles are listed. Some, more famous than others, were the favorite homes of royal families, architectural jewels offered to favorites, or even the seat of the exercise of power, as was the royal fortress of Chinon for many centuries. This high point of European history is rich in a medieval military past marked by Henry II Plantagenêt, king of England, the kings of France Philippe Auguste, or even Philippe Le Bel who imprisoned the Templars in Chinon, then Charles VII and his decisive encounter with Jeanne d'Arc. The fortress, located on a rocky outcrop, majestically dominates Chinon, offering an exceptional panorama of the medieval town which benefits from the City of Art and History label.

**The fortress,** located on a rocky outcrop, majestically dominates Chinon, offering an exceptional panorama of the medieval town which benefits from the City of Art and History label.

## THE PUYs

Located in the confluence zone, the Puy - podium in Latin - are limestone mounds dominating the surrounding landscape by around thirty meters, the highest of which rises to 88 meters. They are classified Natura 2000. A long and slow erosion has created these gentle rounded hills which make the transition between the plains of the Loire and the plateau on which the Chinon forest is located.

There are 8 Puy which extend over the communes of Chinon, Beaumont-en-Véron and Huismes. Several types of landscapes can be observed, generally with small woods at the top, slopes of drying grass and crops and vines below. The calcareous and porous soil stores heat during the day with the presence of a very mild and not very windy microclimate.

A “**Mediterranean island**” with a particular climate that winegrowers have been able to take advantage of.



When the visitor arrives at the Puy du Chinois, he is struck by the general atmosphere and by a feeling of warmth greater than elsewhere. While walking on dry and sandy soil that is sometimes gold, sometimes ochre, he discovers plant species that are unusual for the place: juniper, almond tree, maritime pine, wild thyme, and this through a sensation of elevation in a landscape which nevertheless seems flat. A “Mediterranean island” with a particular climate that winegrowers have been able to take advantage of. The puy produce structured and long-lasting wines. Maintaining the cultivation of vines in Les Puy plays an essential role in preserving the landscape: an exceptional but sensitive environment, which must be preserved from construction.



# ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Two surveys, one in 2014 and the other dating from 2019, reveal precisely the evolution of organic farming in the Chinon vineyard: in five years, the Chinon appellation has more than doubled the percentage of the cultivated surface area in organic farming representing 44% of the surface area of the appellation, compared to 20% in 2014. Today, three-quarters of the surface area of the AOC Chinon, or 74%, are engaged in an environmental certification process. A significant leap that reinforces numerous other actions such as the evolution of the size or the struggle against frost and the commitments of the AOC to better understand climatic developments and possible solutions in Chinon.



## THE CLIMATE

Located at the western end of Touraine, the geographical area of Chinon benefits from an oceanic to semi-continental climate, warmer and drier than the rest of the region. These particular characteristics are linked to the beneficial influence of draughts generated by the two watercourses doing natural drainage of cold air masses.

In Chinon, summers are quite hot and winters are mild. The average range between temperatures is between 35° and -4° C. More than 2,100 hours of sunshine are recorded on average each year and the low rainfall (500 to 600 mm/year), is regularly distributed over the year.

Whereas the climate remains mostly mild, Chinon is said to be located at the “wind rose”: an alternation of the dominant east and west winds. Some vintages are marked by predominantly cool and dry east winds. The oenologist Jacques Puisais said that these Chinons “pinotent” (look like Pinots) ! Others are influenced by hot and humid southwest winds. It is one of the only regions in the world that can be influenced by different winds every year.

Whereas the climate remains mostly mild, Chinon is said to be located at the “**wind rose**”: an alternation of the dominant east and west winds.

## FROST PROTECTION

**Today, more than a quarter of the Chinon vineyard is protected against frost, i.e. 610 hectares which represent the majority of the so-called “frost-prone” zones of the appellation.**

This awareness of the need to protect the vineyard was quite rapid in Chinon, from the devastating frosts of 1991 and 1994. At that time, the winegrowers of Cravant-les-Coteaux were the first to create a CUMA to invest collectively in the means of control, essentially choosing wind towers. Since then, other CUMAs were born in the most exposed sectors of the appellation. Currently, there are 280 hectares protected by anti-frost towers, 265 hectares by sprinkling, 52 hectares by candles and 13 hectares by frostguards.





## PRUNING IN AOC CHINON

The Chinon appellation has changed the pruning rules to adapt to the increase in the frequency of climatic hazards: the number of buds per vine has not changed, remaining at 11, but a maximum number of 11 fruiting branches per vine has been defined. Three types of pruning are thus authorized in Chinon: the simple guyot pruning, the two half-baguettes pruning and the short crown pruning. Many winegrowers have changed their practice in recent years, for example by delaying the pruning of the vines, by pruning longer, which limits the effects of frost during periods of risk and thus slows down the vegetative cycle and the appearance of the bud. Others opt for pruning and disbudding right after the frost period, if necessary.

## THE CHINONAIS 30,000 GROUP AIMS AT REDUCING PHYTO

The opportunity was offered, at a national level, to think collectively about reducing phytosanitary products in the vineyard. The Chinon appellation has taken up this issue and has a group of around ten winegrowers who are participating in the "30,000" operation. This aims at reducing the use of phytosanitary products by applying technical means – such as research on soil management – to increase ecological diversity in the vineyard and to accompany them towards agroecology that is more respectful of the environment.



## CLIMENVI: CLIMATE CHANGE IN 2030

The Climenvi program is part of the European Innovation Partnership with a funding from the Regional Council and the EAFRD. It aims at helping winegrowers to integrate climate change into their decision-making. Three pilot wine farms were selected according to a gradient of oceanic, intermediate and continental climatic influence. An estate in Chinon is one of the farms chosen to implement agro-climatic indicators. The various experts (chambers of agriculture, IFV, University of Tours, Cer France and Météo France) will have the mission of studying the data to construct realistic adaptation scenarios as solutions for vine professionals. The project also plans to integrate the theme of climate change into a training module entitled "sustainable viticulture" at the University of Tours.

## THE BIODIVERSITY <sup>2</sup>

The Chinonais is made up of a network of natural sites on which ecological inventories have been carried out aimed at defining their heritage value. Many humid, forest or bocage ecosystems, made up of natural ecological continuities, are home to so-called "heritage" species, that is to say, species benefiting from protected status and/or threatened, such as the midwife albatross (toad), the common pipistrelle (bat), the lesser horseshoe bat (bat), the hoopoe (bird), the barn swallow or the black swift.

In the Chinon vineyard, no less than 9 protected species frequent the vines: the Eurasian harrier, the garish oedecnema, the crested lapwing, the melodious linnet, the hoopoe as far as birds are concerned; rare plants are the argemone poppy, the pea with round seeds, the alyssum with persistent calyx and the conical campion which we see growing between the rows. The vineyard is a culture with a strong identity in the region and unlike other cultures, spontaneous vegetation develops between the rows of vines and fits more gently into the environment. The native flora develops spontaneously and persists because it provides a certain cultural advantage by fighting against soil erosion and controlling the vigor of the vines. This floral diversity attracts numerous pollinating and beneficial insects.

