

Loire Valley – Reds

- Region follows the Loire River and stretches over 600 miles from the Atlantic ocean in the west all the way into the middle of France, roughly two hours south of Paris
- Huge diversity of grapes, though main reds are Cabernet Franc, Gamay, Côt
- 4 *general* sub-regions: Pays Nantais (Muscadet), Anjou-Saumur (Chenin Blanc and Cab Franc), Touraine (Chenin and Cab Franc), Central Vineyards (Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir)
- Style widely varies based on grapes, vineyard site and soil, vintage, winemaking
- Overall, lots of focus on sustainability, very food-friendly wines and big value

1) La Grapperie Adonis '07 – Côteaux du Loir, France

- Côteaux du Loir appellation is within the Touraine sub-region, north of Vouvray, Chinon, Bourgueil and based around the River Loir (not Loire!)
- The reds in this AOP are made from mostly Pineau d'Aunis, a local variety
- Pineau d'Aunis (aka Chenin Noir) is lighter in body with great freshness and spice
- La Grapperie winery's vineyards spread along left bank of River Loir and across a number of microclimates and soil types; he blends to create balance
- The vines for this wine average 75 years; hand-harvested and transported by horse!

2) Nicolas Réau Poil de la Bête Gamay '11 – Anjou, France

- Anjou is one large (and very diverse) appellation; within it are smaller, more specific individual appellations (including Savennières, Saumur-Champigny, Côteaux du Layon)
- Anjou is often referred to in conjunction with its eastern sub-region, Saumur
- *Poil de la Bête* is French for "hair of the dog"... it's light, easy, relatively low in alcohol, can work nicely with a slight chill
- From the Gamay grape, which has a lighter body and soft tannins, grown on chalk and schist soils
- Nicolas Réau dropped out of school and bought some vineyards only about 12 years ago; today he's much admired in the region for his high quality



3) Cousin-Leduc Grolleau “Le Cousin” ’11 – Anjou, France

- Grolleau is a local grape; often dominates the large quantity of rosé wines from Anjou
- *Grolle* means “crow” in French; said to refer to deep black grapes of Grolleau vine
- Dark color but light skins make for softer tannins
- Olivier Cousin is the grower and winemaker; he lets the juice sit on the skins for an extended period of time to extract more color and flavor

4) Benoit Courault Les Tabeneaux VdT ’10 – Faye d’Anjou, France

- Benoit Courault is a disciple of Olivier Cousin, practicing biodynamically and working with a horse... he actually lives in a little wooden-slatted mobile home on his vineyard!
- Cabernet Franc and Grolleau grapes, all hand-harvested
- VdT = *Vin de Table*: least regulated/specific category of French wine; used here as it is a blend including Grolleau and not from a specified AOP (from town of Faye d’Anjou)

5) Grange Tiphaine Clef de Sol ’10 – Touraine, France

- Touraine is one of the four large sub-regions of the Loire, based around city of Tours
- Made by Damien Delecheneau and his wife Coralie in Touraine-Amboise AOP
- Blend of Cabernet Franc with Côt (local name for Malbec) from 60-year-old vines on clay and silica soils over limestone
- Very natural winemaking; made for drinking “at the table” — very versatile with food

6) Charles Joguet Cuvée Terroir ’09 – Chinon, France

- Chinon is an appellation within Touraine for (almost exclusively) Cabernet Franc
- Soft limestone *tufa* soils in the area contribute depth and longevity to wines
- Classic notes of red raspberries, tobacco, bell pepper
- Charles Joguet was a frontrunner in vinifying individual vineyard plots separately, though this is technically a blend of two distinct vineyards, made to be enjoyed earlier

