



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

Burgundy 2018:
Opening Offer

EXCLUSIVE TO MEMBERS



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

INTRODUCTION



THERE'S AN OLD SAYING ABOUT SECOND ALBUMS AND NOVELS BEING THE MOST DIFFICULT.

However, in the case of this, our second opening offer from Burgundy, we have a new vintage in 2018 that is certainly more generous and a range of wines that is only enhanced thanks to some wonderful additions.

Burgundy also had a bounce in its step following harvest 2018. For a report on the whys and wherefores of the vintage, please read the report that follows. About those additions: I am truly excited to be able to bring the wines of Thibault Liger-Belair and Benjamin Leroux to

Club Magnum members. Ben's wines were introduced to a number of you at our club dinner in January. I have selected three wines in 2018, all from the Côte de Nuits, but frankly I have had to restrain myself as it would have been easy to pick many, many more. This is a cellar with quality in every corner and I have no doubt that these beautiful wines will find immediate favour.

Thibault is another acclaimed Burgundian talent, making a brilliant range of wines across two estates. He is fully committed to organic and biodynamic practices and obsessive about the small details. Tasting with him in preparation for this offer has been a total pleasure. His Nuits St Georges 1er cru Les St Georges is unquestionably one of the great wines of Burgundy and a true reference point for this famous village.

We now have a complete XI for you to choose from for this offer and I will continue to add further growers at the right time. Despite the difficulties of recent months, my firm belief is that bringing these great wines directly to those who most appreciate them can only result in enhanced and long-lived relationships that reward the efforts and skills of the growers and the passion and loyalty of Club members.

With thanks for your continued support.

Santé!
Mike

HOW THIS OFFER WORKS

Allocations of new releases are only available to members of Club Magnum. Prices can be found on the accompanying order form and are exclusive to members. Please take a moment to read a little on the vintage and on the wines selected. If you would like help and suggestions, then please do not hesitate to contact Mike in the usual way.

NOT YET A MEMBER?

Applications to join Club Magnum are always welcome. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more or email mike@clubmagnum.com to begin a discussion and/or application.



2018 VINTAGE SUMMARY

IT'S A NATURAL INSTINCT
TO EXPLORE THE UNKNOWN
USING A FAMILIAR FRAME OF
REFERENCE.

Yet the pitfall is obvious. If we obsess with drawing comparisons to what has gone before, we risk identifying the new arrival not for what it is but for what it isn't. With wine, the process of discovery is part of the intrigue: every year brings its own puzzle and vigneron, merchant and consumer alike set about on the task of understanding what is being delivered.

In a vintage like 2018, so full of extremes, the pull away from our comfort zone is even more violent. This is a year that stretches credulity and saw seasoned campaigners scratching their heads.



Some vintages leave a heavy imprint while others carry little distinction. The task, however, remains the same: to nurture your crop to perfect health by understanding the intricacies and quirks of the growing season and in-so-doing faithfully allowing your terroir to express itself. But how exactly to do that when little seems to make sense and when practical challenges abound?

2018 is one of the most uneven vintages I have encountered. You can find everything from sublime to ridiculous, from magnificent to malignant and all points in between. It requires careful navigation so strap in and enjoy the ride!



GROWING CONDITIONS

Let's look at a few key aspects of the growing season first. After a particularly wet and mild winter, with record rainfall in January and March, the vines began to bud early. Development slowed a little in April as colder temperatures briefly returned but inevitably that meant that the threat of spring frosts came onto the radar. Thankfully, this was a year in which the Côte managed to clear that particular hurdle. From there it was plain sailing: conditions were mostly benign in May and June and thus flowering was beautiful and bounteous, with fruit setting evenly.



2018 VINTAGE SUMMARY

If the spring decides the potential quantity of the crop, summer decides the quality. Faced with the high potential load and the conditions overhead, vigneronns faced some particularly tricky decisions on canopy management and crop thinning. Temperatures in July and August were consistently hot but only rarely extreme. Other than one small rainstorm in mid-July and some very localised hail in and around the southern end of the Côte de Nuits, most vineyards didn't see any proper rain until after the harvest. Hydric stress was noted in a few areas, notably on thinner soils and with young vines.

A major difference, however between 2018 and a true heatwave year like 2003 were the night-time temperatures. This turned out to be crucial as the vine was able to find some respite, translating into a surprising degree of freshness in the fruit come harvest time. What was truly extraordinary was the light. In most summers in continental France, days often start clear but cloud builds during the day and often there will be a rumble of thunder somewhere. In 2018, there was very little cloud in the sky. To put this into perspective, some estimates on the additional sunlight hours amount to the equivalent of three extra weeks over a typical year.

Unsurprisingly, the vines surged forwards and harvest dates kept on being revised. However, with such a load on the vines, the question that kept vigneronns awake at night was whether their crops would all ripen fully while freshness was able to be maintained.



HARVEST

When it came to harvest, which largely took place in the last week of August and first ten days of September, conditions were optimal: warm, settled and dry. The mornings were also mercifully cool, definitely the time to be picking as much as you possibly could. However, the high yields meant that there was simply a lot of work to do and while most domaines were able to find the additional hands to do the picking, their ability to process the extra fruit quickly enough in the winery brought challenges. The last thing you want to do is to leave the fruit sitting out in crates in the sun.

But, I hear you ask, where did the volume come from? Logic would dictate that in a growing season that lacks water, there would be less juice. Yet, it was the reverse and it certainly caught many growers by surprise.

The most likely answer lies back in the winter where the wet, mild months ensured that the water table was truly topped up, providing the crucial reserves to draw from. Many growers also made mention of the importance of dew in the morning, giving the vines just enough water on those summer mornings to keep them going. Others point to the pent-up vigour of the vine after so many years of crop shortage.



2018 VINTAGE SUMMARY

Whatever the reason, the numbers were startling but is a large crop necessarily a negative? In the case of Chardonnay, we know that this is a hardy grape variety that can happily support a high yield without losing flavour. Pinot Noir, on the other hand, is more delicate and so demands special attention: high yields in Pinot translate into dilute, indistinctive and undistinguished wines. Not what we come to Burgundy for.

In many respects, you can argue that the high yields were a saving factor in the vintage. Without them, the incidence of over-ripe, acid-deficient wines would have been much higher: at least the vine had somewhere to divert these extraordinary sources of energy. The biggest issue, as I see it, is that such a super-charged growing season accelerates the accumulation of sugar but not necessarily the ripening of the phenols, wherein the key flavour compounds reside. Pick too early and you may well have potential alcohols in the 'correct range', with enough acidity to boot but without sufficient ripeness in flavour to make for interesting wine. Pick too late, however and the ever-increasing sugar turns into high-octane alcoholic monsters and acidity drops away too. Hence the need to get on with the harvest as quickly as possible once you have fired the starting gun.



