



**PLUMPJACK**  
WINES

PlumpJack Wine Club

## February 2008

It has been a while since I have warned you to fasten your organoleptic seat belts, but this month, you are going to have to really hold on tight! I think when the government warnings were put on these bottles, it was not to warn the consumer of the effects of alcohol, but rather to forewarn you of how distracted you will become when the flavors of these wines explode in your mouth. These two selections are classic examples of what happens when winemakers of extraordinary talent apply their experience and know-how in regions that, until now, have remained somewhat obscure. The quality of these wines will be obvious as soon as you take your first sip, and the satisfaction will be further reinforced when you take note of the affordable prices these wines sell for. While the white wine will be best over the next year, the red will continue to improve for many years. Supplies are limited and will dwindle quickly, so put a few bottles in your closet, and you will reap the benefits in days to come.

*2005 Domaine Sauvète  
"Oneiros"  
Touraine, AC  
Monthou-sur-Cher, France*



*2005 Bodegos y Vinedos Maurodos  
"Prima"  
Toro, DO  
Valladolid, Spain*



Touraine is one of the most interesting of the Loire's wine provinces and is known as 'the garden of France.' Viticulture is concentrated on the steep banks of the Loire River and its tributary, the Cher. Soil and climate vary considerably throughout Touraine, resulting in an enormous range of grape varieties. All the best wines have their own specific appellations, however there is a large amount of wine made that is merely labeled Touraine AC. This *Appellation Contrôlée* covers 60 miles of the Loire Valley to the east and west of Tours, the region's capital, and includes sections of the Loir-et-Cher, Indre-et-Loire, and Indre *départements*. The Touraine AC encompasses 28,500 acres of vineyards that are divided half and half between white and red or rosé. Domaine Sauvète is located in the Cher valley, in the commune of Monthou-sur-Cher, at the very western end of the Touraine province. It is a small family estate, run by Jérôme Sauvète and his wife Dominique. They work their 39.5 acres completely organically and biodynamically. They estate bottle every wine they grow and hand-harvest all of their grapes. Jérôme is the second generation to take over the estate and says, "When I was a baby my parents would put me in a wicker basket in the shade of a vine plant while they harvested their grapes. Today I know every single plant on the estate, cultivate the grapes with the greatest respect, and make wines that I love." Domaine Sauvète's vineyards are rich in many aspects -- geographic location, climate, sunlight, soil types -- all combining to enable the domaine to make a wide variety of wines that fully express the characteristics of their environment. Their work is carefully thought out from the vineyard through to bottling. Grapes from each parcel are brought to full maturity and meticulously selected. Sometimes it gets so hot in Touraine, the Sauvignon grapes turn orange. It's a delicate balance that Sauvète strikes

with each vintage—he must harvest at exactly the right time to capture both the grapes’ ultimate ripeness and acidic balance. Needless to say he has this process down to a science, given his attention to his vineyards. The 2005 “Oneiros” (dream in Greek) is made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc. The grapes are sourced from the higher hillsides of Sansuette and La Rouère. The sandy topsoil is rich in flint and heats rapidly, ensuring optimal conditions for full grape maturity, and the wine captures both the steely freshness of its terroir and the richness of the vintage. Fruit is vinified completely in stainless-steel tanks, yet “Onieros” gets extra lees work, adding extra layers of supple fruit and freshness. For devoted fans of Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre, “Onieros” will satisfy both your palate and your wallet. Not only is it world-class Sauvignon crafted by one of the region’s leading artisans, but also it is considerably less expensive than one might expect for such high quality. Put your nose to the glass and “Onieros” offers aromas of candied lemon rinds and tarragon, with notes of pear juice and honeysuckle. In the mouth, the wine is lovely and long, with Sancerre-like depth and precision. Meyer lemons and minerals create a medium-bodied and stunningly fresh mouth. The wine is a classic blend of everything that makes Sauvignon irresistible: ripe fruit, citrus freshness and minerals. As Jérôme suggests, try this wine with seafood terrines, scallops, or fresh goat cheese.

**The 2005 Domaine Sauvète “Onieros” is \$17.99/bottle, \$194.30/case.**



Americans bought almost \$170 million worth of Spanish wine last year - 10% more than the year before, and an almost 44% increase from five years ago. Spain is producing more new, world-class wines than ever before, thanks in part to an abundance of brilliant winemaking talent. Spain remains a source for some of the best wine values around, especially robust reds from emerging regions like Toro. Toro is a Spanish red wine zone in Castilla y León that became a DO (Denominacion de Origen) in 1987. It spans the Duero valley east of Zamora, is adjacent to the Rueda wine region and is close to the northern border of Portugal. The wine world has seen several Spanish regions quickly rise from obscurity to international prominence, and Toro has become the newest, despite having a long and glorious past. The quality of Toro wines has been recognized since Roman times. Toro wines were especially appreciated in the Middle Ages, when they were awarded royal privilege and were shipped across the Atlantic to baptize the Americas. It is said that Christopher Columbus took Toro wines on his voyage of discovery. The vineyards of Toro lie at an altitude between 620 to 750 meters above sea level and the vines benefit from over 3000 hours of sunshine annually. The region’s principal grape variety, Tinto de Toro, is a variant of Rioja’s Tempranillo. Tinto de Toro has smaller berries, which in turn leads to deeper color and more intense aromas and structure than Tempranillo from other regions. Marinano Garcia, the founder of Bodegas Mauro in Ribera del Duero, and the winemaker at Vega Sicilia for over 30 years, is considered one of the greatest winemakers in Spain. Mariano’s interest in Toro began in 1995, studying various terroirs with different microclimates, as well as the characteristics and potential of the Tinta de Toro and Garnacha grape varieties. Marinano’s Bodegas y Viñedos Maurodos owns 86 acres in the villages of Villaester and San Roman de Hornija, planted mainly with Tinta de Toro. In Villaester, the soil is composed of sand and clay with some gravel, while in San Roman, the soil is stonier. “Prima” is a new wine of Bodegas Maurodos, from vineyards planted in sandy, clay soils in three different areas in Toro. The grapes were hand-harvested from vines averaging 20-years-old. After fermentation was complete the wine was aged for 12 months in French and American oak barrels, and then bottled unfiltered. This wine shows the unmistakable touch of Mariano’s masterful use of oak, whereby concentrated dark fruit aromas and toasted, spicy aromas from oak coexist and it is nearly impossible to tell one from the other. Stephen Tanzer, from his journal IWC, states "Youthful purple. Spicy cherry and dark chocolate aromas are underscored by zesty minerals and orange zest. Sweet raspberry and kirsch flavors are impressively pure and deep, showing an energetic personality. Gains sweetness on the long, spicy finish. This outstanding value offers the complexity of wines costing much more." The 2005 “Prima” is a big wine that pairs wonderfully with full-flavored dishes such as braised lamb shanks or oxtails, or a grilled steak. Try it with strong, hard cheeses like aged cheddar or manchego.

**The 2005 Bodegas y Viñedos Maurodos “Prima” is \$20.99/bottle, \$226.70/case.**