

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

By John Gilman

November-December 2019

Number Eighty-Four

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View From the Cellar is published bi-monthly by John Gilman, who is solely responsible for its content. Electronic subscriptions are available for \$120 per year (\$220 for two years), available at www.viewfromthecellar.com. Inquiries may also be emailed to john@viewfromthecellar.com. Copyright 2020 by John B. Gilman, all rights reserved. Content may be utilized by members of the wine trade and/or media as long as either View From the Cellar or John Gilman are fully credited. **Please do not share.**

RECENTLY-TASTED CHAMPAGNE WINTER 2019



The beautiful entrance foyer for the offices at Champagne Louis Roederer.

One of the positive aspects of not being able to finish all of the Champagne samples I had accrued in time for the release of the last issue of the newsletter was having a goodly supply handy to fill out this article, to go along with several important new releases that arrived in the market for the end of 2019. These included the newest vintages of Cristal from Champagne Louis Roederer, which are landmark releases from this great *Grande Marque*, as the 2012s are the first pair to be made exclusively from biodynamically-farmed vineyards owned by the estate. The Rosé bottling of Cristal has been made from fruit produced under biodynamic auspices since the 2008 release, but the larger production regular bottling of Cristal has not been exclusively from Demeter-certified vineyards until the new and utterly stunning 2012. As I have written about in past articles on the region and in my feature on Maison Roederer, their commitment to organic and biodynamic farming is a huge change for all of Champagne, as they are not only showing that farming in this sustainable manner is good for the planet, but it also produces even better wines than the application of chemical farming products in the vineyards. Despite all of the progress that has been made amongst small *vignerons* and *Grandes Marques* such as Louis Roederer in better farming, the region of Champagne continues to lag behind many of its other

contemporaries in France in terms of good farming and Louis Roederer's fine example is inspiring more and more larger producers to consider this option in the future. Of course, with so much of Champagne's production still the work of small, individual *vignerons* who simply sell of their crop to the large houses, and who have little or no incentive built into the current system for taking organic or biodynamic farming risks, the region will probably continue to bring up the rear in terms of good farming in comparison to regions like Burgundy and the Loire Valley, where biodynamic viticulture amongst the top estates is already well-established, but the commitment made by Louis Roederer is a huge and historic step in the right direction for Champagne in general. I am very optimistic that their lead will eventually evolve into organic and biodynamic farming being the norm, rather than the exception in Champagne someday in the not too distant future!

There are many more important new releases currently out in the Champagne market here in the US that I have not yet had a chance to report on, such as new vintages from Champagne Krug, but as I have been pretty much living out of a suitcase since the start of August of last year, it has been hard to organize samples (and be around in the office to sign and receive them), so this report is not as deep as it might have been if fate had allowed me to be home for an extended period of time in the last five months. Hopefully, things will normalize in my schedule at the start of the new year and I can start to pester importers more frequently about receiving samples of the new releases. Amongst my favorite *Grandes Marques*, Champagne Krug is not the only great producer whose new releases have alluded me in my last few months of itinerant living, as I have not been able to circle back to taste the wines from producers such as Charles Heidsieck, Pol Roger or Gosset in what seems like an eternity and I am sure that there are new cuvées in the market from these producers (and many others) that deserve attention. I will do my best to turn my attention their way in the months to come, once I get re-established back in my New York haunts sometime early in 2020, as I have been impaired staying with my father up in Massachusetts these last several months, as the state has some of the most restrictive wine shipping laws in the country and it has not been possible to have samples delivered to me up here in New England during my half year of forced exploration of the American healthcare system. And given what I have witnessed in that field, I would have been very well-served to have a much larger cache of Champagne at my elbow to salve the daily psychic wounds of trying to help care for an elderly family member in our US system of negligence, exploitation and corruption that masquerades for healthcare for the older segment of our population. But, despite the best efforts of several quasi-criminal organizations masquerading as rehabilitation hospitals here in Massachusetts, my father is healthy and home again and I can start to envision a return to New York and business as usual. And at the top of the agenda will be playing catch up on the new releases I have missed from several important addresses in the Champagne region!

Non-Vintage Brut Nature Bottlings

Janisson Baradon et Fils Brut Nature NV (Épernay)

The current bottling of Janisson Baradon Brut Nature in the market is from the base year, with thirty percent of the blend from the previous year. It is composed of a *cépages* of fifty percent each of chardonnay and pinot noir and was disgorged in January of 2018. The *vins clairs* do not undergo malo and thirty percent of the reserve wines are aged in cask. The nose offers up a complex blend of apple, fresh-baked bread, a touch of peach, lovely soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a good core,

pinpoint bubbles, well-integrated acids and fine length and grip on the focused finish. 2020-2035. **90.**

Blanc de Blancs Non-Vintage

Gaston Chiquet “Blanc de Blancs d’Aÿ” Brut NV (Dizy)

I always enjoy the Gaston Chiquet “Blanc de Blancs d’Aÿ” non-vintage Brut, as this is such a unique combination of chardonnay and the *terroir* of Aÿ, which is not replicated anywhere else. The current release was disgorged in June of 2018 and is from the base year of 2014 and was aged three and a half years *sur latte*. The wine delivers fine aromatic complexity in its blend of pear, almond, brioche, lovely Aÿ soil tones, discreet floral tones and the first signs of the smokiness of maturity in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely broad shouldered in the proper Aÿ context, with a good core of fruit, gentle *mousse* and lovely complexity on the finish. This is not the longest Brut NV on the backend, which is its only demerit, as the wine has lovely depth and impressive complexity to go along with its singular blend of varietal and soil signature. Nicolas Chiquet also makes a vintage-dated Blanc de Blancs from exclusively from Aÿ fruit as well, from older vines, and I would love to try that bottling someday. 2020-2030+. **90.**

Lilbert-Fils Blanc de Blancs “Grand Cru” Brut NV (Cramant)

The new release of Lilbert-Fils Blanc de Blancs non-vintage Brut is composed of a fifty-fifty blend of 2015 base year juice and reserve wines. It was disgorged in the fall of 2018 and finished with a *dosage* of five grams per liter. The wine offers up a fine bouquet of pear, fresh almond, chalky minerality, bread dough and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and youthfully complex, with a lovely core of fruit, a brisk girdle of acidity, frothy *mousse* and fine length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This is tasty out of the blocks and will age very nicely indeed. 2020-2040. **91.**

Pierre Peters “Cuvée de Réserve” Blanc de Blancs Brut NV (Mesnil-sur-Oger) Jeroboam

Out of jeroboam, this bottling was still quite youthful and in need of more time in the cellar. To the best knowledge of the gentleman who brought it to this tasting, this is the 2014 base year version of this wine, and offers up a still primary nose of apple, toast, stony minerality, warm bread and a bit of youthfully reductive iodine. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still quite snappy with brisk acidity, with a good core and grip, frothy *mousse* and good length on the still undeveloped finish. I suspect this would already be a pretty good drink out of regular bottle, but out of jeroboam, it is almost painfully young! 2023-2050. **90.**

Brut and Extra Brut Non-Vintage

Chartogne-Taillet “Cuvée Ste. Anne” Brut NV (Merfy) Served from Jeroboam

This particular example of Alexandre Chartogne’s Cuvée Ste. Anne is from the base year of 2012 and the wine is absolutely superb. It harkens back to the days when there were a few less single vineyard bottlings being produced here and the Cuvée Ste. Anne had even finer raw materials to go into the final blend. Out of jeroboam, the wine is drinking very nicely today, but still with a bit of youthful zippiness to its structure, as it offers up a complex bouquet of green apple, lemon, fresh-baked bread, a good base of soil and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a lovely core of fruit, elegant *mousse*, bright acids and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2020-2035+. **92.**

Delamotte Brut NV (Mesnil-sur-Oger)

Delamotte is best known for its bottlings of Blanc de Blancs, as the *maison* is owned by Salon. Their non-vintage Brut is a blend of fifty-five percent chardonnay, thirty-five percent pinot noir and ten percent pinot meunier. The wine spends three years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement, but this bottle had no information about when it had been disgorged on the back label (though it is the current release in the market). The wine is excellent on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, brioche and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with frothy *mousse*, a fine core and very good length and grip on the focused and complex finish. Fine juice. 2020-2040. **91.**

Champagne Geoffroy “Expression” Premier Cru Brut NV (Aÿ)

Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy’s current release of Expression non-vintage Brut in the market was disgorged in December of 2016, so the wine is starting to show some lovely secondary layers of complexity on both the nose and palate and is drinking very well indeed. All of the fruit for this bottling is sourced from the vintages of Cumières and Hautvillers and the *cépages* here is a fairly unique blend of forty-one percent pinot meunier, thirty-one percent pinot noir and twenty-eight percent chardonnay. The wine is two-thirds from the base year of 2013 and the balance from the previous year. It offers up a lovely bouquet of peach, apple, *patissière*, a touch of sweet hazelnut, a fine base of soil and just a whisper of floral tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and complex, with fine focus and grip, pinpoint bubbles and a good core in the mid-palate. My only, very minor complaint, is the wine is not all that long on the backend, but what it may lack in length it makes up for with personality and development in the bottle. A very tasty bottle for drinking over the next ten to fifteen years. 2020-2035. **90.**

Marc Hebrart “Mes Favorites” Vieilles Vignes Brut NV (Mareuil-sur-Aÿ)

The new release of Marc Hebrart “Mes Favorites” Vieilles Vignes is composed of a blend of seventy-five percent pinot noir and twenty-five percent chardonnay, all grown in the village of Mareuil-sur-Aÿ and all old vines. It is primarily from the base year of 2014, with twenty percent each of the blend hailing from the two previous vintages. It was disgorged in September of 2018 and offers up a superb bouquet of white peach, *patissière*, lovely soil tones, gentle smokiness, a bit of fresh-baked bread and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core, a very good base of soil tones, slightly large bubbles and very good length and grip on the very tasty finish. Other than the slight coarseness to the *mousse* here, everything else is exemplary. 2020-2040. **90.**

Huré Frères “Cuvée Invitation” Brut NV (Ludes)

The new release of the “Cuvée Invitation” from Huré Frères is from the base year of 2015 and was disgorged in April of 2019, having been finished with a *dosage* of five grams per liter. The wine’s *cépages* is its customary blend of forty percent pinot noir, forty percent pinot meunier and twenty percent chardonnay and includes its usual thirty-three percent of reserve wines. The bouquet is lovely, wafting from the glass in a youthful blend of white peach, apple, bread dough, white flowers, lovely minerality and hints of the smokiness to come with further bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven, with a fine core of fruit, a youthful girdle of acidity, fine *mousse* and impressive length and grip on the vibrant finish. This is the new disgorgement and it is still pretty youthfully tight, but should loosen up nicely over the next few months and offer fine drinking. 2020-2035. **90.**

Huré Frères “Cuvée Mémoire” Extra Brut NV (Ludes)

The Huré Frères “Cuvée Mémoire” non-vintage Extra Brut is produced from the family’s solera, which they began in 1982, with the youngest wine in the new release coming from the 2015 vintage. The blend here is its customary forty-five percent each of pinot noir and pinot meunier, with ten percent chardonnay. The wine ages two years on its fine lees and this bottling was disgorged in April of 2019. It was finished off with a *dosage* of only two grams per liter. The bouquet is bright and youthful, offering up scents of apple, white peach, bread dough, a good base of soil, a touch of citrus peel and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and still brisk with youthful acidity, with a good core, elegant *mousse* and good length and grip on the still very primary finish. This will be a good bottle with a bit of bottle age, but the combination of the low *dosage* of two grams per liter and the two years aging *sur latte* finds it issuing into the market still very youthful. I liked the 2013 base year version better, but then it was two years older. Tuck this away in the cellar for at least another eighteen months to let it soften up and blossom. 2021-2040. **88+**.

Krug “Private Cuvée” Brut NV (Reims) Magnum

This great old magnum of Krug “Private Cuvée” is probably from a base year in the late 1950s (speculation was 1959), but as it came out of an old cellar, no one was quite sure of just which release it might have been. Not that it really mattered, as the wine was still magnificent, offering up a deep, very complex and gorgeously tertiary blend of fresh apricot, orange peel, a very beautiful base of soil tones, plenty of smokiness, walnuts, caraway seed and a touch of nutmeg in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still retains a nice touch of *mousse*, with a great core and immense complexity, fine length and backend bounce and a very refined, still delightful finish. This is the oldest example of Private Cuvée (the precursor to Grande Cuvée) that I have ever tasted and my sincere thanks to William Kelly for so generously sharing it at our tasting in Beaune in November! 2019-2035. **94**.

Marie-Noëlle Ledru Brut NV (Ambonnay) Half Bottle

While there is no information on this bottle for the base year, this is clearly a wine that has a fair bit of bottle age on it and the wine is really starting to develop some secondary complexity on both the nose and palate; I would guess that this is probably at least ten years out from its base year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy blend of apple, peach, warm bread, complex minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and has nice mineral drive on the backend, with elegant *mousse*, a fine core and excellent length and grip on the still quite snappy finish. 2019-2040+. **92+**.

Ployez-Jacquemart “Extra Quality” Brut NV (Ludes)

I tasted a bottle of Ployez-Jacquemart’s “Extra Quality” Brut NV about six months ago from this same disgorgement, which was October of 2018. The wine was excellent then, but has settled in even more since I last drank a bottle and is really showing well today. The beautiful fruit tones that Laurence Ployez gets in this bottling are most impressive, as today it offers up a compelling bouquet of pear, apple, a lovely and quite complex base of soil tones, fruit blossoms, brioche and a gentle touch of nuttiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and complex, with a great core of fruit, fine mineral drive, refined *mousse* and impeccable balance on the long, zesty and focused finish. Non-vintage Brut does not get better than this! 2020-2040+. **91+**.



Louis Roederer “Brut Premier” NV (Reims)

This bottle was drunk with great pleasure at the restaurant Asiate in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel here in New York. I note that principally because the restaurant still has a pretty good supply and this has already seen three years in the cellar, as it is from the base year of 2012, rather than the new release from the base year of 2015. If one does not believe that it makes sense to age non-vintage Brut, I present you “Exhibit A”. The wine is this cuvée’s customary blend of forty percent each of pinot noir and chardonnay, combined with twenty percent pinot meunier and was disgorged in 2016. While the wine remains youthful, the three extra years of bottle age have really let it blossom nicely, as the bouquet now offers up a very classy blend of apple, white peach, chalky minerality, fresh-baked bread, gentle smokiness and a touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and wide open, with a lovely core, good soil signature and grip, refined *mousse* and a long, vibrant and beautifully balanced finish. This is really starting to drink well today, but may be even better three to five years down the road! Fine juice. 2019-2040+. 92.

Brut and Extra Brut Rosé Non-Vintage

Pierre Gerbais Rosé de Saignée Brut Nature NV (Celles-sur-Ource)

The new release of Aurélien Gerbais’ Rosé de Saignée is from the vintage of 2015 and is composed entirely of pinot noir. It is non-dosé and was disgorged in April of 2019 and was aged for just over three years sur latte. The wine takes its nice, deep color for twenty-four hours of

skin maceration at the outset of fermentation. The new release offers up a deep and vinous nose of cherries, fruit skin, smoke, citrus peel and chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, bright and full-bodied, with a youthful girdle of acidity, a good core, lovely mineral drive, frothy mousse and a long, still very primary finish. This is still very young and a bit disjointed; perhaps bottle age will help it settle in. Right now, I do not think it is fair to such a young wine to score it when it is still obviously unsettled. ???