Certainly for lazy headline writers, 'abundance' was the easy sensationalist story to sell, particularly as it was such a convenient counterpoint to the stories written about loss and shortage earlier in the decade. As a result, critics and merchants were on their guard, looking for dilute, over-cropped wines and undeniably those are out there. Even on such hallowed ground as the Côte d'Or, there are still those who opt for an industrial approach: use of chemicals, fertilisers, machine harvesting and all the rest. After all, the farmer who limits his own fortunes by reducing his crop is still a comparatively rare beast.



The serious, quality-conscious domaines, however are guided by the same principles every year: let the terroir speak; express the vintage; make wine in the style enjoyed by legions of customers and ardent fans over decades. They know that over-cropping nullifies the terroir and if you cannot tell one glass of Burgundy from the next, then you have failed in your mission. It also makes it very difficult to price it other than to the lowest common denominator, which also keeps people on their toes.

So, 2018 is a vintage which presented unique challenges in the vineyard and also in the winery. I heard many growers pleading with neighbours to borrow tanks, to spare some barrels, to lend them materials. Liquids are very difficult to handle if you don't have the right equipment. Once it was all in, however, a major hurdle had been cleared. Then it was onto the vinification. Here again there were problems, with a number of growers reporting that fermentations were slow, raising the prospect of getting stuck and producing volatile acidity and brettanomyces.

2018 VINTAGE SUMMARY

PLACING 2018

As for the comparisons, if we look for years of high yield such as 2009, 1999, 1985 or 1982, do any of them resemble 2018? Or how about years noted for their warmth- 1947, 1959 or 1990 or the aforementioned 2003, perhaps? Taking each of these, I cannot find an exact match. In every case, there is something which doesn't quite fit.

How about the colours? Is 2018 more favourable to one style or the other? Once again, the answers cover the spectrum of possibilities. To the reds first: there are some quite magnificent reds in 2018, wines that will thrill us all along their development curve and many that will live for decades, as indeed have some of the fabled vintages already mentioned. However, in such a highly variable vintage you simply cannot 'blanket buy' it. Last year, we noted that 2017 was a summer "without extremes". 2018 is the opposite and where there are extremes, inevitably it will be too much for some to deal with. 2018 posed some unusual questions, not seen for many years and not everyone had the answers.

As a buyer, you can often seek strategic safety by favouring certain villages or only buying the crus. Again, in 2018, I don't think this applies. There are some delicious Bourgognes and village wines but also some shockers. The same is true as you climb the scale: I have tasted wines from great crus that could be worthy of 'best ever' and also others that would be more appropriate spread on toast. Geographically, I tasted wonderful things in both Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune but also a few wines from both sectors that I would be happy to never see again.



In white, the biggest surprise is the freshness. As anticipated, there is more flesh but aromatically, it was rare to find wines in the exotic fruit spectrum. Lots of ripe orchard fruits and flowers but plenty of citrus too and very little that suggested over-ripeness, desiccation or botrytis. Against the gorgeous, classic 2017s, the 2018s can look more playful and less serious but the best are a lot more interesting than the 2015s and 2016s. Don't underestimate them. You should absolutely be putting these into the cellar with the anticipation of great pleasure. Jean-Marc Roulot ranks them behind only his 2017s and 2014s, ahead of every other vintage of the decade. And he certainly knows his onions.

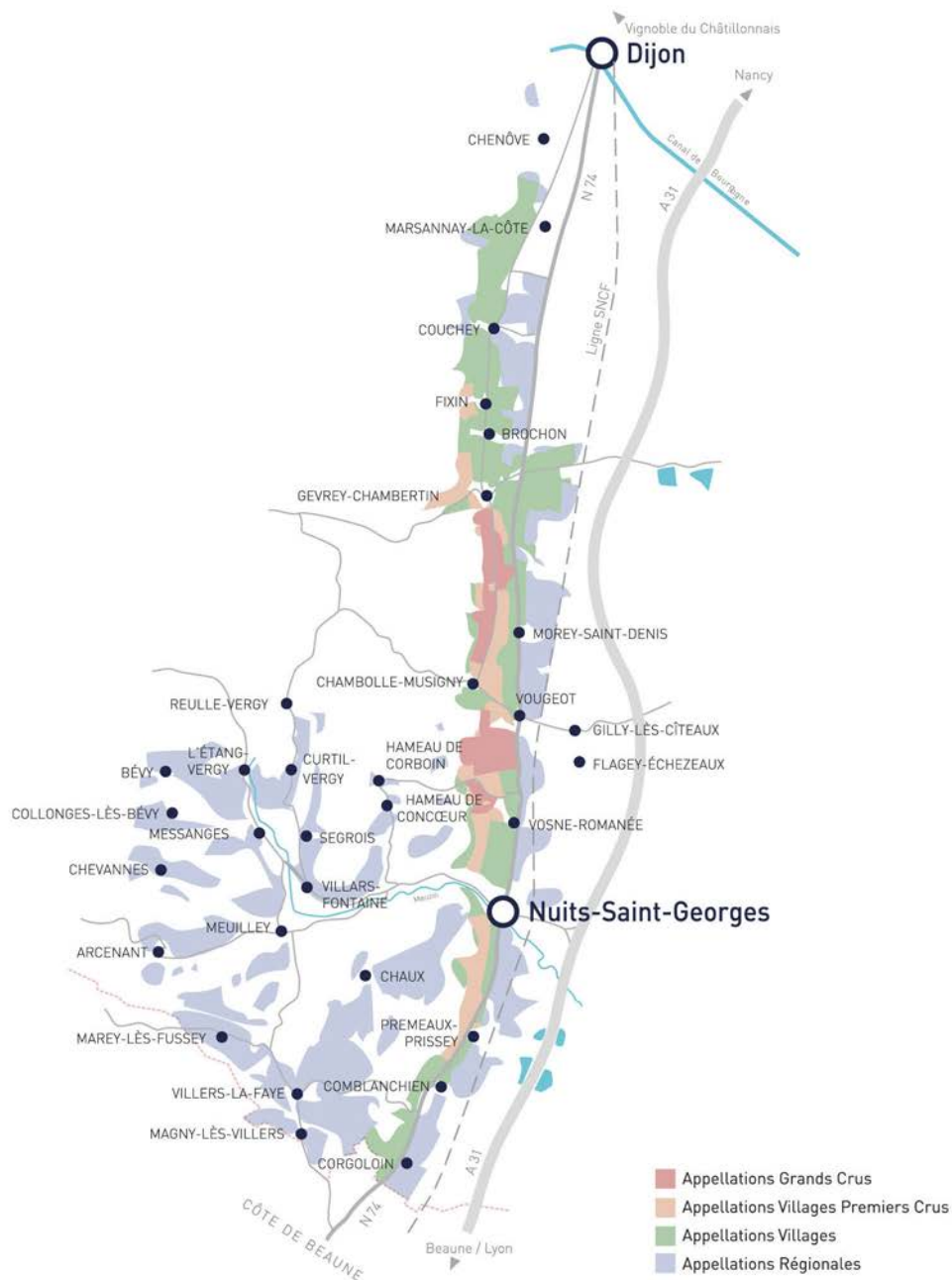
Taking all of this on board, the best advice I can offer, perhaps predictably, is to focus on the growers. Who did the work, who understood the vintage, who coped best with the challenges presented. This is the huge advantage of working directly, over many years and tasting and talking regularly. The growers were candid in their comments and in any case, having once again worked the harvest myself, I could see with my own eyes what they were presented with and what they did to answer the questions.