<sup>2</sup> According to the CPIE "Atlas of Biodiversity" report carried out in 2014



# THE CHINON APPELLATION IN FIGURES<sup>3</sup>

Every five years, the AOC Chinon carries out an in-depth survey made up of individual interviews and questionnaires with Chinon winegrowers. This work extends over several months and provides a precise picture of practices in the vineyard on indicators such as the vat room, the production, the aging and even the certification. The data below comes from the last 2019 survey, published in 2020, and the 2021 harvest declaration.

## THE WINEGROWERS

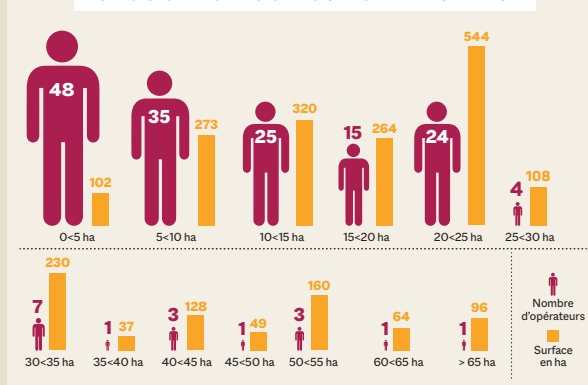


**166**  
winegrowers



**14,14** HA : average  
operating area

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF OPERATORS AND CLAIMED AREAS BY FARM SIZE

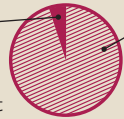


## THE GRAPE VARIETY

**5% Chenin**

**105** hectares

**27** hectares of  
plantation project



**95% Cabernet Franc**

**2,260** hectares

**71** hectares of plantation  
project



The minimum planting density is 4,500 plants per hectare with a maximum spacing between rows of 2.10 meters. The spacing between the feet of the same row cannot be less than 1 meter.

## CERTIFICATION



**74%** of  
production areas  
in the Chinon  
appellation are  
labeled or in the  
process of being  
labeled (Organic,  
HVE, terra Vitis)



**38%** of  
production  
areas are  
managed in  
organic and  
biodynamic  
agriculture

## PRODUCTION



**CHINON RED**

**83,500** HL  
produced,  
average yield:  
**41** HL/HA



**CHINON ROSÉ**

**8,800** HL  
produced,  
average yield:  
**43** HL/HA



**CHINON BLANC**

**4,000** HL  
produced,  
average yield:  
**38** HL/HA

## HARVEST



**71%**  
of the surfaces  
are harvested mechanically



**29%**  
of the surfaces  
are harvested manually

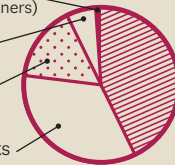
## WINERY

**1%** other (amphora, enameled steel,  
egg-shaped containers)

**6%** wood

**16%** fiber vats

**34%** concrete tanks



**43%**  
stainless  
steel tanks

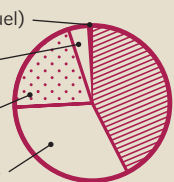
## WINERY

**1%** autre (manuel)

**4%** vertical

**21%** continu  
ou semi-continu

**32%** pneumatique



**43%**  
cage  
tournante

## AGING



**23%**  
of winegrowers **do not**  
age in barrels



**51%**  
of winegrowers age  
between **1 and 25%** of  
their wine in barrels



**19%**  
of winegrowers age  
between **25 and 50%** of  
their wine in barrels



**6%** of winegrowers age  
between **50 and 74%** of  
their wine in barrels



**1%** of winegrowers age  
between **75 and 100%** of  
their wine in barrels

## JOB



**50** full-time equivalents  
have been created in  
AOC Chinon in 4 years.



In total,  
**400** FTEs in Chinon.

RÉPARTITION DU NOMBRE DE SALARIÉS EN ÉQUIVALENT TEMPS PLEIN PAR CATÉGORIE D'EMPLOI



Permanent  
winegrower  
**48%**



Administrative  
**11%**



Seasonal  
winegrower  
**21%**



Commercial  
**5%**



Winegrower  
**14%**

<sup>3</sup> According to the 2019 survey carried out in the Chinon vineyard and the 2021 harvest declaration

# THE COLLECTIVE DYNAMICS GIVES BIRTH TO THE MAISON DES VIGNERONS ET VIGNERONNES DE CHINON (HOUSE OF CHINON WINEGROWERS)

There are important stages in the life of a collective: that of the birth of the Maison des vignerons et des vigneronnes de Chinon, inaugurated on October 14, 2022, marks the ambition, even in its architecture, of an appellation that is aware of its rich history and resolutely turned towards the future. In the heart of the medieval city, the winegrowers of the AOC Chinon have designed together a place with their image, a symbol of the vitality which drives them to promote their know-how and imagine the future of their appellation. A House with a professional vocation where sharing, questioning, exchange and openness are the solid pillars of its foundation. Located at the entrance to the Caves Paintées (former cellars of Rabelais' parents and today a place of festivities for the Rabelaisian Entonneurs brotherhood), at the foot of the cliff overlooked by the royal fortress, the Maison des vignerons et des vigneronnes de Chinon is anchored in the historical heritage of the city and embraces the richness of its heritage. However, it is a place resolutely turned towards the future which has opened its doors.



## AN AMBITIOUS ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

At the end of a competition launched jointly by the Union and the Brotherhood, the architects Philippe Montandon (Tours) and Bertrand Rémy (Chinon) signed the design of the building, **with a project whose central axis leads directly to the Cellars Paintées.**

The main meeting room, with its vaulted ceiling and slatted wood cladding walls, is a nod to the vineyard's barrels. It is decorated with a stained-glass window signed by Florence Maynard, master glassmaker in Beaumont-en-Véron, which refers to the symbols dear to the appellation: Rabelais, the vineyard, the

fortress, the Vienne... The colors displayed on the walls and the doors of the place echo the graphic charter of the AOC. One of the strong points of the selected project is also the location of the Union's administrative offices; located on the ground floor, they allow easy access between members and employees. In a permanent dialogue between past and present, the roof of the House is made of zinc and red tiles allowing it to be noticed at first glance, from the medieval ramparts which overlook it. Its terrace offers a direct view over the Clock Tower.



This **House** also offers winegrowers the opportunity to receive customers in optimal conditions because not all estates have a suitable reception area.



## A PLACE FOR EXCHANGES AND SYNERGY BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS

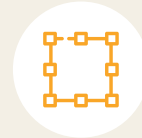
On its 742m<sup>2</sup> surface area, the Maison des vignerons et des vigneronnes de Chinon is designed to meet functional needs and essentially professional use.

It corresponds to the desire for synergy driven by the Union: *"Our name is, above all, all the people who bring it to life. This place embodies our desire to work collectively. We imagined it together and we want each winegrower of the appellation to be able to make these spaces his/her own. We will offer times for discussions on our practices and our issues, targeted training on our professions, and also moments of conviviality to get together."* explains Fabrice Gasnier, President of the Chinon Wine Union from June 2020 to May 2023.

**This House also offers winegrowers the opportunity to receive customers in optimal conditions** because not all estates have a suitable reception area. *"I am convinced by this adage which says that alone we go faster but together we go further."* specifies the President of the Union.

