

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME “Loire Valley”
Thursday, September 4, 2008

PRICES ARE FOR:

1 BOTTLE – 6 BOTTLES – 12 BOTTLES (Mixing is OK!)

Les Hautes Noelles Muscadet, Cotes de Grandlieu, “Les Granges,” 2006 100% Melon de Bourgogne
\$15 each - \$13.50 (6) - \$12.75 (12)

A stony, yeasty nose with melon and citrus aromas leads into flavors of green melon, grapefruit, and crisp minerality. Would be great with oysters!

Francois Cazin Cheverny, “Le Petit Chambord,”
2007 85% Sauvignon Blanc, 15% Chardonnay
\$18 each - \$16.20 (6) - \$15.30 (12)

Pear, lime pith, and melon aromas start the experience, which continues with stony lime and grapefruit in a clean, crisp, refreshing, well-structured wine of medium body and lengthy finish. Try with shellfish.

Domaines des Aubuisieres Vouvray 2007 100%
Chenin Blanc
\$18 each - \$16.20 (6) - \$15.30 (12)

Ripe apricots and honey over stone on the nose, followed by rich, lush peach and apricot on the palate with touches of flint and charcoal and honey on the finish. Drink alone or with creamy chicken dishes.

Domaine St. Vincent Saumur Champigny 2007
100% Cabernet Franc
\$16 each - \$14.40 (6) - \$13.60 (12)

Jammy nose of red cherry and blackberry with a touch of smoke. The smoke continues in the mouth, with more cherry in this medium-bodied wine. Would pair with bistro food.

Domaine des Vallettes Bourgueil 2006
100% Cabernet Franc
\$19 each - \$17.10 (6) - \$16.15 (12)

Aromas of sweet red fruit, smoke, and tobacco waft from the glass. Very fine tannins and a touch of acidity provide the framework for currant and blackberry flavors. Medium weight with a longer finish. Spicy roast chicken, root vegetables, and eggplant or mushroom dishes go well with this wine.

See you next Thursday for HANG TIME!
Our subject will be “Italian Favorites from
Importer Marc de Grazia.”
EXPLORE THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS.

Loire Valley

The Loire is France’s longest river, running some 630 miles from its source in the Ardèche north to Orléans then west to the Atlantic. It passes through three distinct geographic areas, each with its own soils. Close to the ocean, the climate is mild with a long growing season (though dampness and spring frosts are

problems). Inland, summers are hot and winters harsh. Rainfall and sun are variable in both areas, so vintages matter.

The Romans grew grapes and made wine; medieval monasteries founded many of the greatest vineyards. A thriving wine trade grew up along the river, with wines shipped by water inland to Paris and overseas to England (Anjou wines were popular as early as 1160) and the Netherlands. The Dutch dominated the wine trade from the early 16th century on. Exploiting tax disparities, they strongly influenced the varieties of grapes planted in the lower Loire. Vineyard blights struck in the late 19th century, and it was only during the period between world wars that the trade started its recovery. Vineyards were replanted, schools founded, regulations created (ignored as often as heeded), and techniques in vineyards and cellars improved, particularly after WW II. The late 1970s saw a renaissance that continues today.

White wine dominates production; Chenin Blanc, Melon de Bourgogne (Muscadet), and Sauvignon Blanc are the main grapes. Chenin is the crown jewel, producing wines both sweet and dry, still and sparkling, ageworthy and meant to be drunk young. Cabernet Franc leads the red grapes; made in both a fruity, easy style meant to be drunk young and a complex, age-worthy version from old vines.

Let’s look at today’s wines, moving from west to east. Closest to the Atlantic is the Muscadet region; the **Hautes Noelles “Les Granges”** comes from the Cotes de Grand Lieu on the south side of the river. It is made *sur lie*; here these are fine lees, with dirt, bugs, and stems removed, leaving only spent yeast cells. Not only does this increase the flavor and richness of the wine, but it also traps some CO₂, making the wine a touch sparkling. Wine must be bottled in the cellar in which it was made. Muscadet is dry, lacy, fresh, minerally, delicate with “steely vigor” and has flavors of minerals, apples, lemon, and almond. They pair with oysters, river fish and shellfish.

Anjou is next, and Chenin is the undisputed jewel, particularly the sweet styles. Next come Saumur and Saumur-Champigny, home to both reds and whites. The latter is the source of **Dom. St. Vincent “Les Trezelières,”** a Cabernet Franc in a bistro style made on a family domaine named after winegrowers’ patron saint. Well made and refreshing, this wine goes well with duck, sausage and bistro fare.

Moving east to Touraine brings us to the home of Vouvray, where Chenin is showcased in every possible form. Bernard Fouquet at **Dom. Des Aubuisières** offers “**Cuvée de Silex,**” a brilliant, award-winning example of a still wine to drink with fish, chicken, and goat cheese. Touraine also holds the Chinon AOC, and Bourgueil AOC, both making bistro-style Cab Francs and deep, rich, age-worthy versions. Wines from both these regions are similar, structured by fine tannins and characterized by cherry and plum flavors. **Dom. Des Vallettes** is a family estate headed by the sixth generation of Jamets. This concentrated wine spent a year in new oak, adding vanilla to its stewy fruits. It would drink well with game, red meat, and ripe cheese. Our final stop in the Touraine region is Cheverny, an AOC created in 1993. Rules insist that the wine be a blend containing at least 60% Sauvignon Blanc and at least 15% Chardonnay, with other grapes permitted. Francis and François Cazin, a father-son team, are the only ones in the area who still hand-harvest their grapes. The wine is made with wild yeasts, moved only by gravity and bottled unfiltered. Its fresh minerality is enhanced by the appleness of Chardonnay. As with most Loire whites, this wine loves fish.

The Loire continues—to Sancerre and beyond—but our journey ends here.