

The Loire valley
~ One of France's most beautiful wine regions ~



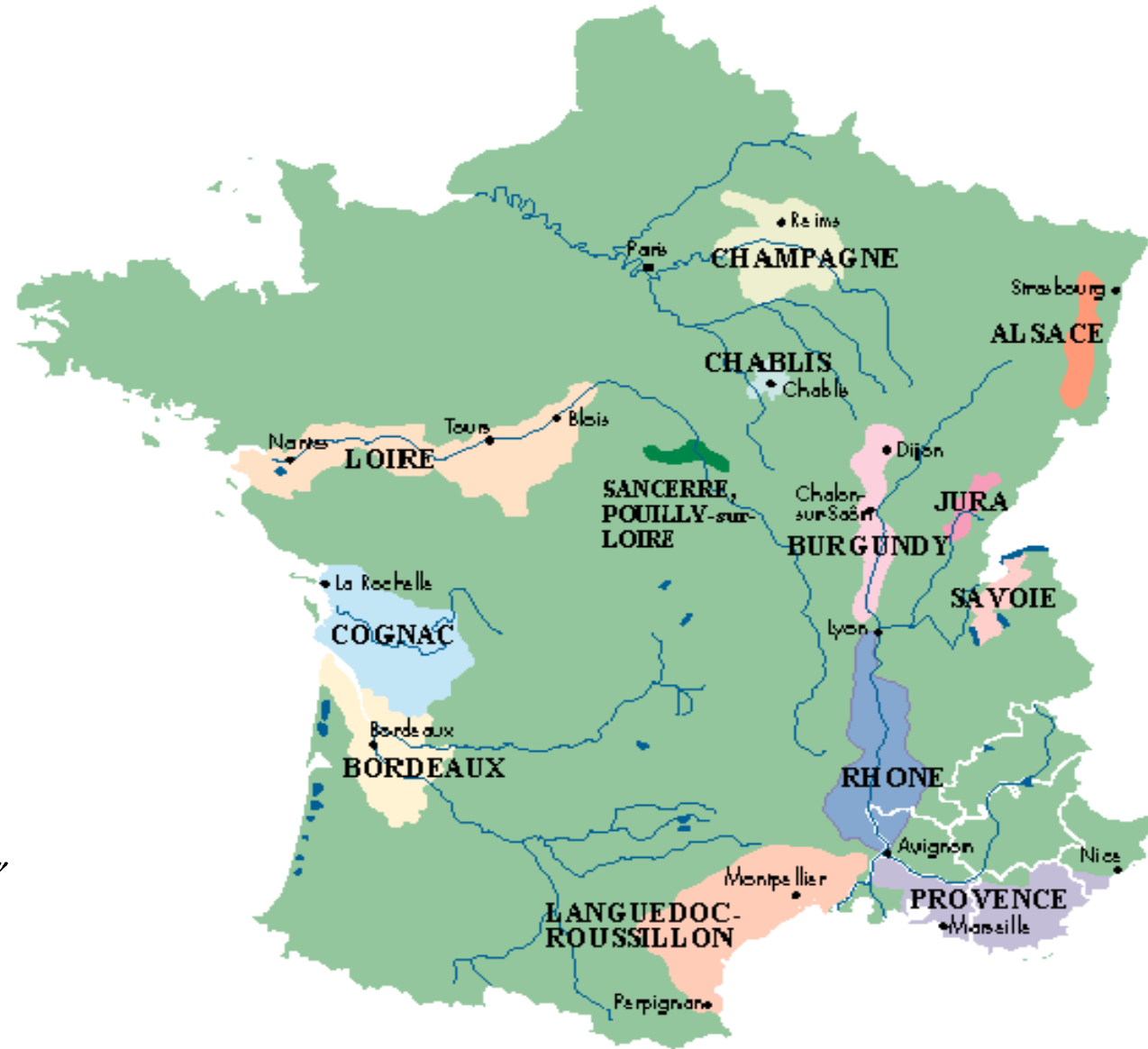
But sadly...Loire wines simply get no respect...

