



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

Burgundy 2020 – Opening Offer

EXCLUSIVE TO MEMBERS



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

INTRODUCTION



MANY YEARS AGO, IN THE EARLY PART OF THIS CENTURY, SOMEONE INVITED ME TO CRYSTAL BALL GAZE VIA AN INTRODUCTION TO A SALES BROCHURE. SNAPPILY, I CHOSE THE TITLE ‘2020 VISION’ FOR MY OPUS.

As 2020 approached, however, it became clear that if said crystal ball had accurately functioned then I would have known to immediately reject my witty title or face the risk of adding my name to the list of those charged with crimes against writing. File it alongside such loathed words as ‘curated’ and ‘iconic’ for clichés to avoid at all costs. Fortunately it was a niche publication.

As it turned out, despite my stylistic blunders, most of my thematic predictions for the future of the wine world were not too wide of the mark, albeit I can hardly claim that they were very bold. But the crystal ball was certainly a faulty one: there was no mention of a global pandemic, nor of Burgundy harvests finishing in August and certainly no mention of online school, Zoom calls and an obsession with homemade sourdough bread.

Life is not always predictable and 2020 is not a year that we are likely to forget in a hurry. However, with rain comes shine and when we turn our thoughts to Burgundy, let’s start by saying that we have a real cracker of a vintage to begin the new decade. Roaring twenties? Well certainly there is one in the bank already. (And another cliché). The return of travel has happily meant that I was able to taste the vintage fully and extensively alongside our growers. My vintage report follows, along with those on the individual producers and the tasting notes. There are new wines in our selection alongside established favourites and there will be a few more to follow in the months ahead, as both the producers and Club Magnum attempt to bridge the rather daunting gap left by a tiny 2021 vintage.

I am thrilled to report that Club Magnum is growing steadily, due in its entirety to the support of our members for introducing their friends as well as to our growers for supporting us with allocations of such wonderful wines. Bringing members and wines together is a very happy task to be burdened with. I know that you will be as smitten with these 2020s as I am and I am really excited to help you select some terrific wines for your cellar.

With thanks for your ongoing support,

Mike



CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

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.

SHARING THE SPOILS

Thanks to our Club model, we are able to purchase sufficient wine so that every member is able to access something from every grower. Please simply fill in your order form with what you would ideally like to have.

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.



2020 VINTAGE SUMMARY

TWELVE MONTHS ON AND WE HAVE SURELY NOTCHED UP FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: A GROWING SEASON WHICH AGAIN BROKE RECORDS AND CAUSED CONSTERNATION THROUGH THE APPARENT PARADOX OF A WARM, DRY EARLY YEAR THAT SOMEHOW RESULTED IN WINES THAT HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED BY BURGUNDY'S LEADING WINE CRITIC AS 'BEAUTIFUL, FRESH AND VIBRANT'.

You have indeed read such words before...however, that does not make them any less relevant. In 2020, we either have an extraordinary vintage, if your lens of history is a long one, or another example of the 'new normal' if you prefer something more focussed on our times. The bullet points ape the raucous chants of MPs in the debating chamber: sunlight hours- UP! Temperatures – UP! Rainfall- DOWN! All the indicators point towards extremes rather than to balance.

Yet, once again, we need to read beyond the headlines: this is Burgundy, after all where the patchwork quilt of climats and fractional nature of vineyard ownership make generalisations particularly inaccurate and the details particularly intriguing.



GROWING CONDITIONS

THE WINTER OF 2019–20 WAS ESSENTIALLY A NON–EVENT IN BURGUNDY, IN SO MUCH AS THERE WASN'T ONE.

I remember visiting growers on the eve of the pandemic, in late February 2020 and even for someone generally allergic to wearing coats and jumpers, outerwear seemed particularly redundant. Temperatures were well up on the average- in the case of February by almost 3.5-4°C- and therefore it was little surprise that buds were bursting before the end of March, a full three weeks before this had happened in 2018, for example.

With the exception of February, which saw plenty of rain, precipitation over the early part of 2020 was well below par, a pattern that would continue throughout the year. It may have been a god-send for those trapped at home in the early stages of lockdown to be able to home-school and (attempt to) work in the garden but growing plants need water. Over the course of the growing season, the weather station in Beaune reported total rainfall over 60% down on the 30-year average and the lowest of any year since 2015.



The bright conditions overhead also added up significantly: one estimate is that the region saw an extra 275-300 hours of sunlight compared to the average over the course of the growing season. This is the equivalent of over three extra weeks and came at a time of the year when that light is at its most intense. The natural protection mechanisms of the vine swung into action: skins thickened on grapes, roots were forced lower into the earth, moisture was grabbed from wherever it could be found but where this still wasn't enough, hydric stress became commonplace, particularly among young vines on the driest slopes.

An important similarity with 2019 is the diurnal temperature difference: with the north wind dominant, cool nights contrasting with hot days once again allowed the vines some respite, both allowing acidity to be preserved and, through the creation of morning dew, permitting a few vital drops of water to be available to quench the morning thirst.

The crucial period of flowering had reached its mid-point in late May, again well in advance of the historical average. As is often the case in May, conditions were more blustery than in the summer proper, meaning that flowering was not as successful as it might have been, with many growers reporting coulure and millerandage, conditions that invariably lead to lower volumes. With the drought conditions of July and August following on, we have the combination of smaller bunches, lower juice volumes in the individual berries and thicker skins on those berries, all further enhancing the high solids to juice ratio. Many growers felt that this explains the great depth of colour in the red wines, which particularly confounded tasters who found energetic, fresh wines in their glass rather than the rich, sweet and heavy ones suggested by the appearance. They also explain, of course, the relative paucity of the crop in terms of volume.

In terms of climatic episodes, there was brief concern about frost in early April but by and large, this obstacle was cleared. With conditions so dry and bright, so too was the threat of rot. There was a bit of hail- at its worst in parts of Nuits-St. Georges in early August- but damage was at most 10-15%, often less and sufficiently early in the season to not affect quality in any case.

HARVEST

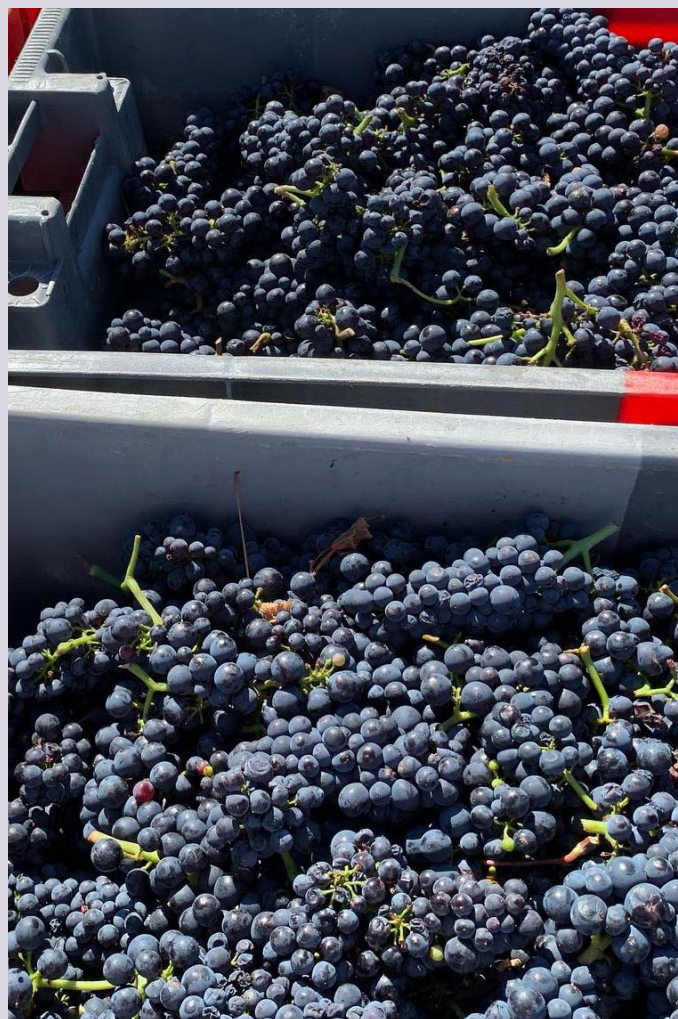
WITH FLOWERING IN MID-LATE MAY, THE HARVEST DATE HAD ALREADY BEEN PROJECTED TO BE IN LATE AUGUST.

