Wines of the Loire

It's been years since we made a Loire offer, but a prospecting trip in the spring rekindled our former enthusiasm for the wines of the region. In particular, after a lot of tasting amongst Saumur growers we were delighted to discover the wines of Domaine de la Guilloterie; plus we have shipped a wider range from the Branchereau family at Domaine des Forges.

The best-known wines produced along the huge length of the river are the Sauvignon Blancs from Touraine and the central vineyards of Pouilly and Sancerre, but Loire reds - see pp. 8-9 - have become so much more consistently ripe and enjoyable over the last twenty years. Chenin Blanc (arguably better known in the Cape than its home in the Loire) also gives us spectacular sweet wines in Anjou - pp.10-12.

The length and multiple micro-climates of this long band permits a hugely diverse range of wine styles, but most of the still wines from the Loire – sparkling, white, rosé and red - exhibit freshness and grace and therefore make lovely summer drinking.

THE

Simon Taylor May 2019

STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

Mixed Cases

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



MIDSUMMER TASTING

A broad selection of Loire wines from this list will feature in our Midsummer Tasting, an informal walk-round event to be held at the shop / warehouse in Twyford on Friday 21st June, 5.00pm to 8.00pm; and Saturday 22nd June, 9.30am to 3.45pm.

> Please let us know if you are planning to attend - 01962 712351 or sales@stonevine.co.uk

Valley Values £110.75 Code LO19

Two bottles of each of three whites, a rosé and two reds

Chauvinière, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2017 Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, IGP Vin de Pays de Loire 2018 Forges, Sauvignon, IGP Vin de Pays du Val de Loire, 2018 Forges, Rosé de Loire, 2018 Forges, Anjou Rouge, 2018

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur Rouge, Affinité, 2017

Loire Whites £143.90 Code LO29

Two bottles of each of six whites

Clos des Montys, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2017 Forges, Sauvignon, IGP Vin de Pays du Val de Loire, 2018 Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2018 Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernets, 2017 Cherrier, Sancerre, 2018 Guilloterie, Saumur Blanc, Les Perruches, 2017

Riparian Terroirs £169.50 Code LO39

Two bottles of each of three whites and three reds

Clos des Montys, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, Vieilles Vignes 1914, 2016 Forges, Savennières, Moulin du Gué, 2017 Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Silice, 2017 Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Tradition, 2017 Wilfrid Rousse, Chinon, Les Bois de Beaumont, 2014 Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre Rouge, 2017

Muscadet

Domaine de la Chauvinière, Chateau-Thébaud

Muscadet has suffered terribly over the last decade: from falling demand and a series of harvests dramatically hit by frost or other extreme weather. Survivors (about a third of the appellation's growers have hung up their pruning secateurs and the quantity of wine produced has shrunk dramatically) are those making the best wine, often from old vines on the finest terroirs. Against this trend Jérémie Huchet, at Chauvinière and Clos des Montys, has expanded his vineyard holdings: he's a regional superstar.

Domaine de la Chauvinière, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2017, 12%

Bottle £9.95 Case with 10% off £107.46 Code HUC117

From low yielding vines on the estate's classic granite soils. Open, generous mouthful with stone fruit, textbook zest and balance, and a dry, gently saline finish. Drink this year.

Clos des Montys, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, 2017, 12%

Bottle £10.95 Case with 10% off £118.26 Code CDM117

A superior Muscadet, from ancient vines, mostly 80-100 years old, grown on thin, sandy soils over hard metamorphic rock: perfect as a match for a wide range of seafood, but a refreshing aperitif too. There's an exoticism to this which is alluring - apricot and melon permeate the wine, though it's otherwise anti-fruity, with hints of hay and white pepper over a stony base. Now-2020

Clos des Montys, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie, Vieilles Vignes 1914, 2016, 12%

Bottle £15.50 Case with 10% off £167.40 Code HUC316

From a vineyard planted 105 years ago on a well sited plot of sandstone over amphibolite soils. A Muscadet with a completely unfamiliar depth and concentration: mineral and pear flavours; and a lingering finish. This keeps too. Now-2021



Loire Sauvignon Blanc

2018 was an unusually hot vintage in the Loire, leading to great ripeness and higher alcohol levels than usual in the Sauvignons. Many people drink Sauvignons on their own, but the dry and intense wines from the central vineyards are arguably better drunk with food. Bearing in mind the time of year it's worth pointing out that Loire Sauvignon Blanc is arguably the best pairing for asparagus!