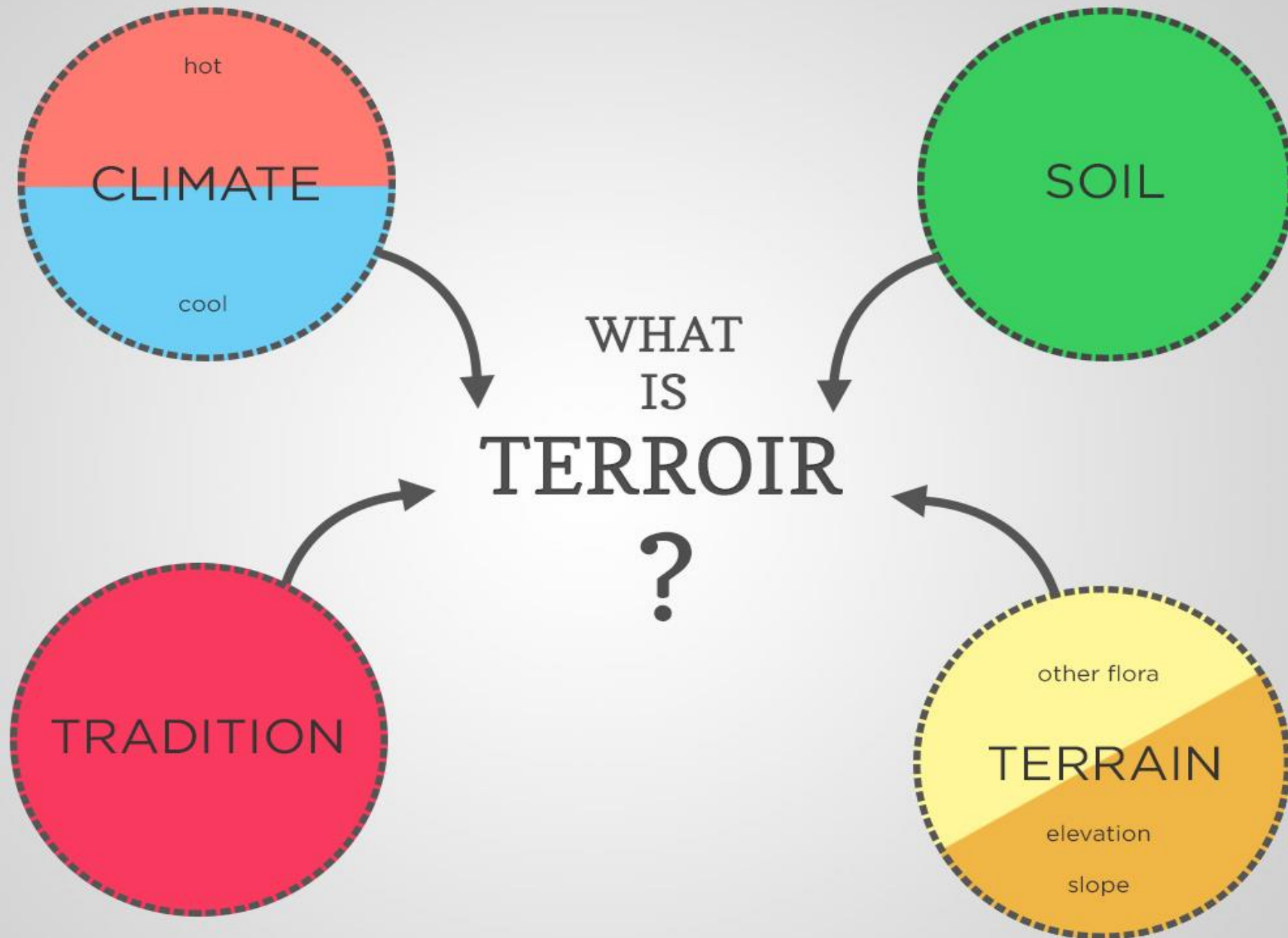
- Off all the many wonderful wines that are made in the Loire valley, most of them simply don't fit the typical styles sought by contemporary North American wine consumers....
 - Muscadet...huh??? I do love pinot grigio though!
 - Sauvignon Blanc??? Sure, but from New Zealand!
 - Chenin Blanc... huh??? Let's have a Chardonnay...
 - Botrysisized Chenin??? We don't like sweet wines!
 - Cabernet Franc... we prefer Cabernet Sauvignon!
- Maybe we can maybe change some minds tonight....



The Loire is France's most diverse wine region

- The Loire is France's longest river...
 - Many tributaries lead to numerous sub-regions with diverse conditions and styles
- 7 Main Official Growing regions...
 - But numerous unique sub-regions
 - *varied mix of varieties and styles!*
- White, red, dry, sweet, sparkling....
 - All are light & invigorating
- Long known as the "Garden of France"
 - VdF - 'Vins de la Jardin de France'





Early Loire Winemaking

- Winemaking is known to originate with Roman contact in the 1st century AD...
 - By the fall of Rome it was made in all of today's current wine producing regions
- By the 11th century wine was being traded, via connecting rivers and sea to Paris, Holland & England... **BUT...**
 - The Loire did not have the benefit of any high status religious or royal patrons at the time...
 - The Dutch became their main distributors
- However, with the growth of French nobility, the Loire became a sort of 'vacation destination' for wealthy Parisians....