**Maison des vignerons  
et des vigneronnes  
de CHINON** 

## CHIFFRES CLÉS



**742 m<sup>2</sup>**  
of surface area



**2**  
office spaces  
for union employees



**1**  
reception  
and exhibition hall



**1**  
terrace



**2**  
2 changing rooms for the  
Rabelaisian Entonneurs



**1**  
courtyard



**3**  
meeting  
and tasting rooms



**2**  
offices

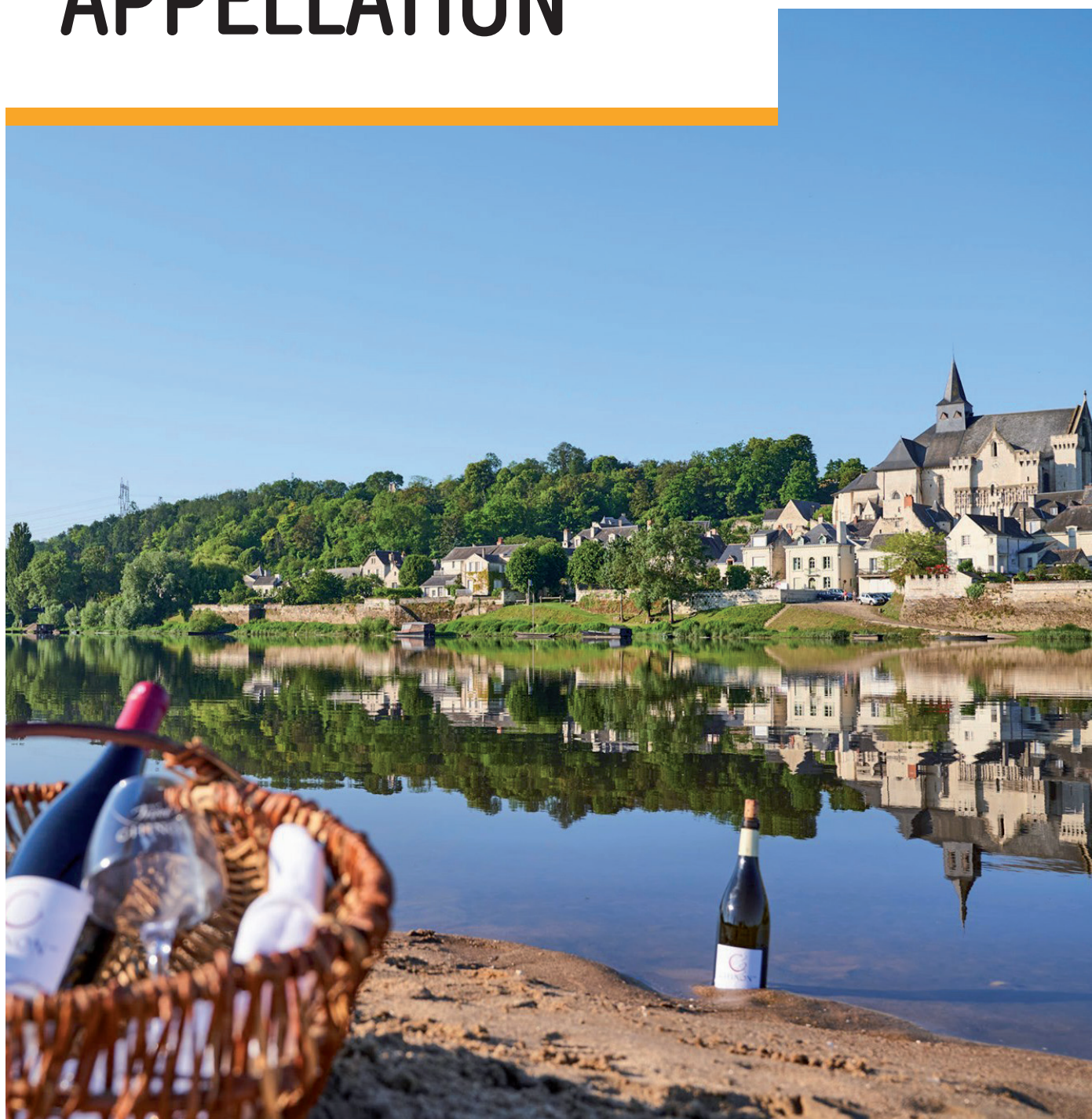


Storage and convenience  
spaces

PART II

# CHINON<sup>AOC</sup>

## A HISTORIC APPELLATION





# HISTORY OF THE CHINON VINEYARD

Delving into the history of the Chinon appellation and its king grape variety, the Cabernet Franc, is a bit like carrying out an investigation that will never end... with a simple, easy and effective answer to disclose! The AOC Chinon has been rigorously gathering documents, research and scientific articles for several years to deeply know itself and understand the richness of its territory. This is how she notes that nothing is set in stone, that researchers discover and find elements that open, each time, a new page in a constantly renewed story.



## CHINON, AN ANCIENT VINEYARD

The latest scientific publications<sup>4</sup> which relate the archaeological discoveries made in the area of the Chinon appellation prove the presence of vine cultivation and wine production, in the commune of Crouzille, in the very first centuries AD. The dates given vary between the 1st century and the beginning of the 3rd century AD. There was also in this village a workshop which manufactured large numbers of wine amphorae, which were exported: archaeologists found in Rennes, under Place Hoche, wine amphorae that could come from the Crouzille workshop. At a very early time, the vineyards on the banks of Vienne perhaps already supplied the Rennes market! The proximity of the river offers a major advantage for the transport and export of goods.



These discoveries support the thesis according to which the Chinon vineyard is ancient and that it would have produced wine since **the Gallo-Roman era.**

## WHICH ANCIENT GRAPE VARIETY IN CHINON?

A few kilometers from Chinon, "*The discoveries of wine amphora manufacturing workshops attest to the existence, nearby, of vineyards, from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD*"<sup>6</sup>, but history does not say it was already a question of planting the Cabernet Franc or *Biturica* grape variety which would have come from Aquitaine.

**If Cabernet Franc is a descendant of *Biturica*, the most plausible explanation for its presence in Chinon is perhaps found in the commercial alliances between the people of Bordeaux and the Bretons, particularly in the Middle Ages.** Breton

navigators transported wine from the Gironde estuary to the gates of the Loire which were part of Loire Brittany, since the border was located at Ingrandes-sur-Loire (between Ancenis and Angers) on the right bank of the Loire, formerly called Ingrandes de Bretagne: "*It would not be surprising if in this case, in many others of the same kind, the transplants of grape varieties had followed the export of wine*"<sup>7</sup>. The presence of "Bordeaux vines"

is also, for the first time attested in writing in the Loire Valley in Anjou, from the 11<sup>th</sup> century under the name "*Plant de Bordeaux*". But nothing says that it is cabernet franc. It is indeed possible that it was another plant.