Les Chardons, Sauvignon Blanc, IGP Vin de Pays de Loire, 2018, 13%

Bottle £9.95 Case with 10% off £107.46 Code AUM318

Surprisingly tropical aroma. In this hot vintage this is riper and more rounded than usual, with ripe citrus and hint of pineapple. Refreshing finish. Now-2020

Domaine des Forges, Sauvignon, IGP Vin de Pays du Val de Loire, 2018, 12.5%

Bottle £10.50 Case with 10% off £113.40 Code FOR718

Very pale, almost water white. Very correct, bright and zippy. Now-2020

Domaine de l'Aumonier, Touraine Sauvignon, 2018, 13.5%

Bottle £12.50 Case with 10% off £135.00 Code AUM118

From organically farmed vines, this is a long-established best-seller here, admired for its overt fruitiness, which is particularly pronounced in the hot 2018 vintage. Well delineated ripe citrus with more tropical fruit hints. Makes a relaxing aperitif. Now-2020

Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Pernets, 2017, 12.5%

Bottle £15.50 Case with 10% off £167.40 Code BLA117

Always very true to the appellation: bright lemon over a mineral acid thread. Fresh and bone dry on the finish. Pair with simply prepared white fish. Now-2020

Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, 2018, 14%

Bottle £16.25 Case with 10% off £175.50 Code ROS118

The latest vintage of this Loire classic from the Cherrier family in Verdigny is as crisp and bright as ever, despite the unusual summer heat. Intense, irony depth behind ripe citrus. Now-2021

Francis Blanchet, Pouilly-Fumé, Les Silice, 2017, 13%

Bottle £16.50 Case with 10% off £178.20 Code BLA217

From a small block on very flinty soils in the heart of the appellation, this is an intense and ageworthy wine. Smelling of citrus peel and hawthorn blossom, it's intensely grapefruity. A splendidly long, steely finish, with a peppery sense of minerality, indicates its class. Could stand up to wellflavoured fish or light chicken dishes. Now-2021

Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre, L'Essentiel, 2017, 13.5%

Bottle £16.95 Case with 10% off £183.06 Code ROS417

L'Essentiel is a selection from a vineyard farmed biodynamically, made naturally, left for an extended time on its lees and then bottled without filtration. Explosively open scent of ripe citrus and white flowers; and then an exotically flavoured mouthful of greengages, grapefruit and orchard fruits. In some ways akin to a very lightly oaked white Bordeaux, this is a fascinating and exciting bottle. Now-2021



Chenin Blanc - Dry

Chenin Blanc is the dominant grape of the middle Loire, around Tours and Angers. The ultimate expression of dry Chenin unquestionably comes from Savennières, a tiny appellation of about 80 hectares of vines on schistous southfacing hillsides on the north side of the Loire just west of Angers. Here yields are highly restricted, the grapes are late picked, and usually fermented bone dry to 13.5%-14%.

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur Blanc, Les Perruches, 2017, 13.5%

Bottle £14.25 Case with 10% off £153.90 Code GUL617

From a new domaine for us, this is a very superior, barrelfermented Saumur Blanc from 50 year old vines. Lovely scent of honey and orange blossom. This builds expansively on the palate, with notes of orange and kumquats and the merest hint of Brazil nut fatness and bitterness. A long fresh finish leaves one wanting more. Now-2020

Domaine des Forges, Savennières, Moulin du Gué, 2017, 13.5%

Bottle £16.50 Case with 10% off £178.20 Code FOR817

The first of the Branchereaus' Savennières is from Chenin Blanc grown on sand and shale soils and given 11 months in old barrels: it's a wine to enjoy lively and young: mid-weight, poised, with energy and a stony freshness. Very good with white fish or salmon. Now-2021

Domaine des Forges, Savennières Roche aux Moines, 2017, 14%

Bottle £25.50 Case with 10% off £275.40 Code FOR917

Though less than 30 hectares in area, since 2011 Savennières Roche aux Moines has had its own appellation, next to the famed Coulée de Serrant. For this wine the grapes are picked over several weeks for full ripeness (and a touch of botrytis). Very open honeyed aromas before a stunningly rich, almost unctuous but wholly dry, palate showing apricot and quince flavours. Weighty and very long indeed. Could pair a wide range of dishes, for example veal or chicken in a creamy sauce. Now-2024 *Limited stock*.