However, as you will have been able to calculate, even accounting for the hindering effect of the lack of water, adding in all of those extra hours of sunlight pulled things forward substantially and most growers found themselves rapidly cancelling their holiday plans and returning to prepare for harvest mid-month.

As an agricultural region largely devoid of big populations centres, the impact of Covid had been largely avoided by most in Burgundy. Working outside in the fresh air and without interruptions from pesky visitors took on new levels of attractiveness. However, assembling teams of harvesters under lockdown conditions was always going to be a headache, so too housing and feeding them in observance with the emergency laws. In the circumstances, that the harvest was completed so successfully is really rather remarkable. Here nature provided some assistance: by eliminating the need for any meaningful sorting, one time-consuming job was removed while the smaller volumes also meant that the job could be done by fewer hands.

Yields of 20-30 hl/ha were commonplace for Pinot Noir while Chardonnay fared better although only rarely above 40 hl/ha.

Not everyone chose to pick early, of course. Where hydric stress and blockage occur, sugars will accumulate at a faster rate than the structural elements, such as tannins, can ripen and there is a choice to be made. Many growers chose to preserve freshness at the potential expense of full ripeness, while others waited it out. As in 2019, success was possible by both methods but certainly waiting longer under such conditions means a greater likelihood of turning out wines with higher alcohol levels, which may not appeal to everyone. In the end, Covid logistics aside, the harvest was remarkably painless. The most commented-upon feature was the fact that in many instances it was over before the end of August, something which none of the growers had ever seen before.



IN THE CELLAR

THE WORK OF TURNING THIS LOVELY RAW MATERIAL INTO SOMETHING TO MAKE OUR HEARTS FLUTTER IN THE FUTURE COULD NOW BEGIN IN EARNEST.

Once again, care needed to be taken with extraction on account of the high solids to juice ratio and particularly as regards pressing too hard in areas where under-ripe elements might still be present. Indeed, the lightness of touch practiced by today's winemakers would certainly confuse many from previous generations. The techniques employed, tools available and the tolerance for heavy-handedness have certainly changed. Those who still practice punchdowns generally reduced the practice still further while those pumping over were as gentle as possible too. Colours came bursting out of the red wines easily and fermentations were reportedly smooth too.

The freshness in the wines, remarked upon by so many, again results from both the growing season and to the increased health of the Burgundian vineyard as a whole. With so much water lost by evaporation under the dry conditions, the acidic component (mainly tartaric) that was retained appears more pronounced and concentrated when the wines are tasted although analytically the levels are certainly not extreme. The cool nights had helped to retain acidity- unlike, say, 2003 where nights had often been closed to the daytime temperatures- and with plants and growers now better adapted to the conditions, the young wines that emerged quickly put smiles on faces and largely dismissed any lingering fears that they might more resemble jam.



Other notable trends, in no particular order, continue to favour the use of whole bunches for red wines; larger and more neutral/old oak containers for both colours; the use of vertical presses; the use of amphorae and concrete eggs; a reluctance to pump, fine and filter and a reduction in the practice of stirring the lees.

All of these measures can be bracketed together under a desire for less human intervention, a promotion of purity and freshness and a methodology considered more sympathetic and in keeping with the organic and biodynamic vineyard practices adopted by so many leading estates.

PLACING 2020

AS YOU WILL KNOW BY NOW, I AM NOT A NATURAL DRAMATIST—YOU CAN ADD THE WORDS ‘VINTAGE OF THE CENTURY’ TO THE PREVIOUS LIST OF ROOM 101 CLICHÉS AND CRIMES AGAINST WRITING.

We are, clearly, extraordinarily lucky to have yet another very, very good vintage on our hands. Will it prove to be better than anything in the previous decade? Even I cannot dismiss that possibility: the depth and length of flavour, the freshness of the wines, the balance, the potential for long keeping and the faithfulness to origin are all very strong markers in this vintage and something that we all look for in the greatest years. There might be some debate about that claim for typicity. Some commentators have remarked on the imprint of a ‘solar’ vintage, something that habitually happens anyway when weather charts are studied at the expense of actually tasting but one acknowledges, to be fair, that this characteristic will have afflicted certain wines where growers didn’t quite get everything right. Not everybody can hit the ball out of the park. However, this is the advantage of being able to select from top estates only: I am fully confident that the wines that we have chosen for this offer are fine examples of their appellations and that their individual climats will only become more sharply defined as they develop.

AND, FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF DOUBT, WE ARE SPEAKING ABOUT BOTH COLOURS HERE. THE WHITES ARE SOME OF THE VERY BEST YOUNG CHARDONNAYS (NOT FORGETTING THE ODD ALIGOTÉ!) THAT I CAN REMEMBER TASTING.

Perhaps not quite as laser-focussed, steely and nerve-tingling as the very best 2014s or 2017s but my goodness, we really are quibbling here: there are some simply terrific, complete wines and I simply cannot see what there is not to like about them unless you are the most exacting purist. Flavours are resolutely in the ripe citrus, mid-orchard fruit part of the spectrum and I didn’t once note anything tropical or over-ripe.



FOR THE REDS, THE DEEP COLOURS WILL RAISE AN EYEBROW– THIS IS PINOT NOIR, NOT MALBEC AFTER ALL– BUT BOTH THE CÔTE DE NUITS AND CÔTE DE BEAUNE HAVE PRODUCED SOME TRUE KNOCKOUTS. EVEN GUILLAUME D’ANGERVILLE, WHO IS ABOUT AS ANTI–BOMBASTIC A CHARACTER AS YOU COULD MEET, CONFESSES THAT HE MAY HAVE A NEW FAVOURITE CHILD IN THE FAMILY.

You may want to give them an extra year or two in the cellar, on account of their fullness and concentration before bringing them out to play. The best of them will surely outlive us all. And to be drinking them from magnum too! This is what dreams are truly made of!

The one – reasonably substantial – fly in the ointment is the marketplace. 2020 is another below average vintage in terms of quantity; we already know that 2021 is likely to be one of the smallest of this century, indeed some of our growers are as much as 80% down on volume; and we know that over the decade of the 2010s, only 2017 and 2018 were vintages of normal or above normal yield.



At the same time, global demand for Burgundy is simply insatiable and we are in a highly inflationary phase economically, not helped by war, energy crises and the rebound from the pandemic. New records are also being paid for vineyard land in Burgundy: great if you are selling, terrible if you want to keep what you have and pass it on to future generations of your family. For all of these reasons and many more prices have risen and it is hard to see this pattern changing.

New entrants to the market, of which there are many, do not tend to look back to what things used to cost- it is irrelevant to them as those wines are not available to them. Rather, they tend to ask “do I want it now and can I afford it now?”. Perhaps it is just that we have all become like Sir Winston Churchill, who was famously fond of stating that he was “easily satisfied with the best”. Whatever your precise motive, adding 2020 Burgundies from the top estates at opening prices to your cellar is unlikely to be a matter for long-term regret.

