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Wine Talk: December 2009

The newsletter of Terroir Wines: Edition 10

Welcome to the December edition of Wine Talk, Terroir Wines' newsletter. We have just received our latest shipment from France just in time for Christmas including many of the fabulous Loire Valley wines that sold out so quickly last time.

We have four special packs for you for Christmas and the summer season. Remember that the special packs attract a 15% discount instead of a 10% discount so if you order a special pack you really are getting a special deal (not that a 10% discount and free freight on your own selection isn't a good arrangement too)!

Our order form for these packs and any other wines is at the end of this very long newsletter!

Pinot Noir from the Loire Valley 6 pack

In this newsletter we have an article on Pinot Noir, a popular grape variety in Australia and New Zealand.

While this grape is best know in the Burgundy region, it is also widely grown in the Loire Valley.

We have put together a six pack of Pinot Noir and Pinot Noir blends from three appellations in the Loire that we think are very special.

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Rouge – 100% Pinot Noir

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Champ de l'Archer – 100% Pinot Noir

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Les Ardilles – 80% Pinot Noir, 20% Gamay

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Rouge – 50% Pinot Noir, 50% Gamay

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Reflets Rouge – 40% Pinot Noir, 20% Gamay, 20% Negrette and 20% Cabernet Franc

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens La Grande Pièce – 100% Pinot Noir

All of these wines can be drunk now. They don't need to be kept.

The recommended retail price for this six-pack is \$240. The special price is \$204 (freight free).

Exploring natural wines - 6 pack

This edition of the newsletter contains a story about the emerging world of natural wines. We have put together this six pack to give you the opportunity to dip your toes in the waters of these fresh, vibrant and compelling wines.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Les Ardilles Rouge – 80% Pinot Noir, 20% Gamay

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Rouge – 50% Pinot Noir, 20% Gamay

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Blanc - 70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Chardonnay (2 bottles)

Domaine Mosse Vin de Table Bois Rouge – 75% Cabernet Franc, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon

Domaine Mosse Anjou Le Rouchefer Blanc – 100% Chenin Blanc

The recommended retail price for this six-pack is \$187. The special price is \$158.95 (freight free).

Loire and Provence Rosé 6 Pack

We now have three lovely rosé wines that will be perfect over the summer season. We have added Daniel Chotard's beautiful, pale-orange Pinot Noir rosé to our portfolio in time for summer. The popular Chateau Unang's 2007 rosé, which is a savoury, light-hued blend of Grenache, Cinsault, and Syrah (Shiraz) is also perfect for lazy summer days and one of our most popular wines, if repeat orders are a guide. And, just to make things really interesting we have been lucky to score a few cases of the Domaine Mosse Achillée which is a sweet and very slightly sparkling rosé that is a perfect match for raspberry-based desserts.

So this six pack comprises"

Chateau Unang Ventoux Rosé (Provence) – 3 bottles

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Rosé (Loire Valley) – 2 bottles

Domaine Mosse Anjou Archillée Rosé (Loire Valley) – 1 bottle

The recommended retail price for this pack is \$173. The special price is \$147.05 (freight free).

Wines of Sancerre pack

While Sancerre is best known for its elegant white wines made from Sauvignon Blanc, it is also highly regarded by the French for wines made from Pinot Noir as well.

Daniel Chotard's vineyard lies in the Sancerre appellation on the slopes surrounding the small commune of Crezancy-en-Sancerre, just a few kilometres from the picture perfect village of Sancerre.

We have assembled a pack of Daniel's excellent white, red and rosé wines so that you can explore the different styles of this area just a two hour drive south of Paris.

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Blanc – 2 bottles, 100% Sauvignon Blanc

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Rouge – 2 bottles, 100% Pinot Noir

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Champ de l'Archer Rouge – 1 bottle - 100% Pinot Noir

Domaine Daniel Chotard Sancerre Rosé – 1 bottle - 100% Pinot Noir

The recommended retail price for this pack is \$216. The special price is \$183.60 (freight free).

DIY 6 packs

And remember that you can design your own six packs, either of the one wine or of a mixture and we will still ship it free of charge and give you a 10% discount off our list price.

Here are just some examples of six packs you could make up, but any wines in our catalogue qualify.