In conclusion, looking at Burgundy as a whole, if you choose well, there is a lot of fun and reward to be had in 2018. And in these extraordinary times, we all need as much of that in our lives as we can possibly find.



CÔTE DE NUITS

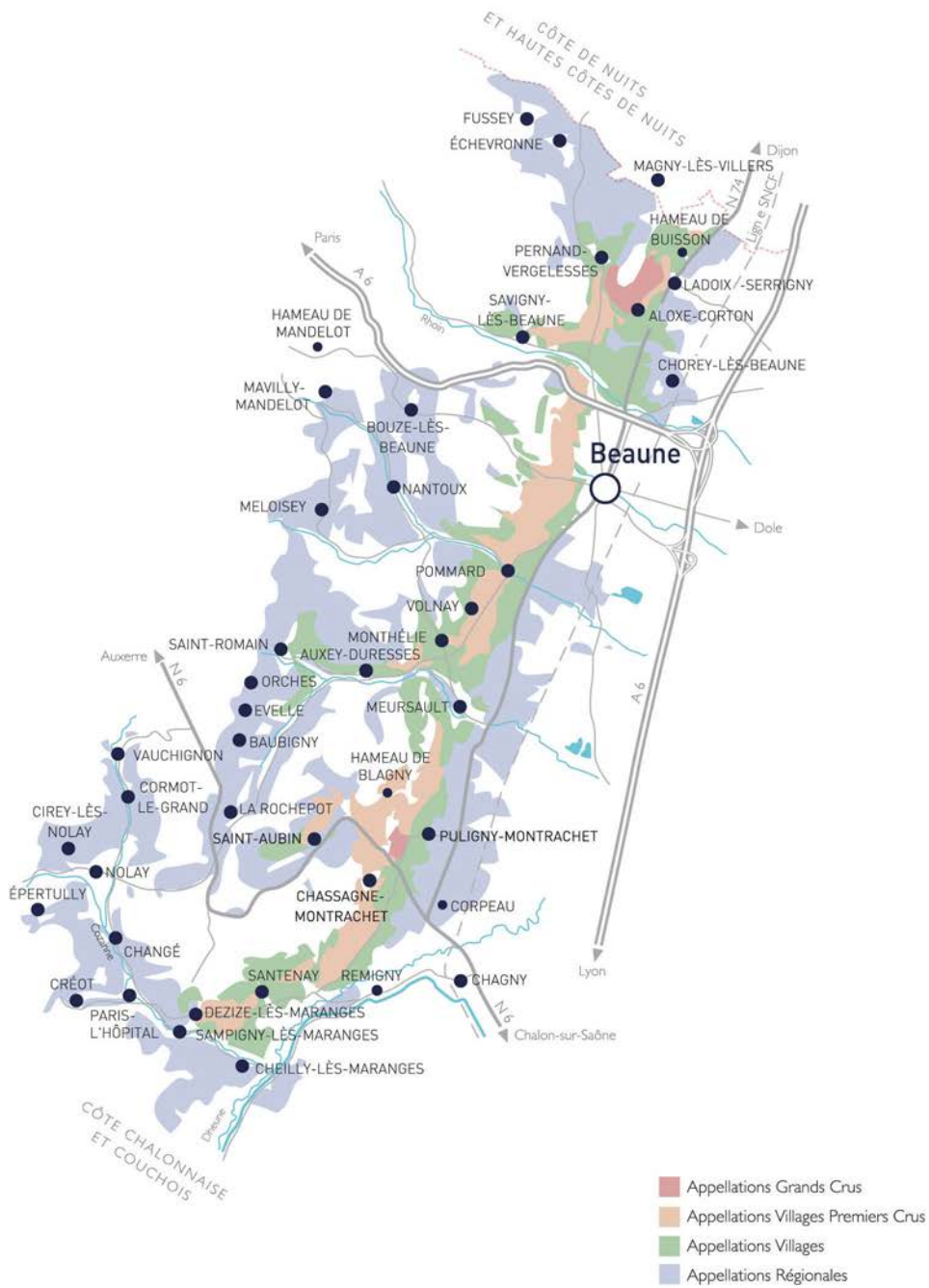
ET HAUTES CÔTES DE NUITS



MAP PROVIDED BY BOURGOGNE WINE BOARD

CÔTE DE BEAUNE

ET HAUTES CÔTES DE BEAUNE



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DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE



GUILLAUME D'ANGERVILLE DESCRIBES THE GROWING SEASON OF 2018 AS “BENIGN”, ALTHOUGH GIVEN THE TRAUMA OF HIS EXPERIENCE FOR MUCH OF THE DECADE WITH HAIL AND FROST, ONE CAN PERHAPS UNDERSTAND THAT ANY YEAR WHERE THESE DISASTERS WERE AVOIDED MUST SEEM LIKE A BREEZE.

Certainly there was additional purpose in his stride at harvest, which began on 1st September and was completed in six days thanks to the successful recruitment of some extra pickers, particularly from Italy. In the winery, the team worked flat-out and retained the use of a sorting table to fine tune the quality of what went into the vats. If truth be told, there was no compelling need to sort the fruit- certainly no rot, only a tiny amount of grilled fruit and generally very even ripening across the bunches thanks to the fantastic flowering- but standards are so high here that every bunch is still examined before being admitted.

Due to the proximity of his vineyards and to the cooling systems on his vats, Guillaume was able to capture the essence of the crop to its maximum potential. Tasting through the range, it was noticeable how

much red fruit character had been retained in the wines alongside the more anticipated black fruits of a warm year. The exuberance of the vintage is certainly there but it is carried within a firm, upright framework. Guillaume dares to draw qualitative parallels to years such as 2015, 2009 and 2005.

The approach at Domaine Marquis d'Angerville is always thoughtful and considered and everything is done with the long-term in mind. That said, if there are opportunities to make tweaks and small adjustments, they are always taken. This combination of constant questioning within an assured, focused environment ensures that the reputation of this great estate only continues to grow.

[PLEASE CLICK FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE](#)



DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

ROUGE

VOLNAY 1ER CRU CHAMPANS

The quality of the fruit from Champans in 2018 was a joy to behold. Despite the naturally efficient drainage of the soils here, enough water had been retained to ensure beautiful bunches. Guillaume's parcels run the entire length of the slope, with more alluvial silt as one descends but there was little difference in the condition of the fruit between top, middle and bottom which again points to the even flowering as well as to the assiduous vineyard work of the team.

