

Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil and Chinon

Just before the town of Saumur as the Loire flows towards the west is the source of many of the best red wines in the valley. Saint Nicolas lies on the north bank whilst Chinon is to the south of the river, both producing wines from Cabernet Franc in styles from light and early drinking to more full-bodied, structured and age worthy.

Gérald Vallée, Domaine de la Cotelleraie, Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil

On the gently south-facing gravel terraces and sandstone slopes around the village Gérald Vallée crafts a range of 5 wines from a domaine of 26 hectares (Ha). We offer two wines: Cuvée Domaine, from plots across the estate, is just rounded from some ageing in old wooden vats, and shows typicity allied to real finesse. L'Envolée is his top wine, from two low-yielding plots of sixty year old vines on the slopes, given lots of *pigeage* and long maceration to aid extraction, before 12 months ageing in barrel, and bottling without fining or filtration.

2006 Domaine de la Cotelleraie, Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil, 13°

Bottle £9.95 Case £113.43 Code VAL106

Dark tone. Scent of fresh currants. Silkily textured, showing ripe currants backed by fine tannins, this is attractively aromatic. So correct and elegant. Now-2011

2006 Gérald Vallée, St. Nicolas de Bourgueil, L'Envolée, 13°

Bottle £14.25 Case £162.45 Code VAL306

Deep and opaque. Oak to the fore currently on the nose. Intensely black-fruited, with mineral hints of lead and earth. Huge mass, but still appears light in the mouth. Really poised. Now-2013



Anjou-Saumur

As the river flows west from Touraine, Chenin takes over from Sauvignon Blanc for whites, supplemented by the Cabernet varieties for reds and rosés, This area south of the town of Angers produces the vast quantities needed to fill supermarket shelves, alongside rare and sought after treats such as Savennières and Quarts de Chaume.

Chapin & Landais, Saumur

We continue with this excellent vintage fizz, made by an offshoot of the well-known Bouvet-Ladubay house. Chenin Blanc has excellent acidity, so lends itself perfectly to the production of sparkling wine, produced in Saumur since the early nineteenth century.

2006 Saumur Brut, Le Grand Saumur, 12.5°

Bottle £10.50 Case £119.70 Code CHL106

Fine mousse. This always has a pretty scent of apples and pears. Very clean fruit, not absolutely bone dry, and appealing freshness. Now-2010

Château de Putille, La Pommeraye

It was disappointing that we were unable to offer the 2007 wines from Pascal and Geneviève Delaunay, but we were not happy with

Wilfrid Rousse, Savigny en Veron

Wilfrid Rousse has 18 hectares of Cabernet Franc, across a wide range of soils. Les Galuches is from sand and gravel lying near to the river Vienne: it's always a perfectly correct, fresh, lead-pencil Chinon for early drinking. Les Puy, from a flinty, clay and sandy south-facing vineyard on the hills, is a weightier wine, and was selected as one of the top three 2005 Chinons in a **New York Times** tasting. Wilfrid's grand wine is Clos de la Roche. From a single hectare of vines planted in 1950 within a south-facing, formerly walled vineyard, with the fruit given long maceration before ageing in new to two year old *demi-muids*.

2007 Chinon, Les Galuches, 12.5°

Bottle £8.95 Case £102.03 Code ROT307

Attractive purple hue. Very true Cabernet Franc nose, curranty and just a touch leafy. Crisp, showing ripe redcurrants and blackcurrants. Now-2010

2005 Chinon, Les Puy, 13.5°

Bottle £10.75 Case £122.55 Code ROT605

Given a year in 3-4 year old barrels. Very deep colour. Scent of crushed blackcurrants. Bittersweet black fruit, quite dense and big-framed, with spice accents, and a ripe tannic backbone. Real wine. "Full-bodied, dry and earthy, with flavors of bright fruit, spice, citrus and herbs" **New York Times**, March 19th 2008. Now-2011

2005 Chinon, Clos de la Roche, 13.5°

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code ROT405

Very opaque purple. Outstandingly overt nose: smart oak and crushed raspberries. Smooth and concentrated heart of juicy blackberries and blackcurrants, with dark chocolate notes from the oak. Beautifully ripe but not overdone, just all succulence and class. Still improving. Now-2014

the quality. 2008 was far more successful and we offer the good value Chenin Blanc and a Cabernet Franc. The quality of the latter has benefitted from the advice of New Zealand born winemaker and consultant Sam Harrop MW.