Chateau Unang Blanc six pack – Six refreshing and highly affordable white wines made from Clairette and Roussanne. Good to have on hand over the summer.

Catherine Le Goeuil Cairanne six pack – Six of the best of the southern Rhone. This red wine has the power and elegance of a Chateauneuf-du-Pape at a fraction of the price. One of the best value wines in our selection.

White wines of the Loire six pack – A selection of white wines from along the Loire Valley starting with Daniel Chotard's thrilling Sancerre, moving on to Herve Villemade's beautiful Cheverny blends and then finishing in Fiefs Vendéens with the seafood-friendly wines of Thierry Michon.

Prestige Wines 6 pack – This pack might contain a Chateau Unang La Croix, a Catherine le Goeuil Cuvée Leah Felsch, a Domaine Saint Nicolas La Grande Pièce Pinot Noir, a Domaine Daniel Chotard Champ de l'Archer Sancerre Rouge, a Domaine Mosse Anjou Rouge and a Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Les Ardilles Rouge. A very impressive introduction to the quality wines of France. Just send us an email and we will arrange the pack for you or send us an email and describe the types of wine you would like and we will send you back our suggestion.

Christmas vouchers

If you are looking for the perfect Christmas gift for a wine loving friend then give some thought to a voucher from Terroir Wines. You specify the value and we provide the voucher. The person who receives the gift can then order wines to that value from Terroir Wines.

Simply email us with the request for a voucher and the amount and we will contact you to arrange payment and to organise the voucher to be sent to you.

Just click on this link to request a voucher nominating the amount you would like on the voucher: wine@terroirwines.com.au

News from Terroir Wines

New shipment has arrived

Our latest shipment has arrived with wines from Chateau Unang (the white is back!), Domaine de la Garrelière including the very popular Gamay Sans Tra La La, Domaine Mosse, including a beautiful sweet rosé, the stunning Sancerre red, white and rosé from Domaine Daniel Chotard and all of the very popular wines from Domaine du Moulin in the Cheverny appellation.

Temperature-controlled wine storage extended

We have now doubled the size of our temperature-controlled wine storage to cope with the increase in the range of wines we are bringing in. This storage facility is vital for ensuring that the wines reach you in peak condition.

Natural wine movement

We have been pleased with the very positive national press we have received in the past month following our decision to import natural and biodynamic wines. We have also been buoyed by the many enquiries about our wines from people who are desperate to try wines that are free of chemicals and commercial yeasts. See the lengthy article later in this newsletter if you want to know what the fuss is about.

Grape variety of the month: Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir is one of the world's most important wine grapes. The small, tight bunches of blue-black grapes thrive on the slopes around the town of Beaune in eastern France where they are the source of the red wines of Burgundy.

All red wine produced in Burgundy must have Pinot Noir in it although some other grape varieties are permitted. For example, the white mutants of Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc, may be used in red wines from Burgundy provided they do not exceed 15% of the blend. Gamay, which takes its name from a village right in the heart of Burgundy, can comprise up to 75% of the wine labelled as Bourgogne Passe-Tout-Grains and can also be used in the sparkling Cremant de Bourgogne. It is more common to find Gamay these days in the southern region of the Maçon and Beaujolais. The other red grape that is found in some wines from the northern area of Burgundy is César.

Many people who know about Pinot Noir in Burgundy do not realise that it is widely planted outside that area and flourishes in the Loire Valley, in particular where it is found in the red wines of Sancerre, Cheverny and Fiefs Vendéens appellations. It is also one of the main grape varieties of Champagne and is found further east in the high reaches of Alsace and the Arbois.

It is also widely planted in the so-called New World including Oregon, Washington and California in the United States and, of course, in Australia and New Zealand.

Moving west along the Loire Valley the first place you come across Pinot Noir is Sancerre (and the nearby Coteaux du Giennois). Here there are fine examples of 100% Pinot Noir such as the Domaine Daniel Chotard Champ de l'Archer.

