

BOTTLE OF RED, BOTTLE OF WHITE

**Bacchus,
the God of Wine,
visits Lake
Charles, LA**

story and photography
by Laurette Veres

The highly anticipated food and wine festival **Rouge et Blanc** brings heartfelt goodness to the heart of Cajun country.

Wine pairings, seminars and dinners take place throughout Lake Charles, Louisiana, all week as partiers, food connoisseurs and wine aficionados anxiously await the main festival on Saturday. One thing is for sure: When lovers of food and wine get together, only good things can happen.

The Golden Ticket

Wine dinners abound during the weeklong celebration of red and white. One of the most anticipated events takes place at **La Truffe Sauvage**. It begins with the N.V. Charles Heidsieck, Brut, Reserve, paired with the escargot



L'AUBERGE DU LAC CASINO RESORT

and salmon Crostini. (Fun fact: According to co-host Jared Cocke of Republic National Distributing Company, the first champagne reached Louisiana in the 1800s.) Other highlights of the meal include: fresh tagliatelle pasta and alba white truffle paired with light-colored, full-bodied

2004 Barolo; pan-roasted wild Alaskan halibut served with a fire-roasted pepper risotto and 2007 Louis Jadot, Beaune, Les Avaux. It's a treat to dine at one of the finest restaurants in town. And it's even more of a treat when the chef and wine supplier are given creativity carte blanche.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: FESTIVITIES AT CITY HALL, THE AUTHOR AND FRIENDS AT ROUGE ET BLANC, PAN ROASTED WILD ALASKAN HALIBUT SERVED WITH FIRE ROASTED PEPPER RISOTTO, CUPCAKE TOWER BY SWEET CHIC DESSERTS, MARDI GRAS "KREWS."



Eat, Drink and Be Happy

Welcome to the big show: **Rouge et Blanc** offers more than bottles of wine—you'll find champagne and bites from local restaurants. The grounds in front of the historic city hall are closed to motorized vehicles so pedestrians can roam freely among nearly 50 tasting tents. This is a great place to get your fill of atchafalaya, gumbo, etouffee, prime rib, lamb chops and more; plus lots of wine. The clock tower at city hall is a beacon for dessert lovers—the building is overflowing with cupcake displays, bread pudding and other confectionary delights.

The Celebration Continues

The newly introduced Bubbles for Banners—an upscale champagne brunch—wraps up the week's activities, and this year, it takes place at L'Auberge du Lac. The award-winning chefs work their magic in live

cooking demonstrations while the scent of truffle popcorn wafts through the ballroom. In this casual setting, attendees compare notes and relive the previous day's revelries as they enjoy made-to-order salmon, eggs Benedict, quiche, fruit and a plethora of desserts. Even better: Proceeds go to the Banners program, a cultural program at local McNeese University.

Local Color

Firm up on Fat Tuesday facts at the Mardi Gras Museum. Brightly colored "Krews" (groups who participate in Mardi Gras parades) costumes fill this historic schoolhouse. Mardi Gras' theme changes each year and designers strive to outdo the previous year's garb. It's bad luck to wear a costume more than once, so the museum has a constant flow of new displays. Not to be missed: float replicas that make you feel like you're on a parade float.

Stay

For the best accommodations in Lake Charles, head to **L'Auberge du Lac Casino Resort**, located on Contraband Bayou. The luscious grounds, winding pool, multiple restaurants and casino are the closest to Las Vegas style you're going to find on Interstate 10.

If you love food and wine, you won't want to miss the next festival. Tickets are on sale now for the main event on October 15, 2011.

ESSENTIALS:
rougeetblanc.us
thewildtruffle.com
ldlcasino.com