2008 Anjou Blanc Sec, 12.5°

Bottle £7.75 Case £88.35 Code PUT708

Ripe pears and a touch of honey on the nose. Bright, pure, clean fruit flavours: a fine example of young Chenin Blanc, and correctly dry on the finish. Now-2011

2008 Anjou Rouge, 13°

Bottle £7.25 Case £82.65 Code PUT308

Vivid youthful purple. Intense aromas of hedgerow fruits. Crunchy cassis fruit balanced by ripe, supple tannin. An ideal accompaniment to roast pork. Now-2011

Château Pierre-Bise, Beaulieu

Claude Papin, described by Simon in last year's list as "a true Stone, Vine & Sun man", is a master of Chenin Blanc in all its guises from bone dry to lusciously sweet. His focus is to produce wines which truly reflect their individual origins alongside their varietal character. This year we offer three dry wines from Savennières and four sweet wines: 3 from the superb but tiny 2007 vintage and one that has been held back from the *botrytis* rich 2005.

2006 Savennières, Clos de Coulaïne, 14°

Bottle £11.50 Case £131.10 Code CPB606

Pale gold with a suggestion of green. As usual, an appealingly honeyed nose. Lemony and perhaps a little less textured than usual, but pure, and with a mineral thread. Now-2011 Limited stock

2007 Savennières, Clos de Coulaïne, 14°

Bottle £12.75 Case £145.35 Code CPB607

Pale gold. Intensely apricot on the nose. Richly textured with fascinating hints of sandalwood and nuts. Suavely smooth and balanced, and a long finish too. Now-2013

2007 Savennières, Clos le Grand Beaupréau, 14°

Bottle £14.50 Case £165.30 Code CPB807

A restrained nose of ripe honeyed fruit. More elegant than Clos de Coulaïne, displaying seamless integration, which promises a long and fascinating development. Now-2015

2005 Coteaux du Layon, Rochefort Rayelles, 12°

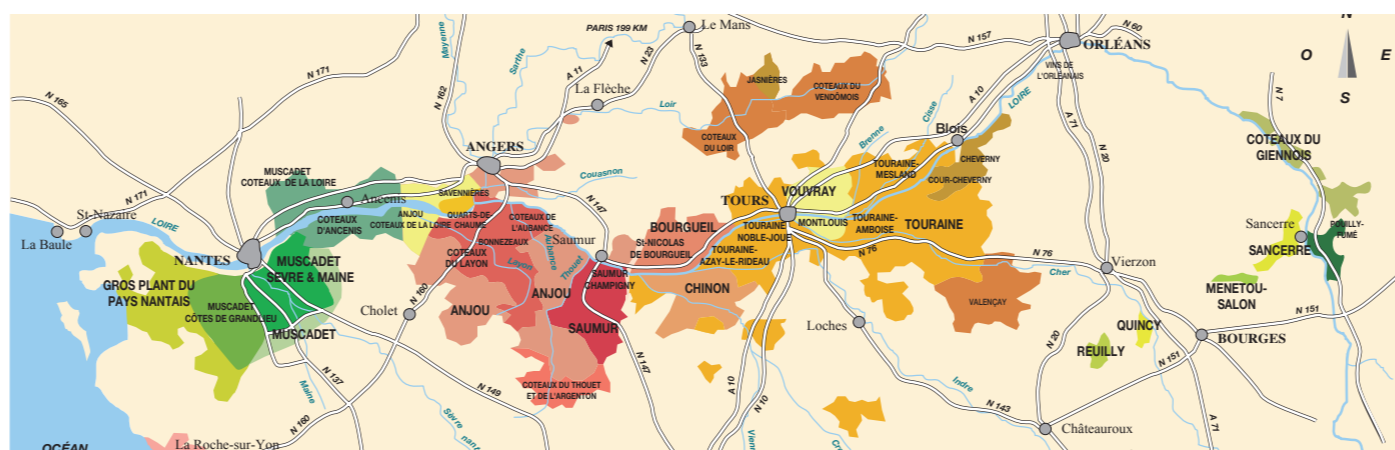
Bottle (50cl.) £16.50 Case £188.10 Code CPB105

