



LONG RED BURGUNDY
MORE THAN SEGREGATED
JAMES LAURENCE ON
BLIND TASTING
PAIRING & DRINKING IN
MENDOCINO COUNTY



The Chinon appellation, known for fresh, light-bodied reds from Cabernet Franc, achieved moderate success in the challenging 2011 vintage.

REALITY CHECK

Reds fare better than whites as France's Loire Valley struggles in 2011

// BY JAMES MOLESWORTH //

Spoiled by the outstanding vintages of 2009 and 2010, fans of Loire Valley wines may be slightly disappointed to come back to earth with the good, but irregular, versions from 2011.

This long and sprawling region, capable of producing fresh, minerally whites from Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc in top vintages, instead delivered a crop of generally soft, diffuse whites in 2011. With producers hampered by difficult

weather, and with strict sorting critical to achieving quality, yields are also down from previous vintages.

Though less prominent than the whites, Loire reds fared better in 2011. Cabernet Franc, the middle Loire's leading red variety, shrugged off some late-season rains thanks to its thick skin. But in general, consumers will need to proceed with caution when selecting 2011 Loire wines as they arrive on U.S. shores. Snatching up any remaining or late-release 2010s presents a much better alternative.