CONCLUSION

I'M NOT GOING TO GET THE CRYSTAL BALL OUT AGAIN AND SPECULATE ABOUT WHERE WE WILL BE IN ANOTHER TWELVE MONTHS TIME, LET ALONE TWENTY YEARS TIME. IF THE PANDEMIC AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE HAVE TAUGHT US ANYTHING IT IS TO LEARN FROM OUR PAST AND TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR PRESENT.

At the risk of being a touch light, if that present can involve lots of gatherings around tables, bottles uncorked and glasses chinked, laughter shared and friendships made, then we can all be happy at a very simple level. However, to ensure that we can continue such good moments into the future- and particularly if they are to include great, mature Burgundy- then we need to plan ahead today. 2020 is a gift of a vintage and if we need to make just one prediction, then surely the safest one is that its arrival will only increase attention on and demand for the wines of this special region.



CÔTE DE NUITS

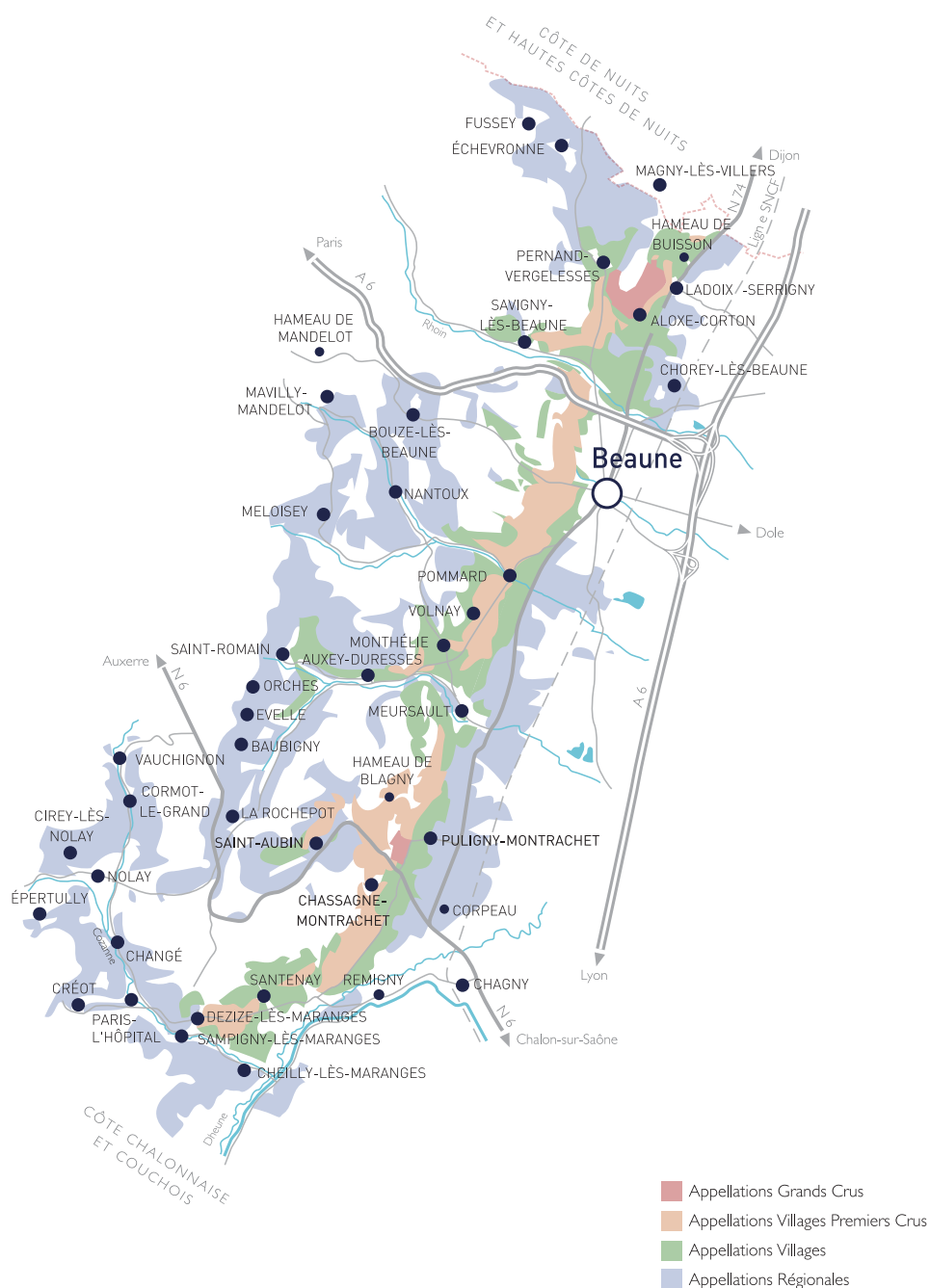
ET HAUTES CÔTES DE NUITS



MAPS REPRODUCED THANKS TO THE KIND PERMISSION OF THE BIVB
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CÔTE DE BEAUNE

ET HAUTES CÔTES DE BEAUNE



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DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE



GUILLAUME D'ANGERVILLE HAD PLANNED TO BEGIN HARVESTING ON 25TH AUGUST BUT AFTER CAREFUL DISCUSSION WITH RÉGISSEUR FRANÇOIS DUVIVIER, HE RAPIDLY REDREW HIS PLANS AND BROUGHT EVERYTHING FORWARD A FULL WEEK.

The major concern was to avoid high degrees of alcohol and if that meant running the risk of missing full phenolic maturity, it was a risk they both preferred to take. To end up conducting his paulée before the traditional rentrée weekend at the end of August was a new experience for the estate but a decision Guillaume is very happy to have taken. The picking date held the key to the success of the vintage.

The growing season had been happily free of stress, despite the extra sunshine. At harvest, there was no rot, no disease, no sunburnt bunches, making sorting almost completely unnecessary. A total yield across the estate of only 30 hl/ha was a touch disappointing but still perfectly acceptable and manageable.

One subtle change that was made was in the winery where at pumpover, they were able to drop the juice into another empty vat in order to let it air and avoid any issues of stuck fermentation. A small positive from the lack of volumes!

Guillaume is more and more convinced that the health of the vineyards, thanks to a biodynamic regime in place for over a decade, has enabled his vines to cope better in adverse conditions and brings him a considerable advantage. The proof is certainly in the pudding: this was a terrific set of wines across the entire range. Guillaume notes the texture of the wines as a defining feature and is already prepared to concede that 2020 might just have displaced 2010 as his favourite vintage during his almost 20 years in charge.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Marquis d'Angerville.



DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

ROUGE VOLNAY 1ER CRU CHAMPANS

This is a confident wine that simply brims with health. A nose of densely-packed red and black fruits is cushioned by a creamy caress around the edges while on the palate, the wine opens out readily, showing breadth, depth and richness. As you work it, the detailed and more lifted notes of roses and blood orange start to emerge too, along with a background hint of spices. As we move towards the finish, the wine continues to build, showing just how much is going on here. It is already a captivating performance and promises to deliver pure pleasure for decades to come.

In many ways, Champans is the quintessential Volnay, marrying the prettiness of the fruit with the curviness of the tannins, in contrast to, say, the more angular shapes of Taillepieds further up the hillside. For all that charm, however, this is a wine with substantial keeping potential. It is also worth repeating that the top wines of the Côte de Beaune, of which this most certainly is, are still criminally undervalued versus their counterparts in the Côte de Nuits. In this febrile market, where four figure sums are being paid for certain village level wines in Vosne and Chambolle, this is exactly where to focus ones firepower- and even more so in a vintage of such obvious talent and ability.