Gosset “Grand Rosé” Brut NV (Épernay)

This particular bottle of Gosset “Grand Rosé” had been in my cellar for a couple of years and was really starting to blossom nicely when I opened it on Christmas. The wine is composed of a blend of fifty-eight percent chardonnay and forty-two percent pinot noir and was finished with a *dosage* of nine grams per liter, which seamlessly buffers the good spine of acidity here (as the *vins clairs* do not go through malolactic for this bottling). The complex bouquet is pure, expressive and very classy, wafting from the glass in a blend of tangerine, white cherry, rye toast, a complex base of chalky soil tones, dried rose petals and a gentle topnote of smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and zesty, with a great core of fruit, fine soil signature, very refined *mousse* and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. While this still had room for further improvement with more bottle age, it was in a superb point of evolution for current drinking. 2020-2040. 92+.

Huré Frères “Cuvée Insouciance” Brut Rosé NV (Ludes)

The new release of Huré Frères “Cuvée Insouciance” Brut Rosé is from the base year of 2017 and was disgorged in April of 2019. The cépages is forty-five percent pinot noir, thirty percent chardonnay and twenty-five percent pinot noir, with the wine being finished with a dosage of five grams per liter and including five percent still red wine in the blend. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classy blend of strawberries, orange, chalky soil tones, bread dough and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied and focused, with lovely mid-palate depth, frothy mousse, a youthful girdle of acidity and very good length and grip on the bright and snappy finish. This is still a puppy and needs some bottle age to soften up structurally, but it has lovely constituent components and will be a very good glass of Rosé Champagne with a bit of bottle age. 2021-2035. 89+.

Blanc de Blancs Millésime

2016 Chartogne-Taillet “Heurtebise” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Millésime (Merfy)

As I was not able to visit Alexandre Chartogne on my last trip to Champagne, I was very happy to see that he had brought along a few bottles of his 2016 Heurtebise single vineyard cuvée to the Mugneret family’s celebration in Vosne this winter. Heurtebise is a *lieu à dit* planted to old vine chardonnay on sandstone soils, which makes for a lovely and quite unique combination of varietal and soil signature in the finished wine. It was finished in 2016 with a *dosage* of 4.5 grams per liter and disgorged in April of 2019. It offers up a superb young nose of pear, apple, smoky overtones, a complex base of soil, spring flowers and a nice touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, snappy and nascently complex, with a superb core of fruit, elegant *mousse* and lovely balance and grip on the long, poised and focused finish. This is going to be a superb bottle of bubbly and all it needs is more bottle age to start to blossom properly. 2024-2050. 93+.

2015 Pierre Gerbais “l’Osmose” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Millésime (Celles-sur-Ource)

The 2015 “l’Osmose” Blanc de Blancs from Aurélien Gerbais is outstanding wine in the making. It was finished with a *dosage* of three to four grams and disgorged in April of 2019. The chardonnay vineyard that l’Osmose originates from has a northerly exposition, sitting on a fine bed of the Aube’s signature Kimmeridgian limestone. The wine delivers lovely aromatics in its mix of pear, delicious apple, the almost flinty, limestone minerality of the Aube, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent mineral drive, pinpoint bubbles, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the long, youthful and very well-balanced finish. This is first class bubbly in the making, but give it a few years to blossom more from behind its girdle of acidity. 2022-2045. **91+**.

2015 Pierre Gerbais “l’Unique” Blanc de Blancs Doux (Celles-sur-Ource)

The 2015 Champagne Gerbais “l’Unique” Blanc de Blancs Doux is an experimental wine made by Aurélien Gerbais that is made entirely from old vine pinot blanc (planted in 1905) that was late-harvested and allowed to finish its fermentation with significant residual sugar. The wine is really quite lovely (and not particularly sweet), offering up a quite precise bouquet of peach, apple, chalky soil tones, gentle smokiness and a nice touch of gently smoky floral tones. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and very nicely balanced, with good acids, a fine core of fruit, frothy *mousse* and good soil signature on the long, complex and moderately sweet, but vibrant finish. The bottling was first produced in 2014, and is the only wine produced at Champagne Gerbais without any SO₂, so my gut instinct suggests that drinking it over the relative near-term would be prudent. It would be terrific served with fruit desserts. 2020-2030+? **92.**

2014 Huré Frères “Cuvée Inattendue” Blanc de Blancs Extra Brut Millésime (Ludes)

The 2014 Huré Frères “Cuvée Inattendue” Blanc de Blancs was disgorged in April of 2019 and finished with a *dosage* of four grams per liter. The wine is produced is made from two different parcels of chardonnay, one planted in Ludes and the other in Rilly-la-Montagne, so it is that rare Blanc de Blancs with its foundation on the Montagne de Reims. The wine offers up a refined young nose of pear, lemon zest, a fine base of soil tones, brioche and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and still quite youthful, with a good core of fruit, fine mineral drive, pinpoint bubbles and a long, well-balanced and snappy finish. This is approachable right out of the blocks, but will also age very nicely and for my palate, I would love to give it three or four more years in the cellar and let it blossom more fully. 2020-2040+. **91+.**

2014 Pierre et François Huré “4 Éléments” Chardonnay Extra Brut NV (Ludes)

The “4 Éléments” bottlings from Pierre and François Huré were first produced in the vintage of 2010, in a chardonnay version made from a different *lieu à dit* than this most recent chardonnay cuvée, which hails from the vineyard of Les Blanches Voies in Rilly-la-Montagne. In concept, the four elements are vineyard, variety, vintage and vision (for cellar technique). All three wines in this series see their *vins clairs* barrel-fermented and aged for six months in 600 liter *demi-muids*, do not undergo malolactic fermentation, and hail from a single grape variety and vineyard. The 2014 version shows its wood a bit on the nose, but not in an unflattering way, as it offers up a complex bouquet of pear, golden delicious apple, almond, chalky soil and buttery oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and fairly oaky (it tastes quite a bit like a good Meursault with bubbles!), with a fine core of fruit, delicate *mousse* and impressive length and grip on the complex finish. Of the three 4 Éléments bottlings, this is the most overtly oaky

(along with the pinot noir), and I have to imagine it may have a bit too much wood for some tasters, but it is a very well-made wine in its rather unique style and is certain to delight those not put off by the fair bit of new oak. To my palate, this works very well with this wine, but not quite as well with the pinot noir version (see below). 2020-2040+. **92.**

2013 Louis Roederer Blanc de Blancs Brut Millésime (Reims)

I love Louis Roederer's vintage-dated Blanc de Blancs bottling, but often find it one of the most tensile wines in the lineup out of the blocks and always in need of some cellaring time prior to really getting started drinking it. However, the 2013 marks a very slight stylistic departure from previous iterations, as Jean-Baptiste Lécaillon and his winemaking team at Roederer decided this year to pick the chardonnay grapes for this bottling ten days later than customary, so as to work with slightly riper fruit than previously. The result is a wine that shows a bit more early accessibility than has been the case in the past, albeit, this is still a long-distance runner made for beautiful evolution in the bottle and I, personally, would still let it rest comfortably in the cellar for at least three or four more years before seriously thinking of broaching a bottle! The wine is composed entirely of chardonnay from the grand cru village of Avize, offering up a deep and very classy bouquet of pear, apple, a beautiful base of limestone, fruit blossoms, incipient notes of brioche and a nice touch of lemon peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, nascently complex and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with frothy *mousse*, great focus and grip and a very long, very pure and very, very promising finish. For those whose curiosity might get the best of them, there is plenty of pleasure to be had here already, but the wine is still a puppy and I would still give it a bit of bottle age to let it properly blossom. 2023-2060+. **93+.**

2010 Pierre Gimmonet et Fils "Cuvée Fleuron" Blanc de Blancs Brut Millésime (Cuis)

The 2010 Pierre Gimmonet et Fils "Cuvée Fleuron" is starting to drink nicely at ten years of age, offering up a bright and complex nose of apple, white peach, gentle floral tones, brioche, chalky soil tones and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite open in personality, with a fine core of fruit, elegant *mousse* and good, but not great length on the complex finish. I like this wine quite well, but it is just a tad short on the backend, which keeps its score down a touch. But, that said, there is still plenty of enjoyment to be had here today. 2020-2030+. **90.**

Brut, Extra Brut and Non-Dosé Millésime

2016 Pierre Gerbais "Grains de Celles" Extra Brut Millésime (Celles-sur-Ource)

The 2016 "Grains de Celles" Extra Brut from Aurélien Gerbais is made of a unique blend of fifty percent pinot noir and twenty-five percent each of chardonnay and pinot blanc. It was disgorged in April of 2019 and finished with a *dosage* of under four grams. The bouquet is bright and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a complex base of limestone, a touch of brioche, gentle accents of lime peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and still nicely wound up by a girdle of acidity, with a good core of fruit, pinpoint bubbles and impressive length and grip on the complex and snappy finish. This is a lovely example that will be even better with a bit more bottle age, but is eminently drinkable today. Interestingly, it is more accessible than the 2016 Grains de Celles Rosé, despite the wine being essentially the same, with the Rosé just including an addition of still red wine for color. 2020-2035. **90+.**

2015 Pierre Gerbais “l’Audace” Blanc de Noirs Extra Brut Nature (Celles-sur-Ource)

The l’Audace cuvée from Aurélien Gerbais is composed entirely from pinot noir, with this vineyard having been planted in 1960 and with a northerly exposition. The wine was disgorged in April of 2019 and delivers a beautifully expressive bouquet of apple, peach, warm biscuits, limestone minerality, plenty of smokiness and a touch of Chablis-like straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and grip, impressive complexity, frothy *mousse* and a long, balanced and racy finish. Given how youthful this wine is, it is very impressive to see its exquisite balance right out of the blocks, despite being non-*dosé*, as the acids need no buffering and the wine is already drinking beautifully. It will also age very well indeed. 2020-2045. **92.**

2014 Pierre et François Huré “4 Éléments” Pinot Meunier Extra Brut (Ludes)

The 2014 Pinot Meunier bottling of 4 Éléments is from the *lieu à dit* of Grosse Pierre in Ludes, which has a western exposition on the top of the Montagne de Reims. The *vins clairs* do not undergo malolactic fermentation, are barrel-fermented and raised in *demi-muids* for six months before bottling. It was disgorged in April of 2019 and finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. The wine offers up a fine bouquet of white peach, delicate sourdough notes, a complex base of chalky soil tones, a touch of Meunier flora tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a good core, delicate *mousse* and impressive length and grip on the complex finish. There is a bit of oak influence on the backend of this wine that suggests it will be even better with some bottle age, to allow that (fifth?) element to bury itself in the wine. But, this is an impressive new (to me) direction for the property and a lovely bottle in the making. 2021-2045. **92.**

2014 Pierre et François Huré “4 Éléments” Pinot Noir Extra Brut (Ludes)

The 2014 Pinot Noir bottling of Pierre and François Huré’s “4 Éléments” hails from the Ludes *lieu à dit* of La Perthe, with the vines having been planted in 1983. It is treated the same as the other two bottlings in the line, with the *vins clairs* are barrel-fermented and aged in *demi-muids* for six months prior to bottling, with no malo and a finishing *dosage* of three grams per liter. It was disgorged as well in April of 2019. The wine is very lovely aromatically, offering up a discreetly blend of white peach, bread dough, a complex base of soil, a touch of nutskin, dried flowers and very discreet vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and more oaky than the nose suggests, with good mid-palate depth, frothy *mousse* and a bit of gentle rigidity from the oak on the backend that needs to be waited out. The length here is good, and I suspect it will absorb its wood nicely with some bottle age and drink quite elegantly, but right now, the wood is in the way a bit and this is my least favorite of the 2014s at this point in time. 2022-2040+? **89+?**

2014 Marguet “Les Crayères” Extra Brut Millésime (Ambonnay)

The 2014 Les Crayères from Benoît Marguet is a deep, complex and beautifully soil-driven example of the vintage, but there is just a touch of natural wine “mousiness” here that I hope will age out of the wine with some bottle age, as everything else about this wine is truly stunning. Leaving aside the whisper of mousiness, the bouquet wafts from the glass in a deep and very refined blend of white peach, apple, very complex, chalky soil tones, fresh-baked bread, just a bit of buttery oak and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and impeccably balanced, with refined *mousse*, good acids and grip and a long, minerally finish. Other than that dollop of mousiness, this is stunning Champagne, and I wish it was not here. If it subsides with bottle age, this wine will merit a score at the top of the range; if

it does not, then place it at the lower value. I should note that this is the second time I have tasted the 2014 Les Crayères, as the bottle showed this quality when it was only recently shipped and the importers generously gave me another bottle to tuck in my cellar and let it settle in; it has been down there for four more months and the quality has not dissipated. This is the first minor misstep I have tasted from Benoît Marguet in a decade full of dazzling wines. 2020-2050. **89-94?**

2014 Frédéric Savart “le Mont Benoît” Extra Brut Millésime (Écueil) Magnum

Frédéric Savart’s 2014 “le Mont Benoît” Extra Brut Millésime is composed from a blend of ninety-five percent pinot noir and five percent chardonnay, with the grapes hailing from a *lieu à dit* in the village of Villers aux Noeuds. It was finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter. The wine is still young out of magnum, but shows lovely potential in its aromatic constellation of lemon, tart pear, bread dough, chalky minerality and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good core of fruit, frothy *mousse*, brisk acids and impressive length and grip on the snappy and well-balanced finish. In larger format, this is still a puppy and needs some more bottle age to blossom, but it will be very tasty in due course. 2023-2045+. **92.**



2013 Louis Roederer Brut Millésime (Reims)

In terms of personality, the vintage-dated Brut bottling from Maison Louis Roederer is always their “Montagne de Reims” cuvée, as all the pinot noir that goes into this bottling typically hails from their vineyards in the villages of Verzy and Verzenay. This year, the flinty

mineral *terroir* of Verzy particularly evident in this lovely version, as all the pinot noir came from this village in 2013. The wine is composed of a blend of seventy percent pinot noir from Verzy this year and thirty percent chardonnay from Chouilly in the Côte de Blancs and the wine was aged *sur latte* four years prior to disgorgement. About a third of the *vins clairs* for this wine are barrel-fermented. The bouquet is already quite expressive, wafting from the glass in a blend of apple, white peach, plenty of smokiness, a lovely base of minerality, warm bread and just a whisper of oak from the barrel-fermentation in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and refined, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent mineral drive, pinpoint bubbles and a very classy, nascently complex and perfectly balanced finish. First class Brut Millésime! 2023-2060+. **93+**.

2012 Huré Frères “Instantanée” Extra Brut Millésime (Ludes)

The 2012 Huré Frères “Instantanée” Extra Brut Millésime is composed of a blend of thirty-five percent each of chardonnay and pinot noir, coupled with thirty percent pinot meunier. It was aged for six years *sur latte* and disgorged in April of 2019, with a finishing *dosage* of three grams. I had liked the 2010 version a few months back and the 2012 is a fine follow-up, offering up a fine bouquet of apple, white peach, a complex base of soil tones, lovely smokiness, dried flowers and a gently savory topnote that is hard to attribute, but adds to the aromatic mosaic nicely. On the palate the wine is brisk, full-bodied, focused and youthful, with excellent depth at the core, fine mineral drive on the backend, frothy *mousse* and a long, nascently complex and very nicely balanced finish. Unlike the 2010 version, which is drinking nicely, the 2012 Instantanée really needs a bit of time in the cellar to really start to blossom properly and hit on all cylinders. 2022-2045+. **92**.