From the top section of the Haut de la Garde vineyard. Glowing deep gold. A brooding nose of honey and caramel leads into a huge rush of flavours from petrol through to Christmas cake. Viscous and mouthfilling, but a bright acid spine maintains balance. Very long. Now-2017

2007 Coteaux du Layon, Beaulieu, Anlaie, 12°

Bottle (50cl.) £17.75 Case £202.35 Code CPB307

Bright old gold. *Passerillage* has produced amazing concentration with flavours of ripe stone fruits and Seville orange marmalade. Now-2019



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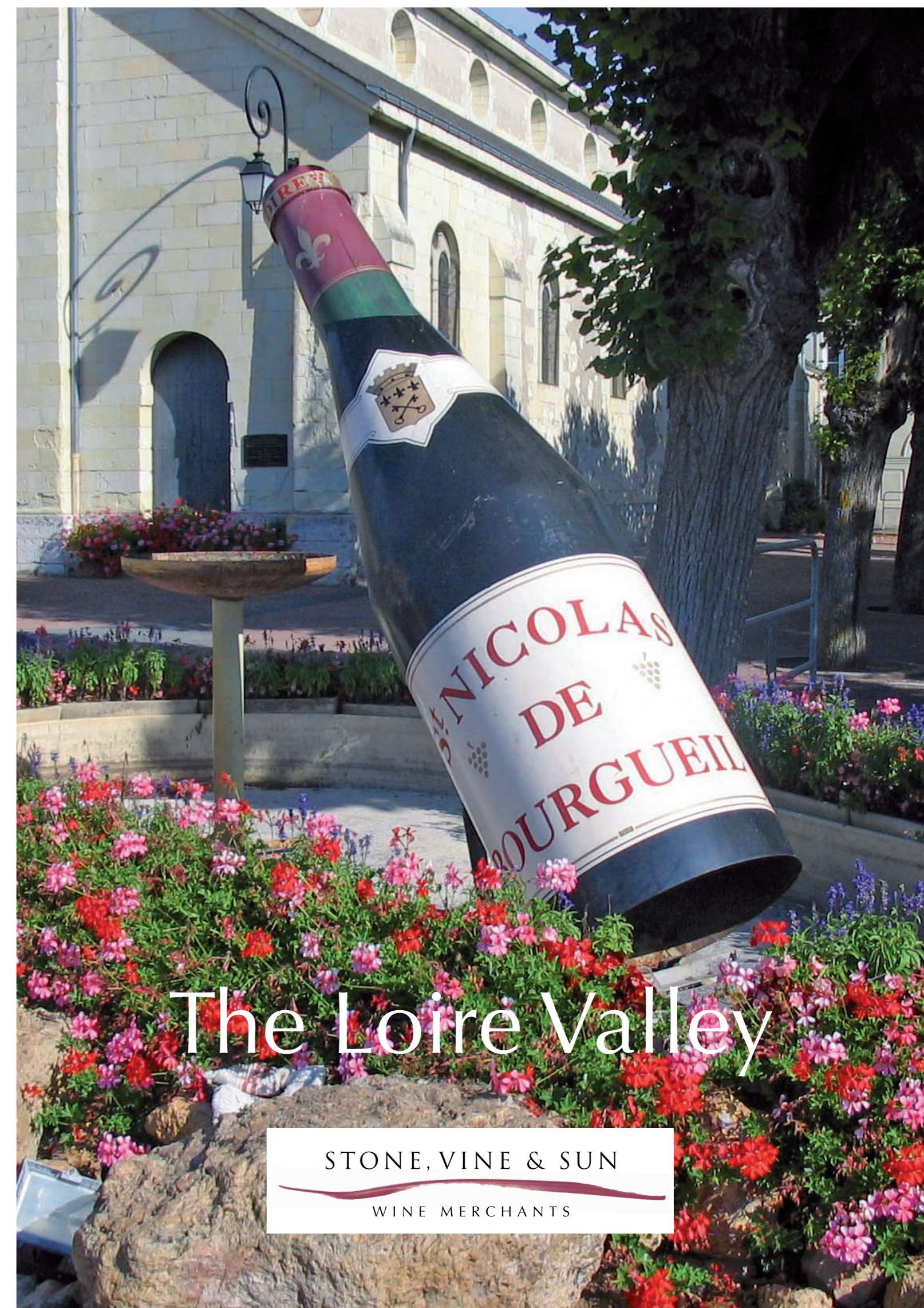
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The Loire Valley

STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

In early February I undertook our annual visit to the wine fair in Angers, escaping the snow which engulfed much of the UK during that week. This is the yearly opportunity for the vast majority of vigneronns in the Loire valley to show off their latest offerings to the rest of the world. The early season's weather in 2008 was not kind, with variously frost, hail and torrential rain all conspiring to reduce the size of the crop and make life uncomfortable for the growers. Sunny and dry weather from the second week in September allowed the grapes to ripen fully. However, to get the best results careful selective picking was required, adding further to production costs. The extra work required in the vineyards, coupled with reduced production (down 30% in some cases), has put upward pressure on prices, though most growers have worked with us to minimize price increases.

The Sauvignons of the upper Loire and Touraine are attractively aromatic, concentrated yet more focused than 2007. Red wines, particularly from Cabernet Franc, display impressive concentration allied to ripe structure. Late October rain did dilute a potentially outstanding sweet wine vintage, but this list contains wines from the superb 2007 and earlier vintages.

We have found several new wines from a number of our best sources to complement the many perennial favourites. The estates are listed in order from the source of the Loire to its mouth.

Gordon Coates - April 2009

Mixed Cases

with a saving of at least 10% on the bottle prices

Loire Terroirs £99.95

(2 bottles of each of 3 whites and 3 reds)

Code CL19

2008 Chevilly, Quincy

2006 Aumonier, Touraine, Cuvée Henri

2008 Putille, Anjou Blanc

2008 La Grange Tiphaine, Les Cassiers

2006 Cotelleraie, Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil

2005 Rousse, Chinon, Les Puys

Sauvignon Blanc Tasting Case £110.00

(2 bottles each of 6 whites)

Code CL29

2008 Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon

2007 Corbillières, Touraine Sauvignon, Fabel Barbou

2008 Chevilly, Quincy

2008 Chavet, Menetou-Salon

2007 Cherrier, Sancerre

2008 Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernetts



Pouilly-Fumé

The longest river in France; the Loire flows north for over half its length, before turning west at Orléans and heading towards the Atlantic coast. Just before this deviation the river runs between Pouilly and Sancerre, the two most famous names in the whole valley. Both towns are capable of producing thrilling wines from Sauvignon Blanc but it would be a brave, or possibly foolish, taster who would claim to consistently tell one from the other. It is true that Pouilly-Fumé has a higher proportion of clay-flint soils which can impart a characteristic smokiness to the wines.

Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-sur-Loire

Year in, year out M. Blanchet creates wine that is so true to the appellation, and that really displays the illusive suggestion of gunflint, especially after a year or so in bottle. The 2008 is a particular success from a vintage the family considers to be a *"bonne année"*.

2008 Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernetts, 12.5°

Bottle £11.95 Case £136.23 Code BLA108

Pale lemon with green highlights. Delicately balanced between fresh citrus and deeper more mineral elements, with prominent acidity. Long and fine. Now-2012

Masson-Blondelet, Pouilly-sur-Loire

The seventh generation of Massons are now firmly in charge with Pierre looking after both vineyards and cellar whilst sister Mélanie is in charge of sales and marketing. The estate covers about 15 hectares of vines around the village, from which they make several

cuvées of Pouilly-Fumé from different soils: Les Angelots is from south and south-east facing chalky (calcareous) vineyards in the heart of the appellation, and always shows really open, enticing aromas and fruit. Les Pierres de Pierre is a relatively new wine - the first vintage was 2004 - from four small parcels of 40-45 year old vines grown on flint. The modern winemaking here aims to let the differences in *terroir* shine through in the finished wines.

