

Chapter 1 : Loire Valley Wine Guide | Wine Folly

A Wine & Food Guide to the Loire The book won the following Best Wine & Spirits Book of the Year award: James Beard, IACP (Julia Child), *Veuve Cliquot*, *Decanter* magazine, Robert Parker (*The Wine Advocate*).

My various reflections on Didier Dagueneau compiled and posted here. Wine Tasting Notes February I chose the former. The riverboat event was presenting Loire wines I already knew and could easily catch up on; the wine lounge was the setting for an extraordinary tasting of Darroze Armagnacs, long one of my favorites. Darroze, like most Armagnac producers – particularly those in Bas-Armagnac – works chiefly with three grapes: Baco is heavier than the other grapes and ages well; Folle Blanche brings elegance and finesse but rots easily -- as anyone in the Muscadet region knows: Folle Blanche, known in the Muscadet area as Gros Plant, is, arguably, at its most typical when its flavor profile includes a fair percentage of rot; and Ugni Blanc, commonly used in Cognac. The Domaine de Jouanchicot, pure Ugni Blanc, really did recall Cognac, a very, very good, extremely pure one. Atelier number 2 presented 8 Armagnacs composed of varying percentages of the above grapes. I found that the age was at least as important as the blend in determining the flavor. The eight year old reminded me of a Speyside malt. Darroze observed that it could be served on the rocks as an aperitif. The most complex so far, it was also strong, muscular and long. The , a bit flatter, had attractive notes of caramel and less pervasive ones of shellac. On the palate there were flavors of coffee, preserved ginger, orange zest and oak. Food and Wine Pairing of the Year No one has to tell me that Armagnac and chocolate is a marriage divine. I have never understood the pairing of chocolate and red wine – fortified or not. Speaking of felicity again, I found my wine and food pairing of the year at this event. Here was culinary rhapsody that removes you from the world for the all-too-brief instant it takes to consume the combined delicacies. Workshop Number 3 On to Atelier 3, the theme of which was vintage combined with aging. All included varying degrees of similar flavors: Very hard to spit. At some point in the afternoon the weather turned violent, pelting the roof of the conservatory with rain. Here was the perfect ambiance in which to savor the final flight of Armagnacs: Another taster wisely decided – self-interest rules afterall – that we were allowed to swallow any Armagnac that was older than we were. And so we did, over and over and over, while rain pounded down on the roof of the winter garden. First came a beautiful Chateau de Lasserate bottled in Oct. Then came the penetrating, infinitely complex, menthol-accented Domaine de Peyrot bottled which I preferred to its only slightly less captivating sibling, the A fiery Chateau Bataille bottled wanted a bit of taming but a Domaine de Maubaret bottled , while equally sappy and vivid, was beguiling and well-integrated. Back to Domaine de Peyrot with a bottled in , fragrant, ginger, complex and intriguing; then a lipsmacking Domaine de Picpout bottled and finishing with another glorious Domaine de Peyrot, this one a mellow bottled Hours had slipped by unnoticed. I had one more slice of foie gras-on-toast and another snifter of that last Peyrot and left the lounge, singing in the rain. Which Armagnac was the best? I choose to answer that question with another question: How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? I checked out a number of websites and decided to give samples prices from Wine-Searcher as it offers a range: There are, of course, very good, indeed excellent Armagnacs, that will do less damage to your bank account. Here are recommendations of two producers whose Armagnacs I have recently enjoyed. It is devoted to sustainable agriculture and biodiversity, which I mention because I love the fact that it looses between and ewes in its Armaganc vineyards from October to May in order to provide fertilizer. Stains on a label are signs of love. Now that I live in France, my tasting vistas are more limited geography-wise. But what France lacks in breadth, its tasting possibilities make up for in depth. Improvised groups of six to ten to thirty vigneron, generally from small, young domaines and rather obscure appellations, often plan tasting events in wine bars and restaurants. To name but a few: One of the forerunners, Les Gens du Mtier, was founded in the s by Pascal Delbeck, Didier Dagueneau and a handful of other like-minded vigneron. The most recent even occurred earlier this week, on Monday, November 26, I admit that I tasted at only about half the stands. Herewith a couple of coups de coeur: This house has always been one of my favorites in the Beaujolais region. Even their primeur is delicious. But as they brought a multitude of wines – the primeur, an effervescent, a white, a rose, several basic Beaujolais and a cluster of