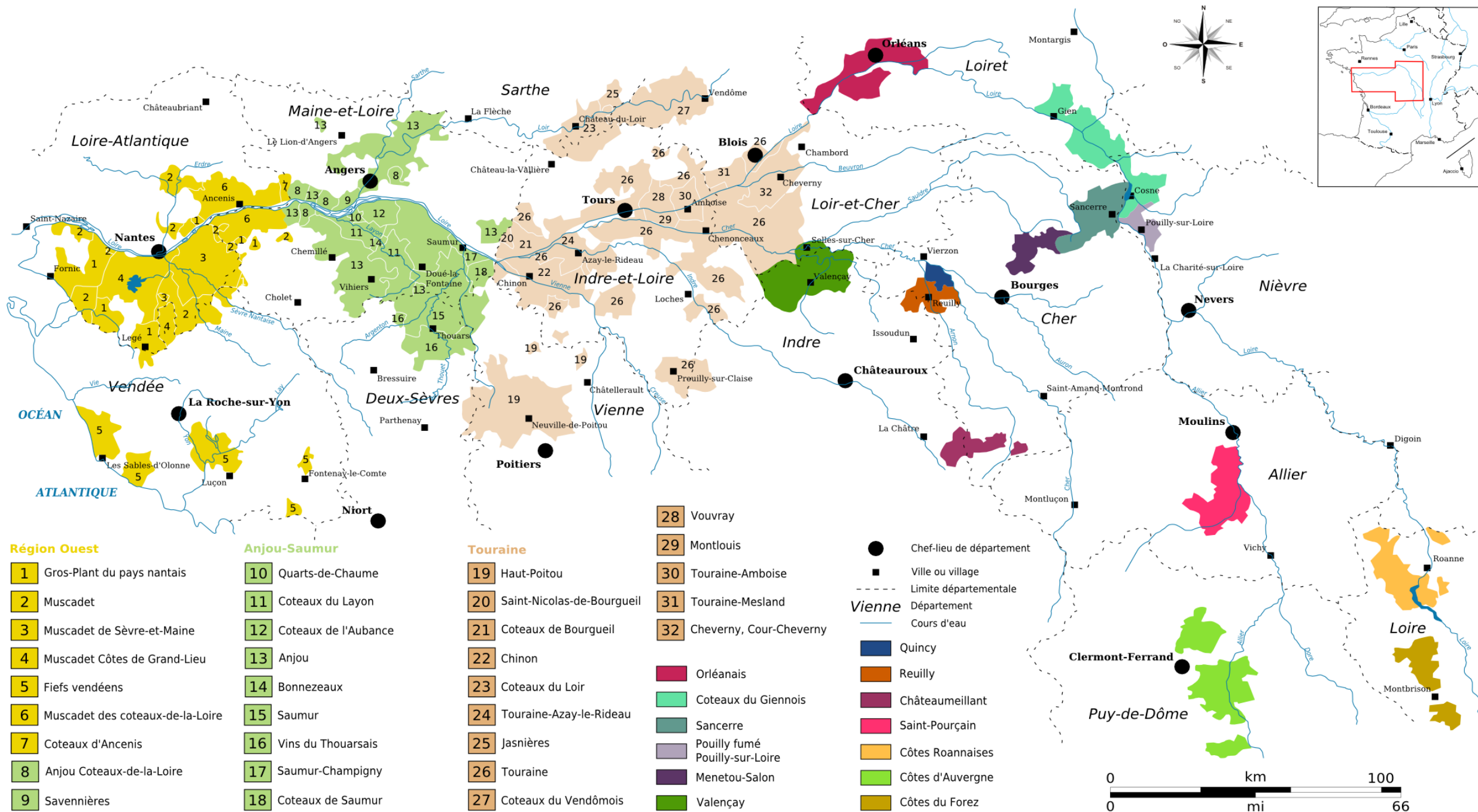
Some PEC parallels here???



Geography and Climate of the Loire Valley

Frost is always a threat due to the northern locale...

- varieties therefore need to be cold-hardy...which means lighter body and style wines
- vintages can vary greatly....
 - In cool years attaining ripeness is a problem
 - Warm years can result in top, late harvest & botrytized, sweet wines
- BUT..... All Loire wines are noted for their bright fresh character and food-affinity
 - MLF and heavy oak influences are generally avoided....
 - Instead, "lees contact" is often encouraged to impart backbone & character
- The Loire is climatically and geographically too diverse to generalize... BUT...
 - 1) East half very continental
 - 2) West very maritime
 - 3) Central – a mixed bag



The Diverse Soils of the Loire...

- Diversity is the key word tonight...
 - Lighter, sandy soils in the west around Nantes
 - Limestone in Sancerre and flint across the river in Pouilly-Fume
 - In the central parts a complex mix of...
 - Gravels, limestone and clays
- Saumur-Champigny...
 - Is located on an elevated plain of 'Tuffeau'... partly clay, partly limestone, partly sand, partly chalk...
 - Lighter and more crumbly on top... more compressed and dense the deeper you dig...
- This is key to your wine tonight!!!



2016 'Le Clos' du Chateau de Parnay

~ Saumur-Champigny ~

- Located along the Loire river on the most reputable tuffeau, clay and limestone terroir of Saumur-Champigny appellation, Chateau de Parnay has been producing outstanding wines for more than two centuries.
- This wine is made from old Cabernet Franc vines planted on tuffeau, clay and limestone soils. The grapes go through three days of pre-fermentation cold maceration; followed by a gentle extraction and maceration with no temperature control for the first 20 days... *this encourages warmer fermentation temperatures and as a result extracts more colour and body*
- On the nose, beautiful notes of ripe red fruits, associated with the freshness of the soil (mint, spices...) form a very harmonious whole. The palate is full, silky, very balanced, revealing high quality fruit. The length in the mouth is exceptional... and augurs a very good aptitude for aging.
- The 2016 vintage was much like PEC's 2015



*The next dinner would have been on June 24...
~ The Wines of Bordeaux's Right Bank ~*