2012 Louis Roederer “Philippe Starck” Brut Nature Millésime (Reims)

This is now the third release of the Brut Nature Millésime from Louis Roederer, following the 2006 and 2009 vintages. As I have noted in the past, it is only produced in riper vintages, so as to ensure that there is good, ripe acids to work with, as there is no buffering *dosage* in the wine. The *cépages* of the 2012 is a bit different than the previous two releases (which were essentially one-third each of the three varieties), with the blend composed of fifty-five percent pinot noir, twenty-five percent pinot meunier and twenty percent chardonnay this year, and has been the case in the past, the *vins clairs* do not undergo malolactic fermentation. The 2012 offers up a fine, young nose of pear, apple, lemon zest, chalky minerality and a lovely topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and racy in personality, with a fine core, lovely mineral drive, refined *mousse* and a long, beautifully balanced and extremely promising finish. For Brut Nature purists, this is already drinking very well, but for those of us weaned on a bit of *dosage*, I would give it two or three more years in the cellar to really let it open up from behind its girdle of acidity and drink with a touch more generosity. It will be a very long-lived Brut Nature vintage from Louis Roederer. 2022-2050. **93**.

2012 Louis Roederer “Philippe Starck” Brut Nature Rosé Millésime (Reims)

2012 is the first Brut Nature Rosé produced by Maison Roederer and it is a lovely bottle. This is far more limited in production than the regular Brut Nature in 2012, as there were only fifteen thousand bottles produced of the Rosé, as compared to seventy thousand of the regular Brut Nature. The wine was produced by going through the *maison*’s vineyards in Cumières five days ahead of the scheduled harvest and picking a bit of the ripest pinot noir grapes, which were then brought to the cellars, pressed and underwent a five day “cold soak” prior to their addition at the start of fermentation to the remaining components in the wine to give it its delicate salmon

color. The 2012 Rosé is produced from the same *cépages* as the regular bottling this year. The wine is very refined aromatically, offering up scents of white peach, a touch of melon, bread dough, chalky soil tones, a dollop of smokiness and a bit of caraway seed starting to develop in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a touch more primary in personality than the Blanc, with a fine core, lovely balance and cut, elegant *mousse* and outstanding length and grip on the focused and youthful finish. I would give this a year or two longer in the cellar than the regular 2012 Brut Nature, but again, those accustomed to drinking non-*dosé* Champagne will already find it immensely pleasurable out of the blocks. 2023-2050. **93.**

2012 Louis Roederer Cristal Brut Millésime (Reims)

The 2012 vintage of Cristal is the first to be produced entirely from Demeter-certified, biodynamically-farmed fruit, which is a landmark for Maison Roederer. The future is now here! I have been looking forward to this release of this vintage of Cristal for a few years now, but sadly found myself not in top form to appreciate its debut, as I was so suffering from jet lag after my three weeks on the road in November that my energy level was no match for this beautiful young wine. The 2012 Cristal is its customary *cépages* of sixty percent pinot noir and forty percent chardonnay and none of the *vins clairs* went through malo this year, with one-third of the blend barrel-fermented. The wine was finished in 2012 with a *dosage* of 7.5 grams per liter and offers up a beautiful young nose of pear, apple, fresh lemon, white flowers, a very complex base of chalky minerality, a hint of the caraway seed to come and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a racy girdle of acidity, a rock solid core, impeccable focus and grip, refined *mousse* and stunning length and grip on the poised and perfectly balanced finish. This is another great vintage of Cristal in the making, but it deserves plenty of time in the cellar to blossom properly. 2030-2100. **98.**

2010 Bérèche Père et Fils “le Cran” Brut Millésime (Ludes) Served from Magnum

Raphaël Bérèche’s 2010 le Cran is showing lovely potential today out of magnum. The *cépages* of the 2010 le Cran is fifty percent pinot noir and fifty percent chardonnay, all grown in the Bérèche family’s vineyards in their home village of Ludes on the Montagne de Reims. I had not tasted a bottle of this wine since my visit to the domaine in the spring of 2018 and was very happy to fine Raphaël Bérèche pouring it out of magnum at the thirtieth harvest celebration at Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg in Vosne-Romanée this past November. The wine is still youthful, but starting to really show nicely, as it offers up a complex bouquet of apple, pear, chalky minerality, bread dough, a nice touch of smokiness and a bit of citrus zest in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with a fine core, elegant *mousse*, lovely focus and grip and a nice touch of buttery roundness to the texture of the wine on the backend from the barrel fermentation of the *vins clairs* for this bottling. This is first class juice. 2022-2045+. **93+.**

2008 Dehours et Fils “Brisefer” Extra Brut Millésime (Mareuil le Port)

The 2008 Brisefer from Jérôme Dehours was disgorged in September of 2017, after aging *sur latte* for a bit more than eight years, as Monsieur Dehours aged his *vins clairs* for this bottle until June of 2009 before bottling it up for its second fermentation. The wine is composed entirely of chardonnay, but is not labeled as a Blanc de Blancs. The finishing *dosage* for this wine was 2.3 grams per liter for the 2008. The wine offers up a youthful and complex bouquet of apple, pear, salty soil tones, almond, delicate floral tones and just a hint of brioche. On the palate

the wine is brisk, full-bodied, focused and complex, with outstanding mineral drive, great focus and grip, elegant *mousse* and a very long, well-balanced and extremely promising finish. This is still a puppy at twelve years of age and needs at least a handful more years in the cellar to properly blossom, but it is going to be an excellent wine once it has had a chance to relax a bit structurally. 2025-2055+. **93.**

2008 Huré Frères “Terre Natale” Brut Millésime (Ludes)

The 2008 Huré Frères “Terre Natale” Extra Brut Millésime is composed of a blend of forty percent chardonnay and thirty percent each of pinot noir and pinot meunier. The wine spent fully ten years aging *sur latte* prior to disgorgement and it was finished with a *dosage* of three grams per liter this year. The wine offers up a bouquet of apple, pear, a good base of soil, bread dough, citrus peel and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still fairly adolescent, with frothy *mousse*, brisk acids and good length and grip on the young, adolescent finish. This has not had a chance to settle into focus properly and still needs bottle age to come around; right now it is hard to get a precise read of just how good it is going to be, but there are some good raw materials here. 2023-2045. **88-92?**

2008 Lombard et Cie “Grand Cru” Brut Nature Millésime (Épernay)

The 2008 Lombard et Cie Brut Nature Millésime is composed of eighty percent chardonnay (all from either Mesnil-sur-Oger or Avize) and twenty percent pinot noir, from Ambonnay. The *vins clairs* for this bottling are aged twenty months in cask prior to blending and bottling for the secondary fermentation, and the wine was aged *sur latte* for more than six years before its disgorgement in the spring of 2017. The wine offers up a superbly complex bouquet of apple, pear, a touch of *crème patissière*, almond, chalky minerality, a whisper of oak and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really beautifully balanced for a non-*dosé*, with refined *mousse*, a marvelous core, zesty acids, lovely backend mineral drive and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is quite exceptional. 2020-2040. **93.**

2008 Philipponnat Clos des Goisses Brut Millésime (Mareuil-sur-Aÿ) Magnum

I wrote about the 2008 Clos des Goisses back in June of last year, as it was part of a superb vertical tasting I had the pleasure to participate in at that time. As I mentioned, it is a pretty unique vintage of Clos des Goisses, as there is more chardonnay in the blend than pinot noir, and, to the best of my knowledge this has only happened once before back in 1964. The *cépages* of the 2008 is fifty-five percent chardonnay and forty-five percent pinot noir. After first tasting it last summer, I was delighted to cross paths with it out of magnum during my recent trip to Burgundy and the wine was showing beautifully. The superb bouquet offers up a youthful blend of apple, white peach, chalky soil tones, dried flowers, bread dough, a touch of citrus peel and incipient smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, young and nascently complex, with a great core of fruit, zesty acids, pinpoint bubbles and great cut and grip on the long and vibrant finish. This was still youthful out of regular-sized format in the summer and is even younger out of magnum! It will be a great, great vintage of Clos des Goisses, but it will need time. 2030-2085. **95+.**

2008 Louis Roederer Cristal Brut Millésime (Reims)

As I mentioned in my feature on Maison Louis Roederer a couple of years ago, the 2008 Cristal was the first vintage here to spend fully ten years in the cellars in Reims prior to release. It is a great, great vintage of Cristal and I was very much looking forward to revisiting it this past November, as it is now due for its re-release from the *maison*. Readers may recall that this is the “rare bird” of Cristal vintages that included some *vins clairs* that went through malo, as about

sixteen percent of the blend underwent its secondary fermentation prior to blending and bottling for aging *sur lattes*. The wine is brilliant on both the nose and palate, with time not really seeming to have touched it much since I last tasted a bottle. The bouquet is deep, complex and still properly youthful in personality, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of apple, pear, a touch of fresh almond, complex, chalky minerality, incipient notes of caraway seed, citrus peel and lovely floral tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still fairly primary, with a rock solid core, lovely cut and grip, laser-like focus, refined *mousse* and a very, very long, very pure and still quite youthful finish. As I have noted in the past, twenty percent of the *vins clairs* for the 2008 Cristal were barrel-fermented and the wine was finished with a dosage of 7.5 grams per liter. It was disgorged in September of 2017. 2030-2095. **99.**



Looking down at the village of Cumières from the middle of one of its vineyards on a fine spring morning.

Vintage-Dated Rosé

2016 Pierre Gerbais “Grains de Celles” Extra Brut Rosé (Celles-sur-Ource)

The Champagne Pierre Gerbais 2016 “Grains de Celles” Extra Brut Rosé is composed of a blend of fifty percent pinot noir and twenty-five percent each of chardonnay and pinot blanc. It was disgorged in April of 2019 and finished with a *dosage* of between three and four grams. It offers up a lovely bouquet of strawberries, tangerine, chalky minerality, warm bread and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still youthfully snappy, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature, frothy *mousse* and a long, vibrant and still very youthful finish. To my palate, this needs time to soften up a bit structurally, but it is a fairly recent disgorgement and it may start to stir more briskly than I anticipate. 2021-2035. **90.**

2014 Louis Roederer Brut Rosé Millésime (Reims)

The Cumières signature that is always found in the Louis Roederer vintage Brut Rosé is very much apparent in this excellent 2014 version, as this village always produced a riper interpretation of the grape and which works so beautifully in Rosés. The *cépages* this year is its customary blend of seventy percent pinot noir from very chalky vineyards in Cumières and thirty percent chardonnay from the village of Cuis in the Côte des Blancs. Twenty percent of the *vins clairs* this year are aged in larger oak casks prior to blending and bottling. The wine offers up a beautiful young bouquet of tart strawberries, peach, sourdough bread, a touch of caraway seed, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones and a discreetly smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, elegant *mousse* and a very long, very pure and classy finish. This is approachable today, but it will really be a waste of bottles to not give it a few more years of bottle age prior to really drinking it with abandon! 2022-2060. **93.**

2012 Louis Roederer Cristal Brut Rosé Millésime (Reims)

The 2012 Louis Roederer Cristal Brut Rosé is a magical wine in the making. It is composed this year of a blend of fifty-six percent pinot noir and forty-four percent chardonnay, with fifteen percent of the *vins clairs* having been barrel-fermented in this vintage. None of the *vins clairs* underwent malo this year and the finishing *dosage* for the 2012 is eight grams per liter. The wine is superb and just a bit more accessible out of the blocks than the regular 2012 Cristal, wafting from the glass in a very refined constellation of apple, white peach, gentle smokiness, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of fresh-baked bread, caraway seed, incipient smokiness and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, racy and bottomless at the core, with lovely mineral drive, refined *mousse*, impeccable focus and grip and a very, very long, very pure and nascently complex finish. This is not quite as buttoned up behind its girdle of acidity as the regular 2012 Cristal, but it is by no means ready for primetime drinking and still needs a minimum of eight to ten years in the cellar to really unfold. Great juice. 2027-2080. **98.**

Coteaux Champenois

2015 Coteaux Champenois Blanc “En Vieux Frombrés”- Champagne Doyard (Vertus)

The 2015 Coteaux Champenois Blanc from Champagne Doyard is produced from the *lieu à dit* of En Vieux Frombrés in the commune of Vertus, from a parcel of fifty-plus year-old chardonnay vines. The wine is barrel-fermented and raised in five and six year-old casks and does not undergo malolactic fermentation. The 2015 is the current release and offers up a fine bouquet of pear, apple, almond, buttery oak and chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and gently oaky, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature and lovely secondary development on the long and complex finish. This still has sound acids, but I was expecting a bit more cut, given the fact that the malos were blocked. Good juice. 2020-2030. **88.**

HISTOIRE D'ENFER IMPRESSIVELY SERIOUS SWISS RED WINES



I first received these samples from the fine Valais winery of Histoire d'Enfer eighteen months ago, when one of the proprietors dropped them off for me at Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy in Gevrey-Chambertin and I was able to retrieve them on my next visit to Burgundy. However, during that spring trip, my schedule was completely packed and I never had a free hour to sit down and taste the bottles, so I had to wait for the following trip to try the bottles. So, I tucked them away in a friend's cellar in Beaune for safe keeping until my next visit to the region, and was finally able to get to the bottles this past November. I had no idea what to expect from the wines of Histoire d'Enfer, except that two of the principals in the winery, James Paget and Alexandre Challand were long-time subscribers to the newsletter and passionate Burgundy collectors, so I knew that their standards would be quite high. What I found were some truly superb wines, made from both well-known international grape varieties such as pinot noir and syrah, as well as some of the Valais indigenous varietals that were completely new to me and impressively compelling in terms of balance and complexity. While my six pack of samples only included red wines, the estate makes a full range of white wines, a little *Vin Jaune*, a fortified wine, dessert wine and a rosé as well, in addition to these fine reds. Over all, the entire lineup

that I tasted from Histoire d'Enfer was impressively expressive of their underlying minerality and clearly were wines made by gentlemen who are champions of *terroir*.

Histoire d'Enfer is a project that was created and now run by four gentleman, Messieurs Paget and Challand, and fellow founder Dr. Patrick Regamey, as well as Alexandre Plassat. The winery was founded in 2007 when the original trio purchased three hectares of vines in Valais, and has now grown to encompass seven hectares of vines. Almost all of their vineyards were already established, so the vines here are not young. For example, the pinot noir in the domaine's vineyards was planted in the 1970s and 1980s. The beautiful, mountainous soils of the Valais have a high concentration of limestone, which no doubt drew these Burgundy lovers to start cultivating their own vines here in the mountains of southwestern Switzerland. The winery is located in the Alpine village of Corin, at the source of the Rhône River, roughly sixty miles due east of Genève as the crow flies. The first vintage produced by the estate was from 2008, and their lineup has expanded steadily since that inaugural vintage. I tasted a range of red wines from the 2015, 2014 and 2013 vintages and was quite impressed with what I sampled; I hope to have the opportunity on another trip to Europe to work through more of the estate's wines and get a better sense of their winemaking philosophies (beyond the obvious championing of *terroir* in the various cuvées) and perhaps see how the wines have aged from some of their earlier vintages.