crus â€” I decided to stick with the reds. A velvet swath of luscious, cherry-and-spice-rich gamay spread across the tongue. The wine was simply irresistible. One of my favorite interviews and tastings was with Paolo di Marchi at Isole e Olena. Les Gens du Metier now includes a handful of producers from beyond the hexagon. Here was a welcoming, full, spicy red, dreaming of a meaty stew to partner. Nady, of course, was showing his Champignys. Mightily promising but overwhelmed by oak and begging for long aging. The Sancerre blanc was pellucid, strong and dominated by mineral flavors. A style I adore. And it had none of the mid-palate softness I associate with the whites. This was one of the pleasant surprises of the day: Philippe told me that he considered the vintage the equal of the great -- at least for him. No frost damage, no maladies and only a slight reduction in volume. Hand harvested, by successive passes through the vineyard and transported in small cases. Put in pneumatic press immediately upon arrival at the cellar. It took a little while -- and a little wine, as I went back for another sip and then another. As this was a medium-sized Montlouis tasting, I was spitting between sips. Most of the time, anyway. So I started with the first sniff and found what to me was a mingled, nuanced, chenin nose, a mellow fruit compote of apples and quince, which followed through on the palate, interwoven with good, well integrated acidity. The finish was very long and echoed all the above flavors. It is everything a dry Montlouis should be. There seemed to be some residual sugar, maybe around 2 grams. Actually there were three. So a very fine sec-tendre. It really is perfect. Nicolas de Bourgueil, Tasty Selections from "Off" vintages: On day two, the wine had fleshed out, with deep plum flavors and real succulence. Spices, cooked fruit, cassis, mint and mild oak were among the flavors in this savory, cool and lightly tannic wine. On night One, it was an excellent partner for porc la moutarde. On night Two, cooked plum and dried cherry joined the mix. The wine can still age but is drinking beautifully. It outshone whatever I served for dinner. This wine was among those I served at Thanksgiving. At the time, it was tasty but failed to charm: Cut to May Focused, with chiseled black cherry fruit, it tasted as if it were fresh from the wine tree. A relatively early-drinking cuve, the wine was simultaneously light but substantial. It had lost its youthful exuberance but had settled down nicely, with soft tannins and comforting flavors of baked cherry, melon and lightly infused black tea. Made from forty year old vines grown on clay-silica soils, the wine was lightly tannic, with very mild oak notes aging occurred in demi-muids, rich spice flavors combined with bacon, canteloupe, dried berries, and leather. A vein of succulence ran through it. Perhaps the most evolved of the Mabileau s, the wine was nicely structured and its flavors of spice, leather and dried cherry proved a delectable accompaniment for chicken cooked with white wine, garlic and rosemary. The Boisard brothers add no yeast and not sugar and do not filter their wines which are certified organic. A healthy ruby, this wine offered red cherry, light spice and bacon flavors. It was solid, nicely structured and coherent from beginning to end. With aeration, baked plum and cherry as well as truffle flavors emerged. It was not marked by oak which, regrettably, was the case with the St. A smooth, velvety, unfiltered red, the wine exuded flavors of black cherry, cassis, mild oak, ripe tannins and an appetizingly bitter edge. It had great freshness and was perfect with duck legs cooked with onions, carrots and celery.

Chapter 2 : A Wine and Food Guide to the Loire | Eat Your Books

Jacqueline Friedrich's Wine and Food Guide to the Loire is truly enlightening on these points. We used her book to develop our own 14 day tour of the Loire Valley and, thanks to many of her tips, it was "a trip of a lifetime".

