

François Chidaine

October 2025 – By Yohan Castaing



Originally from Montlouis-sur-Loire, François Chidaine began working in the family vineyard in 1984, assuming significant responsibilities from the outset. He founded his domaine in 1989, assembling four hectares of scattered parcels. Encouraged by Didier Dagueneau and Nady Foucault, he adopted organic methods early on. The first years were challenging, yet under the guidance of biodynamic consultant François Bouchet, he pursued conversion as early as 1989. With his parents' retirement in 1999, the estate expanded to 17 hectares, and that same year, his wife, Manuela, joined him in the venture.

Few doubt that the renaissance of Montlouis-sur-Loire owes much to Chidaine. His wines—defined by purity, energy, structure and crystalline precision—have elevated the appellation's reputation and shaped its identity. In the early 2000s, he expanded into Vouvray, acquiring the Clos Baudoin. Yet AOC regulations, which prohibit vinification outside appellation limits, meant that these wines could only be bottled as Vin de France, since Chidaine vinifies all his wines in Montlouis.

The vineyards of Montlouis largely occupy plateaus, and Chidaine's parcels reflect this character. Vines average nearly 50 years of age and are planted from massal selections on clay soils shot through with flint. Chidaine avoids routine soil tillage, arguing that it is "counterproductive to microbial life." Instead, he relies on under-vine cover cropping and rotational crops between rows, though he concedes that tillage remains necessary for young vines.

In the cellar, fermentations rely exclusively on indigenous yeasts, with pieds de cuve employed to ensure a clean, steady start. Maturation is carried out in various cooperages, most commonly in demi-muids or 500-liter barrels. Elevage is tailored to cépage and site, but the emphasis remains on preserving freshness and precision.

The range encompasses blended cuvées—Choisilles, Argiles, Tuffeaux, Moelleux—and single-vineyard expressions such as Clos du Breuil, Les Bournais, Clos Habert and Clos Baudoin. All reward cellaring, and their vibrancy and structure unfold over several years to reveal depth and complexity.

Today, Domaine François Chidaine stands as one of the Loire Valley's benchmarks, a vital reference point for anyone serious about Chenin Blanc.

2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Bournais

The Wine Advocate

RP 95

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2045

Crafted from vines rooted in clay-limestone soils and vinified and matured in large barrels, the 2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Bournais is yet another standout in Chidaine's portfolio. It opens with vibrant aromas of lemon, confit citrus, flowers and spring blossoms. Medium- to full-bodied, it is round and sappy, with a fleshy core of fruit, a layered mid-palate and an enveloping texture, concluding with a long, racy finish marked by a fine thread of gastronomic bitterness. Sourced from a northwest-facing plot, this may well be the most underrated cuvée at this address.

2022 Montlouis Les Épinays

The Wine Advocate

RP 94+

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2040

Chidaine's 2022 Montlouis Les Épinays is sourced from a south-facing plot composed of clay, silex and limestone. It opens with a complex, slightly reductive bouquet of white fruits, Anjou pear, acacia and confit citrus, delicately laced with mandarin blossom. Medium- to full-bodied, it is structured and slightly austere in profile, with a fleshy, layered core of fruit supported by a fine thread of gastronomic bitterness. The finish is long, intensely sapid and saline, leaving a vivid impression of chalky dry extracts. Matured for eight months in a combination of wine globes (40%) and large barrels (60%), this distinctive cuvée is bottled exclusively in magnum.

2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Choisses

The Wine Advocate

RP 94

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2037

Vinified and matured for eight months in large barrels (demi-muids), the 2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Choisses is particularly flamboyant in this vintage. It opens with a vivid bouquet of exotic fruits, ripe pear, flowers, spices and a subtle touch of reduction. Medium- to full-bodied, it is concentrated and fleshy, framed by a delicate thread of gastronomic bitterness that lends tension and complexity. The finish is long, deep and layered. More structured and dense than the Clos du Breuil, its 2.6 grams of residual sugar contribute to its balance and promise graceful evolution over the next 15 years.

2022 Vin de France Les Argiles

The Wine Advocate

RP 94

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2042

Labeled as a Vin de France for administrative reasons—since Vouvray cannot be bottled outside the appellation's geographic boundaries—the 2022 Vin de France Les Argiles is a graceful and ethereal wine. It opens with delicate aromas of ripe pear, white flowers and subtle spices. Medium- to full-bodied, it is pure and weightless yet possesses notable depth at the core and an elegantly structured and mineral mid-palate, concluding with a long, saline finish. Poised and precise, this wine is built to evolve beautifully over the next decade and beyond.