Sparkling Wine

Diamant de Loire, Crémant de Loire, Brut, France, NV, 12.5%

Bottle £12.75 Case with 10% off £137.70 Code DIA1NV

This was a very successful addition to our list last year, an easy-drinking, light, perfectly clean and fresh sparkling wine from Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay - produced in the same way as Champagne (i.e with a secondary fermentation in the bottle to create the fizz). Ripe, gently appley fruit, lightly creamy, with a little structure too. Easy to like, and classier than a lot of Prosecco. Now-2020

Rosé

Domaine des Forges, Rosé de Loire, 2018, 11.5%

Bottle £10.25 Case with 10% off £110.70 Code FOR518

A dry rosé made from about 70% Grolleau and 30% Cabernet Franc, given a slow, gentle pressing in a pneumatic press – arguably a better way to make quality rosé than bleeding off a tank of red wine. Warm pink. This has a charming perfume of crushed red fruits; and a subtle flavour of *fraises des bois* and ripe red cherries. Fresh and clean, excellent as an aperitif or for a cold lunch – and note the lowish alcohol level too. Now-2020





Red

We have been neglecting Loire reds in recent years, but this is an unintelligent omission as the region has been a winner in the climate change stakes. Traditionally Loire red grapes only ripened perfectly about three times a decade, but now, with longer and warmer summers - and more sophisticated viticulture - the reds are almost every year. So this year we have added the delicious red Saumurs of Domaine de la Guilloterie – and again list a sub £10 Cabernet Franc in Forges' crunchy Anjou Rouge.

The first four wines are from Cabernet Franc. Cabernet Franc can be served slightly chilled; and goes very well with all ham, charcuterie and pork dishes. Roast ham and a decent red Loire is a match made in heaven.

Domaine des Forges, Anjou Rouge, 2018, 13.5%

Bottle £9.95 Case with 10% off £107.46 Code FOR418

Pure Cabernet Franc, unoaked. 2018 was a particularly hot summer so this is surprisingly ripe and concentrated. Lively, juicy and energetic – terrific for an unpretentious Anjou Rouge. Now-2021

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur Rouge, Affinité, 2017, 13.5%

Bottle £10.95 Case with 10% off £118.26 Code GUL117

We found Guilloterie in the early spring: here are two lovely reds, both made with micro-oxygenation, a technique which just softens the wine. Affinité is unoaked Cabernet Franc from 10-40 year old vines grown on *argilo-calcaire* soils over a *tuffeau* (Loire limestone) base. Such a correct Loire Cab. Franc – from a strawberryish scent via a juicy, supple core of red fruits to its slatey and savoury hints. Excellent at the price. Now-2021

Domaine de la Guilloterie, Saumur-Champigny, Tradition, 2017, 13.5%

Bottle £12.95 Case with 10% off £139.86 Code GUL317

We loved the estate's principal wine: enticingly dramatic purple, with a perfume made up of berries and roses, this is rounded and richly fruited, showing an appealing fatness and lip-smacking drinkability. Lots of life; long and complete. A winner. Now-2022

Wilfrid Rousse, Chinon, Les Bois de Beaumont, 2014, 12.5%

Bottle £15.95 Case with 10% off £172.26 Code ROT114

Wilfrid Rousse is making exemplary Chinons from his 18 hectares of organically farmed (and certified) vines. This is from 50 year old vines on argilo-calcaire soils on the slopes, aged in old barrels. Cood weight and flesh, archetypal Loire Cabernet Franc. Now-2021

Cherrier Père et fils, Sancerre Rouge, 2017, 13%

Bottle £16.95 Case with 10% off £183.06 Code ROS617

The Cherriers' pure Pinot Noir, half aged in old barrels, is no thin and wan example, but a really fruity wine which looks good value in comparison to Burgundies from over the hills to the east: intense red fruits, bright and jewelly, a bite of fresh acid and attractive length. Now-2020





Demi-Sec to Sweet

Are these wines the greatest made in the entire Loire Valley? Certainly they offer unbelievable value for their concentration and finesse - and the labour involved, as the Chenin grapes are picked in a succession of tries, passages through the vinevards in autumn to hand-pick bunches. Chenin Blanc has brilliant attributes as a grape for late harvest, sweet wine production: it's thick-skinned, so it holds its integrity even in equinoctial rain; and it also retains its acidity even as sugar levels rise in the autumn sunshine. It's the thrilling balance of sugar and acidity (as with top German Rieslings) which makes these wines so appealing. Secondly the combination of climate and local topography encourages the growth of botrytis cinerea, the "noble rot" fungus, which both concentrates the grape juice by leaching out water and also lends a particular honeysuckle and barley sugar flavour to wine made from affected grapes. Autumn morning fogs. held in the sharply cut valleys of the Layon river and side streams, offer perfect conditions for the fungus to thrive.