Vineyards are close to the right bank of the river or nearby on soft, sheltered slopes. The slate, schist, and clay soils give the wine structure, balanced acidity and minerality, combined with concentrated flavors reminiscent of white linden flowers, anise, pear, candied lemon drops, and hazelnuts. The wines are produced in an oxidative style, making them taste very different more nutty, less fresh and fruity than other Chenin Blanc from the region. Saumur Region Saumur is sparkling wine country. Vineyards planted on limestone soils give the grapes the bright acidity they need to make outstanding sparkling wines. Under the vineyards lie miles and miles of tunnels and caves, carved from the limestone – the perfect place to age these delicious, bright bubbly. Many claim these earthy spiced Cabernet Franc-based reds, with silky tannins and notes of violet, are the best in the Loire. There are also superb sparkling wines and a few surprises. Most of the vineyards are found to the south of the city of Tours, planted on the slopes of the Loire and Cher Rivers. Soils range from chalk, sand, gravel, clay and limestone pebbles. The most notable soil type is tuffeau, a porous limestone soil that contributes to the zesty acidity found in the grapes of Touraine. Inside this AOP are several special zones that are allowed to add their village name: The region suffered problems in the past phylloxera, urban sprawl but is now enjoying a revival. Currently six producers are making vin gris of Pinot Noir, Pinot Munier, and Pinot Gris – all brimming with cherry and strawberry aromas, and lots of finesse. This requirement makes this appellation comparable to Champagne, but at much lower prices. The grapes are grown on the distinctive, tuffeau limestone soils, creating intensely fruity still wines, ranging from dry to sweet, and high quality sparkling wines. Sec is the driest 0 – 0. The wines are crafted dry to sweet and have an earthier, more mineral quality compared to Vouvray. Bourgueil AOP Instantly recognizable Cabernet Franc wines known for their aromas of graphite think pencil shavings, strawberry, and raspberry. Nicholas de Bougueil AOP: Yielding Cabernet Franc reds and roses with lighter aromatics that are easy going and reveal lots of red fruit when young. Legend says this variety was originally planted here by Cardinal Richelieu. Instead of regulating the percentages of grapes that go into the blend, here it is the percentage of each grape planted in the vineyard. Inside the Cheverny appellation is the only region to craft wines from the indigenous Romorantin grape. Think citrus, beeswax, and honey. Wines are made off-dry on excellent vintages. Whites show the more tropical and exotic side of Sauvignon Blanc, sometimes blended with a little Sauvignon Gris. Definitely worth looking into if you like a richer, fuller style. Thus, whites of Sauvignon Blanc are refreshing. Chardonnay is the main white variety, referred to as Auvernat Blanc by the locals. The Sauvignon Blanc from these two areas are emulated throughout the wine world. The climate is what can be called semi-continental with big differences in the daytime and nighttime temperatures the diurnal swing. Frost is always a concern during spring and fog engulfs the valley in the fall. Centre is closest to the source of the Loire River in the Massif Central Mountains and the majority of the vineyards are found along the river where they take advantage of its temperature moderating influence. The soils vary quite a bit with three distinct soil types, all found atop a base of Kimmeridgian Limestone, the same as Chablis, parts of Champagne, and the white cliffs of Dover. Terre Blanche is a mix of clay, Kimmeridgian limestone, and oyster shells, creating wines that are fruity, ageable, and angular with high acidity Caillotes features small pebbles of Oxfordian limestone and yields wines with delicate perfume and less structure than Terre Blanche Silex, or flint, lends a smoky, gunflint quality to the grapes.

Chapter 3 : Loire Valley Top 10 Tours & Activities (with Photos) - Things to Do in Loire Valley, France

A Wine and Food Guide to the Loire, France's Royal River by Jacqueline Friedrich Veuve Clicquot-Wine Book of the Year Winner of the Julia Child Award Winner of the James Beard Award Here, finally, is the first comprehensive guide to the five wine regions of the Loire.