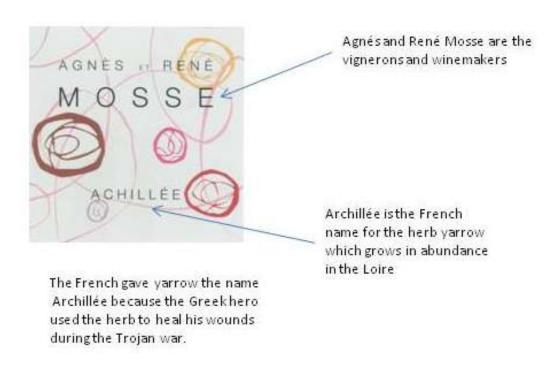
Moving further west to the area around the city of Blois in the appellation of Cheverny there are some stunning Pinot Noir blends available. The Domaine du Moulin Les Ardilles is a blend of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Gamay. This is a refined, elegant and vibrant natural wine that represents amazing value for money. There is also a cheaper, yet still fascinating, version of this blend using 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Gamay called Cheverny Rouge.

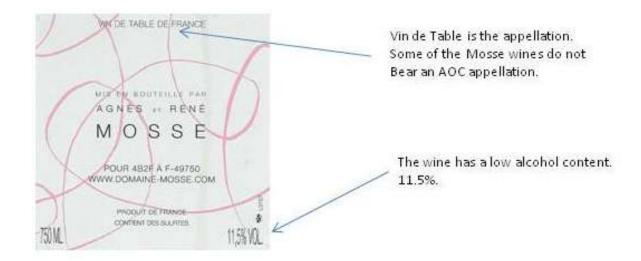
And once you reach the ocean at the far end of the Loire Valley you find the Fiefs Vendéens appellation where biodynamic guru Thierry Michon makes a pure Pinot Noir from gnarled vines that grow close to the sea. His best, and most expensive wine called La Grand Pièce, is made from old vines that grow on crumbling striated schist which imparts an underlay of minerality to the wine. He also makes a wonderful blend of Pinot Noir, Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Negrette called Reflets that has been received very favourably in Australia.

French Wine Labels Explained: Domaine Mosse Archillée

The labels of the Domaine Mosse are colourful and minimalist and have very little information on the front label. We have therefore decided this month to include the back label as well because there is a little more guidance for you there.

This wine is the Archillée from Agnés and René Mosse of Domaine Mosse. It is a sweet rosé wine that has a lovely raspberry and strawberry flavour and a clean, refreshing finish.





The Natural Wine Movement

We have been moved to write this article on 'natural wine' because in Australia the movement is in its infancy, very few winemakers in Australia adhere to its principles (with some notable exceptions) and we want to share the story. There are some wonderful examples of these wines coming onto the market here, not least our own Domaine du Moulin and Domaine Mosse wines.

We first became aware of the natural wine movement during visits to France and Italy over the past five years. It was in wine bars in Paris such as **Le Chapeau Melon**, **La Cremerie**, **Les Papilles** and **Le Verre Vole** where natural wines are the norm rather than the exception that our eyes were opened.



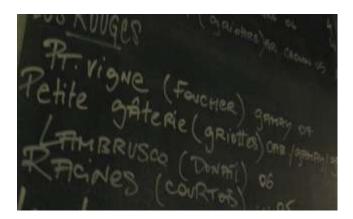
Sign outside Le Verre Volé in Paris

It's a familiar tale – many other natural wine aficionados we've met had their Saul to Damascus moments in exactly the same places.



The iconic Chapeau Melon where the food is great and the wines natural

We then found even more hard core adherents such as the passionate Pierre Jancou at **Racines**, also in Paris (he has recently sold the restaurant but the new owners will continue to serve natural wines) who only served very edgy natural wines such as Claude Courtois and Eric Pfifferling.



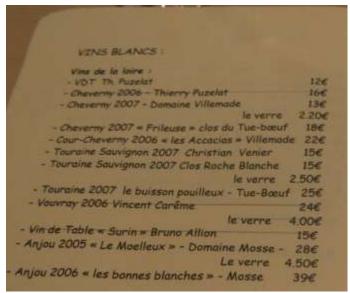
The wine list at Racines

As we learnt more, we found the movement was wider than just Paris. We loved **Terroirs** in London and **Terroir Natural Wine Bar** in San Francisco.



Terroirs in London

Unfortunately, on a trip to New York late in 2008, despite staying round the corner, we didn't find recently opened **Ten Bells**, which has quickly become New York's natural wine bolt hole. Even in country France we've found obsessive bars, especially **Le Cercle Rouge** in Angers in the Loire Valley, one of the epicentres of the natural wine movement, where only natural wines are served. Even tiny towns such as Valaire on the plains above Tours sustain restaurants that serve only natural wines. **L'Herbe Rouge** serves the wines of locals the Puzelat brothers and Hervé Villemade along with an impressive selection from throughout the Loire and beyond.