Tasting the wine, it is remarkable to feel how the limestone bedrock still asserts itself, bringing plenty of tone to the obvious flesh and muscle. The roots had surely been driven ever deeper in the hot conditions, in search of water. Out of barrel, Champans showed its more serious side, developing at a more stately pace and showing restraint where other wines had been more brazen. As such there is no feeling of excess in this wine, just health, confidence and innate ability. Spending a bit more time with it, you can feel it expand smoothly across the palate before driving towards a long, rippling finish. This is a vin de garde, with the necessary concentration of fruit, acid balance and tannic framework to develop over many years. However, the acid and tannins feel neither hard nor brittle and the extra volume and flesh also point towards much pleasure on the upswing, before it reaches its apogee.



DOMAINE DE BELLENE



NICOLAS POTEL CONSIDERS 2018 TO BE A “GREAT” VINTAGE– BY WHICH HE MEANS A VINTAGE THAT CAN FULLY FULFIL THE POTENTIAL OF EACH SITE– AS WELL AS HIS BEST VINTAGE YET AT DOMAINE DE BELLENE.

Ever-ready to speak his mind and call it as he sees it, Nico says the vintage owes a lot of its success to the even flowering and in this, he drew parallels to both 1990 and 1999. This enabled homogenous maturity across bunches and vineyards, giving the opportunity for everything to be picked at the optimum moment, as long as resources could be managed accordingly, of course.

managed to pick 24 hectares in just six days, having had their numbers swelled to 110. This was a massive undertaking but speed was essential given how quickly the sugar was being accumulated. The ripeness is evident in the wines but without ever tipping into over-ripeness and Nico believes that the tannins are sufficiently ripe too to enable drinking at all stages of the wines’ evolution.

He also noted the arrival of small rain showers at just the right time, in both Côte de Beaune and Côte de Nuits allowing the vine to complete its maturation cycle and yield fruit with high polyphenol levels and thick skins yet with lots of juice too. His team were called into action on 6th September and

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ON DOMAINE DE BELLENE](#)



DOMAINE DE BELLENE

ROUGE

VOSNE-ROMANÉE 1ER CRU SUCHOTS



Nicolas' old vines fared very well in the warmth of the summer of 2018, producing a wine of depth and style. His holding in this great premier cru vineyard is a little more than a quarter-hectare. The vines, which date from 1937 and run north-south down a little slope, end at the small road that separates Suchots from the Grand Cru of Richebourg and their well-developed root systems held the key to success in the water-deficient summer.

Aromatically, the wine begins its show with discretion. Any thoughts of being short-changed are quickly abandoned, however, as with air the wine opens up and shows that it has plenty of substance. The little black fruits are given additional complexity by the presence of more exotic asian spices. On the palate, the attack already impresses with its beautiful textures of raw silk. On the finish, however, it is clear that this is a wine at the beginning of its journey, the elements not yet fully pieced together. Once again, try to restrain yourself for a few years before reaching for the corkscrew. To the patient come the prizes.



DOMAINE SIMON BIZE



CHISA BIZE CALLED HER VENDANGEURS INTO ACTION ON 29TH AUGUST AND REPORTED AN UNEVENTFUL HARVEST THAT YIELDED A 'GOOD SIZE CROP' OVER THE COURSE OF THREE WEEKS.

In the cellar, she reported that the malolactic fermentation had followed quickly after the alcoholic fermentation and all the wines were already in tank by the time I tasted here in November 2019. Even at this early stage, the wines were all presenting very well, with the differences between them clearly defined.

On my last visit, she was busily preparing her newest project: the site being readied for building work, with a wine bar called 'La Ruche' due to open in the spring of 2020. To borrow a phrase, this is most definitely 'a fine address'.

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ON DOMAINE SIMON BIZE](#)

It is deeply impressive to see how in control Chisa is at this important estate and I am thrilled to see her work gaining much deserved recognition on the international market and in the wine media. Despite the acclaim, she continues to plough her own furrow, experimenting with her botanist on vineyard preparations and making subtle changes in vinification too.



DOMAINE SIMON BIZE

ROUGE

SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE 1ER CRU AUX VERGELESSES



Chisa was visibly proud presenting this wine, professing that she believes that it will be a good developer and as such able to evolve in such a way that permits the multiple facets to all come together and fully complement each other. From the first encounter, you can indeed feel the class of it. It takes its time, slow to reveal itself, absolutely not in any hurry. In the mouth the wine builds in intensity, showing dark, brambly fruit one minute, hinting at spices the next, constantly shifting and changing.

There is underlying power here, a wine that will charm and engage in its youth but that will nonetheless run the full course. I find increasing soul and calm in the Bize wines in recent years. It's as if the wines have found even greater depth and refinement from inner strength and learning, rather than reaching for the make-up.



DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND

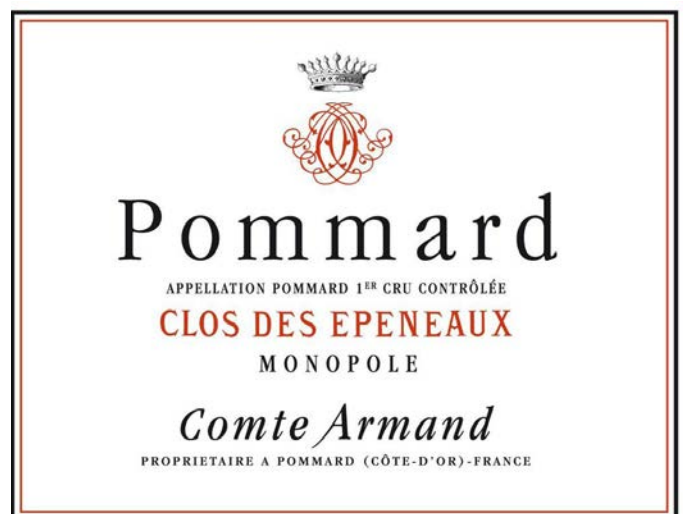


PAUL ZINETTI SUCCINCTLY SUMMARISES 2018 AS “A HOT VINTAGE BUT WITHOUT THE SIGNS OF IT”.

He noted the ripeness of the fruit but also the correct acidities for which he attributes the dedicated work of his team but also the balance in the vineyard that biodynamics has brought. Harvest began on 3rd September and proceeded without any noticeable hitch. Yields were over 40 hl/ha in Auxey-Duresses and Volnay but only 31 hl/ha in Clos des Epeneaux itself. Paul was nonetheless very content, his main guide being to look at the skins of the grapes in order to assess phenolic ripeness, rather than relying on laboratory analysis of potential alcohol.

As ever, the fruit here is completely destemmed and the different parcels of the Clos are vinified separately. Paul is extremely happy with the final result, seeing that the natural power of the site and also of the vintage have been reined in sufficiently to allow an elegant counterbalance in the final result.

