

September 2-Pack
Jean Jacket Whites: A Tale of 2 Chenins
\$65 for the Pair (*regularly \$81 & \$29 respectively*)

Chenin, Chenin, Chenin! Chenin Blanc is like that friend you have that looks good in everything. Chenin can be sparkling and playful, bracingly fresh and acidic, structured and round, lush and honeyed. It is equally delicious in all its many forms.

For our September 2-pack we are featuring a pair of wines from the grape's homeland, the Loire Valley, in France. Both of this month's producers founded their domaines in the 1980's; Domaine Champalou in Vouvray, in 1983 and Domaine de la Taille aux Loups in Montlouis-sur-Loire, in 1988. At the time of their inceptions, both estates undertook what were then unheard-of practices in the region: organic agriculture, terroir specificity and low-intervention winemaking. These practices are now standard for quality wines. Though the Domaines are separated by the Loire River, with Champalou on the north bank, Taille aux Loups on the south, the grapes for both wines were grown in Vouvray.

Located directly to the east of the city of Tours, Vouvray has long been associated with viticulture, with records dating back to the 4th Century. In 1936, it was the first region in the Touraine to be granted Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée status. Vouvray is planted entirely to Chenin Blanc. In Vouvray, like much of the Loire Valley, ancient, marine limestone is overlaid with a clay-siliceous soil called Silex that impart an unmistakable, energetic tension in the wines. This month's 2-pack offers a great study in agreeability and the effects of how wine flavors change and progress with the years.



Domaine Champalou Vouvray Sec 2023 (regularly \$29)

With a combined total of 19 generations of winemaking behind them and one in front – their daughter, Céline joined the team in 2006 – to say that the Champalou family knows what's up is an understatement. Catherine and Didier founded the Domaine in 1983 with a purpose: to shake things up in Vouvray. At the time, the dominant ethos in the region was large scale farming of grapes for sparkling wine production. The Champalous flipped that on its head. They vinified and bottled their whole production rather than selling the grapes off, they practiced small-scale sustainable agriculture, and they produced predominantly still wines – 80% of their wines were still in a region where 75% of production was sparkling wine. Today Domaine Champalou is widely considered one of the foremost producers of Vouvray. With one sip of the fresh and instantly satisfying 2023 Sec it is easy to see why. The grapes are harvested early in the morning to preserve their freshness; for this reason, they are also fermented in stainless steel at low temperatures and aged with just a bit of contact with the fine lees. This wine is full of life, with lip-smacking acidity, tart apple, and just a whiff of honey.

Domaine de la Taille aux Loups Venise Cuvée Parcellaire Monopole Vin de France 2018 (regularly \$81)

Jacky Blot (pronounced blow) purchased 8 hectares in Montlouis in 1988. He has been instrumental in creating a reputation for the region that rivals, and often out-shines, its fellow Chenin-only northern neighbor, Vouvray. Jacky, later joined by his son Jean-Philippe, has been instrumental in pioneering the value of dry, terroir-driven, single vineyard Chenin Blanc. The grapes for the Venise cuvée are grown in a walled vineyard in the town of Noizay in Vouvray; the vineyard is owned solely by the Blot family – hence the designation of monopole – though, due to AOC law, the wine may not bear the Vouvray appellation as it is vinified at the Domaine in Montlouis. The certified organic grapes, from 50+ year-old vines, are hand-harvested. The wine is indigenous yeast fermented and aged in oak barrels, 20% of which are new. As with all the Domaine's wines, the Venise does not undergo malolactic fermentation. The 2018 is showing it's 6-years of age beautifully: still rife with high-toned, energetic acidity but with a lovely sub-structure of honied quince, a touch of beeswax and a lingering minerality. This wine knocks it out of the park!