4 Alain Ferdière, *Gallo-Roman viticulture*, University of Tours, in: Zadora-Rio E. (dir), 2007 in *Archaeological Atlas of Touraine*, 53rd supplement to the *Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France*, FERACF, Tours, 2014

5 SCHWEITZ, Daniel, TOULIER, Christine, TOULIER, Bernard, FERDIÈRE, Alain, FEHMBACH, Xavier and BLANC, Pierre-Marie, "The potter's workshop of Mougon (Crouzilles, Indre-et-Loire)", *Archaeological Review of the Center of France*, volume 25, fascicle 1, 1986, p. 37-77

6 Samuel Leturq, Benoît Musset, *Viticulture in Anjou and Touraine, from Antiquity to the 19th century. A story of winegrowers*. Christian Asselin; Pascal Girault. The Loire Valley, land of Chenin, The cellars rebel, pp 24-29, 2017.

7 Roger Dion, *History of the vine and wine in France, from the origins to the 19th century*, p 160 Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010 [© Roger Dion 1959].

## CABERNET FRANC IS CALLED “BRETON” IN CHINON

In Chinon, the name "Breton wine" or "Breton plant" is in common use to designate Cabernet Franc.

François Rabelais (1494–1553), the thinker and writer, mentions it for the first time in his novel *Gargantua* written in 1534: “I hear of this good Breton wine, which does not grow in Brittany but in this good country of Verron”<sup>8</sup>. Verron is a territory which is part of the Chinon

appellation. Several theories are invoked to justify this name, but it most likely comes from the fact that the names of the wines often came from the place of trade.

The Breton or Berton would be called this way because it was in Nantes or in neighboring ports that the winegrowers of the Loire Valley went to find it<sup>9</sup>: “The name Breton comes from the practice of designations based on the toponym of the place of supply. In this case, Breton is not a gentilic, the vines are not Breton; it is Breton merchants who ensured the supply in wines and plants in harbors in Nantes and its surroundings...”<sup>10</sup>. Another theory puts forward that the place of supply of Cabernet Franc plants was the port of Capbreton, at the mouth of the Adour in the Landes.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless, for ampelographers, there is no doubt about the Breton–Cabernet Franc identity.



## BITURICA, THE ANCESTOR OF CABERNET FRANC

The history of the introduction of grape varieties into the French regions is complex. But **several researchers – geographers, historians, ampelographers or geneticists – are in fact behind the idea that Cabernet Franc comes from an older plant called Biturica which probably came from Spain**: “The hypothesis according to which the appearance of the Biturica vine would result from an effort made to establish on the northern coast of Spain a viticulture hitherto Mediterranean and confined to the Ebro basin can thus be based on serious arguments.”<sup>12</sup> After adapting to northern Spain where it is cold in winter, Biturica would have arrived in Aquitaine. Cabernet Franc “could be under a different name, a descendant of the ancient Biturica.”<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, Thierry Lacombe, professor at INRA in Montpellier, demonstrated in 2012 the proximity of Cabernet Franc and its descendants Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Carmenère with the genetic background of the Basque Pyrenees and Navarre.<sup>14, 15, 16</sup> Thanks to different markers applied to Cabernet Franc and those of Txakoli noir and Morena, the genetic profiles show real proximity to each other, with a large number of alleles in common. Cabernet Franc is of Spanish Basque origin according to this study, but a scientific link is missing because we do not know the real geographical origin of Biturica.

8 François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, p222 in Rabelais, *The Five Books of the Facts and Sayings of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Complete bilingual edition, Marie-Madelaine Fragonard, Edition Quarto Gallimard, 2017.

9 Roger Dion, *History of the vine and wine in France, from the origins to the 19th century*, p 159 Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010 [© Roger Dion 1959].

10 Henri Galinié, *Ways of differentiating and naming vines and plants (1050–1850)*, *Research on the history of grape varieties*, 13, 2019. halshs-02106540

11 Guy Lavignac, quoted by Louis Bordenave, *Cabernet franc*, p 5, Collection de l'ampelologue, Editions Féret, 2016

12 Roger Dion, *History of the vine and wine in France, from the origins to the 19th century*, p 124, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010 [© Roger Dion 1959].

13 Id., p 160, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010 [© Roger Dion 1959].

14 T. Lacombe, article *Contribution to the study of the evolutionary history of the cultivated vine vitis vinifera L. through the analysis of neutral genetic diversity and genes of interest*, 2012

15 JM Boursiquot, article *Parentage of Merlot and related winegrape cultivars of southwestern of France*, *Australian Journal*, 2008

16 The scientific references are cited by Louis Bordenave, *Cabernet franc*, p 9, Collection de l'ampelologue, Editions Féret, 2016



## LES BITURIGES: AN AFFAIR TO FOLLOW

The "Biturica" vine is cited several times in the texts of "Pline l'Ancien" (Natural History) and Columelle (De Rustica), respectively a Roman naturalist and agronomist in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. This vine has been known for 2,000 years. But the name Biturica nevertheless raises questions because it comes from a people called the Bituriges and they are a people from the Loire and not from Bordeaux.

The Bituriges are a people of Gaul who used to control the tin traffic and the circulation of goods between part of the Loire and the Rhône. The territory of this people was substantial since it covered the current departments of Cher and Indre, went up to Sancerre in the North, controlled part of the Loire and Allier, and to the West stretched to the border with the Touraine and to the border with the Poitou<sup>17</sup>. Their capital was the city of Bourges.

During the Gallic War, 12,000 Bituriges warriors joined forces with Vercingetorix in 52 BC and fought against the Romans in Alésia. Caesar wins the battle and deports the Bituriges who had taken part in the combat, to the Bordeaux region. The Bituriges then took the name Bituriges Vivisques and founded the town of Burdigalia (Bordeaux).

This theory is disputed by some historians, but supported by many others.

In any case, the Bituriges settled in Bordeaux after the Gallic War and the first mention of their installation in this region appears by the geographer Strabo<sup>19</sup> at the transition between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

The Bituriges built strong commercial relations with the Basques and Aquitains who lived in the Basque region of the Pyrenees: "Pre-Roman archaeological finds indicate among them a more active trade, and more openings to the outside world than the Bituriges had".<sup>20</sup> **It seems that the Bituriges looked near their new region and in a similar climate, for adaptable plants to locally produce their wine:** "They introduced vines in abundance from this area, to cultivate on their own and produce their own wine"<sup>21</sup>. Given these elements, it is entirely legitimate to ask the question of the existence of a pre-established culture of vines and wine among the Bituriges?

## DISCOVERY OF A "BITURIGE VINEYARD" IN BOURGES

**The generally accepted "Bordeaux" provenance of Biturica is, however, questioned by the reinterpretation of discoveries of provignage pits (vine plantations), in the Cher around Bourges.**

Several sites have been discovered and two of them clearly show signs of cultivated and not wild vines. These are respectively the excavations of Saint-Martin des Champs in 1984 and 1993 which uncovered 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of vines and that of Pijolins in 2005 revealed a small vineyard of 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> which was in the form of rectangular pits in which several objects and grape seeds were found probably dating from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. This discovery of a biturige vine reopens the debate on the viticulture practiced by these people who previously formed only one civitas.

Those who were not displaced by Caesar and who remained in Avaricon (Bourges) then bear the name Bituriges Cubes or Cubi.

"At the same time, therefore, Pline l'Ancien and Columelle mention the "biturica" or "biturigiaca", as well as the people of the Bituriges but do not however give details as to the territory of production. But doesn't Theodore de Seville (7<sup>th</sup> century AD) say that "Biturica takes its name from the country which produces it"?"