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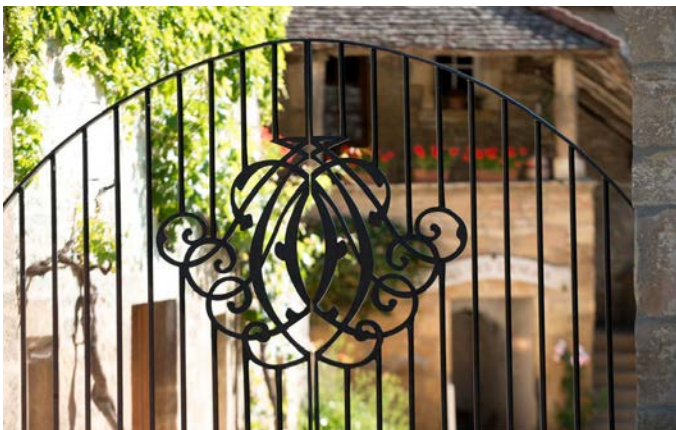
DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND

ROUGE

POMMARD 1ER CRU CLOS DES EPENEAUX MONOPOLE

We were able to taste the four principal parcels within the Clos as well as the press wine before Paul showed his estimated final blend. It was a particularly illuminating exercise. The first cuvée came from the young vines, showing plenty of juicy, sprightly energy, bright-eyed with a slightly raw edge to the tannins on the finish. The second was from the lower part of the vineyards where the vines are particularly unproductive, yielding just six barrels from 0.8ha. You feel this concentration and muscle in the wine but perhaps without the perfume and lifted qualities expected. The third wine is from the upper part of the vineyard on the North (Beaune) side. Here there was an abundance of ripe, dense black fruit, pushing itself forward in an assertive almost showy fashion and with a luxurious, creamy texture. The fourth cuvée, from the oldest vines, was the most complete: fresh, lively and vigorous but with depth and breed also. In the press wine, the savoury elements were particularly in evidence.

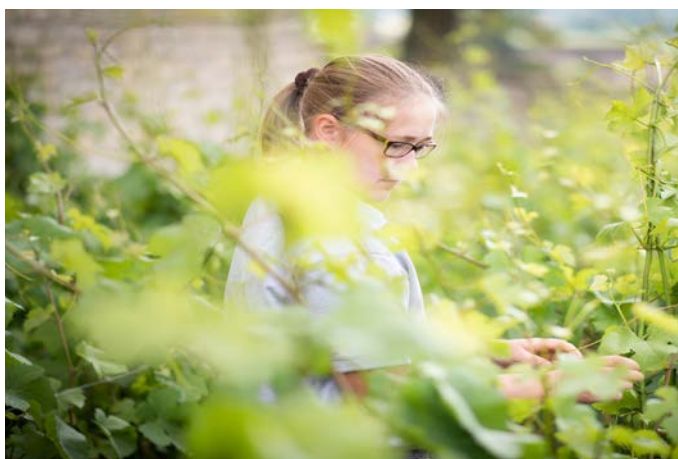
The final blend, which will have seen about one third new oak, shows fantastic potential: concentration and power but with the freshness and spicy notes coming through too. This is a wine already very noted for its long-term potential but with Paul's lightness of touch, there is now succulent fruit where in the past there would have been a wall of tannin. Iron fists, velvet gloves and all that.



DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE



THE LAFARGE FAMILY WERE ONE OF THE EARLIEST TO START HARVESTING REDS IN THE CÔTE DE BEAUNE, THE LIGHTS GOING GREEN ON 1ST SEPTEMBER WITH CLOS DU CHÂTEAU DES DUCS AND LES CAILLERETS BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THEIR OTHER PARCELS A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER.



Spirits were high here too: I remember seeing all three generations together in those early days of the harvest, a bucolic scene with the family clearly revelling in having some fantastic fruit to pick and extremely happy to see some good quantities coming in too. Techniques employed here continue to move counter to mechanisation, with horses being put to good use and destemming using a wicker pan being extended to a greater number of cuvées.

to have known him, tasted with him and learnt from him. His encyclopaedic knowledge and willingness to share it marked him out and the sheer consistency of fabulous wines made by him and his family over such an extended period of time is utterly remarkable and quite possibly without equal.

In 2018, Michel saw parallels to 1959 and 1990, two very great vintages. As only he could, he recalled the intensity of light in the summer of 1959.

In November, we drank a bottle of 1959 Volnay Clos des Chênes to celebrate Frédéric's birthday. I can still taste this magical elixir now. If the 2018s turn out to be as good as that, then we can all consider ourselves blessed.



My first visits to taste the 2018s here were particularly special as they were to be the last time that I tasted with Michel, who sadly passed away in January 2020 aged 91 years. I was to see him once more when returning later in the year and he looked as fit and alert as ever. Michel was a very great figure in Burgundy and it was a privilege

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ON DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE](#)



ROUGE

BEAUNE 1ER CRU GRÈVES

MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER

The Lafarges' vines in Beaune Grèves were planted in 1921 but even they will have seen very few growing seasons like 2018. The resultant wine is immediately captivating, silky and graceful across the palate, following a nose of quite extraordinary depth, with layer upon layer of sweet scented fruit, gentle spice and a background swirl of smoke and earth. The tannins are as beautiful and seamless as the stitching on the finest couture dress. One day, these vines will have to be pulled up and I for one will shed a tear. This is the most magnificent Beaune that money can buy.

BOURGOGNE PASSETOUTGRAIN
L'EXCEPTION 'ANTHOLOGIE'

In 2018, Michel celebrated his 90th birthday, a landmark that he shared with the oldest vines in this very special parcel of Passetoutgrain. In order to mark the occasion the Lafarges have made a special selection, using only those old vines and bottled exclusively in magnums and jeroboams, called 'Anthologie'. It is entirely within the character of the man to mark such an occasion with a special bottling of his most humble wine, rather than to make a glitzy, gilded super-cuvée of something swanky and charge opportunistically through the nose for it. That simply wouldn't be the Lafarge way. This wine is the Lafarges' gift for real wine lovers rather than trophy hunters.

The 'regular' L'Exception cuvée has long been considered to be something of a benchmark for Passetoutgrain, an historic category which is still produced by a handful of domaines thus preserving important regional heritage. The combination of Gamay and Pinot Noir is seldom seen elsewhere in the world but it unquestionably works. 'Anthologie', however, is something altogether more special. It will never be seen again and at this price, it is the sort of wine to buy greedily and stash away in the dark recesses of your cellar.



EN PLUS

Once again, in order to broaden access to their wines given the tiny amounts of Beaune Grèves available, the Lafarges have kindly allocated some further wine from their Domaine to Club Magnum members.

MAGNUM

Lafarge Magnum Trio A- available as 3x150cl, containing 1 magnum each of Volnay villages; Beaune 1er cru Clos des Aigrots Blanc; Volnay 1er cru Clos du Château des Ducs monopole

Lafarge Magnum Trio B- available as 3x150cl, containing 1 magnum each of: Volnay villages; Beaune 1er cru Clos des Aigrots Blanc; Volnay 1er cru Clos des Chênes

BOUTEILLE - 75CL

ALL AVAILABLE AS 6X75CL

ROUGE

CÔTE DE BEAUNE VILLAGES
BOURGOGNE PINOT NOIR

BLANC

BOURGOGNE ALIGOTÉ RAISINS DORÉES



DOMAINE LEFLAIVE



A TASTING AT DOMAINE LEFLAIVE IS ALWAYS A SPECIAL DAY IN THE CALENDAR. HOWEVER, FOR MANY YEARS THERE WAS A CERTAIN FORMULA AND THEREFORE RIGIDITY TO THE PROCESS. THE EXPERIENCE TODAY COULD NOT BE MORE DIFFERENT.