Like all things French, there are many rules that come with the production of wine. To be classified as AOC, wines must be made from approved grapes in specific areas. Each AOC region sets forth their own rules regarding harvesting, vinification, and packaging. Chablis is a town in Burgundy, not a type of grape. Although mostly associated with red, Bordeaux also produces white wine. Sure, Sancerre white wines are world renowned, but those are just the tip of the iceberg for Loire Valley wines. However, they deserve consideration from even the biggest wine snob. But with 50 appellations and denominations, where does one begin? Known for its crisp, whites made from Melon de Bourgogne grapes, these light-bodied wines pair nicely with seafood, especially oysters. Given its proximity to the Bay of Bourgneuf, this makes perfect sense. Pale yellow, with notes of fruit and flowers, Muscadet whites are refreshing. The Chenin Blanc grapes that are used to make the sweet Bonnezeaux wines are grown on a tiny parcel and are hand picked only when super ripe. Bonnezeaux wines can be aged for decades, which develop in color from golden to copper and in flavors from citrus and apricots to honey. Drink these wines with foie gras as a starter and with blue cheese or pear gateau to round out a meal. This glass-enclosed restaurant offers excellent views of the vineyards, as well as tasty French food. The grapes are grown just outside of the restaurant and the domaine owner might just be sitting at the table next to you. Go for a tasting at this historical property. Chaume Similar to Bonnezeaux, Chaume is sweet, with great potential for aging. Located on a tiny parcel, in a single village, on the right bank of the Layon River are the Chenin Blanc grapes grown to make Chaume. The golden-to-auburn color, complex aromas of stone and candied fruits, spice, nuts, and honey are complimented by sweet and fruity flavors. These are also delicious with foie gras and blue cheeses. Saumur Saumur is located in the middle of the Loire Valley. Today, these hollowed-out caves are used as wine cellars. Bouvet-Ladubay was started in , then quickly gained acclaim for its sparkling wines, which were exported around the world. A visit here is an unforgettable experience. After touring the former offices designed by Gustave Eiffel, descend into the five-kilometer system of tunnels on a vintage bicycle, while wearing a battery-operated headlamp. Learn about the various stages of winemaking and see more than 1, oak barrels, as well as ancient sculptures. The cellars are located above the St. Florent Abbey ruins, which date to the 11th century. After, visit the tasting room for a flight of sparkling wines, including a red sparkling, the contemporary art museum and their 19th century theater. A boat captain and domaine owner, Denis will show you the beautiful town of Saumur from the water, while enjoying locally sourced foods and wines from his vineyard. Producing dry, sweet, and sparkling white wines, Vouvray wines work with a variety of foods. Drink sparkling with sushi, dry wines with shellfish and spicy foods, and the sweet with an apple tart. For time in the vines, look no further than Myriam Fouasse-Robert. Born into a family of wine growers from Vouvray, Myriam now is the wife of a wine grower at Vignoble Alain Robert. Her tour, From Vine to Wine, features a walk through the vineyard, a look at the winery and cellar, and a wine tasting alongside local food specialties. Sancerre On the far eastern side of the Loire Valley is the small town of Sancerre. Garnet in color, the reds smell and taste of cherries, and are delicious with salmon. The caves are located in the heart of Sancerre and well worth a visit. Pale yellow, the Menetou-Salon whites are medium bodied and pale yellow in color. The medium-bodied reds smell of stone fruit and have candied fruit flavors. Its menu changes daily, featuring in-season products. Named for its smoky gunflint smell, wines in this appellation are strictly white made with Sauvignon Blanc grapes. These light-to-medium bodied wines typically have a strong white flower and citrus smell and a crisp, acidic citrus and flint taste. Pair them with seafood and white meat. Now, Sophie Landrat-Guyollot is at the helm of this beautiful vineyard. Her attention to the quality of wines spills over into every aspect of the business, from the art on the labels to the design of the tasting room. Loire Valley wines are not only delicious, but also an excellent value.

Chapter 4 : Food and drink of the Loire - Rough Guides | Rough Guides

A Wine and Food Guide to the Loire by Jacqueline Friedrich Veuve Clicquot-Wine Book of the Year Winner of the Julia Child Award Winner of the James Beard Award Here, finally, is the first comprehensive guide to the five wine regions of the Loire.