**For researchers Alain Ferdière, Alexis Luberne and Olivier Ruffier, there is nothing today to confirm the origin of Biturica:** "It is generally accepted to attribute (Biturica) to the Bituriges Vivisques of Bordeaux, but in fact, on the only proof of the notoriety, much more recent, of the wines of this region: no peremptory argument has ever been put forward, and all in all, the witnesses of ancient viticulture are not, in the current state of knowledge, more abundant in Bordeaux and in Berry"<sup>22</sup>.

Another fascinating article goes in this direction and sets the objective of confirming the existence of a Bituriges vine from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD in this region of Bourges by the people of the Bituriges Cubi.<sup>23</sup>

The Bituriges are a people of Gaul who used to control the tin traffic and the circulation of goods between part of the Loire and the Rhône.



17 Christophe Batardy, "Ancient Berry - From the map to the choreographic model", Revue Archéologique du Center de la France, t. 43, 2004, p. 253-258 (ISSN 1951-6207)

18 The Bituriges Vivisques, encyclopedie.arbreceltique.com

19 Strabo, Geography, IV, 2, 1

20 Roger Dion, History of the vine and wine in France, from the origins to the 19th century, p 122, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2010 [© Roger Dion 1959].

21 Louis Bordenave, Cabernet franc, p 7, Collection de l'ampelologue, Editions Féret, 2016

22 Alain Ferdière, Alexis Luberne, Olivier Ruffier. Anything new on biturige viticulture? Reinterpretation of a discovery. In: Revue Archéologique du Center de la France, volume 39. Pp 245-249, 2000

23 Françoise Dumasy, Cristina Gandini, Isabelle Bouchain-Palleau, Nadine Rouquet, Jacques Troadec. Vitis biturica, Bituriges Cubes grape variety? The archeology of the vine in ancient Berry. Gallia - Archeology of ancient France, 2011, The vine and wine in the Three Gauls, 68(1), pp.111-150. Hal-01164345

## A NEW PHASE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CHENIN

Research tends to show that Chenin is an indigenous grape variety of the Loire, meaning it is autochthon. It was probably not introduced like Cabernet Franc in Chinon, but obtained in Anjou. Several confusions arose from the different ways of naming and spelling it in ancient texts<sup>24</sup>. **Chenin is a pineau but to avoid confusing it with other pinots or pineaux, its acceptance as chenin by specialists only dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Rabelais already used this word "chenin" in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.** There is also a very old place called "Champ Chenin" in Savigny-en-Véron.

A recent study<sup>25</sup> published in *Nature Plant*, in 2019, reports the analysis of seeds found in archaeological excavations in the south of France. It establishes a link between certain ancient grape varieties, described in



the works of Pliny for example, and modern grape varieties dating from the Middle Ages, using the DNA technique. **The culture of the Mondeuse blanche is now attested in the South of France from Roman times.** Savagnin descends from *Mondeuse blanche* and "genetics had previously established that Savagnin was one of the parents of Chenin and Sauvignon. But to consider these grape varieties as being present in the Loire vineyards in the Middle Ages, is still too big a step... but the option remains open."<sup>26</sup> However, "the fact that two varieties come from the same parent does not make them mechanically contemporary. Sauvignon and Chenin come from Savagnin but their respective varieties may be distant in time."<sup>27</sup> These discoveries open a "new phase of knowledge"<sup>28</sup>.



## 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY : THE MYSTERY ABOUT THE COLOR OF CHINON WINE REMAINS UNSOLVED!

The Chinon vineyard has developed by relying on natural elements favorable to its development and its trade, thanks to the two main axes which are the Vienne and the Loire which formerly allowed the circulation of Chinon wines. From 1642, the Parisian market became easier to access, thanks to the construction of the Briare canal. 58 transport vouchers<sup>29</sup> dating from 1736 were found in the Tours archives: 22 are for Orléans, 25 for Paris, 3 for Tours, 4 for Orléans and Paris together and 4 whose destination is not specified or is not readable. The quantities of Chinon mentioned, only for Paris and Orléans, represent 803.25 hl. This voucher is numbered no. 283 and we only found 58, which means that the quantities for that year are significantly larger. And there is nothing to say that more bonds were not issued in 1736!

However, despite the "administrative" precision of these vouchers which for the most part indicate the name of the seller-producer, that of the buyer, whether the wine is transported by water or by land and the destination of the Chinon wines...Nothing, However, the nature of the wine is clarified: was Chinon wine white or red in 1736, made from Cabernet Franc or Chenin? Nobody knows!

<sup>24</sup> Henri Galinié, *The Pinot and Pineau graphies (1375-1901)*, 2015 <halshs-01215908>

<sup>25</sup> *Paleogenomic insights into the origins of French grapevine diversity*, *Nature Plant* 5, 2019:595-603

<sup>26</sup> Henri Galinié, *Savagnin in Orléanais before 1200*, article to read on <https://cepagesdeloire.wordpress.com/2019/07/17/76-savagnin-dans-lorleanais-avant-1200/>

<sup>27</sup> Id.

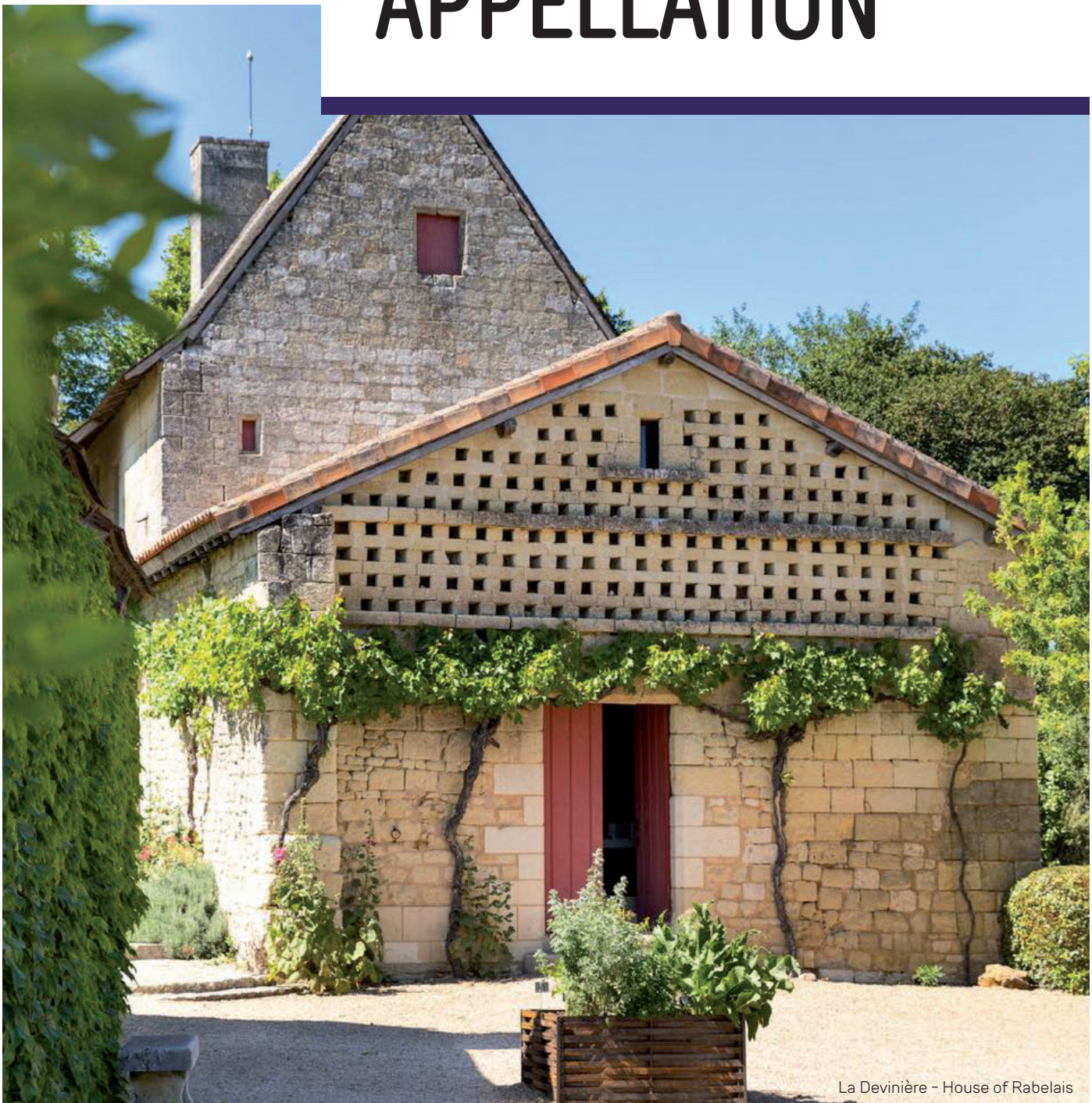
<sup>28</sup> Id.

