



## PJ's Wine of the Month Club June 2008 Selection

### White Selection

**2007 Stefano Massone Gavi "Masera"**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$12.99**

**PJ's Price: \$9.99**

**Location:** Stefano Massone is located in the town of Capriata d'Orba which is in the southeast part of the Piedmont wine region in northern Italy. The appellation of Gavi is just a few miles away from the village and the winery.

**Gavi:** True Gavi can only be produced in the region of Gavi which is rather small. It encompasses a stretch of land that is around 9 miles long and no wider than 3.5 miles. This is the traditional home of the Cortese grape. As early as 1659 Cortese has

been associated with the Gavi region in south east Piedmont. All studies show that Cortese is indigenous to the region but only became the primary focus of production after the decimation of the established Dolcetto vines by phylloxera around 1875. Gavi itself is a beautiful town nestled in the hills of the Piedmont region. It enjoys a mild continental climate with warm summers and mild winters. Gavi has made great strides in the last few decades and thanks to producers such as Stefano Massone and La Scolca (one of the best and most expensive of all Italian white wines) the wine has gained international respect. So much so that in 1999 the region received DOCG status (notice the green sticker on the neck of the bottle) and now all Gavi must be made from 100% Cortese.

**Cortese:** From the start Cortese was identified as one of the most promising white grapes in all of Italy. In the early history people grew Cortese because of its natural vigor and the high quality of the resulting wine. It remained a local wine for much of history; this is in part due to the low level of movement in and out of this region of Italy. More importantly Cortese is yet another example of a varietal that is inseparable from its home, like many of the varietals grown in the Piedmont region. Some Cortese is grown in the surrounding regions of Lombardy and Veneto but it never has the same character as home grown examples. Cortese is light skinned and needs the warmer weather of south east Piedmont to ripen fully. The most important step in producing a good Gavi is to limit the yield of the naturally vigorous Cortese vine. This is done by green harvesting and trying to gain access to old vines whenever possible. When one is able to limit the yield the concentrations of sugar and "varietal character" in each berry rises and, if treated the right way can yield great wine.

**Stefano Massone** is one of the few producers in Piedmont that only produced white wine. Owned and operated by Stefano Massone himself, he oversees all aspects of vine growing and winemaking. He owns a 10 hectare vineyard planted solely with Cortese and makes sure to restrict the yield to insure good flavor density. The vineyard was planted in 1978 and sits on a bed of calcarous-clay with a southern exposure that allows the vine to take full advantage of the summer sun. This wine was aged in stainless steel as most Gavi is. While there are some maverick producers experimenting with oak treatment, steel is more traditional.

**Description:** This wine is intensely aromatic with notes of green apples, pears and citrus fruit. In the background there are notes of minerals that mingle with fruit aromas. This dry wine has a medium-light body and is soft and crisp with flavors of citrus and minerals. The finish is clean and the healthy acidity leaves your palate clean.

**Food Pairing:** This wine will pair well with grilled seafood or shellfish with a lemon butter sauce. It would also pair well with a hot day by the pool or in the park.





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### White Selection

**2006 Domaine de la Soucherie Anjou Blanc,  
Loire Valley**

**Suggested retail Price: \$13.99**

**PJ's Price: \$10.49**

**Location:** Domaine de la Soucherie is located in the village of Beaulieu sur Layon in the very heart of the Côteaux du Layon appellation just south of Angers.

**History:** Anjou was the birthplace of Henri II and home to some of the most highly regarded wines of the Middle Ages. The Tjou family has a long winemaking history in the Anjou. They have been crafting wines since 1780. The actual Domaine de la Soucherie was purchased from the Marquis de Brissac in 1952. At the time almost all the wine produced at the Domaine was sold to the ubiquitous négociant Nicholas. Pierre-Yves Tjou, the current proprietor, took over the management of the estate in 1969 and began to bottle a small portion of the Domaines own wine. Today, the entire production is estate-bottled, which is rare in the region.