BOURGOGNE ROUGE

The enlargement of the holdings of Bourgogne are a very happy development in the d'Angerville story in recent years. The run of warmer vintages has meant that fears of failure to ripen are happily rarely justified and the regional wines that are found on the fringes of the major appellations have been an obvious beneficiary.

The wine begins with a delightful nose of crushed dark raspberries, direct and uncomplicated at this early stage of life. On the palate, a second gear is instantly found, with stony, earthy elements indicating a strong mineral influence which counterbalances the juicy red fruit delightfully. Tannins are supple and fully ripe and the wine is mid-weight, very neatly balanced and likely to give considerable pleasure 'on the fruit' as well as after a few years in bottle. This is a no-brainer in a year like 2020.



DOMAINE DE BELLENE



NICOLAS POTEL WAS ON SUPER FORM WHEN I SAW HIM IN NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, DESPITE A TURBULENT TWELVE MONTHS THAT HAD BROUGHT COVID, A COMPLICATED 2021 VINTAGE AND A FIRE AT HIS HQ IN BEAUNE IN DECEMBER 2020 CAUSED BY MICE EATING ELECTRIC CABLES.

Domaine de Bellene



Fortunately, the wine was all safely moved to his cellars in Savigny-lès-Beaune and the renovation project has already begun in earnest, with Nicolas sharing exciting plans for creating guest accommodation in the historic buildings. Definitely something to be welcomed in Beaune! Harvest began on 22nd August and was over before the month was out despite working with vineyards the length and breadth of the Côte.

Nico remarked that the only other vintage in which he had not needed to use a sorting table was 2005 and he also draws a comparison to 2019 although he finds more tannin and more acidity in the follow-on vintage. Like many, he remarks upon the 'unusual freshness' of the wines given the hot and dry conditions.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine de Bellene.



DOMAINE DE BELLENE

ROUGE VOSNE-ROMANÉE 1ER CRU SUCHOTS

Our tasting across Nico's excellent range of Domaine wines quickly demonstrated the consistent quality of the vintage. This was a year which suited his approach very well with the thick skins on the tiny berries giving great concentration and plush fruit to the wines while the good ripening conditions allowed him to use 100% whole bunches on many of the cuvées, which is always his preference.

The Suchots put on a great showing, its sweet black fruits focussed and finely delineated but with a bold, front-foot approach and terrific concentration of flavour on the mid-palate. Most impressive was the pace of movement and lively energy evident in the wine, meaning that at no point was there even a hint of heaviness or tiredness.

A top note of mint and eucalyptus points towards the ripeness but without ever overpowering the purity of the fruit. On the finish, the flavours linger effortlessly, exhibiting finesse in a graceful signature. The fruit is sufficiently plentiful at the moment to successfully conceal the power and scale of the tannins: puppy fat over taut muscle, if you will. This will be the key dynamic for positive future development and experience dictates that time will be rewarded. For the moment, hedonists might be understandably tempted to indulge themselves. But if you can keep a few magnums back into the 2030s and beyond, you will be entitled to pat yourself on the back too.



DOMAINE SIMON BIZE



CHISA BIZE WAS CLEARLY REVELLING IN THE RESUMPTION OF SOMETHING APPROACHING NORMAL LIFE WHEN WE SAW HER IN NOVEMBER, LOOKING FORWARD TO FUTURE TRIPS OVERSEAS AND MAKING PLANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESTATE, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO REPLANTING.

2020 missed being the earliest harvest ever at Bize by just one day. The first secateurs were wielded on 17th August but unlike others, she took her time to harvest over a full fortnight, taking the opportunity to allow a few extra days ripening for those parcels that needed it and also only working in the premier cru vineyards from first light until 10am in order to look after both the fruit and her picking crew. Given that temperatures in the second half of August were still in the high thirties, this would have been enormously appreciated! Our offer of her 2020s will be split over two years, with the premier crus following the village and regional wines. There is good logic in this approach. For one, allowing the 'bigger' wines more time in the cellar will only ensure that more of them are drunk with some much-deserved bottle age and for two, it will of course allow her more of a chance to cover the chasm left by the lack of 2021s. So, come back in twelve months for the quite brilliant crus and in the meantime, please take full advantage of her terrific village wines which make for astute purchases in such a glorious year.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Simon Bize.



DOMAINE SIMON BIZE

ROUGE SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE

In a vintage like 2020, the lesser appellations merit inspection and our heads were duly turned by this village blend which showed such gorgeous fruit that resistance was futile.

The plummy, bramble notes marry beautifully with the smoky earthiness and this should be delectable from the word go although again, there is sufficient concentration to point towards a little time in the cellar too. At the price point, this is simply outstanding value in today's context and we are delighted to offer it in both bottle and magnum.

SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE AUX GRANDS LIARDS

Grands Liards sits just below the 1er cru Les Lavières, a well-exposed site with a depth of brown clay soil, laden with pebbles that has always been vinified separately from the other village-level holdings. The vines are in four plantings, with the oldest just before the Second World War. The high average vine age helps to bring some extra polish and depth to the wine, which has a richly dark-fruit character and an extra degree of persistence than might be expected for the category. Chisa notes the benefits of the clay for water retention and is evidently very happy with this 2020, apart from the volumes which meant that she only felt able to bottle in 75cl. The advice is to give this an extra year or two in bottle over the village blend.



DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND



ANOTHER WHOSE VINEYARD WORK WAS DONE BEFORE THE END OF AUGUST, PAUL ZINETTI RECOUNTED THE TALE OF A HOT, DRY YEAR THAT RESULTED IN SMALL YIELDS OF RIPELY CONCENTRATED FRUIT AS A RESULT OF THE LACK OF WATER.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Comte Armand.



The constant challenge was to ensure the balance between the accumulation of sugars, the desire for phenolic ripeness and the maintenance of acidity. Aware that the imposing walls of the domaine's prized vineyard, the Clos des Epeneaux, would generate particularly torrid conditions, he decided to get on with the picking, moving quickly on 24th August. Yields of only 22 hl/ha are the clear evidence of the lack of juice in the berries but the fresh acidity that is there also points towards a bullseye as regards timing of harvest.

Paul spoke at good length about the challenges of vinifying such concentrated wines. Firstly, he explained that the yeasts have to work incredibly hard, which is always a worry for winemakers as regards the potential for stuck fermentations. Then, with such thick solids in the vats, there is no alternative in his view but to get your feet dirty, punching down the cap the old-fashioned way. He also remarked upon the long malolactic fermentations and indeed three barrels were still not finished when we tasted in November.

Paul was unphased by this, however and considered it a useful indicator that he too should proceed at leisure. His intention was to give the wines a good, long *élevage*, quite possibly all the way through this summer if so required. We finished our tasting with a quick look back at the preceding vintages and it is clear that Comte Armand is on a great run of form and arguably making the very best wines in this enigmatic appellation.

DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND

ROUGE POMMARD 1ER CRU CLOS DES EPENEAUX MONOPOLE

Paul Zinetti presented two cuvées, one of young vines and the other of old vines, rather than the soil-led multi-cuvée approach of previous years. Vine age was clearly a more important factor in this vintage, as old vines on well-established root systems are better placed to find moisture than callow youngsters. However, it is also an indicator of the additional practical challenges of small yields: working with micro-cuvées is complicated, not least in respect of the size of the vessels and equipment at your disposal.

We tasted the two cuvées separately and then the hypothetical blend. As expected, this is a big, powerful wine, its deep purple-red colours particularly inky and imperial. Yet somehow, this natural heavyweight still manages to find some poise, flair and intelligence.