Be aware that because of the relatively high levels of acidity these wines are not "pudding" wines to be paired with sweet desserts. They are lovely to sip on their own; the lighter examples are superb with rich pâté or foie gras; all accompany cheese, especially blue cheese (salty and sweet together, oh yes); and the sweeter wines can match light fruit desserts (the Branchereaus at Domaine des Forges recommend rhubarb or apricot tart).

Some in the Loire think one should drink the better sweet wines either young - within a few years of the vintage - or alternatively after about eight years: they believe they may go through a dumb stage in between vibrant youth and mature complexity.

Gilles Gaudron, Vouvray Demi-Sec, Les Pierres Rousses, 2014, 12.5%

Bottle £13.50 Case with 10% off £145.80 Code GAU314

Gilles Gaudron is the latest of four generations to control this 25 hectare domaine comprising 50 small plots, along with 1000 metres of 13th century troglodyte cellars.

This is the definitive wine pair for any rich liver pâté - try it, it's sensational - but also a deliciously moreish aperitif. Aromas of pear, table grapes and honey. On the palate a breadth of subtle passion fruit and pineapple flavours with a delicate sweetness are held in check by a fine acid structure. Now-2020 Limited stock



Domaine des Forges, Coteaux du Layon St Aubin, 2017, 12%

Bottle £14.50 Case with 10% off £156.60 Code FOR617

Saint-Aubin-de-Luigné lies between the Loire and Layon rivers. This offers absurdly good value for a wine of such richness and weight; and from vines with an average age of forty years too. Pale gold. Wonderfully honeyed nose. Very sweet attack, showing honey over stone fruit, but with marmalade botrytis character too. Concentrated but finishes with authentic acidity. Much richer than usual for this cuvée. Now-2024

Domaine des Forges, Coteaux du Layon Chaume, Les Onnis, 2016, 11.5%

Bottle £23.50 Case with 10% off £253.80 Code FOR216

From a steep, grassed vineyard beside Quarts de Chaume and near the river, so open to botrytis; and always a longlived, luscious, barrel aged wine with high levels of residual sugar. Dramatically bittersweet, with barleysugar and pure honey laced with rapier acidity. Very intense, already complex, yet so well balanced, and so long. Now-2027

Château Pierre-Bise, Les Rouannières, Coteaux du Layon, Beaulieu, 2014, 11.5% (50cl.)

50 cl. bottle £20.95 Case (12 x 50cl. bottles) with 10% off £226.26 Code CPB514

From a vineyard on thin soil over spilite ("pierre-bise") at this famed estate. Mid gold. Rich, but not over-sweet, with tangy citrus cutting the mandarin and lychee flavours. Lightly honeyed. Now-2024

Domaine Sylvain Gaudron, Vouvray, Grain d'Or, 1er Tri, 2010, 11% (50cl.)

50 cl. bottle £23.95 Case (12 x 50cl. Bottles) with 10% off £258.66 Code GAU410

Fine, dry weather at the end of October and into early November allowed this careful selection of individual berries affected by noble rot. This mid-gold coloured wine has 115g/l residual sugar, so is not that sweet; but it is wonderfully rounded and delicately textured, with honey and pure ripe orchard fruit flavours. Now-2022 *Limited stock*

Château Pierre-Bise, Quarts de Chaume, 2006, 11% (50cl.)

50 cl. bottle £27.50 Case (12 x 50cl. Bottles) with 10% off £297.00 Code CPB206

Quarts de Chaume (literally the best quarter of the village of Chaume) is, along with Bonnezeaux, one of the top two sweet wine appellations in the whole of the Loire. Lustrous gold. This is superbly smooth and honeyed, delivering a lovely (and dangerously more-ish) gush of quince and stone fruit. Drinking perfectly but will keep for years, such is the balance and purity. Now-2022



STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

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