I stumbled into this one quite by chance one Sunday lunchtime and it was just a treat: Inexpensive, yet very proper with crisp linen, sparkling crystal and fine Laguiole silverware, the food was perfect and simple: Le Promenade is situated about a mile west of the small village of St-Mathurin-sur-Loire. Wine visiting and shopping Just on the eastern outskirts of the city of Saumur are a number of sparkling Saumur producers who welcome visitors with attractive facilities. On the Langlois tour you will visit the caves, and be given a small introductory course on how wine is made not just sparkling, as they produce a whole range of wines , including mini-lectures on terroir, the production of sparkling wine and how to taste. The visits are very well organised and welcoming. Open every day, tours last around one hour and can be taken between Charles Joguey is one of the leading lights of Loire wine-making. His Chinon vineyards produce some of most profound Cabernet Franc wines of the region and are just 15 miles or so south east of Saumur in the village of Sazilly. Appointments are advisable, as they are at Couly-Dutheil in Chinon itself. Be sure to see the cellars, carved deep into the rock-face. The Chenins Blanc of Coteaux du Layon and the superior enclaves of Quarts de Chaume and Bonnezeaux are some of the greatest botrytis-affected sweet wines in the world. The region is rather tucked away, about 25 miles west of Saumur, but the drive is beautiful and there are some marvellous riverside spots for a picnic. Again both domaines prefer prior reservations. In Saumur itself â€” a good sized town with plenty of life about it â€” there is a small Maison du Vin; a wine museum and shop. Closed for lunch when I visited and looking a bit dowdy, but perhaps worth a visit. Definitely worth a visit is the large LeClerc hypermarket just on the western edge of town at boulevard Delattre de Tassigny. LeClerc is always worth a look when you come across one as they have a pretty good wine selection that always reflects the local region. However, this is a very different kettle of fish indeed: It is a wonderful temple of fine wine. On sale is not only a fine, fine selection of Loire wines, including sweet wines going back to the turn of the century, but all the Grands Vins of France, including every vintage of Mouton-Rothschild for the past years! Prices on the most famous wines are nothing special, but there are bargains to be found and good advice as well as free tastings is available from the helpful and knowledgeable staff. I enjoyed a very interesting hour tasting and chatting to the very helpful Nick Pringent, and came away with some interesting stuff. The Cabernet Franc wines of the area have me intrigued: The sweet wines are amongst the greatest on the earth, so all-in-all, a very attractive destination for the wine lover.

Chapter 5 : Sancerre: The Ultimate French Sauvignon Blanc? | Wine Folly

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

My various reflections on Didier Dagueneau compiled and posted here. Jancis Robinson has placed it on her list of favorite wine books. I have signed a contract with University of California Press for a completely revised and updated edition. The Loire tasting notes in this section date from before February. Since February all tasting notes, including the Loire, are in the aptly titled Tasting Notes section. For recent Loire tasting notes, scroll past Blurbs. Also, check FrenchFeast for notes on the Loire wine weekend chez moi. She is perceptive and painstaking and writes with clear, decisive strokes. Nor does she forget that the Loire is Rabelais country; the pleasure principle is uppermost. This is not only essential reference, it is mouth-watering. I am truly impressed by it and so grateful for its existence. It is a pioneering work I would not even think of visiting the Loire without it. Comments on the vintage in the Loire will follow. Each of these wines will hold its own in a good cellar but they can also be enjoyed young on the fruit if decanted at least an hour before serving. Six months should do it. You can start drinking immediately. Simply super, with lush fruit interwoven with oak, fine structure. Note that the two were tank samples and the three, none of which had been bottled at the time of the Salon, were barrel samples. Oak disappears behind the lush fruit. Chock-full of similarly luscious fruit, it was firmly structured, though a hint of gameyness troubled me. Jasnières and Coteaux du Loir: Perhaps a whiff of geosmin but quite minor. Recalls, in spirit, top cuvees of pure Carignan in Languedoc-Roussillon. All were extremely fresh, textured, and promising. The wine is richer, chalky, promising though slightly gamey. A terroir-driven wake-up call. A wine to follow. A honeyed, deeply mineral Chenin, with depth and focus. Note that all of the three tasted were tank or barrel samples. Ready to drink with roast ham and pineapples? A bottle would disappear in a flash. Chill, carafe and drink now or wait a year or two. Structured, very dry, very fresh, lovely fruit, not a touch of exaggeration, un vin sage, very good. Just as gorgeous on the palate, with notes of quince, apple and honey and a long, long finish. The wine, with grams residual sugar, is trespassing on Rieussec territory. A civilized Saumur Blanc, with tender oak notes, it should probably evolve well. See the one below. A fine partner for haute cuisine. I could drink it by the bucket. Flavors of honey, apple compote, minerals and citrus zests harmonize beautifully. Cremant de Loire -- Chiefly Chenin Blanc, with almost no dosage, this is a fresh, dry top-notch example of the appellation. An exciting young domaine. Unusual in many respects, including the fact that they make absolutely no white wine, only dry and sweet roses and reds, most aged for two years in barrel. A great wine bar discovery. A revelation for those who know only the mass-produced versions. These two wines were presented at a tasting given by the group Les Gens du Metier. The Foucaults are charter members. Can drink now or hold. Still, what a statement this wine makes. It should be noted that the Couly family is going through a difficult period, sorting out issues of succession which are likely to result in two distinct domaines: Brings to mind a Raveneau Chablis Premier Cru. Jean Francois, Dominique and Laurence Vaillant go from strength to strength. The vines are located in the above named lieu-dit which is at the cusp of the Paris basin and the Massif Amoricain. The chalky soils surely have something to do with the grace and refinement of the wine. Surprisingly fresh though it does finish on a hot note. The wine has 29 grams of residual sugar. An excellent example of the appellation. A small amount of botrytis contributes richness to this very fine, crystalline dry white. The oak is beautifully integrated. The wine is excellent. Rich, fresh, limpid, nuanced and laced with honey. The following wines come from that property: Extremely mineral, racy and fresh. Lots of character here. A gleaming wine, it was richly honeyed, with flavors veering toward butterscotch. But it was fresh and lipsmacking, with no fear for the future. All wines tasted were brut de cuve: A true wine bar discovery. From old vines in Breze, a rich, pedigreed, nicely structured wine worthy of a good Vouvray. Oak well integrated here, too. The grapes, which were harvested later than usual and fermented in large barrels, come from a small lieu-dit. They spent 17 months on their fine lees. I hope this signals a new direction for Guilbaud. A restrained moelleux, all about