The nose on the old vine cuvée showed greater definition and this sense of enhanced focus was carried through into the blend too, sculpting and tailoring the brooding hulk. On the palate, every component is dialled up yet somehow nothing is out of tune, with the acidity bringing the control, shape and discipline. The drive through to the finish is purposeful and supercharged. At this stage, this is a wine still midway through its élevage but with all the talent and natural attributes to emerge as a strapping, handsome youth with an outstanding future in store.



DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE

A BEAMING FRÉDÉRIC LAFARGE WILLINGLY NAILED HIS COLOURS TO THE MAST IN DESCRIBING 2020 AS A “TRÈS GRAND MILLÉSIME”. HE CONCEDED THAT THE LACK OF WATER HAD BEEN THE MAJOR CONCERN BUT THAT IN THE END, HE NOTED VERY LITTLE IF ANY HYDRIC STRESS IN HIS VINEYARDS.

WITH THE VINES IN SUCH GOOD HEALTH, IT ALLOWS THEM TO ‘FULLY EXPLORE THE TERROIR’ AND IT IS THIS SUCCESSFUL TRANSMISSION OF SITE THAT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, ELEVATES THE YEAR INTO THE TOP CATEGORY.

As elsewhere, the major negative is the lack of volume, with the production only 65-70% of a ‘normal’ year. Harvesting began on 22nd August and was largely complete within a week, save for the Aligoté which is always a late-ripeners. Not a single wine exceeded 13.5° alcohol and the range showed an exemplary sense of balance, with the wines seemingly echoing the friendly, beatific smile of their creator.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Michel Lafarge.



DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE

ROUGE BEAUNE 1ER CRU GRÈVES - MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER -

The vineyards of Beaune were some of the most affected by the drought conditions but as we have already noted, old vines are a very effective countermeasure and at 99 years of age, the Lafarge Beaune-Grèves is comfortably one of the senior citizens on the hillside.

Tasting this majestic wine (small 'm'!) is to sink into a luxurious, velvety pillow of rich dark fruit, with the fragrances of spices trailing enticingly around you as you relax. However, just before you fully drift off into paradise, there is a firm backbone and compact, concentrated layers of flavour: this remains a serious, contemplative wine rather than ethereal or whimsical. On the finish, the sense is of drive, purpose and control, a wine that is beautifully built, in full command and that not only links us back to the long history of this site but that will carry us forward for decades to come too. Magical stuff.



ROUGE BOURGOGNE PASSETOUTGRAINS L'EXCÉPTION 'ANTHOLOGIE'

The trouble with creating special edition and 'one off' cuvées is that when they prove so successful and popular, the temptation to repeat the exercise is impossible to resist. The conditions of 2020 broke even the iron discipline of the Lafarges but let's not complain too much, their moment of weakness is our moment of renewed joy. The Anthologie, produced from a parcel of Passetoutgrain vines planted in the same year (1928) as the birth of the late, great Michel Lafarge is the ultimate collector's wine for the Burgundy drinker rather than the trophy hunter. To make a special cuvée in Burgundy's most humble appellation is so very Lafarge: not done for fanfare, fame and fortune but simply to celebrate something authentic, unique and part of their special family heritage. A blend of 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Gamay, all co-planted, the extra detailing and finesse on the tannins here already shows the step-up. Despite the price tag, treat this as you would any serious cru and you will be hugely rewarded.

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.

LAFARGE MAGNUM TRIO

Available as 3 x 150cl, 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 6 x 75cl.

ROUGE

Bourgogne Pinot Noir
Bourgogne Passetoutgrains L'Excéption

BLANC

Bourgogne Aligoté Raisins Dorées

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

I AM FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TASTE AT DOMAINE LEFLAIVE DOZENS OF TIMES OVER THE LAST TWENTY OR SO YEARS BUT I AM REALLY HAVING TO STRAIN THE MEMORY TO FIND A BETTER TASTING THAN THE FIRST LOOK AT THE 2020S THAT I WAS AFFORDED IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR.

There is always a moment when you begin the tasting that rather sets the tone for what might follow. From the very first sample, it was as if every cloud- Covid, impending European war, rocketing fuel prices, you name it- had momentarily lifted. What a happy moment.

An early season is inherently more of a risk for Chardonnay than for Pinot on account of its early budding and consequent risk of exposure to frosts. However, with that major issue non-apparent in 2020, from that point on, fortunes are generally reversed as Chardonnay is hardier. Brice de la Morandière and régisseur Pierre Vincent admitted that the season was remarkably free of stress for them and resulted in wonderful surprises come harvest time.

The most difficult decision was the precise timing of the harvest: like everyone else, they could see the fast accumulation of the sugars and anticipate the drop in acidity if they missed the window and so they started on 20th August, the earliest date in the long history of the domaine.

It is hard to explain what exactly it is that makes these wines so outstanding. Sometimes you just know that you are in the presence of greatness.



Even Brice, not normally lost for words, confessed himself “stunned by the vintage”. White burgundy is truly ‘back’ and once again, Domaine Leflaive is carrying the flag.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Leflaive.



BLANC

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU
PUCELLES

- MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER -

The legend behind the origins of the name 'Pucelles' may conjure up images of floating, lacy skirts but the reality is that this is not a frivolous wine and certainly not to be messed with. It demands your full attention, almost asking you whether you are indeed fully worthy of it and yet it does so with the politest of manners, never severe or aggressive and always with supreme elegance.

As a young wine, there is a steeliness that shows in its structure, a firm mineral backbone holding everything beautifully in place and allowing the more coquettish elements to dance and flicker around the edges. Honeysuckle, preserved lemon, the lifted fragrance of aniseed are all there but never rushing forward. You have to go to them, rather than the other way round. Tempting as it might be to plunge in straight way and ask for the dance, do please consider giving this some time in bottle. Great examples of Pucelles can comfortably continue to develop into their third decade and while such a wait might be too much of a test of willpower for most of us, it does indicate the potential. A great wine in the making.

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU
CLAVOILLON

- MAXIMUM 1 MAGNUM PER MEMBER -

'Biodynamics has tamed it' was the neat summary offered by Brice. Even the old timers in the village won't remember the times, pre-phylloxera, when this was planted as a red vineyard but this history does serve to remind us that we have a vineyard of richer, deeper clay soils than its immediate neighbours, which of course is a real positive when you have dry conditions as we did again in 2020.

The first nose is strikingly pure, almost strict and without any hint of excess. Aromatics are of gentle summer meadow flowers and delicate bright citrus fruit. Once on the palate, there is a little more of a sense of release, the wine moving in a direct manner and quickly showing its rocky, stony, mineral elements. The concentration of the vintage is seen in the dry extract, almost severe at this stage and demanding of a little extra patience for the layers to unravel.

The finish is of a wine in full command, that has long graduated from secondary school and is comfortably at home at the écoles supérieures.

