

# WESTERN RESERVE WINES CLUB AUGUST 2025

*Domaine Champalou Vouvray La Cuvee des Fondraux*

*Varietals: 100% Chenin Blanc*

*Viticulture: Loire Valley, Vouvray Appellation*

**Bottle Price: \$34.99 | Case Price: \$377.89 plus tax**



## INTRODUCTION

Catherine and Didier Champalou both came from vigneron families, yet their mutual sense of independence prompted the couple to brave it on their own right after completing viticultural school in Saumur. Since starting the domaine in 1983, they have not only grown their business, but their label is one of the most highly-acclaimed in the appellation. Vouvray is home to the noble Chenin Blanc, more commonly known as Pineau de la Loire in their part of the world. As widespread as Pineau is, both soil and climate play key roles in the diversity of its incarnations, and a Chenin from California gives one no hint of what the grape is capable of in the right soil.

Farther inland along the Loire, in the region of the Touraine, Vouvray enjoys a warm, continental climate during the summers. Slowly dropping temperatures in autumn make for a long ripening season. Microclimates with high humidity can also bring about the beloved noble rot. The gravel and chalk in the vineyards also play a role absorbing the sun's rays, lending increased ripeness to this part of the Touraine. The Pineau of Vouvray can be pétillant (sparkling), sec (dry and crisp), demi-sec (off-dry) or in a botrytized state called moelleux. Catherine and Didier make all four styles.

## REGION

### Soil Diversity

The Vouvray region in the Touraine subregion of the Loire Valley boasts a richly varied terroir, making its Chenin Blanc wines (from dry to sparkling to sweet) highly distinctive. Here's what defines its soil diversity:

- \* Tuffeau Limestone (Turonian Chalk)  
Enhances minerality, freshness, and aging capability thanks to excellent drainage and heat retention
- \* Overlaying Clay and Siliceous Layers  
Add structure and tension; contribute floral notes—particularly beneficial for semi-sweet and sparkling styles
- \* Clay-Limestone ("Aubuis") and Valley Soils  
Perruche soils yield fruitier, rounder profiles
- \* Topsoil Variations from Quaternary Deposits  
Contributes to soil depth and nuance in vine growth conditions

### Grape Varieties

The Vouvray appellation is almost exclusively dedicated to the Chenin Blanc grape, also known locally as Pineau de la Loire. The Vouvray appellation is nearly monovarietal—**Chenin Blanc** drives its character, structure, and versatility. The allowance for **Arbois** provides a nod to flexibility, but in reality, **Chenin Blanc remains the sole grape of substance** in Vouvray wines.

### Viticultural Practices

Vouvray lies on sloped terrain overlooking the Loire, offering **southern exposures** and **excellent drainage** due to its chalky "tuffeau" bedrock. The interplay of **continental and oceanic influences**, along with heat-retaining soils capped by flint and clay, supports the full spectrum of Chenin Blanc expression—from bone-dry to luxuriously sweet. Vouvray's terroir is anything but uniform—embracing chalky bedrock, mineral clays, and tuning its wines from taut dryness to lush sweetness. The interplay of soils and microclimates underpins the appellation's extraordinary diversity and depth in Chenin Blanc expression.

## PRODUCER

The Champalou family farms twenty-one hectares of vineyards on clay, limestone, and siliceous soils. They embrace sustainable farming while also integrating the use of the lunar calendar more traditionally associated with organic viticulture. The soils in their vineyards are rich, deep, and aerated through regular plowing. Cover crops are planted in between vineyard rows to help with excess water absorption and to encourage micro biotic activity in the soil. The Champalou house style produces wines of great elegance and tenderness, highly aromatic with impeccable balance. No one comes close to copying their distinct style.

Didier and Catherine's daughter, Céline, has recently joined the domaine after spending her internships in New Zealand, South Africa, Languedoc, Corsica, and Canada. Daughter Virginie lives in London, and is also in the wine business. There is no question that the tradition and quality for which this domaine is known will continue for many years to come.



## Tasting Notes:

"Crafting impeccably balanced, off-dry wines like this is no simple task, but the Champalou Fondraux rolls over the tongue so fluidly that you might be tempted to think the berries tasted just like this when they were picked off the vine. It comes down to masterful winemaking, in which precision and savoir faire replace the need for technological intervention to create a velvety, suave Vouvray that oozes class. The contrast of ripe, succulent Chenin Blanc fruit with a spike of flinty minerality is like licking honey off an arrowhead." -Anthony Lynch

## Food Suggestions:

Roast chicken, especially when seasoned with herbs or citrus, complements the wine's crispness and minerality. Fresh seafood dishes, including sushi, scallops, and lobster, are enhanced by the wine's bright acidity and subtle fruit notes. Light vegetable dishes, such as roasted cauliflower with curry and lime, align well with the wine's citrusy and floral characteristics. Indian and Asian dishes, like Tikka Masala or gingered pork, find a harmonious match with the off-dry styles of Vouvray, where the slight sweetness balances the spices.



*Remember We Taste The Bad Ones So you don't have to! CHEERS!!!*

**WESTERN RESERVE WINES**  
**28300 MILES ROAD SUITE B**  
**OLON, OHIO 44139 (440) 498-9463 (WINE)**  
**WesternReserveWines.com**  
**Info@WesternReserveWines.com**  
**Text (216) 220-9225**

**Sources:**  
<https://champalou.com/>  
<https://www.vinsdevouvray.com/en/our-terroir-chenin-wine/>