2007 Pouilly-Fumé, Les Angelots, 12.5°

Bottle £13.75 Case £156.75 Code MAS207

Aromas of gooseberries and ripe citrus are followed on the palate by delicate citrus flavours leading to a savoury depth. Rapier-like focus and very pure on the finish. Now-2010

2007 Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pierres de Pierre, 12.5°

Bottle £15.95 Case £181.83 Code MAS407

Pale with green tinges. This has a more floral scent. Elements of lemon and mineral balance to perfection. Very long and so elegant. Now-2011

Sancerre

Just across the river from Pouilly, Sancerre is so famous that high prices are no guarantee of quality. At a time when so many are tempted to take the high volume route the value of our carefully built relationships with those who favour quality over quantity cannot be overestimated. As the demand for white Sancerre is so high Pinot Noir makes up only a small percentage of the vineyard area but the delicate rosé that it produces is entrancing a growing number of fans. The difficult vintages since 2005 have not favoured the production of red Sancerre.

Cherrier Père et fils, at Domaine de la Rossignole, Verdigny

Prices *chez* Pierre Cherrier have never been greedy and we are delighted that the wines get better year on year. Pierre's superior Cuvée Grand Picot is partially fermented and aged in barrel. Perfectly mature, it shows a delicacy of touch which sets it apart from the aggressively oaky offerings of some of his neighbours.

2007 Sancerre, 12.5°

Bottle £11.75 Case £133.95 Code ROS107

Very open and zesty nose. Refreshingly green-fruited, grassy and bright, yet with good citrus ripeness too. Plenty of mineral character, very complete, textbook example. Now-2010

2005 Sancerre, Cuvée Grand Picot, 12.5°

Bottle £13.95 Case £159.03 Code ROS505

Still pale in colour with a touch of honeyed maturity on the nose. Fully developed with well balanced almond and fresh floral notes. Attractively long finish. Now-2010

Quincy and Menetou-Salon

Quincy and Menetou-Salon both have their own history and character. In 1936, rather surprisingly, Quincy, just north-west of Bourges, became only the second Appellation Controlée in France, after the example of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. From plantings on lighter, sandier soils, and with a slightly warmer climate than at Sancerre, wines from Quincy tend to be creamier and softer. The appellation of Menetou-Salon, spread out along a range of hills to the north-east of Bourges, is contiguous with Sancerre. Among Charolais pastures and cereals, the vineyards lie largely on south-facing slopes, all on calcareous, Kimmeridgian clay.

Domaine de Chevilly, Mereau

The modest Yves Lestourgie continues to make exemplary Quincy from his nine hectares of vines, and his wine is now established as a firm favourite among many customers. Ageing on its fine lees for a few months gives more volume to the wine.

2008 Quincy, 12.5°

Bottle £10.25 Case £116.85 Code CHE108

Almost water white. Quite pungent, fresh cut grass scent. Intensely citrus, possibly even mandarin, this is a classically structured Loire Sauvignon; refreshing and long. Now-2010

Domaine Chavet, Menetou-Salon

All is not as it seems at Domaine Chavet, as the nicely old-fashioned *belle époque* design of the labels hides a very go-ahead approach which brings us our first Loire wine bottled under screw-cap. The wine here is very correct, with an impressive mineral steeliness, continuing a run of successful vintages.

2008 Menetou-Salon, 13° [Screw Cap]

Bottle £11.25 Case £128.25 Code CHC108

Very bright pale lemon. Aroma of preserved lemons. On the palate ripe lemons again, integrating seamlessly with a fine minerality. Very classy and already showing well. Now-2011



Touraine

Domaine de l’Aumonier, Coufy

Sophie and Thierry Chardon are a determined young couple who only founded their estate on bought and rented land in 1997. Since 2007 they have been undertaking the three year process to achieve organic certification.

The appeal of the wines here lies in the ripe fruitiness of the house style. We offer three whites: Vin de Pays Sauvignon, Touraine Sauvignon and a barrel fermented Chenin Blanc, Cuvée Henri. This year we introduce a barrel fermented red made from Cabernet Franc with 5% Malbec which won a bronze medal at this year's Angers fair, whilst the new 2008 vintage of Touraine Sauvignon again won the top award of the *Ligier d'Or*.