Though I have only tasted four red varietals from the estate: Pinot Noir, Syrah, Cornalin and Humagne Rouge, Histoire d'Enfer produces a far larger range of bottlings and I am looking forward on my next trip to hopefully taste a wider selection of wines from this fine domaine. Other cuvées produced here include the red wine of Diolinoir (a Swiss grape created as a cross between Pinot Noir and Rouge de Diolly in the 1970s), and white wines such as Chardonnay, Riesling, Petite Arvin, Fendant (Chasselas), Humane Blanche and Païen (Savignin Blanc), as well as their dry Rosé. So, I have only scratched the surface of the lineup at Histoire d'Enfer, but as these six samples were so impressive, I thought it would make sense to share my notes with readers now, in case you happen to have the opportunity to try any of the wines from this fine estate. Winemaking is quite traditional, with only indigenous yeasts utilized, virtually everything barrel-fermented (the Fendant and Humagne Blanche in a combination of oak and stainless steel), new oak is kept to a rotation of ten to twenty percent, and the domaine is increasingly utilizing more six hundred liter barrels, as James Paget notes that "we like the more gentle oak and oxygenation" with the larger casks. The wines generally spend twelve months in cask and are then assembled in tank and settle for a few months prior to bottling. White wines are generally bottled in the spring and the reds in the early summer, eighteen months out from the harvest. The winery produces roughly twenty-seven thousand bottles per year, and what I have had a chance to try thus far is very impressive!

2014 Syrah- Histoire d'Enfer (Valais)

The 2014 Syrah bottling from Histoire d'Enfer is really excellent. It offers up a classic aromatic constellation of dark berries, black pepper, smoked meats, dark soil tones, plenty of smokiness and a nice topnote of bitter chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise, with excellent transparency down to the soil, a lovely core of fruit, moderate, well-integrated tannins and impressive length and grip on the very well-balanced and promising finish. This is a proper bottle of serious syrah and will need some time in the cellar to allow the

tannins to fall away, but it will offer excellent complexity when it is fully ready to drink. 2022-2045+. **91+**.

2015 Syrah- Histoire d'Enfer (Valais)

The 2015 vintage of Syrah from Histoire d'Enfer is a bit more powerfully constructed than the lovely 2014 version, but it shows excellent potential and will just demand a bit longer in the cellar before it starts to stir. The youthful bouquet offers up a deep and classic mix of cassis, smoked meats, black olive, pepper, a fine base of soil, espresso and just a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine mineral drive, ripe, fairly firm tannins and impressive length and grip on the nascently complex finish. Like many syrahs, this is a touch reductive when first opened and needs some aeration if one is intent on drinking it now; it will be far more enjoyable five or six years down the road, when some of the tannins have had a chance to fall away and the wine really opens up on the palate. 2025-2050. **90**.

2014 Pinot Noir "l'Enfer du Calcaire"- Histoire d'Enfer (Valais)

The 2014 Pinot Noir "l'Enfer du Calcaire" from Histoire d'Enfer is quite light in color, but nicely ripe at 13.5 percent octane and certainly not a shy example of this lovely varietal. The wine offers up a very red fruity bouquet of strawberries, cherries, a nice touch of weediness (that reminds me quite a bit of this grape grown in Mendocino County, California), beetroot, chalky soil tones and a discreet foundation of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very transparent down to the soil, with a good core of fruit, tangy acids, moderate tannins and impressive length and grip on the complex finish. There is a nice touch of botanicals on the backend of the finish that I quite like, as it gives the wine a touch of bitterness, such as one finds in Emidio Pepe's legendary Montepulciano. This fine bottle of pinot noir is approachable today, but clearly built for cellaring and will be better with another four to six years in the cellar. It should age quite gracefully for many more years beyond that. 2024-2045+. **90**.

2014 Pinot Noir "Calcaire Absolu"- Histoire d'Enfer (Valais)

The 2014 Calcaire Absolu bottling of pinot noir from Histoire d'Enfer comes in at the same 13.5 percent octane as the above cuvée, but the wine has a touch deeper color, though still light and transparent in hue. The bouquet shows impressive complexity in its blend of cherries, a touch of pepper, gamebird, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke, fresh herbs and a discreet foundation of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely light on its feet, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature, moderate, well-measure tannins and a long, complex and tangy finish. This is first class pinot noir! 2020-2045+. **91**.

2015 Cornalin "l'Enfer du Calcaire"- Histoire d'Enfer (Valais)

Cornalin is one of the ancient red grapes of the Valais. It has its origins in the Valle d'Aosta in the Italian Alpine foothills, but has largely vanished from its place of origin, and nearly did the same in Valais. Happily, it was saved by a few fans of the grape in the 1970s in Valais and has made a remarkable comeback and is now fairly widely planted here. The 2015 version from Histoire d'Enfer comes in nicely ripe in this warm summer, tipping the scales at 13.7 percent octane and offering up a fine bouquet of sweet dark berries, pepper, woodsmoke, a nice touch of botanicals and a base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and gently weedy, with a fine core of fruit, good, tangy acids, moderate tannins and impressive length and excellent grip on the well-balanced finish. The interplay on the palate between sweet

and bitter here reminds me of several different Italian red wines and is a characteristic that I find works really well at the table. Good juice. 2019-2035+. **92.**



2013 Humagne Rouge “l’Enfer de la Roche”- Histoire d’Enfer (Valais)

Humagne Rouge is a natural cross between Cornalin and a mystery grape, with the variety springing up in vineyards in Valais sometime in the late nineteenth century. The 2013 Humagne Rouge “l’Enfer de la Roche” from Histoire d’Enfer is the lowest octane of these bottlings that I tasted, coming in at 12.7 percent alcohol and offering up a deep and complex bouquet of dark berries, a touch of tree bark, grilled meats, lovely botanical overtones, stony soil, pepper and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and intensely flavored, with lovely transparency down to its stony soil, moderate tannins, bright acids and excellent length and grip on the complex and beautifully balanced finish. This drinks like a theoretical cross between a Gevrey-Chambertin and a Listán Negro from the Canary Islands! A totally new world to me and an excellent wine! 2019-2040+. **92+.**

**THE 2018 BURGUNDY VINTAGE
RIPE, OFTEN SUPERB AND WILDLY VARIABLE**



City Hall in the town of Chablis.

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**THE 2018 BURGUNDY VINTAGE:
ANOTHER SOLAR VINTAGE OF SOMETIMES EXCELLENT QUALITY**



The vineyard of Les Clos in Chablis, still with its golden autumn colors in full bloom.

It is often said (or at least back in the day when Burgundy was the ultimate “insider’s wine”), that to master Burgundy, one did not buy vintages, one bought producers. Perhaps no vintage in the last quarter century will more fully underscore just how correct that old proverb is than the 2018 vintage, which is the most wildly variable in style of vintage as any I have ever tasted. The vintage has produced many truly beautiful wines, in a maddening myriad of stylistic interpretations, as well as some of the least appetizing young Burgundies I have ever tasted. The 2018 vintage in Burgundy is yet another “solar vintage” marked by very hot midsummer days and very often, soaring sugar levels. This was particularly true for the red wines of 2018 in the Côte d’Or, for obvious reasons, which we will get into a bit further on. The resulting wines are of varying quality and even wider variations of style, as it is one of the most heterogeneous young vintages of Burgundy that I have ever tasted, and my first vintage here tasting *sur place* was the 1988. That said, the vintage’s high water marks, and there are many of these, are truly great wines that will rival many other top flight vintages of recent memory, but far from everything is worthy of consideration in 2018. And, I should mention, there are a variety of styles of the most successful wines in 2018, from big, ripe and buxom, to pure, discreet and utterly soil-driven,

with hundreds of shadings in between. So, amongst the best wines, there is a little something for everyone. But, also keep in mind that there are some absolute train wrecks in this vintage as well; wines that are inherently flawed, for one reason or another, and again, the heterogeneous nature of the vintage makes the failed wines problematic for a variety of reasons, so one will be well-served to approach the early vintage hype of greatness with a significant degree of suspicion, for far from every *vigneron* was up to the very serious challenges of the growing season of 2018.

The winter of 2018 was very important for the ultimate quality of the best wines of this vintage, as it rained plenty and there were excellent water reserves built up in the soil going into the springtime. It would turn out that these water reserves were very much necessary for the vines later in the summer, when it turned very hot and very dry. The spring flowering happened beautifully in early June of 2018, with a fine set and the promise of a very big crop, which was very much welcome by *vignerons* who had witnessed extremely short crops in Burgundy in the last couple of vintages. Chablis, which had been bit by frost damage on an unprecedented scale in both 2016 and 2017, was very fortunate to finally have no early spring issues and the vines compensated a bit for the vagaries of the previous two years by promising a huge cropload in 2018. In fact, there were so many grapes when it came picking time in Chablis that everyone had to send off a percentage of their production to distillers, as even with expanded limits on yields, there were still too many grapes! As something similar happened in the Côte d'Or in the excellent vintage of 1999, one must keep in mind that huge crops are not necessarily a sign of diminished quality (nor is the inverse true, that small crops offer greater potential), and this was again the case with the 2018s, for those who succeeded in circumventing all the other potential pitfalls Mother Nature threw their way during the growing season turned out making outstanding wines.

While frost was happily not a problem in 2018, there was some localized hail of dramatic proportions in the Côte de Nuits, with two very centralized and ferocious hail storms striking the village of Prémieux and the southern half of Nuits St. Georges in July. The first was on July 3rd, and the second on July 15th, with both storms hitting in exactly the same place and the second wreaking even more damage than the first. Vineyards like the Clos de la Maréchale of Frédéric Mugnier were pummeled, with the water after the second storm like a flash flood surging over the wall along the bottom of the vineyard and flooding half of the Route Nationale with mud as slick as winter ice and snow. To give an idea of just how heavy the deluge was, the wall at the bottom of the Clos de la Maréchale has openings in it to allow water to pass through when it rains very heavily, but the volume of water was so intense that it surged up and cascaded over the wall, as the outlets were simply overwhelmed. The hail damage was also extensive, shredding vegetation, and though the vines later in the summer had a chance to grow back their leaves, this was energy diverted from ripening the grapes and so the bunches where the hail was most severe did not ripen like those elsewhere in the Côte de Nuits. So, yet another reason for variation in style of the resulting 2018s.

There had been lots of frequent rain during the month of June in 2018, further building up those subterranean water reserves, but which also caused plenty of mildew pressure early on in the growing season, so *vignerons* had to be vigilant to keep that issue at bay. As midsummer arrived, the skies cleared (except over Prémieux during those two violent July hailstorms) and

the heat index rose dramatically. The excellent water reserves in the soils were of great importance to counteract the heat and drought conditions of the backend of the summer of 2018, and there were small, well-spaced bouts of precipitation as well in late July and once or twice in August that allowed the maturation process to continue unimpeded, so hydric stress did not come into play in 2018. This would not be the case in the equally dry and blazing summer of 2019, but that is a story for next year. In 2018, the vintage would come to be characterized by this scorching heat of late July and all of August, with some vineyards handling it far better than others. The era when gloriously hot and sunny days were the stuff of great vintages in Burgundy are probably now over in this descent into the cauldron of global warming, so thinking about hot years in Burgundy the way previous generations might have is overly simplistic and often not particularly useful for understanding the general quality of a vintage in Burgundy. Back in the 1970s, it was the cold years that were the problems; today, more often than not, hot years can be at least or more problematic and this is certainly the case with 2018.

Once the tempests of July cleared out from the skies over Prémieux and southern Nuits St. Georges (not to mention the Côte de Nuits appellations found in the towns of Corgoloin and Comblanchien, which were also ravaged), the weather turned sunny, with dry, hot and solar conditions and everything that had not been hailed on started to ripen up very nicely. The temperatures eventually soared in August, climbing well over thirty degrees Celsius for many days in a row, and sugars started to climb briskly in the baking heat of the backend of the growing season. In these conditions, perhaps white wine producers had a bit of a leg up, as they could time their picking generally on the level of sugar accumulation in the grapes and not have to worry about tannins, but red wine producers were often stuck with a question of balancing phenolic ripeness of the tannins with how much sugar accumulation to allow. This is always an issue with big croploads in hot conditions, and it was not an easy problem to solve. Consequently, both crop size and start date for picking became keys to the vintage, and those who had to wait longer (for whatever reason), ended up missing out on the opportunity to produce something truly great in 2018. As Denis Bachelet commented (and Denis started picking early on September 2nd and was finished five days later), “one really had a different vintage, depending on if they picked the first week, the second week, or waited and were still harvesting in the third week of September.” He continued, “I went out for a ride on my bicycle in the vineyards after we were done and people were still out there picking, with bunches that had absolutely shriveled up from evaporation in the extreme heat, so that they were picking raisins as much as grapes by that point.” So, it is easy to visualize just where some of these extreme differences of style, alcohol level and ripeness and texture of tannins came from in 2018.

From what I tasted on this trip, it seemed that *vignerons* who are farming with biodynamic principles had a leg up in this vintage, as their vines seemed to handle the extreme heat in the second half of the summer far better than those farming conventionally. Perhaps this was not always a decisive factor in being able to produce top examples of the vintage, for of course, there are those who farm biodynamically and still could not surmount the challenges in the cellar presented by the unprecedented style of the grapes of 2018. But, farming in this manner certainly seemed to give some sort of an advantage in this torrid summer. Frédéric Lafarge commented that he thinks that “vines farmed biodynamically are better able to adapt to the variations of each growing season than those farmed with chemical products,” and thus, “are able to ripen their grapes physiologically under extremes like 2018 faster and without the sugar

levels climbing too high.” After tasting his range of svelte, transparent and beautifully elegant (yet still sappy) 2018s, it is hard not to agree with his assessments and note a bit of advantage to those farming biodynamically (or at least, organically). Keep in mind that there are plenty of vintages where the characteristics of the growing season are just the inverse, and punish biodynamic farmers more than those still farming with chemical products, as years with intense mildew pressure can rip through biodynamically farmed vineyards and do far less damage to those still using plenty of sprays. So, it was just that the balance seemed to swing in favor of healthy farming practices this year.

The biggest challenge for *vignerons* during the summer of 2018 was when and how to pick. The backend heat of the summer, where temperatures stayed scorching right through the evening hours, gave no relief for vines out perspiring in the hot summer sun, and as the month of August rolled to a close, sugars started to mount with the vigor of a runaway train. The problem was that the pinot noir was not necessarily ripe physiologically at this point, so it was a delicate balancing act for producers to know when was the right moment to pick. As Jean-Louis Trapet mentioned, he was out in the vines often at the end of August and tasting grapes and kept waiting for the tannins to ripen up, as the sugars were getting higher than what would be considered ideal for classic Burgundy, but he felt that one had to keep their nerve and not start picking too, too early and end up with green and astringent tannins in the wines. The flip side, of course, is that some folks who were waiting for their tannins to ripen properly ended up with much higher sugar levels than is customary in Burgundy, and if you happen to have a big domaine and cannot harness a larger than usual picking team to compensate, your harvesting dates are going to be far more drawn out than with a small domaine. In 2018, the problem was that the grapes also started to shrivel on the vine from the blazing heat on the backend of the picking window, with water evaporating out of the berries, which only further exacerbated the problems with sugar concentration and very high potential alcohol.

In this respect, old vines were also very much an advantage in 2018, as these older vines naturally regulate their yields from year to year and consequently, have less difficulty ripening up tannins in extreme growing season like 2018 that are coupled with larger crop loads. I would suspect that the vast majority of red wine growers in Burgundy grappling with pinot noir picking dates, would have started as early as possible if the tannins in their bunches had been fully ripened up by the last week of August, but this was often not the case. The problem of phenolic ripeness was exacerbated in the vineyards that had been hit by hail in July, as the vines here had directed a significant amount of July and early August energy to re-growing their vegetation, rather than ripening the big cropload, and some of the most tannic and massive wines I tasted on my trip were from these same vineyards affected by the hail damage in July. It was simply a massively complicated growing season, whether or not one succeeded or not in 2018. Sometimes, there were just no right answers. Therefore, in many aspects of this extraordinary growing season, some stylistic characteristics were dictated by Mother Nature and there was little that *vignerons* could do about that. However, there was also the possibility to take decisions later on in the cellars that could put Mother Nature’s dictates in the best light, or compound the problems.