The wine list at L'Herbe Rouge

Even more exciting for us, because it's 20 minutes from our house in France, is **Le Bonheur Suit Son Cours** in Vaison la Romaine. There are no doubt many more equally as committed and special places

– and it's great fun to continue the search.

This got us thinking about the many parallels between fad and fashion in the food industry and the wine industry. Currently we are seeing a bewildering array of technologies invading the kitchen to transform, disguise and manipulate food in ways that render it unrecognisable in some instances. The molecular gastronomy movement has been on the rise for the past decade and still has some 'miles to go'.

A similar trend has also been occurring for the past few decades in wine making. Stainless steel started to replace wooden barrels, chemicals became the norm for controlling weeds and disease, additives became the norm rather than the exception, technology such as reverse osmosis machines and rotofermenters became the tools of winemakers and commercial yeasts started to stamp their indelible flavours on wines.

The natural reaction to the molecular gastronomy movement has been the revival of a deep interest in so-called traditional cooking methods such as braising and a fascination with elemental aspects of food preparation such as butchery and foraging.

The parallel reaction to the industrialisation of wine has been a movement towards 'natural' winemaking as espoused in France by Jules Chauvet and his many disciples. Although many writers are eulogising this movement as being new and radical, it is little more than a return to methods of viticulture and wine making that have been practised for centuries.

So what is a natural wine? There are two main stages in the making of a wine and both present opportunities for a wine not to be natural. The first stage is the growing of the grapes. To be 'natural', in this stage the viticulture should be organic or even biodynamic. No insecticides, no artificial fertilizers and no herbicides should ever be used on the vines. Tractors should be used with

care to avoid compacting the soil and hence reducing the diversity of organisms present in the soil. Some adherents only use horses for that very reason.

Mechanical harvesters should not wreak their damage to the vines, instead grapes should be picked by hand so that the bunches are preserved and the natural yeasts on the fruit are also preserved. In the winemaking, fermentation should only ever be carried out with the natural yeasts that are present on the fruit and in the air. Commercial yeasts are not used because these mask the flavours of the grapes and impart their own foreign flavours. No other enzymes or chemicals or sugars are added during the wine making process.

Indigenous yeasts may well be one of the keys that explain why it's easy to get hooked on 'natural' wines. In a recent excellent discussion started by renowned Rhone winemake Eric Texier, he documents Chauvet's belief in an aromatic fermentation, occurring at the same time as the alcoholic fermentation, and the importance of indigenous yeast in contributing to this aromatic fermentation. Doesn't this sound familiar? It's the raw milk cheese debate transformed to wine. Raw milk cheese is largely about aroma and liveliness. Bacteria and other organisms that are naturally in the milk contribute to this life and are killed by the pasteurisation process. The story of honey is the same. You can read the significant 'conversation' thread started by Texier at http://tinyurl.com/ydy9ydc Chauvet also espoused using some form of carbonic maceration, particularly for gamay grapes in Beaujolais, where whole bunches are fermented in a carbon dioxide rich environment. This seems to preserve the polyphenols better than other fermentation methods, although there is some conjecture in the literature about whether this approach sufficiently respects terroir. Again, this all comes back to looking after those precious natural yeasts.

For similar reasons, filtration is also a non-no. As Tasmanian (formerly French) honey maker Yves Ginat explains it with his product, filtration would remove many of the organisms that give it complexity. With wine, the clarifying effects of filtration strip away complexity as well, even if they may make the wine easier to sell to a mass market.

And finally to the point of most discussion and disagreement about natural wines – the use of sulphur. Many winemakers are taught to dose the harvested grapes in sulphur to kill off those pesky natural yeasts that hitch a ride on the grapes into the winery and introduce risk. There is general agreement in the natural wine movement that this is a really bad idea because these natural yeasts appear to be the critical (albeit risky and less easily controllable) vehicle for transforming the grapes into a wine with life and preserving the flavours of the terroir from which they came.