Firstly, there has been a change in physical environment, the cellars and buildings having been completely remodelled and renovated, bringing the Domaine into the (sustainable) 21st century. One key advantage of these changes for the wine is that it now needs to be moved around far less, which can only be to its benefit. Then there is the human factor: Brice and Pierre encourage engagement and interaction, looking for comments and feedback and in return are happy to share their thoughts about where they intend to concentrate their efforts in the months ahead and why.

When you are considered by all and sundry to be the greatest white wine estate in the world, there is pressure to perform but perhaps a reluctance to accept critique. That reluctance has gone and Brice's mantra of finding the dozens of little things to improve by one or two percent is in evidence everywhere. Warm vintages have caused mixed results here in the past: 1990, 2003, 2006, 2009 would not feature among my favourites. However 2018 is something altogether different: my notes are littered with words like 'tension', 'freshness', 'vitality', 'fragrance', 'poise', none of them suggestive of a warm year.



Brice believes that the experience of 2003 in particular was helpful to the region in how to manage such a year. He also took the decision to conduct a severe green harvest (ie just before véraison) to limit the yield as he could see just how much fruit the vines had put out. As it is, the final declared yield across the Domaine is 45 hl/ha, what would be considered to be a 'normal' or 'normal-plus' year.

Global demand for Domaine Leflaive remains as strong as ever. After a scintillating performance in 2017, these 2018s are a fantastic follow-on. It remains a true pleasure to be able to offer these great wines to Club Magnum members.

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BLANC

PULIGNY MONTRACHET
1ER CRU PUCELLES

MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER

Characteristically, this is a very fine, precise and beautifully detailed wine that delivers its aromas and pleasures without hesitation before driving through to a glorious, lingering finish. This sense of forward movement and heightened energy has come to be a calling card. The purity and clarity, however, somehow seem to be in spite of the warmth of the growing season. On the palate the fine, lacy textures suggest both beautiful healthy fruit and a masterful hand in the cellar. However, there is much more to this than the thrusting rapier and passing perfumes. All of the little notes are there, be they delicate little oranges, soft blossoms, then a burst of lemon peel, dried grasses and a little dash of cream. It is an endlessly fascinating wine, corseted and serious at the moment but with abundant flesh and, one suspects, a charming smile behind its poker face.



PULIGNY MONTRACHET
1ER CRU CLAVOILLON

MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER

The higher clay content in the soils in Clavoillon have helped to moderate the extremes of temperature as well as ensuring a steady supply of water. This is a generous wine, immediately showing breadth and charm and extending a welcoming hand. The nose is unhurried, even graceful with notes of summer flowers sitting alongside the white and yellow orchard fruits. On the palate, there is noticeable dry extract and a mineral burst also, which rather keeps you on your toes just when you think you had got its measure. Such character and detail would have been unthinkable in Clavoillons of the past in such a year. This is a very handsome success.

EN PLUS

Brice has also generously allocated some very small quantities of the following wines:

BLANC

PULIGNY MONTRACHET - MAGNUM - 1 X 150CL

PULIGNY MONTRACHET - BOUTEILLE - 6 X 75CL

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU CLAVOILLON - BOUTEILLE - 6 X 75CL

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU PUCELLES - BOUTEILLE - 3 X 75CL

BIENVENUES-BÂTARD-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU - BOUTEILLE - 3 X 75CL

BÂTARD-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU - BOUTEILLE - 3 X 75CL

BENJAMIN LEROUX



WITH A RANGE OF WINES STRETCHING THE FULL LENGTH OF THE CÔTE D'OR, TASTING WITH BEN IS A VERY GOOD WAY TO GET A SENSE OF THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A VINTAGE.

Yet there is no single formula here that holds the key to success: Ben prefers to fine tune everything individually for each cuvée, be that the choice of vessel, use of whole clusters, percentage of new oak and so on. His ability to recall those details for each of the dozens of wines in his range is impressive and can only come from someone who works fanatically hard.

In 2018, he has certainly made some knockout wines in both colours- although it is the reds on which we focus for this offer. Ben's adaptability and elasticity of approach was a major advantage to him in this highly varied vintage. When you are harvesting so many appellations over a large geographical area and with such variance in the size of each parcel, it is impossible to have everything neatly conforming to a regime and this was further exacerbated by the extremes

of the year. However, he did employ one crucial bit of a kit: a refrigerated truck which followed the team from parcel to parcel, ensuring that the fruit arrived at the winery in optimum condition.

Ben began his harvest on 25th August in the Côte de Beaune but waited until 5th September to begin in the Côte de Nuits, finally bringing in the last baskets on 15th. Attempting to sum up the vintage, Ben believes that 2018 will yield some very long-lived wines and has bottled a number of his top cuvées exclusively in magnum: he too believes in the superior performance of the format. This is the official debut for his wines in a Club Magnum opening offer. We are thrilled to be able to welcome Ben and his wines and offer them for the first time.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION
ON BENJAMIN LEROUX](#)



ROUGE

MAZIS CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU

A beautiful vineyard, sitting to the northern boundary of the Clos de Bèze, immediately to the south of the village, Mazis can produce some of the most characterful and compelling wines of the sector. Ben sources fruit from both the upper (Mazis-Haut) and lower (Mazis-Bas) sectors but is rarely able to produce more than one barrel. In 2018, this is once again exclusively bottled in magnum.

The wine begins with a nose of smoke, scented black fruits and spice box. On the palate, there is immediate richness and density, the wine showing its scale and beginning to flex its muscles. Then the build begins, an intense, concentrated core of black fruits overlaid with licquorice and pepper while maintaining the higher tones of dried flowers and smoke. This is a wine of some impact, with plenty to say but it delivers its lines assuredly. It clearly has not only considerable scale but ability too. Undoubtedly this has many years ahead of it however the ripeness of both aromas and tannins indicate that drinking along the journey will be very rewarding too. In short, impossible to resist.

CHAMBOLLE MUSIGNY
1ER CRU CHATELOTS

Chatelots is a fine premier cru in the heart of the appellation. At just under 3 hectares in total size, there is not much of it but then in Chambolle, there is not much of anything and you have to work hard to get access, particularly to the jewels. The soil in Chatelots has a little more depth and being more protected, the fruit ripens easily. Here we find a nose brimming with rich red summer fruit: cherries, plums, raspberries along with a fruit coulis element and a faint drift of brown spices. At the moment, the fruit is very much to the fore and could easily be enjoyed in this more hedonistic primary phase. Further down the line, one would anticipate a secondary development, bringing forward some of the softer spices as the fruit character matures. Whichever stage you choose, this is going to be a beautiful wine to enjoy in a ripe fruit, softer tannin mode.