EN PLUS

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

BLANC

PULIGNY MONTRACHET
MAGNUM / 1X150CL

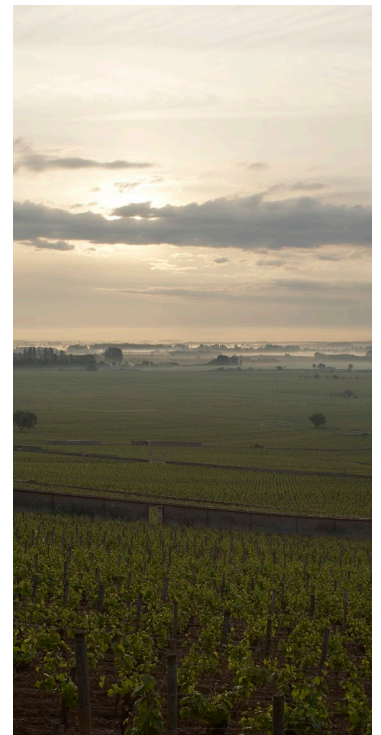
PULIGNY MONTRACHET
BOUTEILLE / 6X75CL

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU CLAVOILLON
BOUTEILLE / 6X75CL

PULIGNY MONTRACHET 1ER CRU PUCELLES
BOUTEILLE / 3X75CL

BIENVENUES-BÂTARD-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU
BOUTEILLE / 3X75CL

BÂTARD-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU
BOUTEILLE / 3X75CL



BENJAMIN LEROUX

‘A DRY YEAR, NOT A HOT YEAR’ WAS THE SUCCINCT AND RATHER PROSAIC SUMMARY OFFERED BY THE NO–NONSENSE BEN LEROUX. THIS IS A GUY WHO DOESN’T GET DISTRACTED: THERE IS TOTAL FOCUS CHEZ LEROUX ON DOING THE HARD YARDS, UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMANDS OF THE YEAR AND ENSURING THAT THE ALL IMPORTANT DETAILS ARE DELIVERED UPON.



Ben started his harvest on 20th August. His observations mirrored those of many: small volumes due to a lack of water; thick skins further enhancing the sense of concentration and requiring great care over extraction; good tartaric acid levels leading to the vital element of freshness, largely brought about by the happily cool nights that counterbalanced the warm, dry days.

Ben’s enthusiasm for the vintage quickly became apparent as we tasted through his excellent range. He is making wine from the full length of the Côte and there was wonderful consistency from even the humblest generic wine.

At the business end of the crus, however we can safely allow ourselves a few superlatives. We are particularly delighted to be able to add two new wines to our range this year, including our first white from Ben. The line-up really is rather mouthwatering and I commiserate with you in the agony of deciding what to choose....

Please [click here](#) for background information on Benjamin Leroux.

BLANC

MEURSAULT BLAGNY 1ER CRU LA
PIÈCE SOUS LE BOIS VIELLES VIGNES

The hamlet of Blagny, sitting out of view on the hillside midway between Meursault and Puligny, can seem rather out on a limb. The vineyards are divided between the two communes, perhaps adding a little confusion to the picture. Is it Meursault or Puligny? The answer of course is neither: this is Blagny, distinctly different and increasingly worthy of our attention once more, thanks to climate change making these elevated vineyards more reliable, particularly as regards preservation of acidity.

The Pièce Sous le Bois is just over 11ha, tucked under the wood at the very top of the hill, as the name suggests. The upper part, where there are whiter soils, is where you will find Ben's tiny parcels of Chardonnay and the produce of the oldest vines, dating from the 1950s, has been separated out for this cuvée, a rarity that is only bottled in magnums. The old vines have a natural tendency to millerandage, meaning that yields are always small. With the 2020 vintage conditions factored in, Ben obtained less than 20 hl/ha but less is more in this instance, the wine showing fabulous depth and character, with a full mid-palate showing crème pâtissière, cracked nuts and a wonderful sense of calm. Certainly a wine for those that love Burgundy for all of its eccentricities and geek potential but also a wine that will delight anyone with a nose and a set of tastebuds.

ROUGE

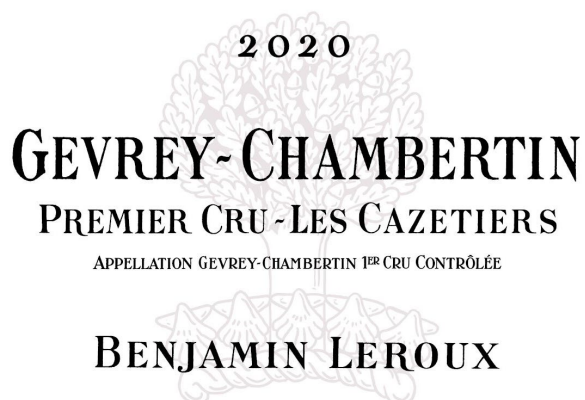
MAZIS CHAMBERTIN
GRAND CRU

I was lucky enough to taste this cuvée twice on two visits three months apart and the transformation was hugely encouraging, from a wine that was initially reluctant, reduced and even surly, to something far more settled, outward looking and welcoming. The danger of taking snapshots...

In 2020, there is only just enough wine to fill one barrel with Ben electing to use a first-year barrel. The weight of fruit initially presses down on the mid-palate with its richness and concentration but as you work the wine, it releases really nicely, showing spices and pepper and a very attractive minty top note. There is real muscle here, a strong, powerful wine that will last many, many years and should emerge as one of the showstoppers of the cellar.

GRIOTTE CHAMBERTIN
GRAND CRU

By contrast, the Griotte has been very accommodating in the cellar through its élevage, with the wine already racked in early January in readiness for bottling. Its forward, almost exuberant style makes this very easy to like and the smoothness of the tannins only add to its disarming approachability. It remains a real treat to be able access Griotte, such is its rarity and this may become all the more difficult in the years to come with changes in ownership underway. In other words, don't miss!



BENJAMIN LEROUX

ROUGE

BONNES MARES GRAND CRU

Bonnes Mares is one of the great vineyards of Burgundy, found at the northern end of Chambolle-Musigny on the boundary with Morey-St. Denis. In many respects, it shares more characteristics with the wines of its neighbour than with those of its own commune. There are two major soil types to be found in the vineyards, one red and one white. Both have their perceived pros and cons. Ben's version is only from the white soils, where the major risk is in vintages of water-shortage and hence you need to be very careful how you work the vineyard. On this tasting in February, all of the pitfalls must have been avoided as the wine was simply splendid despite a recent racking, flowing beautifully and with gorgeous spices and fragrances mixed in with the rich, densely-compacted fruit. Just on the finish, there is something of a whipcrack, as you are called into line and reminded of the more serious side of its character. Real rewards are unlikely if you rush this: to the patient come the prizes.

GEVREY CHAMBERTIN 1ER CRU CAZETIERS

Les Cazetiers is a steep vineyard high up on the Côte St Jacques, facing east. At just under 8.5ha, a little over a quarter of it is in the hands of one owner with the remainder split into tiny parcels among a host of others. It is the closest rival to the famous Clos St Jacques, which is its next door neighbour.

After two scintillating performances in 2018 and 2019, the 2020 had considerable shoes to fill. We needn't have worried: if the bard of wine had written trilogies, they might have looked something like these. With its gorgeous, almost decadent silky black fruit, sumptuous textures and then a display of pure controlled power on the palate, the 2020 tastes like a vinous thoroughbred. Again, I was able to taste this twice and on the second time round, it had been racked and was ready for the bottle, Ben agreeing that every attempt should be made to lock in the magic. Simply superb and, in my view, very close to Grand Cru quality.



DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR

THIBAUT WAS REVELLING IN SHOWING HIS WINES THIS YEAR, ANOTHER WHO WAS FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THE RESULTS OF 2020 WOULD PLACE IT FIRMLY AMONG THE FIRST RANK VINTAGES.

We spoke about any points of comparison with other years and he was interesting in talking about 2010, which he felt was a great year that had put on weight during the *élevage* whereas the 2020s were doing the exact opposite. His point, however, was that they looked like they would both arrive at the same final destination, albeit via a different route.

There were some new wines to show us this year, the most striking of which was an excellent 'lieu-dit' in Gevrey-Chambertin called 'En Créot'. We are delighted to add this to the main offer alongside the domaine flagship, Les Saint-Georges.



