Spotlight on the Loire

18 Oct 2008 by Jancis Robinson

The wines of the Loire Valley have always seemed to Julia and me to attract much less than their fair share of exposure and praise. Julia even made trying to combat this phenomenon the subject of her Master of Wine dissertation. Jacqueline Friedrich is one of the few English language wine writers to concentrate on this wine region that is so celebrated within (northern) France, but so often ignored elsewhere.

Now comes the excellent news that our fellow MW Richard Kelley, whose day job is finding superior South African wines for UK importers Richards Walford, is writing a book on the wines of the Loire. He began more than a year ago and has now managed to finish his first sample chapter which focuses on the Savennières appellation 'on the basis that it's probably the most dynamic and controversial appellation in the Loire at this moment in time', he says.

This has been published on www.richardkelley.co.uk and is free to all. Richard reports: 'You will see that it's billed as *The Definitive Guide to the Loire* which as it stands is a bit rich; The Definitive Guide to Savennières' would be probably more apt, but I think it sets the standard and my intention going forward. The piece is overwritten and I couldn't expect to do such a comprehensive review on every appellation, but I thought this was a special case and I very much enjoyed researching it.'

It's all presented very attractively in great detail, including some recommendations for where (and where not) to eat and stay. I commend it to you all and look forward to future chapters, hoping they won't take quite as long as the first one.

Incidentally, the recent Cape Debates were largely Richard Kelley's idea. He says about the press version reported on by Julia in Cape crusaders and burnt rubber, 'I thought it was a very open, frank and honest discussion, but it's clear that this issue won't even start to go away until we see some results from the boffins at Stellenbosch University.'