**Anjou** is located on the north bank of the Loire River about 80 miles from the where it joins the Bay of Biscay. The appellation has some Atlantic influence because the land between Anjou and the Ocean is very flat and the cooling air flows up river. There is also very little rain fall in this region of the Loire; however, because of river and ground water, the region is one of the greenest in all of France. Anjou is one of the few appellations in France that produces white, red and rosé wines. The reds and rosés are produced from Cabernet Franc and/or Gamay, while the white Anjou must be at least 80% Chenin Blanc, with the balance being either Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc. The whites are prized for the mineral quality, crisp acidity and stone fruit aromas. The best sites for Anjou white are close to the river on a bed of schist which is one of the defining factors for the appellation.

**The Domaine de la Soucherie** is composed of 30 hectares of vineyards, four of which are within the highly coveted area of "Chaume" and 1.80 of which are within the confines of the Savennieres appellation in the "Clos des Perriers." Approximately 18.5 hectares of the domaine is planted to Chenin Blanc; there are also 7 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc; and there are small parcels of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Gamay.

**Vinification:** Use of chemicals in the vineyard is kept to an absolute minimum as the objective is to produce a wine in as natural a manner as possible. All grapes are harvested manually. The prime parcels of Chenin Blanc are harvested by a series of passes through the vineyards in order to obtain grapes of ultimate ripeness. The grapes are then de-stemmed and crushed in a pneumatic press, which applies gentle pressure in order to obtain the purest juice from the very outside of the pulp. Fermentation occurs in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. No oak is used.

**Description:** This is a mineral driven wine but with some time in the glass fruit emerges. On first pass the nose is full with notes of wet stone, flint, and limestone. With time notes of white peach, tart green apple and pear emerge from the glass. It is dry on the palate and packed with cleansing acidity, good body and flavors of peach, wet stone and a light honey note.

**Food Pairing:** This wine is lovely on its own or with any number of foods. It works very well with semi- soft or soft goat cheeses from the Loire valley, or with mussels in white wine and garlic.



## PJ's Wine of the Month Club

### June 2008 Selection

#### Red Selection

**2002 Cardeal Dão Reserva**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$13.99**

**PJ Price: \$10.99**

**Location:** Cardeal is located in the Dão region in northeastern Portugal. Dão Cardeal Reserva was produced in the Vila Nova de Tazém region, which is considered to be one of the best sub-regions of the DOC.

**History:** As early as 1390 CE the wines from this region of Portugal were known for their quality and distinct nature as King James I protected the region from outside forces to insure a source of quality wine. The Dão is one of the oldest D.O.C. (Portugal's version of AOC in France) in the world dating back to 1907. In the mid 1940's the Portuguese government, in an attempt

to control wine production, legislated that all grapes grown in the Dão region after harvest must be sold to co-operative winemaking facilities. These co-ops (10 different located around the region) were primitive, even by past standards. This resulted in wines that were more than "rustic;" some were unclean because of the very old wood casks and general practices of poor hygiene in the winery. This was obvious in the wine from the region and as a result, production and sales quickly fell off. After nearly 50 years this law was overturned in 1989 because the monopolistic legislation was felt to be incompatible with Portugal's membership to the European Union. Once the bureaucratic road block was removed the region was free to advance in wine technology. New wineries were built and the people of the region started to take pride in their wine again. The 1990's saw the most change for the region with new larger wineries being constructed and a movement to produce wines that were cleaner, of better quality and could compete on a global scale.

**Dão** is named after the river that runs through the appellation and is a truly interesting wine locale. It is surrounded on three sides by high granite mountains that shield it from the influence of the Atlantic which is only about 40 miles from the western tip of the Dão. The vast majority of this region is basically a granite plateau with sandy soil that provides good conditions for growing grapes. The Dão has long warm summers and abundant winter rainfall.

