

Wines for the Summer from the Loire Valley!



Chateau Fougeres, Loire Valley



Chateau Cheverny, Loire Valley



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The Loire River is the cradle of the French Nation. It is where the cultures of north and south meet. Charles Martel stopped the Saracen invasion of Europe at Tours in 731 AD. Joan of Arc met the Dauphin at Chinon in 1429 and convinced him to fight the English. In the 16th century, kings and nobles built their great chateaux in the Loire Valley, preferring it to all other parts of France. Called “garden of France” and the “cradle of the French language”, I have been to France over a dozen times and have found it to be the most beautiful region of the country. It also produces some of the best wines, though many are not widely known in the United States.

In my quest to find new and interesting wines for Green’s customers, I spent 4 days in the Loire this past January tasting, primarily, the newly made wines of the superb 2009 vintage. The general style of the dry table wines of this region is light, with plenty of acidity in the finish to balance the fruit. To quench a hot summer thirst, here in the south, I can’t imagine a more appropriate wine-producing region to buy wines from.
– *Michael Bishop, Green’s Wine Buyer*

White Wines

Les Orfèvres Sauvignon Blanc Touraine 2009

Green’s Cash Sale Price: \$9.99

The Loire Valley is famous for its Sauvignon Blanc based wine- ever heard of Sancerre boys and girls! While not from Sancerre, this fresh, 2009 vintage, Sauvignon Blanc from the Touraine possesses that perfect tension between fruit and acidity, with nuances of herb in the bouquet and flavor. Light, crisp, and refreshing, this is a delight and sells for half the price of its more famous neighbor.-Green’s Wine Buyer



La Cabriole Saumur Blanc 2009

Green's Cash Price: \$9.99

Nowhere else in the world does the Chenin Blanc grape reach the quality level that it achieves in the Loire. White fruit and citrus aromatics, there is plenty of mid-palate fruit to buffer the acidity in the aftertaste. Very refreshing.-Green's Wine Buyer

Dom. de L'Auriere Muscadet Sevre et Maine Sur Lie 2008

Green's Cash Price: \$9.99

Along with Vouvray, Muscadet is one of the few Loire Valley wines that one can readily find in the U.S. Let me explain the nomenclature on the label. "Sevre et Maine" is the best wine producing area, taking its name from the two rivers which define the district. "Sur Lie" indicates that the wine has been left on its lees for up to 6 months, over the winter, to give the wines extra body and complexity.

Made from the Melon de Bourgogne grape, this wine is crisp and relatively light, though the "Sur Lie" process adds a little richness. I can't think of a better wine to pair with shellfish, mild fish or seafood dishes. It's great to serve alone as an aperitif too. -Green's Wine Buyer

Vallée Coquette Vouvray Demi Sec 2009

Green's Cash Price: \$11.99

100% Chenin Blanc, Vouvray is one of the best known wines of the Loire. This is the classic style, made with just a touch of sweetness; I would classify it as medium-dry. It has a ripe fruit aroma and displays mouth filling fruit in the taste. A delicious thirst-quencher, serve alone or with fruit and cheeses. Excellent with oriental cuisine, it is particularly good with spicy Thai dishes.-Green's Wine Buyer

Domaine Gueneau Sancerre Le Clos Chartier 2009

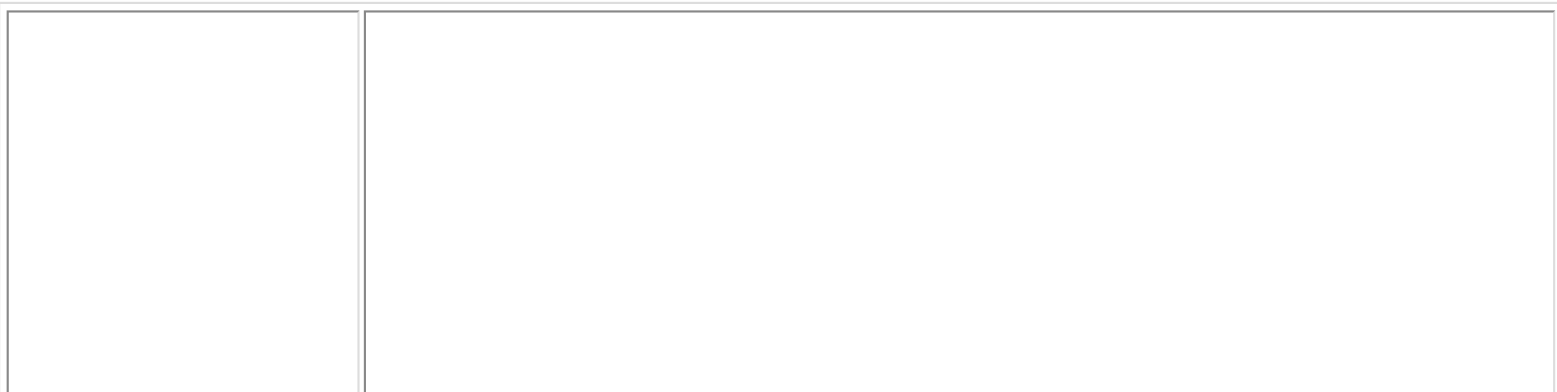
Green's Cash Price: \$16.99

If there is a benchmark for Sauvignon Blanc, it is Sancerre. Flinty and minerally, it possesses rich gooseberry-like fruit qualities that combine with racy acidity. It is a wine best enjoyed in its youth, while fresh and exuberant.

There is only one bad thing about Sancerre. It is too popular, which has pushed its price up over the years, usually averaging around \$25-\$30 today. I can't tell you how delighted I was to find a quality, domaine-bottled example of this wine for under \$20. It's an absolute steal!-Green's Wine Buyer

Red Wines

The Loire gets little attention for its reds in the U.S. That is a shame; the Cabernet Franc based wines here are excellent.





Château de Rivière Chinon 2009

Green's Cash Price: \$10.99

Amazingly forward and ready-to-drink for such a young red wine, the Cabernet Franc really struts its stuff here with its mineral, concentrated fruit flavor. I would decant this in a carafe and cool it in the fridge for 20 minutes before serving. Serve 62-65F.-Green's Wine Buyer

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