<sup>29</sup> Departmental Archives of Tours, C1118



PART III

# CHINON<sup>AOC</sup> A CULTURAL APPELLATION



La Devinière - House of Rabelais

# RABELAIS, THE ENCHANTER

This universal titan of literature was born in Seuilly, near Chinon around 1494. His birthplace La Devinière reverently preserves all traces of this past: old editions, portraits, chronologies, topographies... we can learn everything from Rabelais, a cheerful and controversial author in his time.

The modesty of the house, which has become a museum, is misleading: it was the scene of the Picrocholine wars, the stronghold of Grandgousier, father of Gargantua. From these fierce battles, it is said that our giant is still held responsible for numerous observable geographical distortions: the bell tower of Lerné, a village near Seuilly, is leaning because Gargantua sat on it!

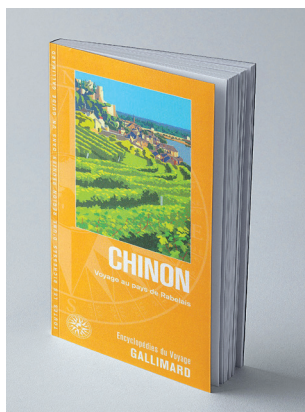
**In the country of Chinon, Rabelais is the king of what we today call Rabelaisie.**

The cantor of gigantic fatherhood still governs the memories of those who raise wine like a child. Land of good drinking, praise of the Dive Bouteille, *"the great laugh of Rabelais is a unique phenomenon in the literature of all time; and next to him, Aristophanes, Boccaccio, Molière appear as morticians"* Marcel Aymé.

## JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF RABELAIS: A GALLIMARD GUIDE TO RABELAISIE

The twentieth century produced a few fascicles revealing the notion of Rabelaisie. But never before had a tourist guide attempted to define this territory. What is Rabelaisie? An imaginary or real country? Rabelais, an exceptional traveler, traveled and lived in many regions of France, so much so that we could finally say that Rabelaisie is nothing else than France? However, **when Rabelais wrote Gargantua in 1534, he anchored his novel in the microcosm of Chinon, the country of his childhood, which through the**

**genius of his writing became the scene of a global "picrocholine" war where thousands of soldiers fought thrashed with thrown chickens, sticks and are drowned in the "urine" of Gargantua's giant mare. A conflict began in Seuilly during the harvest and originated in a small "fouace", a simple spiced brioche!**



Everything about the territory inspires him. The meticulous topography of the novel *Gargantua* - let us point out the remarkable work of the University of Tours which established a map in the Renom site - erected localities and villages of Chinonais into fiefdoms, sometimes loyal to Grandgousier and Gargantua, sometimes to Picrochole. Characters bear the name of a village like the priest named Panzoult, conflicts and local dramas become a plot, culinary specialties from Chinon are the object of desire and Chinon wine symbolizes the quest for knowledge which leads Pantagruel, in the Fifth Book, to the oracle of the "Dive Bottle", located in the Caves Painctes of the city.

**The guide highlights these places, castles still standing and takes the visitor in the footsteps of Rabelais in today's Chinonais.**

The highlighted quotes affirm the correspondence between the novels and the landscapes, the description of the comic heroes reminds us how colorful the characters were, the pantagruelian banquets invite us to discover the table of the 16th century, the navigable "Vienna" opened onto the world and daily life was punctuated by the sound of bells. So many elements that explore the territory through the prism of the author.

This considerable work, entrusted to Gallimard by the winegrowers of Chinon, shows to what extent Rabelais is a tutelary figure for the people of Chinon. Rabelais, with his imagination and his humanist values, created a land of plenty that became "Rabelaisie". A name present in the local lexicon, which bears a border joined in 2016 by the geographical production area of the AOC Chinon: Seuilly, the birthplace of François Rabelais, finally integrates the appellation and thus legitimizes Chinon as the capital of Rabelaisie.

**The winegrowers of Chinon know well that learning Chinon is undoubtedly following in the footsteps of Rabelais, the humanist.** It then remained to construct a simple work that could be shared by everyone, as a common base of knowledge. It's done. And when we see this guide, we have the weird feeling that it has always existed! However, this work has never been done until now. The Gallimard guide *"Chinon, journey to the land of Rabelais"* is a tribute from the winegrowers of Chinon to François Rabelais, of whom they are in some way the heirs. Through this guide, they provide an original reflection on what underpins the AOC Chinon: Chinon, humanism in a bottle!

**TECHNICAL SHEET:** 144 pages • 250 photos • Format: 112 x 225 mm • Price: €14,90



# FESTIVAL DES NOURRITURES ÉLÉMENTAIRES\*: (MEANS ELEMENTAL FOODS FESTIVAL) A CONTEMPORARY FESTIVAL



The festival  
“Les Nourritures  
Élémentaires”  
(Elemental Foods),  
Rabelais, wine, and ideas,  
is a contemporary hymn  
to Rabelaisian  
thought.

To all those who would be tempted to consider Rabelais as a dusty thinker, the inhabitants of Chinon retort that, if the absence or presence of dust is the unit of measurement by which we determine the interest of a thing, then it should accumulate, as it does on the bottles of old vintages of Chinon stashed in the tuffeau cellars which enhance the best wines...but it is nevertheless very useful to clean up from time to time, to reopen the books of life and taste an old bottle to check if it has kept its promise...