2007 Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, Vin de Pays du Jardin de la France, 12°

Bottle £5.95 Case £67.83 Code AUM307

A simple, crisp, green-fruited and mildly grassy Sauvignon Blanc, perfect for parties, salad lunches or as a mouthwatering aperitif. Drink this year.

2008 Touraine Sauvignon, 13°

Bottle £8.25 Case £94.05 Code AUM108

Our best selling white wine for the last five years. Pale yellow. Fresh, lightly floral scent. Lots of flavour - lime and ripe grapefruit - and good weight. As ever, so fruity that it's delicious on its own, though it's correctly dry and refreshing.Now-2010

2006 Domaine de l’Aumonier, Touraine, Cuvée Henri, 13°

Bottle £8.25 Case £94.05 Code AUM506

Bright and clear, with a hint of green. Clean, mildly exotic scent. Gush of vivid fruit flavours, ranging from juicy plum to white peach and pineapple. Refreshing but offering satisfying volume. Bright and summery. Now-2010

Touraine Amboise

Touraine Amboise is a very small appellation - only 220 hectares - either side of the Loire east of Tours. Two thirds is planted to red varieties, which thrive on the clay and limestone soils.

La Grange Tiphaine, Amboise

Damien & Coralie Delecheneau's reds are fascinating: somehow they achieve full ripeness allied to grace and poise. Les Cassiers is pure Gamay, Ad Libitum is roughly a third each of Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Cot (Malbec), Bécarre is from Cabernet Franc; and the top red, Clef du Sol, is a blend of 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Cot, grown on clay/silex soil. Such is the high demand for these wines from around the world that we have only tiny quantities of each, but they do make supreme summer drinking.

2008 Touraine Amboise, Les Cassiers, 13°

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code TIP708

Soft red cherry tone. Light, fresh, red-fruit aromas. Crunchy mouthful, with bright cherries to the fore. So pretty, with minimal tannin, this makes perfect light drinking. Now-2010

2007 Domaine de l’Aumonier, Touraine, Les Arpents sous bois, 13°

Bottle £9.75 Case £111.15 Code AUM707

Bright mid purple. Classic pencil shavings on the nose. Creamy red and black fruits with a mid-palate rounded by a hint of toasty oak. Attractive length indicates potential for further development. Now-2011

Domaine des Corbillières, Oisly

This estate lies at Oisly, just south of Blois in the heart of the appellation. Our usual wine here is the family's old vine cuvée, named after Dominique Barbou's great-grandfather, who was one of the pioneers of Sauvignon Blanc in Touraine. This, picked late and from low yields, is always a wine with plenty of weight and minerality, genuinely able to stand comparison with more expensive wines from the Central vineyards; and it ages surprisingly well too.

2007 Touraine Sauvignon, Fabel Barbou, 13.5°

Bottle £8.75 Case £99.75 Code COR207

Green-tinged. Intriguing, gently smokey note. Sweet attack, reminiscent almost of grilled grapefruit. Ripe and powerful, showing ripe pears and lime, and cut by true minerality. So impressive for what it is. The 2008 vintage will follow at £9.75. Now-2010



2008 Touraine Amboise, Ad Libitum, 13°

Bottle £10.50 Case £119.70 Code TIP608

Deeper coloured than Les Cassiers. Red and black fruit seasoned with clove and cinnamon spice. Correctly firm tannins and a long finish. Now-2011

2006 Touraine Amboise, Bécarre, 13.5°

Bottle £11.95 Case £136.23 Code TIP806

Youthful mid-purple. Deliciously juicy gush of raspberries and cranberries. Fine, perfumed finish. Some structure for keeping, and beautifully balanced. Now-2011

2006 Touraine Amboise, Clef du Sol, 13°

Bottle £12.50 Case £142.50 Code TIP906

Bright young purple. High-toned scent, almost minty. So light in the mouth, whilst offering a zippy palate of *fraise des bois*. Charming, sweet finish lasts a long time. Excitingly different. Now-2012