As last year, we will also have a small 'top-up' offer later in the year of smaller quantities across a number of wines, from Bourgogne up to Grand Cru.

Thibault began his harvest on 29th August, movingly quickly to capture the freshness of the vintage. He used more whole bunches wherever possible, again with freshness at the forefront of his thinking. We had an interesting exercise during the tasting while discussing the subject of alcoholic degrees, a subject that had been a real talking point among visitors to Burgundy over the tasting season.

Thibault happily volunteered that his wines ranged from 13° to 15°, the latter being a number that many would find off-putting. So he put a few wines in front of us (there were eight people in the cellar at the time) and asked us to find the wine with 15°. Not one of us succeeded. His point, apart from providing himself with a chuckle, was to show the folly of looking at data without context. A wine can be beautifully balanced at 15° and hideously out of kilter at 12°, it just rather depends on what has happened with the acidity, tannins and the fruit.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Thibault Liger-Belair.



DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR

ROUGE

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

Spectacular is not normally a word found in tasting notes of senior Nuits-St. Georges wines from barrel but my goodness, this was quite the showing. On the nose, we immediately have an alert, energetic and very substantial wine with this active, almost athletic component becoming even further apparent on the palate. Flexing, moving and shaping all the while, the wine continues to entrance all the way through to an astounding long finish. When we asked him about it, Thibault explains that there is a crack in the layers of rock in the middle of the vineyard, where his parcel is, that brings up calcite limestone and that it is this that explains the added energy and verve. The spice and white pepper alongside the rich berry fruit makes for a pure delight. A wine of this kind of substance and dynamism positively demands time in bottle.



GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN EN CRÉOT

The northern side of Gevrey-Chambertin, under the commune of Brochon, actually produces some of the more interesting village wines in the appellation given that most of the village appellation vineyards on the southern side are on the flat lands along the route nationale. Thibault has taken over a 1.4ha plot on limestone soil, farming it himself and if this first outing is anything to go by, it will quickly establish itself as an important wine in the Liger-Belair ranks. At harvest time, Thibault elected to destem this completely. Our tasting showed a wine of real style, fluid and giving with very attractive summer fruits and suggesting an earlier drinking style too, well certainly long before the St. Georges at any rate. Offered in both bottle and magnum.



DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

THE EXPERIENCED TEAM AT DOMAINE DE MONTILLE HAVE PUT IN A STELLAR PERFORMANCE IN 2020.

THE MOST DEMANDING ASPECT WAS BEING ABLE TO PICK EVERYTHING AT THE OPTIMUM MOMENT, SOMETHING THAT INEVITABLY BECOMES HARDER WHEN YOU HAVE A SIZEABLE DOMAINE AND A MULTITUDE OF DIFFERENT PARCELS WITHIN IT.



Undeterred however, the harvest gun was fired on 23rd August and the team moved quickly, grateful to find the fruit in super condition negating any real need for sorting. All of the wines have come in between 12.5° and 13.5° alcohol and the vintage conditions also lent themselves well to the inclusion of whole bunches, which has been done up to 100% in some instances.

One small change in our selection this year is to include the domaine's celebrated Volnay 1er cru Taillepiéds, a wine I have always had a soft-spot for and which I just couldn't resist this year. Volnay remains ridiculously undervalued, particularly for its best wines.

I have drunk de Montille Taillepiéds in multiple vintages and cannot remember anything other than a wonderful performance.

On the whites, we have a nice balance with Grand Cru, Premier cru and a village blend, all available in magnum. The two senior wines are as good as I have ever seen them and Etienne's stated preference to work for acidity and freshness has quite clearly proved successful to counterbalance the ripeness of the vintage.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine de Montille.



DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

ROUGE

CORTON CLOS DU ROI GRAND CRU

Quite how team de Montille has managed to get a Corton to sing with beautiful, haunting fragrances in a vintage like 2020, one can only guess but the result is truly gorgeous. There is a polished feel to the tannins, a sweet coulis of red fruit caressing the mid-palate and then some welcome drive and grunt towards the finish that brings in the wild and more savoury tones. This was vinified with 60% whole bunches and 40% new oak. There are certainly bigger, meatier and richer Cortons out there but my advice would still be to leave this one until the 2030s. Cortons can be enjoyed on the fruit but it is the secondary set of flavours that really distinguish the appellation.

Treats in store.

VOLNAY 1ER CRU TAILLEPIEDS

In a line up that includes heavyweight appellations like Clos Vougeot, Pommard Rugiens and Corton Clos du Roi, you'd think that there is a danger of a pretty Volnay getting somewhat drowned out but this is very rarely the case chez de Montille. For one, the heavyweight appellations are treated with intelligence rather than brutishness and for two, the Taillepieds is possessed of an ethereal, floating character that is impossible to ignore once it has been experienced, hanging regally above the others in the room while the others fight it out at ground level. With the vines here over 80 years of age, there is wonderful depth and purity to the fruit, laser focus with the rocky nature of the vineyard coming across in the taut, linear profile.

Etienne elects to use whole bunches to the maximum on this cuvée, further heightening this high-toned character and notes of violet, lilac and lavender are just beautiful alongside the summer fruits.



DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

BLANC

CORTON CHARLEMAGNE GRAND CRU

The power here is carried like a coiled-up spring but you have the sense that it will unravel over time rather than simply explode in one go. There is such density and drive, lovely fresh acidity counterbalancing the fruit. At this stage, the more nuanced notes of the appellation- gunflint, oyster shell and the like- are hidden under the weight of sumptuous limey fruit but fear not, time will allow them to be drawn out. At 13.4° this is one of the riper wines in the line-up analytically but you do not feel any sense of excess at all. In fact, the lingering impression is of control and refinement, almost a sense of classicism even. A great success in the vintage.

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU LE CAILLERET

We offered this wine for the first time last year and are thrilled to continue with it. While 'only' a premier cru, in many respects this is the flagship white wine of the Domaine as the first meaningful white appellation added by Etienne's father, Hubert de Montille, back in 1993. In addition, there is a very strong argument to rank it among the grand crus, forming as it does the the continuation of Le Montrachet to the north, with Chevalier-Montrachet above it and Les Pucelles below it.

In 2020, all of the textbook aspects of Puligny are there in spades: the finesse, the delicate white peach fruit, the citrus twist and a gorgeous floral fragrance sitting above. Concentration with control defines the shape of the wine and the minerality coursing beneath it carries it forward with real energy and purpose. For all that, however, the finish brings back a notion of elegance and refinement, true ultimately to its origins.

MEURSAULT ST CHRISTOPHE

The 2020 version of this wine is a straight blend between Les Petits Charrons and Les Casse-Têtes, two of the more outstanding hillside vineyards in Meursault. In the dry conditions, these rockier sites needed plenty of vigilance and the team have done well here to avoid tipping into over-ripeness. There is unmistakably a sweetness to the citrus fruit here, lovely tangerines and clementines rather than the harsh tang of a grapefruit but nothing approaching tropical. We showed the 2019 at a recent event and it really charmed the room and I expect that the 2020 will behave in a similarly accommodating manner. Drink while you wait for the Cailleret and Charlemagne!



DOMAINE GUY ROULOT



JEAN-MARC ROULOT CONTINUES TO BALANCE ONE OF THE MORE DEMANDING SCHEDULES THAT ONE COULD CHOOSE, POPPING UP ON SCREENS IN A VARIETY OF ROLES AS A PROFESSIONAL ACTOR AND THEN DEDICATING TIME TO TRAVEL ALL THE WAY TO ARGENTINIAN PATAGONIA TO HELP HIS GOOD FRIEND PIERO INCISA WITH THE WHITE WINES AT BODEGAS CHACRA.

