

# AUBERT LA CHAPELLE

Loire

## Marçon (Loir)

A half hour's drive north of Vouvray, the Loir winds like a lovely miniature of that famous wine-giving river which spells its name with an "e". In fact, there is even another Vouvray on the Loir. But the place of viticultural and historical note in this bucolic and nowadays all but forgotten strip of France is scarcely even a hamlet. Jasnieres is the location for an impressive embankment of chenin blanc vines, naming a wine that was once among the most prestigious in the Loire region, indeed in all of France. Like the legendary but less-forgotten Coulée de Serrant, Jasnieres's chalk-clay, flint and pebble-strewn slopes here produced a wine of notable perfume and finesse that could age for decades. And like Vouvray, the best wines were frequently rich, honeyed products of late harvest and selective picking of nobly rotten fruit.

Jean-Michel Aubert was the director of the grower cooperative in Sauvignon-dominated Cheverny, but he longed to make a name for a domaine of his own, if only he could find a French terroir of potential greatness that a man of modest means might yet afford to purchase. And so he moved to Marçon, one of several lovely little towns across the Loir from Jasnieres and its neighboring slopes – collectively and logically enough known as the Coteaux du Loir. Deep, spacious, cold cellars carved into the hillsides at frequent intervals testify to the once-burgeoning market and stellar reputation of the local wine, as well as affording Aubert an ideal vinificatory environment.

There is nothing complicated about what goes in this cellar, though. The action is all in the vineyards, where low yields and selective picking make for a range of wine from dry to nobly sweet, all of them



combining the unique virtues of the best Loire chenin blanc: florality, minerality, deep fruit, and an uncanny combination of textural richness and density with clarity and delicacy of flavors, buoyancy, and mouthwatering, refreshing acidity.

Jasnieres today officially extends to nearly one hundred acres, but even the parcels from which Aubert picks and crafts his Coteaux du Loir sec have at one time or another been classified as Jasnieres. The degree to which that incredibly inexpensive wine reflects the special virtues of this viticultural locality make it the ideal point of departure for Vintner Select's collaboration with Jean-Michel Aubert and for a modest but startling voyage of vinous discovery by American consumers.

## Jasnieres

### Coteaux du Loir

Varieties: *Chenin Blanc; Pineau d'Aunis, Gamay, Cot and Cabernet Franc*

Total acreage: *36 acres*

Average production: *12,000 cs.*

Vinification: *stainless steel*

### Coteaux du Loir Rosé

A fresh, mineral, sour cherry scented rosé of Pineau d'Aunis whose finish of chalk and cherry stone may remind you of a Chablis and will certainly compulsively call forth the next low-alcohol sip.

### Coteaux du Loir sec

Vivid and noble peach aromas, citrus and flowers remind me of certain great Rieslings. Juicy and delicate in weight yet expansive in flavor, this displays clear pure fruit and mineral exchange in the finish. Eight grams of residual sugar suit it perfectly, leaving the wine dry-tasting.

### Jasnieres "Cuvée Anne Mathilde"

This small, ravishing, discretely demi-sec bottling (all in 375 ml.) offers smoke- and chalk-tinged pear and yellow cherries, polished delicacy and billowing length.

### Coteaux du Loir "Cuvée Prestige"

If there's a Moeleux picking chez Aubert, it's usually a Jasnieres, but this year, super-ripe, subtly desiccated fruit from outside that appellation generated vinous electricity. Rich, pear-, cherry-, peach preserve; honey; citrus; minerality; airy lift; the poise of a great Riesling Auslese.