With climate change, *vignerons* in Burgundy are becoming more and more familiar with very hot growing seasons, as it was only back in 2015 that the last scorching summer occurred

here, and once again, in 2019, this was the also case. So blazingly hot seems to be the “new normal” in Burgundy today. Several producers whom I spoke with commented that the recent experience with blazing heat during the growing season is helping them to cope with these conditions, and several mentioned that back in the first furnace of a summer in 2003, many producers probably took the wrong course with their wines and made mistakes that amplified the undesirable characteristics of that vintage. But, many have learned, so when 2015 came along, people did a better job managing the heat and made far better wines in 2015 than 2003; in the vintage of 2018, they have probably again built upon their recent experiences and for those who were dealt the kinder hand by Mother Nature and made the best decisions, they have managed to make some improbably stunning wines this year. One of the things that was commented on by a majority of the winegrowers I visited on this trip who I would rank as unqualified successes in 2018 was that “very gentle extractions were necessary this year” and punching down was far less desirable than pumping over and gently wetting of the cap of the must in the fermentation tanks. The red wines of 2018 simply had tons of color and plenty of material and tannin from very early on after the initial pressing, and the strategy of keeping as much elegance and finesse in the wines resulted in the highest quality results.

Most of my discussion of the 2018s in Burgundy has thus far been focused on the red wines from the vintage, but I will get into the white wines of both the Côte de Beaune and Chablis further on in this report. For the moment, let’s just stay focused on the red wines of this vintage, as I have already read from some other commentators on the vintage that “2018 is a great red wine vintage” and I would have to take exception with that on a number of fronts. With the scorching heat around harvest time and in the weeks that followed, as the month of September of 2018 was one of the very hottest ever recorded in Burgundy, so one had to protect the fruit they gathered in the heat of the afternoon in addition to all the other challenges the vintage was piling up on *vignerons*. Several told me that they got out in the fields as early as possible each morning during picking and brought in grapes up until lunch time, after which they stopped harvesting for the day, as the temperatures were just too brutally high to try and bring in fruit in the furnace of mid-to-late afternoons. Once the grapes were collected, the next big question faced by producers was whether or not to include the stems in the fermentations. There were two sides to this question, as using some whole clusters would keep potential alcohol levels down, as the stems absorb alcohol during the fermentation and Jean-Louis Trapet noted that using whole clusters in 2018 “could keep alcohol levels down .5 or .6 percent in the finished wines, just from what the stems would absorb.” Using whole clusters also lowers acidities as well in the finished wines, and there was not always a lot of acidity to start with in the grapes this year. But, with a huge crop on the vines, tied with problematic phenolic maturity and soaring sugars, not all of the stems were ripe either when some *vignerons* were forced to pick, so this was yet another variable to which there was not always a good solution.

In general, the malolactic fermentations this year were quite brisk, except at domaines like Hudelot-Noëllat, where Charles van Canneyt kept his cellars cool to slow down the malos and let the wines percolate along gently for several months. But, at most estates, the malos started soon after the alcoholic fermentations were complete, gave a big burst over the first week or two and then gently bubbled along for a couple more weeks, as there was not all that much malic acid in the juice this year to convert, with many finishing up in November and December of 2018. However, not everyone was having smooth alcoholic fermentations in 2018, as a lot of

the wines with very high potential alcohol levels simply did not have vigorous enough indigenous yeasts to “finish the job” and there were reports of plenty of stuck fermentations up and down the Côte where sugar levels had gotten too high in the grapes prior to picking. Remember, there could be some truly alarming sugar levels in 2018, as producers who had to harvest later in this year (perhaps waiting for tannins to ripen) also had the issues of dehydration of their grapes on the vine, which was a similar problem to what happened in Bordeaux in 2010 (particularly in St. Émilion), which would concentrate sugars, tannins and acids in the grapes before the bunches were finally cut and brought in. Some producers noted that it was necessary with certain tanks with stuck fermentations to warm up the *caves* to try and get the fermentations going again, and often having to resort to using commercial yeasts made to survive at high alcohol levels to try and ferment out the wines to total dryness. Probably, some of the very high octane red wines that I tasted in 2018 that showed so very little underlying *terroir* were the result of using these steroid-like commercial yeasts to finish up fermentations with very high alcohol levels, after the indigenous yeasts had given up attempts to keep the fermentations going.



The sun just sneaking out from behind the clouds over the premier cru vineyards of Puligny-Montrachet.

The other serious potential Achilles' Heel of the red wines of 2018 is the tannic structures of certain wines, as this is often a very tannic vintage, and not all of the *vignerons* were given ripe tannins to work with this year. Even the most successful red wines of 2018 are tannic wines—often with very suave, buried tannins in the beautiful depth of fruit of the top wines, but still with

enough tannin to carry the wines far into the future. But, some of the unsuccessful wines of 2018 often have a dry edge to their substantial tannins, as the grapes were never able to really properly ripen their tannins before the sugar levels had soared to very high potential alcohol levels and producers were forced to bring in the grapes, even with underripe, green-edged tannins, as they were beginning to be faced with sugars that could produce sixteen percent or more alcohol levels in the wines. The highest alcohol red wine that I tasted on this trip was 15.5 percent octane (pretty shocking for red Burgundy), but I heard reports of wines elsewhere from estates I did not visit this past November that were fully 16.5 percent alcohol, so keep in mind just how far out of the norm some of these 2018s can be in terms of alcohol, and often these higher alcohol wines are also very tannic, as the concentration of sugars from dehydrating grapes out on the vines as September ticked away also meant that tannins were being concentrated as well.

When I schedule my appointments to taste in November, I try to be cognizant of the new *En Primeur* market for Burgundy that has really come into existence since the acclaimed 2005 vintage, and I try to make sure that I visit as many domaines as possible that are popular in the Burgundy futures markets during the first of my two annual trips to the region to taste the new vintage. Consequently, I tend to taste at more of the “most famous” estates in November than I do in the springtime (provided I can schedule a visit in November to these well-known estates, as the crowds of tasters get thicker each year and it has become more and more difficult to see everyone I would like in November, so some estates end up being scheduled in the spring regardless, just because tastings are generally easier to organize at that time of the year). Therefore, my general remarks on a given vintage can be sometimes a bit more critical than the notes on wines from individual estates from the November trip, due to the skewing of my visits for November to the many of the very finest producers, and this is certainly the case with the 2018 vintage. So, please keep this in mind when reading the notes that follow.

Most of the discussion thus far about the general style and quality of the vintage of 2018 in Burgundy has focused on the red wines, but I tasted at quite a few top white wine-producing estates during November and I tasted some truly beautiful young white Burgundies from these estates. My white wine notes in the Côte d’Or are a bit less complete than customary from this most recent trip, as I was unable to schedule a visit to Domaine Leflaive in Puligny this time, due to the press of other appointments that the domaine already had on their calendar, and I simply forgot to make an appointment at Domaine Sauzet in that village as well (having asked their importer about the possibility at the start of my planning, and then not following up until I had already filled up my schedule and there was simply not an open slot where I could dash down to Puligny from the Côte de Nuits to taste with the Boudot family). I also missed tasting on this trip at Domaine Fontaine-Gagnard, as Céline Fontaine ended up being delayed returning to Burgundy from a trip right before my appointment, due to mechanical problems with her airplane, and I did not have any open slots left in my schedule for later in my trip to play catch up. I did not taste at Domaine Roulot in Meursault this year, for reasons that I explain further below, so my white wine notes are a bit more limited than customary from this November trip and I hope to be able to make up for this when I get back to Beaune in the spring.

Despite, not tasting at several of my favorite white wine producers during the November visits, I tasted some truly exceptional white wines from 2018 at the domaines that I did visit and there are some really marvelous white wines waiting in the wings for shipment in the coming

months. I will go into more depth about the 2018s from Chablis in the section on the region just below, so let me focus a bit on the white wines from the Côte d'Or first. Stylistically, for the most successful producers of white wines in 2018, I was really struck by their resemblance to what I remember of the 1992 white wines back when they were first released. I was a wine merchant specializing in Burgundy back when the 1992 whites were released and I sold and tasted an awful lot of that vintage over the course of the year those wines were in the market (and out of my cellar for many years after), and there are many similarities with the best 1992s and the best 2018 white wines. These similarities include a beautiful, ripe, but not overripe panoply of fruit tones, strikingly pure underlying *terroir*, sound, juicy acidity and lovely, wide open personalities right out of the blocks. The best 2018 whites are not particularly high in acidity, but they are impeccably balanced, and vintages of this sort have a sneaky way of aging far longer than one might think by simply looking at their acidity levels. The biggest threat to aging the top 2018 white Burgundies (if we forget premo for the moment) will be just how good they taste in their youth, which like the 1992s, will happily claim many, many bottles before their time.

Of course, the caveats I mentioned above for red wines, concerning the general vintage characteristics and the juxtaposition to the individual domaines that I visited, is equally true for primarily white wine domaines, and harvesting dates were absolutely key to keeping wines bright and light on their feet in the torrid backend of the summer of 2018. Early picking was essential to producing top flight white Burgundies in this vintage, and this was so important that Dominique Lafon joked that when he got out in his vineyard parcels with his team to start picking on August 24th, “it was the first year I had ever beaten Jean-Marc (Roulot) out into the vines to start a harvest.” Though almost everyone who produces mostly white wines with whom I visited started picking in August in 2018, I have again heard stories of people that waited later and ended up with high octane, extremely soft, tropical and blowsy white wines in 2018, so the heterogeneity of the vintage is likely to be just as widespread amongst white wine producers as it is with red wine producers in this year. And, again, as is the case with the red wines of 2018, even at the most successful domaines producing white wines, not every parcel could be brought in at the same time, so grand crus and top premier crus tended to be collected first and benefited from their early attention. Therefore, it is possible to taste some really good top range wines in the same domaine's lineup where the regional or *villages* level wines are a bit more tropical and fruit-driven in personality, as these grapes were picked a few days later. However, I really tasted extremely well with white wines in general on this trip, and as I mentioned above, with white wine domaines not having to concern themselves with ripening tannins in their chardonnay bunches, they had a bit of an advantage as the heat ramped up in the back fortnight of August and on into September. So contrary to expectations, there are truly some stunning 2018 white Burgundies waiting in cellars in the region awaiting shipping.

The best white wines of 2018 are going to be wines that drink very well from very early on in their evolutions, and they are going to make a lot of friends when they start to emerge from the pipeline. They are loaded with very pure and classic fruit tones, coupled to excellent foundations of *terroir* and mineral drive and have good, zesty acids to keep them vibrant and light on their feet out of the blocks. They are not as racy as the very best 2017 whites, but they are beautifully balanced wines that show no obvious lack of acidity in their collective youth and will probably age much better than many will expect. Again, the parallel with the 1992 whites from the Côte d'Or is probably a good measuring stick for the future evolutions of the top 2018

white Burgundies, who were perhaps at their most attractive over the first decade or so of their time in bottle, but also aged quite nicely and continue to still offer up good, tertiary and complex drinking now twenty-eight years out from the vintage. But, a great many of the top 2018 whites are going to be so tasty out of the blocks and over their first five or six years that I imagine that most of the village and premier cru wines will probably be drunk up with great pleasure over this time span. It is hard not to imagine that even nicely structured grand crus will not be at their peaks by eight to ten years of age in the 2018 vintage, which will also nicely afford them a bit of protection from potential premo issues, as there will not be that customary closure over that first decade that tempts one to not touch bottles of grand cru over the first decade after release.

Naturally, one of the frequent topics of conversation in the cellars in Burgundy in November of this year was the increased duty of twenty-five percent on French wines being shipped into the American market, and right after my return to the states, the US administration was proposing an additional increase of one hundred percent as its trade war with France heated up on this side of the Atlantic. It is an ugly prospect for American Burgundy lovers, as prices in the US are already quite inflated in comparison to European markets for these wines, due to our three tier system of markups, and adding trade war tariff increases is not going to make anything better over the short-term. In November, I was of the opinion that the twenty-five percent increase that had already been put in place would likely be short-lived, and some Burgundian *vignerons* were of the same opinion and were simply planning to wait and see if the tariffs would be rolled back in the near future prior to shipping. However, not every domaine was in a position to hold back shipments, for a variety of reasons, so it is likely that some 2017s that were later to ship will arrive here in the states with the twenty-five percent increase quite evident in their new sticker prices. American importers were pushing some of their producers to make price concessions to help carry the weight of the twenty-five percent increase in US tariffs, and some were willing to do so on a one-time basis and others were not in a position to be able to assist, so the new taxes will be felt differently from domaine to domaine and importer to importer. However, now with further histrionics emanating from US officials about expanding the trade war and threats of an additional hundred percent taxation of French wines, it seems likely that the US administration will succeed primarily in re-routing many allocations of the very best 2018 Burgundies to European markets where there is not the same trade animosity. And, of course, with Brexit still a complete unknown as to its structural impact of dislocation, the UK market may also see less top flight 2018 Burgundy shipping its way.

The following notes are listed geographically, north to south, from Chablis to the Côte de Nuits to the Côte de Beaune. Within each geographical section, the domaines are listed by village, again from north to south, and then alphabetically within each commune. The notes from each domaine are listed in the order the vigneron or vigneronne chose to present the wines this year during my cellar visit. I have tried to make notes about the evolutionary stage of a particular wine, if it was for some reason an outlier in the tasting (a later completion of malolactic fermentation for instance). I forgot to mention above that there is now a new appellation that is being trotted out for its first use in the 2018 vintage, and this is Bourgogne “Côte d’Or”, and which is reserved for Bourgogne bottlings made exclusively from grapes having been grown within the limits of the Côte d’Or. With the very short crops of the last several years, several domaines in the region have expanded their purchases of grapes, must or juice for their Bourgogne bottlings as far afield as the Mâconnais, and as these could previously

all be labeled as Bourgogne, there was a movement started to differentiate bottlings made exclusively from Côte d'Or fruit with a new appellation. Not every producer who makes their Bourgogne solely from Côte d'Or fruit has chosen to use the new appellation, as often their bottlings already have a following with their previous labels, but a significant percentage of producers in the Côte d'Or will start using the new appellation with the 2018 vintage.

Chablis

I tasted at seven of my favorite domaines in Chablis during this trip, plus a nice range of the Domaine Drouhin-Vaudon wines while back down in Beaune after my couple of days in Chablis. These eight producers are amongst the *crème de la crème* in the region and what I tasted impressed me immensely, and at least for these eight top addresses, the 2018 vintage has turned out beautifully. Yes, the wines are generally quite ripe in style (Patrick Piuze's lovely 2018s being the sole exception in this regard), but the wines have impressive cut and grip, often quite excellent levels of acidity, and underlying signatures of *terroir* that are extremely rare in a "solar vintage" such as 2018. All of these producers started picking quite early, with the Raveneau family beginning on August 30th and everyone on this list having gotten rolling within the next three or four days. Almost all of these producers pick solely by hand (Domaine Louis Michel being the lone exception, as the Michel family continues to harvest some of their vineyards by machine), and everyone who picks by hand commented that it was important to collect the fruit fairly briskly once they started to pick, so that they could keep the lift and mineral drive in the resulting wines. As Vincent Dauvissat commented, "the date to start picking was very important this year, as one had to strive to retain freshness in the wines by not letting the grapes stay out on the vine too long."