Oh and making a quite brilliant range of liqueurs and eaux-de-vie too. It's rather humbling when one considers one's own rather modest achievements! In 2020, there was plenty of nervousness about the early budding of the vines, this being a domaine that has suffered terribly with frost damage in recent years. Jean-Marc has invested in mobile windmills in the vineyards but despite eagerly giving them a work out, he was delighted that the need to use them never really materialised. The dry spring and early flowering in blustery conditions served to reduce yield.

With harvest starting on 20th August and finished on 29th, the estate reported figures not far off 40 hl/ha on average, certainly a manageable volume although not nearly enough to make up for the shortages of 2019 nor for what would follow in 2021 for that matter. More of that another day. In Jean-Marc's view, 2020 is 'moins solaire' than 2019 or 2018. He is clearly very happy with the result and finds that the characteristics of each individual vineyard are already very well presented. For our selection this year, we have kept it true to the heart of the estate: Jean-Marc's exemplary Meursault village blend. We showed the first (2011) vintage of this at a recent Club Magnum dinner- out of jéroboam- and even in the early stages of its second decade, the wine tasted fresh and vibrant, full of life and disappeared in seconds flat. Always the very best sign!

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Guy Roulot.



BLANC
MEURSAULT

In 2011, along with his good friend and neighbour Dominique Lafon, Jean-Marc co-purchased Domaine Manuel. The two major holdings were the 1er cru Clos des Bouchères and the Clos de la Baronne. Dominique and Jean-Marc figured out a neat exchange which preserved the integrity of the former by Jean-Marc agreeing to part with his historic holding of 1er cru Bouchères in exchange for keeping the Clos as a monopole.

For the latter, they have divided the vineyard and at Roulot Clos de la Baronne quickly became the major component of Jean-Marc's newly created village blend. To it, he adds the small parcels of Les Crotots and Les Gruyaches that also came with the purchase as well as a more recent addition of Sous la Velle. Finally, the produce of the young vines from Les Tillets, Les Narvaux and Les Luchets are also incorporated. As such, the blend truly spans the entire village from north to south and includes fruit from both the hillside vineyards and from the deeper soils closer to the village itself.

In 2020, the heavier clay soils of the Clos de la Baronne have performed very well, balancing out the younger vines on the hillside vineyards that were more prone to hydric stress. Tasted in November, the wine was showing excellent acidity and a natural sense of balance although the nose was clearly still forming, something which pleased Jean-Marc who was hoping to give it a good long élevage over a second winter. The classic shape to the wine in the mouth belies the richer image of the vintage, while its clean citrus and white stone fruit notes offer both refreshment and the sense of a little generosity. This looks assured to be another first-rate example.



DOMAINE TAUPENOT-MERME



ROMAIN TAUPENOT DESCRIBED 2020 AS A DREAM VINTAGE— AT LEAST UP UNTIL THE END OF JUNE. AFTER THAT POINT, THE LACK OF WATER BECAME A REAL CAUSE FOR CONCERN, ULTIMATELY IMPACTING ON THE YIELDS AS THE BERRIES REMAIN SO SMALL AS WELL AS BRINGING STRESS TO SOME OF HIS PARCELS, PARTICULARLY THE YOUNGER VINES.

He decided to start the picking on 26th August, the earliest date ever in the history of the domaine and acknowledged the need to go as quickly as possible to avoid the wines tipping into over-ripeness.

His success in retaining acidity and the promotion of what Romain calls 'sapidity', is for him a defining feature of what has enabled this vintage to come through and be potentially worthy of the 'great' vintage tag. Romain loves the purity of the aromatics and was careful with his extraction, conducting only limited punchdowns.

To our range, we have taken the opportunity to introduce to you a brilliant white wine that has been a little inside secret for keen followers of the Taupenots over the years. The village of St Romain, tucked away up the valley behind Auxey Duresses and from where one can find the most spectacular views from the stunning cliffs, is very important to the family (as you can probably surmise from the name chosen for their eldest son). They are producing one of the finest examples of St Romain Blanc, an appellation which still offers excellent value and in 2020, this is again the sort of wine to leap upon given the benefits of the growing season.

Please [click here](#) for background information on Domaine Taupenot-Merme.



DOMAINE TAUPENOT-MERME

ROUGE

MAZOYÈRES-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU

The Domaine has been bottling the Mazoyères and the Charmes separately since 2000 and every time that you taste the two side by side, the differences are always apparent and makes for a fascinating contrast. There are years when they run each other very close and you can probably flip a coin as to who deserves top billing, while in other years a larger gap is discernible. 2020 is one of the latter years when I found the Mazoyères quite noticeably in front. The range of aromatics- spices and pepper alongside the tiny black fruits- contrast with the more monolithic Charmes. The extra sense of grace and tenderness is also a pleasure although there is plenty of power beneath. Romain and I discussed this all and he feels that the extra alluvium in the Mazoyères held the key, contributing extra water.

It is great to see Romain finally getting some proper recognition. Over almost 25 years, alongside his sister Virginie, they have been working incredibly hard to push the family domaine up to the levels that have undoubtedly always been possible but that require years of dedication to achieve.

BLANC

ST ROMAIN BLANC

A nose offering a joyful mixture of orchard and mid-citrus fruits is resolutely in line with the image of this wine, which then carries on with a burst of zippy acidity across the palate. Plenty of energy and vigour carry it forward. There might not be the texture of a fine Puligny nor the breadth of a Meursault but neither is there the price tag...and for honest, pure, vital and truly versatile white Burgundy, this is hard to beat. Offered in bottles and magnums, this is the sort of wine that will fit every occasion save, perhaps, for the very grandest.





CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

SUMMARY OF WINES

NORTH TO SOUTH EN MAGNUM

● ROUGE

● BLANC

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN EN CRÉOT, DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN 1ER CRU CAZETIERS, BENJAMIN LEROUX

MAZIS-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU, BENJAMIN LEROUX

GRIOTTE-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU, BENJAMIN LEROUX

MAZOYÈRES-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU, DOMAINE TAUPENOT MERME

BONNES-MARES GRAND CRU, BENJAMIN LEROUX

VOSNE-ROMANÉE 1ER CRU SUCHOTS, DOMAINE DE BELLENE

NUITS-ST. GEORGES 1ER CRU LES ST. GEORGES, DOMAINE THIBAUT LIGER-BELAIR

CORTON CLOS DU ROI GRAND CRU, DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE GRAND CRU, DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE, DOMAINE SIMON BIZE

BEAUNE 1ER CRU GRÈVES, DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE

POMMARD 1ER CRU CLOS DES EPENEUX MONOPOLE, DOMAINE COMTE ARMAND

BOURGOGNE ROUGE, DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

VOLNAY 1ER CRU CHAMPANS, DOMAINE MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

VOLNAY 1ER CRU TAILLEPIEDS, DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

ANTHOLOGIE, DOMAINE MICHEL LAFARGE

ST ROMAIN BLANC, DOMAINE TAUPENOT-MERME

MEURSAULT ST. CHRISTOPHE, DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

MEURSAULT, DOMAINE ROULOT

MEURSAULT-BLAGNY 1ER CRU LA PIÈCE SOUS LA BOIS VV, BENJAMIN LEROUX

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU LE CAILLERET, DOMAINE DE MONTILLE

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU CLAVOILLON, DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1ER CRU PUCELLES, DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

For the full list of wines, including in 75cl, please consult the order form.

Further releases will follow in the months ahead, including Domaine des Comtes Lafon and Les Héritiers du Comte Lafon.





CLUB MAGNUM

VINS ET EXPÉRIENCES

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PHOTO CREDITS

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