The festival “Les Nourritures Élémentaires” (Elemental Foods), Rabelais, wine, and ideas, is a contemporary hymn to Rabelaisian thought. Each year it is based on a theme developed in the work of François Rabelais, like an old bottle of Chinon that we open on holidays, because this festival is a celebration: the celebration of humanist thought, the Chinon wine festival, the celebration of unique heritage places opened especially for this event.

When Mathilde Boulo-Dutour, professor of philosophy and wife of a winemaker from Chinon, created

this multidisciplinary festival in 2015, she wanted, in a way, to do like Rabelais with her works: thumbing her nose at unique thinking and solemn frameworks of the exercise of thought, with a fairly precise idea in mind that of understanding and knowing the Renaissance period to better question ours, the one in which we live.

“Les Nourritures Élémentaires” is a resolutely utopian festival that distills good humor and good ideas drawn from Rabelaisian thought and from the inspiring swirls of Chinon wine where men of the sixteenth century, philosophers, artists, and writers share their proposals on the French humanist who strongly influenced the modern thought.

#### INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC:

All the program on [www.lesnourritureselementaires.fr](http://www.lesnourritureselementaires.fr),  
[www.ville-chinon.com](http://www.ville-chinon.com) or [www.chinon.com](http://www.chinon.com)

→ Syndicat des Vins de Chinon :

Tél. : 02 47 93 30 44 - [contact@chinon.com](mailto:contact@chinon.com)

→ Association Chinons : [nourritureselementaires@gmail.com](mailto:nourritureselementaires@gmail.com)

\* Free festival which takes place in Chinon every year at the beginning of November

# RABELAIS' FAMOUS SENTENCES ON WINE:

« Knowing is drinking and eating. »

« **Drink, to prevent thirst from arising!** »

« Getting up in the morning is not happiness, drinking in the morning is the best »

« Wait a while until I take a whiff of this bottle. This is my true and only Helicon, this is my Caballine fountain, this is my only enthusiasm. While drinking I deliberate, I speak, I resolve, I conclude. »

« **Drinking is the property of man, to drink good and fresh wine, and from divine wine we become.** »

« A cure for thirst? – It is the opposite of that used against dog bites: always run after the dog, it will never bite you. Always drink before thirst and it will never torment you. »

« **Always drink, never die.** »

« The use of wine, apart from prolix verb and fervent prayer, is of all human actions what distinguishes him from other terrestrial, flying in the sky, running or crawling on the earth creatures, into which God did not inject any human soul. »

« Appetite comes with eating; thirst disappears with drinking. »

« The juice of the vine clarifies the mind and understanding soothes anger, chases away sadness and gives joy. »

« And with large grapes of Chenin they steamed Frogier's legs nicely so that he was instantly cured. »

« **Good people, very illustrious drinkers and you very precious gourmets..., you are not young either, which is competent quality for wine, not in vain, more than physically philosophize and henceforth be of the Bacchic council, to opine substances, color, odor, excellence, eminence, property, faculty, virtues, effect and dignity of the Benedict and desired Piot.** »

« The smell of wine, oh how much more is fond, laughing, praying, more heavenly and delicious than oil. »

« **But you can't make bad Latin out of good wine.** »

« We maintain here that not laughing, but drinking is proper to the man, I do not say drink simply and, because animals drink, I say drink good and fresh wine. »

« **Wine is the most civilized thing in the world.** »

« Physical lust is curbed by wine taken intemperately. Because through the intemperance of wine, cooling of the blood, resolution of the nerves, dissipation of generative seed, dazing of the senses, perversion of movements occur to the human body: all of which are impertinences to the act of generation... Things are different when wine is taken temperately. The ancient proverb points us to it and says that Venus languishes without the company of Ceres and Bacchus... And Sir Priapus was the son of Bacchus and Venus. »

« **No noble man ever hates good wine.** »



# THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE RABELAISIAN ENTONNEURS

If there is one ritual not to be missed, it is that of the induction of the new “disciples” of Chinon by the Brotherhood of Rabelaisian Entonneurs. Four major chapters – Saint Vincent's Chapter in January, Bud Chapter in April, Harvest Chapter in September and Diana Chapter in December – open to all, punctuate the year.

Between solemnity and conviviality, the inductee carries the commitment to support in the eyes of all and at all times, the wine of Chinon, in the historic high place of the Caves Peintes located under the fortress, temple of the Dive Bouteille.

The ceremonial, unchanged since 1962, recalls the humanist precepts of François Rabelais, to which each disciple must devote unfailing worship. The oath is a hymn to freedom of thought, to life, and highlights the qualities of the characters in Rabelais's work. So like Gargantua, prodigious in understanding, the disciple must demonstrate discernment, like Pantagruel, the enthroned must be tolerant or like Grandgousier, it is necessary to be sincere and to fight against the hypocrites. Each sentence declaimed by the Entonneurs in the manner of an ancient Greek choir is thus punctuated by a sententious “I am committed” expressed loud and clear by the new entrant into this good-natured and humanist brotherhood.

The oath is a hymn to **freedom of thought**, to life, and highlights the qualities of the characters in Rabelais's work.



Among the 40,000 people inducted as “Knights”, there are renowned personalities: Liz Taylor, Gérard Depardieu, Prince Albert 2 of Monaco, Bernard Hnault, Simone Veil, Pierre Salinger to name just a few. After the ritual of passage, all received the insignia of the brotherhood: a red and gold cord supporting the bronze medal bearing the image of Rabelais.

The Confrérie des Entonneurs Rabelaisiens perpetuates the message of Rabelais, based on freedom of spirit (“do what you want”), tolerance (“respect for others”), living well to live longer (“because laughter is proper to the man”) and knowledge (“the dive bottle”). Rabelais was convinced that the educated man becomes wise and that Chinon wine, which he also called “Breton”, the symbol of life, is a social lubricant bringing joy and peace.

The Confrérie des Entonneurs Rabelaisiens is the only one in France to have obtained the “art of living prize” thanks to its dynamism and its values which reflect a certain state of mind and perpetuate a very old tradition.



## INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC:

[www.entonneurs-rabelaisiens.com](http://www.entonneurs-rabelaisiens.com)

→ Syndicat des Vins de Chinon :

Tel. : 02 47 93 30 44 - [contact@chinon.com](mailto:contact@chinon.com)

# TERRESTRIAL FOODS

It is obvious that Tours, which has become a city of gastronomy, owes part of its heritage to the Rabelaisian cuisine. If everything is excessive in Rabelais' work, we must not lose sight of the fact that thirst is here an allegory for the desire to learn and that "*savouring*" and "*knowing*" are the same thing since they are combined in the common Latin root of "*sapere*": to have intelligence, taste, judgment.

In Chinon, we have very well understood this, even if the Rabelaisian tradition still exists in the large banquets given at the Caves Paintées with the following names "*L'amusement de Gouzier*", "*Prime plate*", "*Second plate*", "*Tierce plate*", "*Quarte plate*" and "*Yssue de table*".