delicacy. Full and bright, mineral and stone with a hint of residual sugar. The finish reiterates the steel and stone and adds flavors of citrus and apples. Another steely, crystalline wine with flavors of creamed corn a sign, to me, of adolescence and a touch of sweetness. More residual sugar here than in the Clos du Bourg. This is a silk stocking Vouvray, with a silkiness not easy to find in Chenin. Pinguet, when asked, supposes that refined texture may have something to do with 18 years of biodynamic farming. Based on the first tri, this Vouvray is as rich and succulent as a Layon. Racy, regal and delicious. Based on the first tri, the wine is rich, with flavors of creamed corn and citrus zests. Wait a couple of years. The domaine put this wine on sale again, feeling it was ready to drink " or to begin drinking. Based on shrivled grapes, the wine is racy, limpid and succulent, a beautiful weave of minerals, white currants, light oak and citrus zests. The Oosterlincks have recently converted the domaine to biodynamics. This is the mightly promising first vintage of this dry white. The wine is full, rich, with beautifully integrated oak. A weave of velvet and taffeta. Partially fermented in new oak, this exciting wine sings with juiciness and jewel-like flavors of white currants, honey and citrus zests. Incredibly rich but fresh, nuanced and textured. Velvet, oak, white currants. Manifest sense of place, creamy and extremely mineral. Bring on the friture! Damien Laureau keeps more malic acid in this cuvee and prolongs the oak age to round out the wine. Oak dominates at this point, but this is a very promising wine, rectilinear, pure, with intense flavors of minerals and lemon zests just waiting to take center stage. Why not pair with a tagine chicken or even lamb with preserved lemon?

Chapter 6 : Ultimate Guide to the Loire Valley Wine Region | HowStuffWorks

France, the Loire: food and wine lover's guide The basis of this guide was a touring holiday through France in mid-summer , when I lingered for a few days in the middle of the Loire Valley. The excuse was a truly wonderful hotel, some breathtaking scenery, and of course some rather good food and wine.

Chapter 7 : The Loire - Rough Guides | Rough Guides

Veuve Clicquot-Wine Book of the Year Winner of the Julia Child Award Winner of the James Beard Award Here, finally, is the first comprehensive guide to the five wine regions of the Loire.

Chapter 8 : Drink Up: A Beginner's Guide to Loire Valley Wines -

F&W features expert Loire Valley travel tips including where to find the best restaurants and wine in Nantes, as well as tasty recipes and fantastic hotels. The Michelin-starred restaurant on top.

Chapter 9 : A wine and food guide to the Loire (edition) | Open Library

Food and drink of the Loire Find out more Explore Books Features The Loire is renowned for its mild climate and the rich soils, qualities that help produce some of the best fruit and vegetables you'll find anywhere.