As was the case further south in the Côte d'Or, 2018 is a very big crop, and this is even more apparent perhaps in Chablis, as the region had two bad spring frosts back to back, which cut back yields to draconian levels in both 2016 and 2017 in the affected vineyards, and which stored up a lot of energy reserves in the vines, who had a tiny percentage of a normal cropload the last two years and were ready to produce plenty of bunches in 2018. However, with the hydric stress of mid-summer in Chablis, *vignerons* reported that they were not always fully aware of just how many grapes they would be bringing in come harvest time, as the berries were absolutely miniscule on the vines during the driest portion of the summer, and it was only after the bit of rain that fell between August 8th and August 10th, that the grapes really plumped up and the enormous size of the crop became readily apparent. As Patrick Piuze noted, "we were very lucky with the August rains, as they came just a couple of weeks or so before we started picking and fleshed out the grapes, but there was not so much rain that it diluted the juice." The rain just took all of those tiny, pea-sized grapes and added enough juice that they were properly balanced and all of a sudden, there was a very big, very beautiful looking crop begging to be harvested when August rolled to a close. There ended up being such enormous yields in 2018 in Chablis (larger than in the Côte de Beaune, as both 2016 and 2017 were heavily-frosted, short crops in Chablis) that most domaines sold off around twenty percent of their production to the distilleries, even after they had been granted a waiver to produce a bit over the maximum limits. But, as Patrick Piuze commented, "we will never see another vintage like this in our lifetimes, where we had such high yields and such high quality together." But after the brutal crop reductions from frost and hail damage in 2016 and 2017, nature was a bit more just in 2018 and delivered enough quantity to compensate to some degree for the last two very, very tiny crops in Chablis.



Christian Moreau in the domaine's new and very comfortable tasting room at the estate.

In general terms, the 2018 wines tend to be around thirteen to thirteen and a half percent alcohol at the top domains in Chablis who graced my tasting schedule this year (though there were a few very well-balanced wines that reached all the way up to fourteen percent), but the wines are far more precise aromatically and expressive of their foundations of minerality at this stage in their development than was the case with the equally “solar” vintage of 2015, which seemed far more fruit-driven and tropical in personality out of the blocks. As I mentioned above, the only range of 2018s that do not fit this description are the lovely wines from Patrick Piuze, who managed to keep his sugar levels down by leaving a very thick leaf canopy right up to picking and has plenty of wines under thirteen percent in this vintage. But, Guillaume Michel’s ranges were more typical of the producers I visited, with his village wine and premier crus typically coming in between 12.8 and 13.2 percent alcohol and the grand crus a full 13.5 percent. But, despite the higher than normal alcohol levels in the 2018s, at least at the domaines I tasted at in Chablis, the wines are not overly fruity or tropical in personality, and show off beautifully ripe, pure fruit tones and classic underlying signatures of minerality. As Maxim Raveneau commented about his family’s 2018s: “the wines are already nicely expressive of their *terroir*, which is quite rare for such young wines.” In this regard, they are quite different from the 2015s, which were much more shadowed by touch of *sur maturité* and were far less precise in their signatures of soil, at least early on in their evolutions. The really beautiful *typicité* that so many

2018s from Chablis show already augurs very well for their future development, as this minerality is coupled to ripe, generous and really pretty fruit tones and usually, also very good girdles of acidity for at least mid-term aging potential.

The 2018 vintage of Chablis will not be as long-lived as the utterly classical 2017s from these same estates, but they are not going to be flash in the pan wines either and they will offer very wide windows of peak drinkability. Though I have been grouping the 2018 Chablis that I tasted as a group, the wines from Patrick Piuze did stand apart a bit stylistically, as his wines were lower in alcohol than most of his peers in this top flight of estates, and I think he was able to do this by keeping thick leaf canopies for his vines as the season headed towards a close. This allowed his grapes to stay nicely in shade in the baking heat of August and also diverted some of the energy in the vines to keeping the foliage going throughout the month, and which slowed his bunches' accumulation of sugars. Consequently, though he and the Raveneau family both started picking on the same early date of August 30th, the Raveneaus did a bit of leaf-pulling in August and we see the Piuze wines are mostly under thirteen percent octane, while the Raveneau wines are in the thirteen to 13.5 range for alcohol this year. But, as was the case in the Côte d'Or, sugar accumulation was mounting very quickly at harvest time, due to the baking heat of late August and early September, and for any domaines in Chablis that waited a bit too long to get rolling with their harvesting, I have little doubt that their results in 2018 are a far cry stylistically from the really lovely wines that I was able to taste during my time in Chablis in November. I do not mean to suggest that the high water marks in Chablis in 2018 are only to be found amongst the domaines where I tasted, as there are lots of other very serious *vignerons* in the region that may well have done equally well at navigating the backend of the growing season and produced equally exemplary wines in 2018, but I am sure that the stories I heard from others about super-tropical, soft and heavy wines here are not without a basis in fact at certain domaines. It is going to be one of those vintages where it behooves one to taste first wherever possible, before buying multiple bottles of a given wine for the cellar, as there could be plenty of potential train wrecks to be found in Chablis as well in this vintage. But, there could also be lots of really good wines beyond the relatively small set of domaines that I had a chance to taste at during this trip and my gut feeling right now is that for the most judicious producers, Chablis was even a bit more blessed with the possibility to make outstanding wines in 2018 than anywhere else in Burgundy. In any event, as one will see from the notes that follow, I tasted some brilliant 2018s in Chablis during my visits to these domaines!

Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin (La Chapelle Vaupelteigne)

Jean-Claude and Romain Bessin have crafted a lovely set of ripe and minerally 2018s and these are going to be very popular wines from early on in their evolutions. The Bessins opted to start their picking in their grand cru of Valmur and then moved onto the premier crus, prior to tackling the villages level parcels, so that the higher one moves in the appellation hierarchy, the slightly lower the alcohol levels become. Consequently, the villages level wines here are right around fourteen percent chez Bessin in 2018 and the premier and grand crus in the 13.4 to 13.8 range. There is a new wine in the domaine's lineup this year- a villages level bottling of Chablis to augment the Vieilles Vignes cuvée that has always been here. The new Chablis AC vines belonged to Jean-Claude's father, but were let out under fermage agreement for many years and only reverted back to Jean-Claude and Romain Bessin in 2018. Most of these vines are just over twenty years of age and just starting to come into their own, but there are also some forty year-

old vines as well. The 2018 version was a very good AC and a welcome new addition to the Domaine Bessin lineup.

2018 Chablis- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

This first vintage from the Domaine Bessin of the Chablis *villages* is a lovely wine, coming in close to fourteen percent octane and offering very pretty, ripe, but precise fruit and good mineral undertow, to go along with a full-bodied and juicy palate impression and good acids. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of lemon, pear, really quite fine minerality, citrus zest and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and nicely plump at the core, with quite good length and grip on the zesty and wide open finish. This is really a good example of AC that will drink well right from release, but has the balance to age nicely for a couple of decades. 2020-2040. **90.**

2018 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The 2018 Vieilles Vignes cuvée from Jean-Claude and Romain Bessin had just been fined a short time before my visit, but was still showing nicely. The bouquet is bright and complex, offering up scents of pear, fresh lime, chalky minerality, orange zest and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really rock solid at the core, with fine focus, cut and grip on the long, balanced and vibrant finish. This too is pretty forward in personality, but I might be inclined to let it have a year or two in the cellar to blossom just a bit more prior to starting to drink it in earnest. 2021-2045. **91+.**

2018 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The 2018 Montmains from Domaine Bessin had not yet been fined, so was really in good form. Thirty percent of the cuvée this year was raised in older barrels, with the balance in stainless steel tank, and the addition of just a bit of the bottling having been barrel-raised gives the wine even a bit more depth and complexity. The nose here jumps from the glass in a complex blend of tangerine, apple, citrus zest, wet stone minerality and a topnote of straw. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and vibrant, with a lovely core, good soil signature, bright acids and very good cut and grip on the long finish. This is one of the riper premier crus here, but still very pure, and it will drink very nicely from early on in its evolution and also age nicely. First class juice. 2022-2050. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “La Forêt”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

I really like the combination of pure, ripe fruit and mineral drive in the 2018 La Forêt from Messieurs Bessin, coupled to a fine girdle of acidity. The bouquet delivers a refined combination of ripe, apple, tangerine, flinty minerality, citrus blossoms and a nice topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely ripe in personality, but with good mineral undertow, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. This is a bit more reserved in personality than the Montmains out of the blocks, but equally fine. 2023-2050. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “Fourchaume”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The Fourchaume 2018 *chez* Bessin, is the most nicely structured and youthful of the premier crus up to this point in the lineup, offering up a youthfully complex nose of apple, citrus peel, a touch of tangerine, a lovely base of that “woody” Fourchaume soil tone and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and well-balanced, with a good girdle of acidity, a fine core of fruit and impressive focus and grip on the soil-driven finish that closes with a note of orange peel. Another fine premier cru in the making. 2024-2050. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “La Pièce au Comte”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The 2018 La Pièce au Comte from Messieurs Bessin is a fine bottle for down the road, with a lovely structural chassis to carry it nicely into the future, but it will want a bit of bottle age before it really starts to blossom. The bouquet is pure and nicely primary in its composition of pear, orange, a complex base of minerality, lime blossoms and youthful topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very long, with these old vines giving the wine impressive backend mineral drive, good cut and grip and a very well balanced finish. This is ripe, but mineral and structured and is very impressive juice. 2026-2055+. **93.**



Romain and Jean-Claude Bessin, outside of their cellars in the village of La Chapelle Vaupelteigne.

2018 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Jean-Claude Bessin

The Bessin family’s 2018 Valmur is truly a stunning young bottle of Chablis, as it was picked first and shows off perfect volume on both the nose and palate as a result. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a very classy blend of apple, pear, lemon, kaleidoscopic, chalky minerality, citrus blossoms and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, pure, full-bodied and utterly refined in profile, with a rock solid core, lovely elegance and grip and a long, complex and utterly seamless finish. This is a brilliant bottle of young Valmur! 2025-2075. **95+.**

2017 Chablis “Vaillons”- Romain Bessin

In addition to the estate-bottled wines now being fashioned by father and son Bessin here, Romain Bessin has also taken out a *négociant* license and is looking to add a wine or two to the domaine’s lineup each year, if the wine is up to their standards and opportunity allows. This particular Vaillons is made by a friend of Romain’s, and he has bought a bit of Vaillons from

him in both 2017 and again in 2018. We tasted the 2017 version after running through the estate 2018s and it is a very good wine, offering up a bright and classic nose of lemon, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of citrus peel and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and zesty, with a good core, fine soil signature, bright acids and a nice sense of reserve on the long and promising finish. A fine addition to the domaine's lineup! 2021-2045+. **91.**

Domaine Vincent Dauvissat (Chablis)

Vincent Dauvissat started harvesting on September 3rd in 2018 and has produced a fine range of wines. They are a bit riper than his utterly classical 2017s and will drink sooner, but they are a beautiful synthesis of ripe, pure fruit tones and underlying minerality, with bright, zesty acids and no shortage of typicité and are going to be very popular with fans of the estate. I got the sense that Monsieur Dauvissat is not quite as enthusiastic with his 2018s as he had been the year before with his magical 2017s, but he is an experienced vigneron and understands that each year is different and one must simply do the best job possible with what Mother Nature decided to share in terms of weather during the growing season. Of the seven very, very top estates I visited in Chablis in November, the Dauvissat wines were, along with the fine range from Jean-Claude Bessin, probably the ripest of what I tasted, but that said, there is nothing in the cellars here over 13.5 percent octane and the wines are certainly not tropical in their presentations of fruit tones. They are just a tad more powerful in style than the racy 2017s, and certainly more likely to drink well right out of the blocks, but still with their signatures of terroir very much front and center in the wines and plenty of zesty acidity to give them cut, lift and vibrancy. They are very, very good wines that to my mind, recall a bit the 1992 vintage here back in the day (though probably with a bit more power), which aged beautifully, despite sharing the same forward personalities out of the blocks with these 2018s. They are an excellent set of wines that are going to be very popular with fans of the estate, and may serve as an excellent insurance policy for those who put the 2017 Dauvissat wines in their cellars and have already been tempted to check in on them and see how they were doing! The 2018s will be the better drinks for the next five years or so and are a perfect follow-up to protect the 2017s while they have a chance to blossom with bottle age!

2018 Petit Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 Petit Chablis from Domaine Dauvissat is excellent and is going to be a terrific value this year. The bouquet is bright and precise, offering up scents of apple, lemon, chalky minerality, white flowers and a nice topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe in personality, with fine focus, excellent cut and grip and a long, zesty finish that closes with a pronounced note of orange peel. Good juice. 2020-2028. **89.**

2018 Chablis- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

I always like Vincent Dauvissat's Chablis *villages* bottling and the 2018 vintage is no exception. The wine is ripe and generously forward in style this year, but also with great cut and grip and a good foundation of acidity, so it is going to be delicious from the moment it is released. The nose delivers a fine constellation of pear, tangerine, a good base of limestone, dried flowers and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with slightly broader shoulders than customary, but with a fine girdle of acidity, excellent grip and focus and a long, complex and wide open finish. There is a bit of uncusomary power here for this cuvée, but I do not think anyone is going to complain. 2020-2035+. **90.**

2018 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 Séchet *chez* Dauvissat is cut from a similar cloth to the *villages* this year, but with the greater depth and soil signature of a top premier cru. The wine is nicely plump and juicy on the attack, with a full-bodied and generous format, excellent concentration at the core, plenty of soil signature and very good acids and grip on the long, complex and very well-balanced finish. The bouquet is a head-turning mix of pear, tangerine, chalky minerality, a hint of oyster shell, lemon peel and dried flowers. All in all, this is a lovely wine in a slightly larger scale than usual, but with all of its constituent components just as they should be. 2020-2040+. **91.**

2018 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 Dauvissat family’s Vaillons is a tad more precise and classical in personality than the Séchet this year, offering up a beautiful bouquet of apple, tangerine, a hint of grapefruit, chalky minerality and a lovely topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and vibrant, with a very pretty core of ripe (but not overripe) fruit, lovely mineral drive, zesty acids and a long, well-balanced and utterly charming finish. 2022-2045+. **92.**

2018 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 Montée de Tonnerre *chez* Dauvissat is an excellent wine in the making, which surprisingly, is a tad less powerful than either the Séchet or Vaillons in this vintage. The bouquet has a nice touch of “cooler” fruit tones in its mix of lemon, apple, citrus zest, complex, chalky minerality and a hint of the beeswax to come in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and quite solid at the core, with lovely focus and grip, classical shape and power and a long, vibrant and snappy finish. This is really lovely this year. 2022-2045+. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “la Forest”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The nice old vines in the Dauvissats’ parcel of la Forest (they average fifty-five years of age, with a significant portion far older) have navigated the heat of August beautifully in 2018 and this is a marvelous wine in the making. The wine delivers a vibrant and very classy aromatic constellation of apple, pear, flint, a nice touch of beeswax, citrus peel and a topnote of anise. On the palate the wine is pure, full, ripe and mineral, with excellent cut and grip, impressive focus and a long, zesty and complex finish. There are very good acids here to support the fruit, and coupled with the strong vein of minerality, the overall impression is of a first class example of la Forest with a bit of almost grand cru weight to it this year. It will drink well sooner, but I would try to leave my hands off of it for the next five years and let its secondary layers unfold. 2024-2045+. **93.**

2018 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 les Preuses is outstanding this year (but that is probably true every year in the Dauvissat cellars for several generations now!), with nicely ripe fruit coupled to kaleidoscopic mineral undertow and a marvelous girdle of acidity. The bouquet jumps from the glass in an already very complex mix of apple, lemon peel, grapefruit, all sorts of mineral shadings, paraffin and white flowers. On the palate the wine is very pure and mineral-driven, with a full-bodied and classic format, superb depth at the core and excellent length and grip on the ripe, but very mineral finish. Fine, fine juice. 2024-2065+. **95.**

2018 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Vincent Dauvissat

The 2018 les Clos from Domaine Dauvissat is another absolutely superb wine in the making. It offers up a deep, pure and complex bouquet of pear, apple, minerality that is both flinty and chalky in personality, citrus blossoms and a bit of lemon peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a bit more early reserve than the les Preuses is showing right now. The finish is very, very long, mineral-driven and

snappy, with excellent focus and grip and impeccable balance. First class les Clos in the making. 2026-2075. **95+**.