GEVREY CHAMBERTIN
1ER CRU CAZETIERS

To the north side of the village, Cazetiers sits above the famous Clos St Jacques, high up on a steep slope and it is widely regarded as one of the finest crus of the village. Ben decided to harvest here on 5th September, day one for his team in the Côte de Nuits and certainly relatively early for the appellation which is often a week behind the villages to the south, such as Vosne and Chambolle.

I tasted this a number of times over the course of the past months and each time it has shown the same open, breezy style making it very easy to engage with. The touch of licquorice alongside the little black fruits is very attractive, as too the scents of lilac and violets over the top. On the palate, the wine shows depth and strength but without any hint of austerity or toughness. It moves freely, keeping the fruit in the darker register but with aromatic lift and a mineral backbone. Utterly delightful and a great example of this superb site.



DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR



IN A PRESCIENT MOVE, THIBAUT MOVED INTO HIS NEW STATE OF THE ART CELLAR IN TIME FOR THE 2018 HARVEST. NO SPACE CONSTRAINTS HERE, INSTEAD HIS “OBSESSION” IN 2018 WAS TO “MAINTAIN FRESHNESS”.

Having completed the harvest in Moulin à Vent, his attention switched to the Côte de Nuits, with his team beginning their work there on 7th September and picking as quickly as they could. Thibault was one of the unlucky few to have had some hail damage in and around Nuits, particularly on the southern side. Other than this he reported that he was very happy with the condition of the fruit, which required little sorting in the winery.

Thibault produces a full range of wines from regional blends and minor villages up to the grandest of Grand Crus, encompassing his own estate as well as fruit from holdings farmed under contract. He is another who carefully adapts his approach according to the

demands of the individual cuvée. Across three visits, I was able to see quite an evolution in these young wines, something that Thibault noted himself, professing to have become more seduced by them with the progress of time. This is a very serious operation and a source of some very great wines, despite its relative youth. The 2018 is the first vintage to be offered to Club Magnum members, across both estates. For details of the 2018s from Moulin à Vent, please refer to the Beaujolais and Jura offer brochure from March 2020.

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DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR](#)



DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR

ROUGE

NUITS-ST. GEORGES 1ER CRU LES ST. GEORGES

Les St. Georges is the most prominent cru in Nuits, as can be deduced by the annexing of its name and Thibault owns the most significant piece of it. There is some depth to the soil here but plenty of stones and little rocks too. The reputation is for a robust, sturdy and long-lived wine and certainly in a year like 2018, moderating the muscle and framework has taken some doing. Thibault therefore included 40% whole clusters in the fermentation vat and on each visit, the wine appeared to be knitting together very well.

In the middle of the vineyard, there is a fault line and the calcite limestone that is thrown up here has a strong influence, bringing verticality and finesse to the wine. The fruit character is deep and wild, rather than polished and perfumed, with hedgerow fruits sitting alongside the plums and cherries. However, it is the build of the wine that you cannot fail to notice. There is a seriousness, with great power and density which carries the richness of the vintage with ease. This is a wine for robust meats and game and with the capacity for considerable extended cellaring if so desired.



DOMAINE DE MONTILLE



ETIENNE DE MONTILLE WAS IN EBULLIENT MOOD, CLEARLY VERY HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS OF THE YEAR'S WORK BUT HONEST ENOUGH TO ADMIT THAT "WE GOT LUCKY".

The combination of high quality and good quantity is, after all, every proprietor's dream. With a talented team alongside, headed by Brian Sieve, Domaine de Montille has put in one of its best yet performances. Brian is another who varies his approach according to each cuvée and hearing him run through the various vessels used, the percentage of whole clusters retained, the number of punch-downs or the length of fermentation, you can see that it is the obsession to maximise the potential of each parcel that drives things forward here, rather than a formula written on tablets.

The estate boasts a simply fabulous line-up of appellations and I couldn't resist the temptation to add a further label to our selection this year. Meursault St Christophe is a relatively new addition to the range, first appearing

in 2016 and now, in its third year, I really felt it had found its identity. There is knock-out quality at the price and it will also satisfy those looking for a wine to drink in the short-term, allowing for patience with the crus.

Speaking of which... the hill of Corton has been noted by a number of commentators as having produced some particularly outstanding results in 2018. Whether this is simply down to the additional altitude, it is hard to say for sure but certainly the two wines from Domaine de Montille have excelled and in an appellation which can be very hard to navigate, buying from a top source is the only way to approach it.

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ON DOMAINE DE MONTILLE](#)



ROUGE

CORTON CLOS DU ROI GRAND CRU

We always have fun tasting this wine. It generally follows Etienne's excellent Volnay and Pommards in the line-up, which almost invariably will have already seduced everyone. However, the arrival of Corton changes the tone. There is a raw, brooding intensity to this wine, a young, dashing, powerfully-built presence that is impossible to deny. Hush descends. Language changes: when you get to the grandest sites, notes that focus solely on fruits and flowers always miss the point. They are there, of course- in this case, a beautiful fresh compote of rich, summer berries and plums with dark pepper and this year a more exotic, eastern spice too- but it is the build of the wine and the way that it presents itself that gives the greatest clue to the pedigree. Today it speaks of potential: its time has not yet come.

Two-thirds of the fruit was kept as whole clusters and half of the barrels used were new, which already gives the clue that this is a wine of some stature that needs a framework in which to grow and that can handle most challenges thrown at it. There seems little doubt that there is a long life ahead for this handsome beast. However, you may want to glimpse behind the curtain along the way, if only for the thrill.



BLANC

CORTON CHARLEMAGNE GRAND CRU

Lest we forget, Corton Charlemagne is the only white Grand Cru outside of the Montrachets. We should, therefore, expect a quality that is quite exceptional. Sadly, there are too many that disappoint, something that is all the more frustrating when you compare them to those that live up to the billing.

Corton-Charlemagne is never a delicate, airy wine. Leave the perfumes for Puligny. On this wine, you immediately find that different aromatic register: oyster shells, brine, tangy lemon, even a touch of medicinal iodine and herbs such as tarragon. It is a dynamic, powerful wine that asks for more robust cuisine.

Indeed, it is often treated as a red wine, decanted at table, served at cellar temperature and as happy with fowl and feathered game as it is with richer seafood. To illustrate the point on its power, it was shown after the Chevalier-Montrachet in the tasting line-up, for fear of over-whelming it. This is not only a confident, muscular wine but an engaging and intelligent one too. The team seem to understand the site perfectly and have fashioned a quite stunning example.