2022 Vin de France Baudoin

The Wine Advocate

RP 93+

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2040

Smoky and elegantly reductive, the 2022 Vin de France Baudoin exudes aromas of exotic fruits, Anjou pear, white fruits, spring flowers and a touch of honey. Medium- to full-bodied, dense and concentrated, it has a fleshy core of fruit, an enveloping texture and a delicately bitter, racy finish. Vinified and matured in large barrels and sourced from vines planted on clay-limestone soils, it promises to evolve beautifully over the next 15 years.

2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Clos du Breuil

The Wine Advocate

RP 92

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2032

Crafted from a single parcel facing south and west and composed of clay and silex with a limestone bedrock, the 2022 Montlouis-sur-Loire Clos du Breuil is showing well today. Revealing aromas of flowers, lemon, grapefruit and spices, it's medium- to full-bodied, pure and seamless, with a crystalline, tensile mid-palate and a fleshy, gourmand core of fruit, finishing long and ethereal. This is a perfumed and refined wine.

2021 Montlouis Clos de La Frelonnerie

The Wine Advocate

RP 94

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2030 - 2041

Crafted from vines planted on a single plot composed of aeolian sands, clay and silex, the 2021 Montlouis Clos de La Frelonnerie is a real success. Evoking a complex, pure bouquet of white fruits, Anjou pear, spring flowers, confit citrus, bergamot and spices, it's medium- to full-bodied, seamless and chiseled, with a lively mid-palate supported by a fleshy core of fruit. Concluding with a structured bitterness, it requires some time in the cellar (10–15 years) to mellow out. The wine matured for 24 months in barrels.

2021 Brut Nature Méthode Traditionnelle

The Wine Advocate

RP 91+

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2030

The 2021 Brut Nature Méthode Traditionnelle, bottled in 2022 and disgorged in August 2024 without dosage, was matured in demi-muids or large barrels. Unfurling from the glass with aromas of exotic fruits, pear and herbs mingled with a lovely reduction, it's round and sappy, fresh and delicate, with a lively, ethereal finish. It could gain depth and raciness with one or two years in the cellar.

2020 Rive Gauche

The Wine Advocate

RP 96

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2029 - 2050

With 110 grams per liter of residual sugar, Chidaine's 2020 Rive Gauche wafts from the glass with aromas of quince, spices, white fruits and ripe orchard fruits mingled with delicate notes of exotic fruits. Full-bodied, enveloping and dense, it's concentrated with a perfectly balanced mid-palate, bright acids and a long, spicy and endless finish. This is a real success.

2020 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Tuffeaux

The Wine Advocate

RP 94+

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2028 - 2040

Opening with a subtle, toasty reduction, the 2020 Montlouis-sur-Loire Les Tuffeaux reveals an inviting bouquet of almonds, Anjou pear, white fruits and gentle spice. Medium- to full-bodied, enveloping and round, it is concentrated yet finely balanced, with a fleshy core of fruit, vibrant acidity and a touch of delicate sweetness. The wine concludes with a racy, mineral-driven finish that reflects its clay, silex and limestone terroir. Residual sugar: 13.8 grams per liter.

2020 Montlouis-sur-Loire Clos Habert

The Wine Advocate

RP 94

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2040

From a solar, hot vintage, the 2020 Montlouis-sur-Loire Clos Habert offers up aromas of white fruits, spices, ripe orchard fruits and flowers. Medium- to full-bodied, enveloping and delicately sweet, it's fleshy with good depth at the core and a long, saline and ethereal finish. Vinified and matured in large barrels, it has 13 grams per liter of residual sugar.

2016 Vin de France Moelleux

The Wine Advocate

RP 95

Reviewed by:

Yohan Castaing

Release Price:

NA

Drink Date:

2025 - 2050

Flamboyant and lively, Chidaine's 2016 Vin de France Moelleux is showing superbly today, evoking aromas of almonds, saffron, baked pear and ripe orchard fruits. Full-bodied, dense and concentrated, it's structured and perfectly balanced, with bright acids and a lively mid-palate that culminates in an endless, mineral and subtle finish. Kudos!