But natural wine enthusiasts are not united in their approach to adding sulphur to the bottle. It is beyond argument that sulphur dioxide is a natural by-product of the winemaking process and there is always some sulphur in some form present in wine.

As far as we can tell, Chauvet never espoused not using sulphur (note the double negative!) to preserve wine once it is in the bottle. However most natural wine proponents prefer to keep the level of sulphur very low to ensure that the freshness and vibrancy of the fruit flavours shine through. Some add none at all.

So the easiest way to describe a natural wine is one where nature has been left to take its course. It is, of course, possible to have grapes that have been grown according to strict biodynamic principles but then the wines can be made using commercial yeasts and hence do not qualify to be called 'natural'.

While the European natural wine movement is decades old, and many of the winemaking techniques it encourages are very traditional, as a phenomenon influencing a broad wine drinking public rather than just a small number of aficionados, it's surprisingly new. Even newer than we thought. We were surprised to read Bénédict Beaugé and Edward Behr write in the Fall 2009 issue of the wonderful magazine *The Art of Eating*, in an article called "New Ways to Be a Restaurant in Paris" that at the type of restaurants they were writing about (the likes of Le Chateaubriand, Afaria, La Gazetta, Jadis, Les Papilles and Racines) the sommelier will:

propose some interesting "new" wine, and if you want the ritual glass of Champagne, then it will be a "grower" Champagne (a Champagne *de vigneron*). Throughout the meal the emphasis is generally on little-known "natural" wines. "They are much more alive", easy to drink," says Aizpitarte [proprietor of Le Chateaubriand], and so many others'.

Les Baux de Provence, 200 Grr Nadine	03 Domaine Hauvette	(Baux de Provence)	SSauroe
Bois-Rouge Le Gros, 2007 Les Mortiers, 2007 You are so Nice, 2007 Les Ardilles, 2007 Régions	R.Mosse R.Mosse N.et C. Chaussard N.et C. Chaussard H.Villemade	(Vin de table) (Anjou) (Côteaux du loire) (Vin de Table)29eur (Cheverny)	25euros 32euros 45euros
Domaine de Montrieux ,	2005 ^E . Hérédia	(Côteaux du Vendômois)	34euros
Côte du Py, 2007 Loire	J.Foillard	(Morgon)	38euros
Fleurie, 2006	J. Foillard	(Fleurie) (Morgon)	35euros 45euros

The wine list at Le Chateaubriand in Paris

We thought we were late in discovering the joys of natural wine but it seems the movement is still in its infancy. Without wishing to take away a reason for you to visit Paris, we're delighted to be able to play our small part to make it easier for Australians to try these wines and get in on the act. If you live in Australia, we'd also recommend you find out if you have a wine shop or restaurant nearby that stocks wines imported by Andrew Guard. He imports some of the stars of the French natural wine movement – Gramenon, Pacalet, Foillard, Hervé Souhaut, Breton, and Puzelat for starters. It's in our interest to encourage you to buy from him as well from us because the more of these exciting wines that make it to the country the better. We know that the owners of some of the domaines we represent are good friends and colleagues with people Andrew represents and it only seems right that we support each other as well. His website is www.andrewguard.com.au
To learn more about natural wine in Australia, it's also wise to also pay close attention to Max Allen's writings (e.g. in the *Australian* and *Gourmet Traveller* and *Gourmet Traveller Wine* magazine). He's probably done more than any wine writer in Australia to promote these wines. Thanks to Max, we're

keen to also follow up another small Australian importer, Addley Clark Fine Wines, which imports Italian natural wines. So much to learn ... so little time.

More reading

Internationally, some of the best writing about natural wine is on Alice Feiring's blog. She is as alive and passionate as a natural wine and a great writer. www.alicefeiring.com. Try these articles first: www.alicefeiring.com/feiringsquad/wine/natural_wines_t.html www.alicefeiring.com/feiringsquad/misc/natural_wine_so.html

Eric Asimov, who writes for the New York Times, is also good to follow. This article he wrote in 2005 is another good introduction. http://bit.ly/51sIrd. His blog 'The Pour' is here www.thepour.blogs.nytimes.com.

Otherwise, just plug "natural wine" into google and start exploring. And, while you're there, you may want to bone up on Amphora wines - wines made in traditional clay amphoras – another emerging and interesting wine making phenomenon!

