

Domaine Cherrier et Fils, Sancerre (Loire Valley, France) 2008 (\$25, Vineyard Brands): Many Sancerre these days lack distinctiveness and taste more like simple Sauvignon Blanc. Not this one, which shows why the vineyards around the tiny town of Sancerre on the Loire River have such a good reputation. Sure, it has the bright zesty verve of Sauvignon Blanc, but it's real Sancerre, with layers of chalky minerality--even a smoky flinty element--and depth. **92** [Michael Apstein](#) *Dec 15, 2009*

Patient Cottat, Vin de Pays du Val de Loire (Loire Valley, France) Sauvignon Blanc 2007 (\$11, Vineyard Brands): The Fournier family owns three domaines in and around Sancerre, in the heart of the Loire Valley, and is one of that region's leading producers. In addition to their excellent appellation contrôlée Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé, they produce this bright and lively Sauvignon Blanc, the same grape used in those two appellations. (Vin de Pays regulations allow varietal labeling whereas appellation contrôlée regulations generally forbid it.) While it lacks the complexity and depth of Sancerre or Pouilly Fumé--and the price--it delivers zesty, citric-tinged flavors that would match well with shellfish or simply prepared seafood dishes. **87** [Michael Apstein](#) *Dec 15, 2009*