

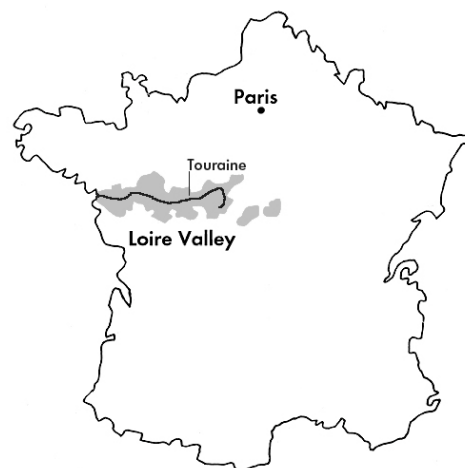
Touraine Le Clos de Vauriou Domaine Ricard 2006

Located on southern facing slopes of the river Cher in the heart of the Touraine district (southeast and about 20km from Tours), Domaine Ricard farms approximately 17 hectares of vineyard planted largely to Sauvignon Blanc, along with small parcels of Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Gamay and Cot (Malbec). Organically farmed Gamay is hand-harvested and de-stemmed, to produce this plump wine. Bright acidity and a pleasant leafy undercurrent on the finish balance primary, plummy aromatics and a lush texture. Excellent with roasted root vegetables, *coq au vin*, or smoked meats.

Regional History

The Loire River runs 635 miles from the Cévennes Mountains in southeastern France to the Atlantic Coast and flows through (or near) over 60 different appellations. During its long history, the hillsides along the banks provided well-drained soils on which to grow grapes, and the river itself provided a transportation network to outside markets. The Touraine appellation covers a broad area of land in the central Loire and encompasses many famous, smaller appellations. This wine comes from the town of Cher (east of Tours), from steep calcereous hillsides overlooking the Cher river as it joins the Loire.

The lower half of the Loire River, the longest in France, runs through more than forty wine appellations, among them Sancerre, Pouilly-Fume, Vouvray, Chinon, Saumur, Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil, and Muscadet. This broad valley, noted for its big skies and big chateaux, doesn't boast an indigenous cuisine. Nevertheless, the rich soil and the varied landscape provide a bounty of raw materials for a cook. Diverse livestock are raised on local farms; the Atlantic coast and the river itself supply plentiful fish; vegetables and grains are harvested from the large, well-tended kitchen gardens seen everywhere. So one drinks Muscadet with Atlantic oysters and pike *au beurre blanc*, Vouvray with *friture de la loire* (fried freshwater fish) or pork *rillettes*. *Rillons*, little fists of pork belly, might be enjoyed with a glass of Montlouis. The reds of Chinon and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil often accompany jugged hare, pork with prunes or venison. Restaurants offer baked cod, escargot, frog's legs and freshwater fish pate with Pouilly-Fume.



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