Domaine Drouhin Vaudon (Chablis)

As is customary in November, these lovely Drouhin Chablis bottlings were shown at the journalists' tasting in Beaune the week following my stay in Chablis. The range was not as wide this year of Chablis bottlings as last year, which was more a reflection on the sheer number of wines presented at the tasting. In some years, I have time to ask for samples of the other Chablis bottlings from the family while I am still in Beaune, but this year, as I was a bit earlier than usual (so as to get to Houston for that epic Vega Sicilia tasting), I was only in Beaune a day or two after our press event this year and could not circle back to taste the other bottlings from the Drouhin family's estate in Chablis.

2018 Chablis "Réserve de Vaudon"- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2018 Réserve de Vaudon is nicely ripe and wide open in personality this year, offering up a bright and inviting bouquet of apple, lemon, a touch of tangerine, straw and a fine base of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with good soil signature, sound framing acids and good length and grip on the bouncy and generous finish. This is nicely ripe in personality and will drink well right from the start. 2020-2040. **89**.

2018 Chablis "Mont de Milieu"- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The Drouhins' 2018 Mont de Milieu is really lovely in this vintage. The bouquet is vibrant and nascently complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of green apple, lemon, wet stones, white lilies and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with fine framing acids, lovely focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and very enjoyable finish. This has the balance to last nicely for a couple of decades, but will be delicious right from the start. 2020-2040. **91+**.

2018 Chablis "Bougros"- Domaine Drouhin Vaudon

The 2018 Bougros was showing quite a bit riper in personality than these other Chablis bottlings. The bouquet has a distinctively tropical overtone in its blend of pineapple, tangerine, citrus peel, chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full, ripe and powerful in personality, with a rock solid core, very good acids and grip and a long, adolescent and slightly warm finish. I suspect that we caught this wine in a grumpy, post-bottling phase, as the *mise* was only on October 18th of this year, or less than a month before the tasting, and it is probably far more pleasurable than it showed at our tasting. Consequently, I am scoring it within a range and would expect it to settle back in as it stretches out from its bottling and merit a score at the top of the range. 2020-2040+. **89-92**.

Domaine William Fèvre (Chablis)

As I mentioned in the email accompanying the release of Issue 84, I have left my handwritten notes in my office in New York and have had to complete the writing of this issue up in Massachusetts, while taking care of my eighty-eight year-old father. As soon as possible, I will find a window to drive back down to my office, retrieve these notes, type them up and resend the new issue out to everyone. In the interim, let me just note that Didier Séguier and his team have made brilliant wines in 2018, with great purity and underlying mineral drive, and they were absolutely amongst the highlights of my November visit to Chablis. I will have the notes

recovered and written up in the next several days (such is life on the road...), but did not want to hold up the release of the rest of this report while I tried to organize someone to take my place caring for my father, so that I could make a quick trip down to New York and find these notes!

2018 Petit Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Champs Royaux”- Maison William Fèvre

2018 Chablis- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Beauroy”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Les Lys”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Mont de Milieu”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “Bougros- Côte de Bouguerots”- Domaine William Fèvre

2018 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine William Fèvre

Domaine Louis Michel (Chablis)

Guillaume Michel continues to make just outstanding wines at his family’s domaine in the center of Chablis. As I have mentioned in the past, I would love to see more of the vineyards harvested by hand, as my gut feeling is that this could take what are already outstanding wines up to even a higher level of quality, but I also understand that the economics behind such a decision could be problematical for the family. In any case, the entire range of 2018s here were simply superb, offering excellent purity of fruit, strikingly pure expressions of terroir and lovely, zesty girdles of acidity to carry the wines very nicely out into the future. Guillaume and his team began harvesting on September 4th in 2018 and had every bunch in house by the 11th of the month. The resulting wines are nicely ripe, with alcohol levels generally around thirteen percent for the premier crus and 13.5 percent for the grand crus, with absolutely none of the cuvées chaptalized this year. The only wines that had been bottled at the time of my visit on the 4th of November were the Petit Chablis, Chablis villages (both bottled in July) and the premier crus of Montmains and the Vaulorent, which had been bottled two weeks ahead of my tasting here. Everything else was still in tank, with the other premier crus scheduled for bottling in December and the grand crus sometime after the start of the new year. As was the case at almost every domaine in Chablis in 2018, the yields were high at Domaine Michel, with Guillaume acknowledging that some vineyards were in the seventy-five to eighty hectoliters per hectare range, and a percentage had to be sold off to the distillery. Most of the 2018 premier crus chez Michel are going to drink well right from release, or with only a couple of years in the cellar, with only the more traditionally structured crus likely to need five or six years to express themselves fully. The grand crus here will also be more on the forward side than their 2017 counterparts, but at both levels, the wines are well-balanced and zesty and they should also age very well indeed. It is a very strong vintage at Domaine Louis Michel and it will make a nice

contemporary with the 2017s, as one will be able to enjoy the 2018s a bit earlier and let the previous vintage blossom completely in the cellar prior to having at it in earnest.



Guillaume Michel in the domaine's tasting room in the cellars in Chablis.

2018 Petit Chablis- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

This is really strong vintage for the Petit Chablis from the domaine, as there is a mid-palate amplitude here this year which is quite rare with wines from this appellation. The bouquet offers a fine blend of apple, a touch of pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and quite succulent in the core, with sound acids and good length and grip on the very satisfying finish. Good juice. 2020-2025. **88.**

2018 Chablis- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Chablis *villages* was also showing lovely depth this year. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of lemon, apple, chalky soil tones, straw and white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and zesty, with a fine core, excellent focus and grip and really lovely structural tension adding bounce on the long and quite complex finish. The wine closes with lovely mineral drive and really is a fine example. 2020-2040+. **89.**

2018 Chablis “Montmains”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Montmains had only been bottled for a couple weeks prior to my visit, but had not yet shut down from the *mise* and was showing very nicely. The nose delivers a refined blend of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of paraffin and a topnote of spring flowers. On the

palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and vibrant, with lovely mid-palate depth, good mineral drive, bright acids and lovely balance and length on the focused and complex finish. A very good example of Montmains that will drink beautifully from release, but also age nicely. 2020-2045. **91.**

2018 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Vaulorent had also just been bottled, but like the Montmains, it had not yet closed down entirely post-bottling and was very easy to see its size and shape in early November. As is typical of this premier cru, it is more reserved in personality than the Montmains and will want some cellaring time before it really starts to drink and deliver full potential, but all of the constituent components are in place for a truly excellent wine down the road. The youthful bouquet reveals scents of lemon, tart pear, straw, flinty minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and tightly-knit out of the blocks, with an excellent core, impressive backend mineral drive and plenty of grip and bounce on the long and youthful finish. This is going to be lovely. 2022-2045+. **92.**

2018 Chablis “Forêts”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Forêts had already been fined in anticipation of its coming bottling in December, but was showing very well. The wine offers up impressive aromatic complexity in its mix of lime, green apple, flinty soil tones, a touch of smokiness, beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite mineral in personality, with fine depth in the center, lovely cut and grip, bright acids and a long, complex and classy finish. Good juice in the making here. 2021-2045+. **91+.**

2018 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The regular bottling of Butteaux in 2018 is the lowest alcohol premier cru in the cellar *chez* Michel, coming in at 12.8 percent and offering up superb energy and cut on the backend. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of lime, ripe apple, a beautiful base of chalky minerality, spring flowers and a topnote of paraffin. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and racy, with a great core, lovely mineral drive and a very long, vibrant and promising finish. This is lovely. 2022-2050. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “Butteaux” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 old vine bottling of Butteaux is just a whisper riper than the regular cuvée, coming in at thirteen percent octane, but more structured, deeper and asking for a bit of time alone in the cellar to fully blossom. The youthful nose delivers a fine constellation of green apple, pear, flinty soil tones, smoke and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very good structural chassis, impressive backend minerality and a very long, pure and nascently complex finish. This will be simply outstanding in the fullness of time, but will need some bottle age to really blossom. 2025-2055. **94.**

2018 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Vaillons here is also showing very nicely and was very expressive at the time of my visit. The aromatic constellation offers up scents of pear, lemon, beeswax, spring flowers, chalky soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and vibrant, with a lovely core, fine grip and a long, elegant and already very tasty finish. This will age very nicely, but it is going to be so good out of the blocks that I suspect most bottles will be consumed before their tenth birthdays! 2020-2045+. **92.**

2018 Chablis “Séchet”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Séchet *chez* Michel is another of the more forward premier crus in the cellar this year and this wine will be delicious from the outset. The nose delivers a fine blend of apple,

pear, fruit blossoms, chalky soil tones and a nice topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and zesty, with lovely structure and grip, fine mid-palate depth and a long, vibrant and already quite tasty finish. This is not quite as rock solid at the core as the two Butteaux bottlings, but it is not short on stuffing and will make friends early. 2020-2045. **92.**

2018 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Not surprisingly, the 2018 Montée de Tonnerre is one of the more structured premier crus in the cellars this year and it will want some bottle age to start to stir. The potential here is excellent, with the very pure and precise nose offering up scents of green apple, smoke, flinty minerality, citrus zest, spring flowers and a hint of the beeswax to come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with an excellent core of fruit, fine transparency and grip, snappy acids and a long, soil-driven and vibrant finish. This is a first class example. 2024-2065. **94.**

2018 Chablis “Vaudésir”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

As I noted in the introduction, the grand crus *chez* Michel are all in the 13.5 percent range and were a bit more behind in their evolutions in the cellar at the time of my visit. The Vaudésir offers up lovely aromatic promise in its blend of pear, apple, a hint of tangerine, anise, chalky soil tones, straw and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a touch riper and more tropical in personality than the Montée de Tonnerre, with good mineral undertow, bright acids and a long, vibrant and youthfully complex finish. This is very good, but stylistically, I have a very slight preference (at least at the present time) for the Montée de Tonnerre and Butteaux “Vieilles Vignes” bottlings this year. 2025-2065. **93+.**

2018 Chablis “Grenouilles”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

Though the 2018 Grenouilles from Domaine Louis Michel is as ripe as the Vaudésir, it seems just a tad less tropical in personality, as it delivers a refined bouquet of apple, fresh lime, chalky minerality, beeswax, dried flowers and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very good girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This is lovely juice. 2025-2065. **94.**

2018 Chablis “Les Clos”- Domaine Louis Michel et Fils

The 2018 Les Clos from Guillaume Michel is simply outstanding, as it beautifully synthesizes the ripe, but not overripe fruit tones of the best wines of the vintage with a kaleidoscopic foundation of minerality and stellar structure. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a youthfully complex blend of lime, pear, tangerine, gorgeous, flinty minerality, citrus blossom and just a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, precise and properly reserved in personality, with a rock solid core, stellar mineral drive and a very, very long, snappy and simply loaded finish. Great juice. 2027-2075. **95+.**

Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils (Chablis)

I had been remiss in not visiting Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils in a couple of vintages, but was very happy to make time this year to spend an hour with Christian Moreau in early November. Christian’s son, Fabien, was away at a wine event in Greece, but his father and I settled into their comfortable new tasting room to work through their 2018s. The domaine started picking on September 3rd in 2018 and had brought everything in by the fifteenth of the month. The Chablis villages and Vaillons bottlings had been bottled at the end of June of this year and the other wines were planned to be bottled in early December or just after the New Year. I learned on this trip where the one hectare Clos des Hospices parcel is situated within the

vineyard of Les Clos, as I had not thought to previously ask. It is on the lower section of the vineyard, right near the small slice of Valmur that reaches down to the roadside here. It is easily spotted as one drives beside the grand cru slope in the direction of Tonnerre, as there is a small white house in this parcel at the foot of the hillside. As readers may recall, this one hectare of vines used to be owned by the Hospices in Chablis, but was sold off to the Moreau family in 1904, and the domaine has bottled it separately from its other holdings in Les Clos since that day. The vines are not particularly old in the Clos des Hospices section, as the frosts of 1985 killed them off and the one hectare had to be completely replanted in 1988. However, as they are now more than thirty years of age, they are now into their prime and producing superb fruit. All of the 2018s were showing fine potential at the time of my visit.

2018 Chablis- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

One would assume that the *villages* parcels were the last to be picked here at the domaine, and the 2018 Chablis AC was showing a bit riper in personality than any of the other wines in the cellar as a result. The bouquet is pretty and quite vibrant, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones, straw and just a touch of oyster shell. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, generous and nicely balanced, with plenty of depth at the core, sound framing acids and good length on the bouncy and wide open finish. Good juice to drink over the relatively near-term. 2020-2030. **88.**

2018 Chablis “Vaillons”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2018 Vaillons from Christian and Fabien Moreau was really showing well at the time of my visit, with more purity and precision than the slightly more tropical *villages* bottling. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of lemon, green apple, limestone minerality, white flowers, gentle notes of vanillin oak and a touch of beeswax in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with fine focus and cut and a long, vibrant and still fairly youthful finish. One-third of this wine is always barrel-fermented, and though there is only a trace amount of new oak used (around five percent), the wine was showing its oak just a bit a few months after the bottling and will probably want a few more months to absorb this again. So, I would let the wine sit to spring before having at it, despite the fact that it will be a wine that drinks very nicely from early on. 2020-2045+. **91.**

2018 Chablis “Vaillons” Cuvée Guy Moreau- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

As I mentioned in the past, the Cuvée Guy Moreau bottling is produced from just under a hectare of vines in Vaillons that were planted by Christian’s grandfather, Guy Moreau, in 1933. The 2018 version is excellent, but was fifty percent barrel-fermented this year (though again, only four percent new casks were used) and will want some bottle age to let its oak bury itself in the wine. The bouquet is superb, offering up a very precise blend of pear, lemon, complex, chalky minerality, spring flowers, orange zest and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely reserved structurally, with a lovely core, fine cut and grip and a very long, gently oaky and adolescent finish. Give this wine a bit of time in the cellar to really blossom. 2024-2065. **93.**

2018 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2018 Valmur was assembled in July and was to be bottled in early December. The wine is showing excellent potential on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, a touch of paraffin, orange blossoms, a fine base of chalky soil tones and just a hint of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite primary

in personality today, with an excellent core, bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. 2024-2075. **93+**.

2018 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The “regular” bottling of Les Clos from the Moreau family is excellent in 2018. The wine is raised exactly the same as the Clos des Hospices, which is fifty percent barrel fermentation, fifty percent tank fermentation, and the new oak kept to four percent. The 2018 was showing well, offering up a fine aromatic constellation of apple, lemon, tangerine, straw, wet stone minerality and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil signature and impressive length and grip on the vibrant and very well-balanced finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2025-2075. **94**.