**Touriga Nacional** is the most respected red grape in Portugal. It is native to the Dão but is now well known for its role as the noblest grape used in the production of Port in the Douro Valley. It usually produces deeply colored tannic reds however choices made during wine making have a great impact over the final product. This wine is 100% Touriga Nacional, but the majority of Dão reds are blends that include any number of local native Portuguese grapes (such as Tinto Roriz, Jean and Alfrocheiro Preto).

**Vinification:** This wine was fermented in stainless steel and then moved to French oak barrels for 12 month of maturation. The wine was then aged in bottle for 18 month before its release to the public. It is this maturation in cask and aging in bottle before release that allows it to be called a "Reserva."

**Description:** Aromas of ripe red cherry, spice and earth dominate the nose of this ruby red wine. On the palate there are flavors of more ripe cherries and sweet spice like clove. It has medium tannins, medium acidity and great body that fills the mouth. There are notes of smoke and earth on the long finish. This is a great value red and will pair well with the traditional roast suckling pig and garlic found in that region of Portugal or a simple meal like pasta or even pizza.





## PJ's Wine of the Month Club

June 2008 Selection

### Red Selection

**2005 Boccadigabbia Rosso Piceno, Marche Italy**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$14.99 PJ's Price: \$11.99**

**Location:** Boccadigabbia is located in the district of Castelletta di Fontespina in the Marche region of central Italy. Marche and the Rosso Piceno appellation sit on the Adriatic Sea on the "calf muscle" of the Italian Peninsula.

**History:** Boccadigabbia was once one of the individual farms that made up the "Amministrazione Bonaparte of Civitanova," which was a massive agricultural estate that for over a century was an influential example of modern, sustainable agriculture. This portion of the land was owned by the former Bonaparte administration. It was inherited by Napoleon III and during this time French varietals were introduced to the region. However, in the late 1960s, it was decided by the local government to exclusively cultivate grapes on the property that were geared toward the production of local "everyday wine" and unfortunately the older varieties, direct descendants of those planted by Hallaire, Napoleon III's agronomist-superintendent, were torn out of the vineyard. To recoup this catastrophic loss, a program was launched in the mid-80s to re-plant the lost Cabernet, Merlot, and Pinot Noir; the goal was to achieve the high quality of the "Amministrazione Bonaparte of Civitanova" grapes. In the old Boccadigabbia farmhouse one can still see today a venerable ceramic tile bearing the name of the winery and, above it, the Napoleonic coat of arms, a crowned "N."



**Rosso Piceno** is on the eastern shores of Italy and covers about 11,860 acres along the Adriatic Sea. The Marche region has some things in common with Molise, to the south, in that until recently not much produced there registered on the global wine map. There are many reasons for this but the most important one is that this region is rather devoid of urban centers. A near by urban center would create a market for the wine and would be a haven for discerning locals that would take interest in wines made in their homeland. Without this, and other factors, the Marche region has remained rather obscure and produced mostly unremarkable wine that is drunk locally. The wine itself is made with a blend of Sangiovese and Montepulciano. The Sangiovese made in the Marche is usually lighter in body than those of Tuscany but has a delicate balance that is great for warm weather.

**Vinification:** The grapes are from the 5 hectare vineyard that sits on sandy clay soils not far from the sea. Both the Sangiovese and Montepulciano are picked by hand. The Sangiovese is harvested in late September while the Montepulciano will hang until the second half of October. The grapes are then crushed (just to break the skins) and lightly pressed and moved to stainless steel fermentation tanks. The wine then undergoes extensive maceration and pumping over with skin contact. The wine is then let to mature for 10-12 months in one- or two-year old French oak barriques.

**Description:** The wine is ruby red in color and offers aromas of red berries mixed with notes of vanilla, sweet spice, and violets. Dry on the palate but with very ripe fine tannins there are abundant flavors of red cherries and raspberries. Crisp acidity and a light body make this a great summer red.

**Food Pairing:** This is a very versatile wine. It is light enough for almost anyone to enjoy drinking it on its own however it would shine if paired with something with a cooked tomato component, like pasta or even fried foods. It would also go well with hard cheeses or any red meat.