It must be said that the Chinon region concentrates a number of quality products: the presence of the rivers offers pike, zander, shad and perch which go perfectly with the white and light red Chinons; the imposing forest provides the game that deserves structured Chinon; cattle breeding is practiced in the green bocage and it is not uncommon to see cows grazing on the islands: red meat which supports a Chinon of a

few years; Tours rillettes are perfect for an aperitif accompanied by a Chinon rosé; the traditional cultivation of asparagus in Véron is more difficult to accompany, but here again rosé has a role to play; saffron from Touraine has around thirty producers and wonderfully enhances fish sauces which are easily accompanied by a white Chinon; the Chinon truffle present thanks to the limestone soils is magnified by the Chinon reds; the numerous goat cheeses and those of the Sainte Maure de Touraine appellation in particular, go perfectly with a red or white Chinon... without forgetting the delicious vine peaches, the generous walnut and delicate almond trees that we find in the countryside.

## TASTING OF CHINON WINES



### Chinon rouge

comes from Cabernet Franc. The range is varied and extends from delicious and light wines to more powerful and structured wines. If it is cultivated as a single grape variety, the winegrowers carefully select their plots and sometimes vinify them separately to blend them until they give the wine the character they want. In all cases, the color has purple reflections, ranging from cherry to violet. The nose exudes red fruits – strawberry, raspberry, cherry, redcurrant – or stewed black fruits – blackberry, blackcurrant, redcurrant – from which sweet spices exude – cinnamon, vanilla, cardamom – accompanied by floral notes of peony. In the mouth, Chinon is supple or full-bodied. It goes well with any type of dish, from the simplest to the most complex, from starters to dessert, including cheese.



### Le Chinon blanc

comes from Chenin known as "Pineau de Loire". This is a rarity since it only represents 4% of the grape variety with 105 hectares planted and an additional 27 hectares planned for planting. The volume is at 3,730 hectoliters on average per year. Its presence in Chinonais is, however, very old. There is even a place called Champ Chenin in Savigny-en-Véron. Rabelais, the author who has undoubtedly written the most about wine, mentions it frequently. The color is a subtle pale gold. The nose reveals citrus fruits. It is floral and mineral, fresh on the palate.



### Le Chinon rosé

comes from Cabernet Franc known as "Breton". It can be made by bleeding method – 26% of Chinon rosés –, direct pressing – 31% – or mixed – 33%. Only 10% of enterprises do not produce Chinon rosé. Its color ranges from very pale salmon to intense pink. The nose suggests peach or lychee. It is supple, sometimes with aromas of rose and small red fruits or even grapefruit. It's the king of the "aperitif" (appetizer).

### OPERATING TEMPERATURE

Wine merchants recommend consuming Chinon red wines between 16° and 18°. Some can be enjoyed straight away or others kept for 5 years to 15 years... Chinon rosés, dry and fruity, are served between 10° and 12°C. Chinon whites, dry and always balanced, can be enjoyed at 12° to 16°C.

### KEEPING POTENTIAL

The wines blossom within two or three years; the most structured ones benefit from being kept for 10 years, or even much longer depending on the vintage.





## CHINON SPECIALTIES



**The vigneronne tart** is a tart made of very thin and crispy puff pastry with mandolin-cut apples and covered with Chinon red wine jam.



**La fouace** is famous thanks to Rabelais because it is responsible for a quarrel that will degenerate into a microcholine war. Rabelais even gives the recipe in Gargantua: "Made of fine wheat flour diluted with fine egg yolks and butter, saffron, spices and water". It's a small round brioche spiced with saffron and topped with a walnut. It is eaten both sweet and savory. It is perfect with foie gras. It can be found in all the good bakeries in Chinon.



**Chinon wine jam** is a traditional jam but instead of cooking fruit with sugar, it is cooked with red or white wine from Chinon. It's delicious!

**Rillons de Touraine** are small pieces of lean pork belly, spiced then browned for coloring and candied in fat, rillons are considered in Touraine as the flagship of charcuterie. They are perfect with a fouace.



**The fouée** is a small bread made from wheat flour, water, salt and sourdough which is cooked over a wood fire. As soon as it comes out of the oven, the fouée is opened to be filled with savory or sweet fillings. Its origin is very local and very rural. It represents the simple pleasure of coming together around a meal. Traditionally, fouée is filled with rillettes, mogettes, garlic butter or goat cheese.



**The Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine** is a goat's cheese from the region Centre-Val de Loire which benefits from a designation of origin which bears the name of a commune "Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine" near Chinon.





**VINS DE**  
**Loire**







# 10 GOOD REASONS TO COME TO CHINON – VAL DE LOIRE



- 1 **Savor Chinon at its source** – meet the winegrowers. 26 areas are labeled “Caves Touristiques du Val de Loire” including 17 also labeled “Vignobles et Découvertes”, networks bringing together quality restaurants, accommodation and tourist sites in our destination
- 2 **Discover the beauty of its landscapes**, classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- 3 **Immerse yourself in the history of France and England:** Saint-Martin, Henri II Plantagenêt, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard the Lionheart, John Lackland, Philippe Auguste, The Templars, Charles VII, Joan of Arc, Richelieu
- 4 Visit the majestic **castles of the Loire**
- 5 **Follow the footsteps of Rabelais** by reading Gargantua and immerse yourself in November in Rabelaisian humanism during the annual festival “Les Nourritures Elementaires”

- 6 **Taste the Chinon art of living and taste local products:** the vigneronne tart, Véron asparagus, Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine goat cheese, fouées, fouace, saffron, Rabelaisian truffle
- 7 Experience an exceptional moment full of ceremony by **being inducted into the majestic Caves Paintes by the Rabelaisian Entonneurs:** Chapter of Saint Vincent in January, Chapter of the Bud in April, Chapter of the Harvest in September, Chapter of Diane in December
- 8 **Sail on the Vienne** to the confluence of the Loire
- 9 **Hike on the many marked paths and routes**, stroll on the Loire à Vélo route (Cycle path) and the greenway between Chinon and Richelieu
- 10 **Limit your carbon footprint** by coming to Chinon without a car thanks to its proximity from the station located in the city center. A train station and city center designed for people with reduced mobility and wheelchairs.



## USEFUL INFORMATION

### SYNDICAT DES VINS DE CHINON (CHINON WINE UNION)

House of winegrowers of Chinon  
Impasse des Caves Paintes  
37500 Chinon  
Tel. 02 47 93 30 44 • chinon.com

### BROTHERHOOD OF THE RABELAISIAN ENTONNEURS

Impasse de Caves Paintes  
37500 Chinon  
Tel. 02 47 93 30 44

### HOUSE OF WINES AND TOURISM

14, rue du 8 mai 1945  
37420 Beaumont en Véron  
Tel. : 02 47 58 86 17  
laimaisondesvinsduveron.com  
Open all year round from Tuesday to Saturday:  
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. / 2:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

### CHINON TOURIST OFFICE

1 rue Rabelais – 37500 Chinon  
Tel. : 02 47 93 17 85  
chinon-valde Loire.com

### CAVE DE LA SYBILLE

Les Villeseaux  
37220 Panzoult  
Tel. : 02 47 58 38 33  
cave-panzoult.com  
Open all year round (except January)  
Tuesday to Saturday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. / 2:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. (last entries into the cellar 1 hour before closing)