MEURSAULT ST CHRISTOPHE

The punishing frost of 2016 forced growers to make many changes and these included looking again at blends where the trends had been resolutely towards single sites. At Domaine de Montille, the combination of the fruits of three hillside vineyards in Meursault-Narvaux, Casse-Têtes and Les Petits Charrons- gave birth to this new wine, named after the hill on which the vineyards sit. This third edition is a beauty, showing great energy and a burst of cleansing lemon acidity. The aromas stay in the same citrus range and there is an almost sherbet-like prickle on the edges of the palate. The wine keeps moving all through to the finish, cleansing and refreshing at every turn. This will drink beautifully in its youth and over the mid-term.

DOMAINE GUY ROULOT



JEAN-MARC ROULOT, A HABITUALLY EARLY HARVESTER, REMEMBERS CALLING HIS NEIGHBOUR AND CLOSE FRIEND, DOMINIQUE LAFON ON THE EVENING OF 24TH AUGUST, THE FIRST EVENING OF THE HARVEST.

The first day of harvest, the moment that the entire year's work has been leading up to, is always a butterflies-in-your-stomach moment. However, this year had some additional surprises and he had to check whether Dominique's experience was the same.

"I just don't know where all this juice has come from!" Jean-Marc exclaimed. The realisation that they had the biggest crop since 1982 on their hands at Domaine Roulot meant plans had to develop quickly, with their expanded winery being tested to its capacity. Was this a problem unique to him?

The answer put his concerns at rest. Lafon had found the same situation: the happy confluence of quantity and quality, with the vineyards showing an abundance of beautiful, ripe, juicy fruit. Very much the right type of problem to have.

Such openness is typical of Jean-Marc. Unlike some growers who clearly cannot wait to jump back on their tractors,

Jean-Marc always seems to enjoy the process of tasting his wines with his customers. Comparing thoughts, teasing out comments and sharing observations is as much part of the work as deciding on the picking or bottling date. There is nothing being hidden here: everything is on show and perhaps it's as a result of this approach that he has been able to advance so consistently since coming back to the family property full-time, thirty years ago.

His wines show the generosity of the vintage in their breadth across the palate but this is Domaine Roulot, where precision and definition are watchwords. Even the noted riper sites, like Charmes or Poruzots, show freshness and focus. The more elevated vineyards do seem particularly distinguished however, the vintage adding some volume to their habitual tension.

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ON DOMAINE GUY ROULOT](#)



BLANC

MEURSAULT A MON PLAISIR,
CLOS DU HAUT-TESSON



Each village has its favourite candidate for elevation to a higher classification: Gevrey and Clos St Jacques; Chambolle and Les Amoureuses; Nuits and Les St Georges and so on. In Meursault, if Les Perrières is commonly put forward as the vineyard that should be a Grand Cru, then Tessonns surely deserves particular consideration to be a premier cru. Its position on a steep slope, with well-drained, rocky soil, with an easterly aspect and just the merest suggestion of north give it the natural attributes while the presence of some fine growers provide the consistent evidence. At only 4.17ha, this is no sprawling site either. Jean-Marc Roulot has long treated this as the bridging point between his 'lieu-dit' Meursaults and his crus and it has become a wine for which he is particularly famed.



From the first scent, there is immediate appeal here, the wine crackling with anticipation. On the nose, the scents are clear, pure and in the white fruit spectrum, overlaid with flint. On the palate, there is easy charm and breadth across the palate but also plenty of drive, tension and energy too. As you work the wine, it reveals plenty of glinting reflections, a hint of mint on one side, the beginnings of peachiness on the other but always held together with a firm hand and pushing forward to a long, distinguished finish. Drinking this wine will be a pleasure from the off, one feels but it will certainly develop considerably in bottle and has the capacity to offer glorious drinking for many years to come.

DOMAINE TAUPENOT-MERME



ROMAIN TAUPENOT WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THE WATER RESERVES THAT HIS VINES HAD ACCESS TO OVER THE HOT SUMMER OF 2018.

In his view, these had been crucial to mitigating hydric stress and alongside a well-timed shower just before harvest, they ensured that his team were able to pick beautiful fruit in excellent condition.

Romain was also one of a few growers to venture that 2018 might be a vintage that expresses itself with a flourish in its youth before having a teenage sulk four or five years after harvest before emerging with splendour at a later point. His reasoning is that the structure of the wines, as a result of the extra tannin

developed from a warm growing season, will start to show once the exuberance of the early fruit diminishes and that these will then require time before softening for full maturity. Such a stage is considered to be very much a normal part of the evolution of fine red burgundy and gives Romain no concern. He considers 2018 to be a very good vintage and once again, has generously granted Club Magnum access to one of his prized Grand Crus.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON
DOMAINE TAUPENOT-MERME](#)



ROUGE

MAZOYÈRES-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU



Mazoyères is always the final wine that Romain shows in presenting his new babies, preceded by its neighbour Charmes-Chambertin, making Taupenot-Merme one of the few estates where such a comparison is possible. The contrast in 2018 was as clear as always: where Charmes showed a graceful, lilting fragrance and no little style, Mazoyères is immediately in a darker, burlier vein with extra richness and weight on the palate. It is a substantial wine with abundant energy and a strong sense of direction but at the same time, there are layers of flavour here which will simply need time to be unwound.

The length on the finish is already outstanding and will in itself continue to build as the wine evolves in bottle. It is always hard to make a choice between the two: in an ideal world, you take both and bring them out in accordance with your mood, your company or perhaps your choice of cuisine. However, forced to choose, Mazoyères gets the nod: this is another wonderful example and has the potential to be very serious indeed.





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SUMMARY OF WINES

NORTH TO SOUTH

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ROUGE	GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN 1ER CRU CAZETIERS	BENJAMIN LEROUX
ROUGE	MAZIS-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU	BENJAMIN LEROUX
ROUGE	MAZOYÈRES-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU	DOMAINE TAUPENOT MERME
ROUGE	CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY 1ER CRU CHATELOTS	BENJAMIN LEROUX
ROUGE	VOSNE-ROMANÉE 1ER CRU SUCHOTS	DOMAINE DE BELLENE
ROUGE	NUITS-ST. GEORGES 1ER CRU LES ST. GEORGES	DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR
ROUGE	CORTON CLOS DU ROI GRAND CRU	DOMAINE DE MONTILLE
BLANC	CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE GRAND CRU	DOMAINE DE MONTILLE
ROUGE	SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE 1ER CRU AUX VERGELESSES	DOMAINE SIMON BIZE
ROUGE	BEAUNE 1ER CRU GRÈVES	DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE
ROUGE	POMMARD 1ER CRU CLOS DES EPENEUX MONOPOLE	DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND
ROUGE	VOLNAY 1ER CRU CHAMPANS	DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE
ROUGE	BOURGOGNE PASSETOUTGRAIN L'EXCEPTION 'ANTHOLOGIE'	DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE
BLANC	MEURSAULT A MON PLAISIR CLOS DU HAUT-TESSON	DOMAINE GUY ROULOT
BLANC	MEURSAULT ST. CHRISTOPHE	DOMAINE DE MONTILLE
BLANC	PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU CLAVOILLON	DOMAINE LEFLAIVE
BLANC	PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU PUCELLES	DOMAINE LEFLAIVE





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