Order Form

Name:		
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Telephone:	Email:	

Special - current newsletter selection	Price inc	Number	Sub-total
	GST		
Pinot Noir from the Loire Valley – 6 pack	\$204.00		
Exploring natural wines – 6 pack	\$158.95		
Loire and Provence Rosé – 6 Pack	\$147.05		
Wines of Sancerre – 6 Pack	\$183.60		

Compose your own selection	Price per	
	single	
	bottle	
Chateau Unang Côtes du Ventoux Cuvee Adeline White 2006	\$30	
Chateau Unang Côtes du Ventoux Rosé 2007	\$24	
Chateau Unang Côtes du Ventoux Red 2006)	\$21	
Chateau Unang Côtes du Ventoux La Source Red 2006	\$31	
Chateau Unang Côtes du Ventoux La Croix Red 2005	\$50	
Chateau Unang St Gabriel (Carignan) Red 2007	\$24	
Domaine de Cascavel Côtes du Ventoux Cuvee le Cascavel Red 2005 LIMITED	\$23	
Domaine de Cascavel Côtes du Ventoux les Amidyves Red 2004	\$32	
Domaine des Grands Devers Côtes du Rhône White 2006 LIMITED	\$25	
Domaine des Grands Devers Côtes du Rhône Red 2006 LIMITED	\$19	
Domaine des Grands Devers Côtes du Rhône Villages Valreas Red 2005	\$28	
Domaine des Grands Devers Côtes du Rhône Villages Visan Red 2005	\$26	
St Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux Oligocene Red 2004	\$55	
St Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux White 2006	\$66	
Domaine Catherine Le Goeuil Cairanne Cuvee Lea Felsch 2006	\$29	
Domaine Mosse Anjou Le Rouchefer 2007	\$51	
Domaine Mosse Anjou Rouge 2007	\$42	
Domaine Mosse Bois Rouge 2007	\$32	
Domaine Mosse Archillée Rosé 2008	\$35	

Compose your own selection	Price per
	single
	bottle
Domaine Mosse Savenierres Arena 2008	\$66
Daniel Chotard Sancerre Rouge 2007	\$37
Daniel Chotard Sancerre Champ de l'Archer Rouge 2007	\$43
Daniel Chotard Sancerre Blanc 2007	\$33
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Les Clous Blanc 2008	\$32
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Reflets Rouge 2008	\$32
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cuvée Franc Blanc 2006	\$39
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Le Haut des Clous Blanc 2006	\$53
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cuvée Maria Blanc 2005	\$53
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cabaret Rouge 2006	\$39
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cuvee Jacques Rouge 2005	\$50
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Le Poiré Rouge 2005	\$55
Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens La Grande Pièce Rouge 2004	\$70
Domaine Stephane Guion Bourgueil Cuvee Domaine 2007 LIMITED	\$21
Domaine Stephane Guion Bourgueil Cuvee Prestige 2006	\$23
Domaine de la Garreliere Touraine Cendrillon 2008 LIMITED	\$30
Domaine de la Garreliere Touraine Cuvee Cinabre 2007 LIMITED	\$32
Domaine de la Garreliere Touraine Gamay Sans Tra La La 2007	\$31
Domaine de la Garreliere Touraine Le Rouge 2007 LIMITED	\$27
Domaine de Moulin Cour Cheverny Les Acacias Blanc 2006 LIMITED	\$40
Domaine de Moulin Cheverny Domaine Blanc 2008	\$23
Domaine de Moulin Cheverny Domaine Rouge 2008	\$23
Domaine de Moulin Cheverny Blanc Les Ardilles Rouge 2007	\$35
Domaine de Moulin Cheverny Blanc La Bodice Blanc 2007	\$33
TAKE OFF 10% FOR ORDERS IN MULTIPLES OF 6	Total

Note: Please send your order to wine@terroirwines.com.au, post it to GPO Box 2160, Hobart, 7001, Tasmania or fax to 03 62247552. We will then contact you to discuss payment arrangements. You can pay by credit card, cheque or direct bank deposit. If you order wine in lots of 6 (they can be mixed) we will pay the freight charges anywhere in Australia. If freight costs apply, we'll contact you and let you know how much it will be is before processing your order.

If you pay by cheque please make the payment to Quill Australia Pty Ltd, not Terroir Wines.