2018 Chablis “les Clos” Clos des Hospices- Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils

The 2018 Clos des Hospices is another outstanding wine in the making *chez* Moreau. The superb nose jumps from the glass in a youthful blend of pear, lemon, apple, chalky soil tones, white flowers, lemon zest and a gentle touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with a fine girdle of acidity, excellent focus and grip and a long, complex and very classy finish. Outstanding potential. 2025-2075. **95**.



The Moreau family’s parcel of Clos des Hospices, around the small white house, with Valmur in the background.

Domaine Patrick Piuze (Chablis)

Patrick Piuze and his team started harvesting on August 30th of 2018, seeking to keep the wines bright, mineral and lower octane, and they have done marvelously in all respects. In fact, the 2018s from Domaine Piuze are the most refined, classically-styled 2018s that I tasted during my visits to the cellars in Chablis. As I mentioned in the introduction on the region, Patrick decided that the best way to both protect his bunches from potential sunburn in 2018 and slow down the maturation process of the bunches was to leave a heavy leaf canopy in place, which diverted some of the plant's energy away from ripening grapes and also kept the bunches happily in the shade. The results are many of the wines coming in under thirteen percent in octane, which is very rare in 2018, particularly above the level of Petit Chablis, but many of Patrick's premier crus are also in the 12.8 percent range in alcohol this year. As is always the case when I come to visit here in November, everything has already been bottled and much of the vintage has already been shipped out to the estate's importers around the globe, but Patrick very graciously opens up the entire range for tasting. As the depravations from frost were in the rearview mirror in 2018, the lovely lineup of Chablis AC bottlings here was paired back a bit from last year, when Patrick went out and bought grapes from a wider array of parcels so as to have some bottles to sell his clients, but the villages level bottlings here are very strong in 2018 and will offer up tremendous value. As is customary here, the premier crus and grand crus are amongst the finest bottlings of Chablis that the 2018 vintage will have to offer, and there is not a single one that I would not want adorning my own personal cellar!

2018 Bourgogne Aligoté “1953”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The Bourgogne Aligoté “1953” bottling from Patrick Piuze is one of my favorite examples of this varietal made in all of Burgundy and the 2018 has turned out very nicely. This wine remains ninety percent barrel-fermented, with only ten percent of the cuvée raised in tank. The bouquet is bright and precise, offering up scents of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones and a nice touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and bouncy, with a good, solid core, fine focus and grip and a long, vibrant finish. A lovely example of Aligoté. 2020-2024. **88.**

2018 Bourgogne “Côte d’Auxerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The domaine's 2018 Bourgogne “Côte d’Auxerre” is another really lovely, entry level bottling in this vintage and is a great value. The nose wafts from the glass in a nice ripe mix of pear, tangerine, chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish, complex and zesty, with a good core, a nice dollop of soil and a long, complex and very nicely balanced finish. A very good Bourgogne. 2020-2026. **88.**

2018 Bourgogne “Tonnerre” Les Boutots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Bourgogne “Tonnerre” is even a hair better than the Côte d’Auxerre this year, as it is showing just a tad more complexity out of the blocks. The nose delivers a fine and slightly more exotic blend of pear, a hint of papaya, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms and a topnote of lemon peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and quite classy in personality, with a good core, fine soil signature and a long, bright and classy finish. Another excellent value! 2020-2027. **88+.**

2018 Petit Chablis- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze makes really terrific Petit Chablis, from a parcel of vines up on top of the grand cru slope and called *Petit Preuses* (though it is not allowed to put the name of the *lieu à dit* on the label of Petit Chablis), so this is a pretty well-situated parcel! The wine is really excellent

this year, offering up a deep and complex nose of apple, pear, a touch of straw, a good base of chalky soil tones, orange peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is refined, full-bodied and deep at the core, with impressive cut and grip and a long, quite serious finish. Fine juice. 2020-2030. **89+**.

2018 Chablis “Decouverte”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

After having been heavily-frosted and not produced in 2017, I was very happy to see the Decouverte bottling of Chablis AC back in the domaine’s lineup for 2018. Readers may recall that this parcel of vines lies right next door to the great premier cru of Vaulorent and it has turned out very nicely in this vintage. The nose is nicely reserved out of the blocks, revealing scents of apple, pear, orange peel, a good base of soil, straw and a nice touch of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and still a tad shy, but with a good core and soil signature, sound acids and lovely length and grip on the promising finish. This is good juice and just could do with a year or two in the cellar. 2021-2035. **89+**.

2018 Chablis “Coteau de Fontenay”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick’s 2018 Coteau de Fontenay is a tad more precise at the present time than the Decouverte, offering up plenty of depth and breed for a young *villages*. The nose delivers a blend of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a lovely topnote of fruit blossoms and a dollop of youthful orange peel. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and focused, with good depth and a long, zesty and nicely balanced finish. Good juice. 2020-2035. **90**.

2018 Chablis “Terroir de la Chapelle”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Two-thirds of the vines that go into the Terroir de la Chapelle bottling of Chablis AC here were planted in 1959, so there is some extra depth from those sixty year-old vines. The wine was really singing in November, offering a fine aromatic constellation of tangerine, pear, an exotic hint of guava, a gorgeous foundation of limestone soil and apple blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with good cut and grip and a long, complex and very classy finish. A fine, fine *villages*! 2020-2035. **90+**.

2018 Chablis “Terroir de Chablis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Terroir de Chablis bottling does not share that touch of exotica on the nose as found in the la Chapelle, but it is equally precise, deep and nicely mineral-driven. The nose wafts from the glass in a very attractive mix of apple, pear, a fine base of chalk, orange zest and gentle floral tones. On the palate the wine is crisp, full, complex and vibrant, with good mid-palate depth, lovely focus and grip and very good length on the zesty backend. 2020-2033. **90+**.

2018 Chablis “Terroir de Chichée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Chablis “Terroir de Chichée” from Domaine Piuze is another really strong *villages*, delivering a fine bouquet of lemon, pear, oyster shell minerality and a nice touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and complex, with a good core, bright acids and fine structure and grip on the long and refined finish. Like all of these AC bottlings, this wine will drink well from release, but has the balance to age gracefully for another ten to fifteen years. 2020-2035. **90+**.

2018 Chablis “Terroir de Courgis”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

I always think of the Terroir de Courgis bottling from Monsieur Piuze as like a baby Fourchaume, as the underlying minerality here resembles that premier cru in profile more than it does any of its AC siblings in the domaine’s lineup. The 2018 is very good, offering up a nose of apple, tangerine, white flowers, citrus zest and that almost “woody” soil signature. On the palate the wine is deep and much more closed than these other ACs, with a good core, bright acids and a long, but still quite adolescent finish. I suspect that this wine will be even better down the road

than it is showing today, as it is a bit cranky at the present time, but has the depth and balance to catch up with the other *villages* bottlings here with a bit of bottle age. 2022-2035. **89-90+?**

2018 Chablis “Terroir de Fyé”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The *lieu à dit* where Patrick buys his grapes for his Terroir de Fyé bottling lies right next door to the superb premier cru of Chapelot, so this too is pretty special *terroir*. The 2018 version has turned out splendidly well, wafting from the glass in an elegant blend of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones, white flowers and a lovely topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and has a nice sense of reserve (without being adolescent today like the Terroir de Courgis), with a lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature, bright acids and impressive length and grip on the long and seamless finish. Fine juice. 2020-2035. **91.**

2018 Chablis “Terroir de Fleys”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Terroir de Fleys from Patrick Piuze is another very classy Chablis AC. The bouquet is pure and precise, delivering a mix of pear, apple, spring flowers, chalky minerality and just a dollop of paraffin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full, crisp and very focused, with a good core, fine transparency and grip and a long, zesty and very nicely balanced finish. Another impressive *villages*. 2020-2033+. **90+.**

2018 Chablis “La Grande Vallée”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 La Grand Vallée is also outstanding, and ties the Terroir de Fyé as my favorite of this lovely lineup of *villages* level bottlings from Domaine Piuze in this vintage. The bouquet is pure and very promising, wafting from the glass in a combination of pear, apple, a touch of tangerine, complex minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already quite complex, with a good core, lovely backend mineral drive and plenty of cut and grip on the refined finish. This is really good juice. 20202-2035+. **91.**

2018 Chablis “Vaillons” Les Minots- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 les Minots is an outstanding wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and already very expressive, delivering scents of apple, lemon, beeswax, a fine base of chalky soil tones, white flowers and lemon peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and backend mineral drive, bright acids and impressive grip on the long and energetic finish. Minots is the warmest part of Vaillons and I wondered how this would work with the style of the growing season of 2018 (would it end up a bit blowsy?), but this wine has turned out racy and precise and is truly excellent! 2022-2050+. **92+.**

2018 Chablis “Les Roncières”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick Piuze is one of the few *vignerons* who I know of that bottles Roncières on its own (it can be labeled as Vaillons) and his 2018 version is excellent. The bouquet is deeper and a bit riper than the Minots, offering up a complex blend of apple, tangerine, straw, lovely minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has pretty broad shoulders, with a good core of fruit, an excellent foundation of minerality and a ripe, but long, classy and vibrant finish. Good juice. 2022-2050+. **92.**

2018 Chablis “les Séchets”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The parcel of vines that Patrick Piuze buys the fruit from in les Séchets are at the very top of the slope here, just above the parcel owned by Vincent Dauvissat, with the vines having been planted in 1961. The 2018 version has turned out very nicely as well, offering up a fine bouquet of pear, tangerine, chalky minerality, a touch of lemongrass and a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very refined in personality, with a good core, lovely transparency and grip and a long, zesty and complex finish. Classic Séchets. 2022-2050+. **92.**

2018 Chablis “la Forêt”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 la Forêt has turned out beautifully at Domaine Piuze, albeit, without perhaps quite the same cut and mineral drive as the exceptional 2017 version. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of lemon, tangerine, par, beeswax, chalky soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and elegant in profile, with a good core of fruit, fine soil signature, bright acids and very good length and grip on the vibrant and complex finish. Fine juice. 2022-2050+. **93.**

2018 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick’s 2018 Butteaux is also an outstanding wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and absolutely classic in personality, delivering a combination of lemon, apple, pear, chalky soil tones, paraffin and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, complex and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with a bright girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip, impeccable balance and a long, complex finish. Just a lovely bottle. 2023-2050+. **92+.**



2018 Chablis “Vaulorent”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

After this vineyard being too heavily-frosted in 2017 to produce a wine from, I was very happy to see it once again back in the Domaine Piuze lineup in 2018. This is a dynamite premier cru, offering up a precise and complex bouquet of apple, pear, a touch of blood orange, a very complex base of minerality, dried flowers and a bit of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and vibrant, with a great core, laser-like focus and lovely cut and grip on the long, balanced and very classy finish. 2023-2055+. **93+.**

2018 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Montée de Tonnerre chez Piuze is also outstanding, and this wine is surprisingly accessible at this point in the proceedings, which is hardly customary for this cru when still fairly youthful. Perhaps it will close down again with further bottle age, but right now it is seriously in danger of infanticide, as it offers up a beautiful bouquet of pear, lemon, beeswax, a gorgeous base of chalky minerality and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully complex, with a fine core, lovely soil signature and grip and a focused, vibrant and very, very classy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2020-2055+. **94.**

2018 Chablis “Blanchots”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

Patrick’s 2018 Blanchots has turned out brilliantly on both the nose and palate. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of pear, apple, a very complex base of chalky soil tones, candied lemon peel, white flowers and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with a proper sense of early reserve, fine focus and grip and a long, vibrant and zesty finish. This is still fairly youthful, but it should start to drink with only four or five years in the cellar and be quite dazzling once it gets up to cruising altitude. 2024-2065+. **94+.**

2018 Chablis “Bougros”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Bougros *chez* Piuze is also an excellent wine, but it is far more closed at the present time than the Blanchots and will demand some cellaring before it starts to stir. The nose delivers a mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and grip, bright acids and a long, adolescent and nascently complex finish. I may be underrating this just a touch, but after the expressiveness of the Blanchots, this wine has a hard time keeping pace today. 2025-2065. **93.**

2018 Chablis “Côte de Bouqueyreaux”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Côte de Bouqueyreaux is also fairly youthful and reserved on the nose, but it is already very precise and delineated on the palate and is far easier to see its ultimate shape and level than the straight Bougros this year. The nose is very refined in its constellation of pear, tangerine, beeswax, a beautiful base of chalky minerality, white flowers and lemon peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and bottomless at the core, with great cut and mineral drive, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long, complex and energetic finish. This is great juice! 2024-2075. **95.**

2018 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Domaine Piuze Valmur is also great this year, as Patrick’s decision to keep the canopy thick has helped this wine navigate the heat of late August beautifully. The bouquet is pure and utterly refined, offering up scents of apple, pear, candied lemon, paraffin, chalky soil tones and a lovely topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, bright, zesty acids and outstanding length on the finish. A beautiful example of Valmur. 2025-2075. **95.**

2018 Chablis “les Clos”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 Les Clos *chez* Piuze is yet another brilliant wine in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of apple, pear, a hint of tangerine, flinty minerality, paraffin and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full and complex with a great core of fruit, superb soil signature, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the pure, long and simply stunning finish. 2025-2075. **95+.**

2018 Chablis “les Preuses”- Domaine Patrick Piuze

The 2018 les Preuses from Patrick Piuze is also a great, great wine in the making. The bouquet is pure and already very complex, delivering a fine constellation of apple, pear, kaleidoscopic limestone minerality, beeswax, white flowers and a touch of straw in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with the refined profile of a great example of les Preuses, a fine girdle of acidity and stellar length and grip on the pure and complex finish. Great juice. 2025-2075. **95+**.

Domaine Raveneau (Chablis)

I had the chance to taste with Maxim Raveneau on this visit to the domaine in early November. Maxim is the son of Jean-Marie Raveneau and has been working alongside of his cousin, Isabelle Raveneau (daughter of Bernard) for about two and a half years now at the domaine, but this was the first time we had a chance to chat for an extended period while tasting the new vintage in the cellars. It struck me that he is very much his father's son and a passionate viticulturist first and foremost, and we spent lots of time talking about the vineyards. He and Isabelle have started a new project, in association with a few other vignerons who also still have really old plots of vines, to start to gather and cultivate cuttings from these very old vines to protect and eventually promulgate better plant material for future planting in Chablis. At Domaine Raveneau, their oldest vines are in the grand cru of Blanchot, which were planted in 1924 and are now ninety-five years of age. As Maxim notes, “these are not only our oldest vines, but also our healthiest and they are in marvelous shape and produce our best fruit year in and year out.” The family also has one section of their parcel in Butteaux planted with nearly as old vines and which are also from this generation of plantations and in excellent health. It is the Raveneau cousins' opinion, and this is widely shared by others in Chablis, that the really old vines are genetically superior to the clones that were planted in the region in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and many of these more recent plantings are already starting to lose vigor and appear to be nearing the end of their lives, while the really old vines, such as they have in Blanchot, just continue to cruise along as if time will never touch them. So, the younger generation in Chablis is pooling resources where they have great old vines to try and propagate more selection massale cuttings from these very old vines in the hopes that one day, many more vineyards in Chablis will be planted again with this obviously superior genetic material.

The Raveneau family began picking in 2018 on August 30th, which was only the second vintage in which they had ever begun harvesting in August, with the other vintage having been in 2015. The resulting wines are nicely ripe, but very fresh and quite defined by their underlying minerality in 2018, with a less tropical character than I remember the 2015s showing at a similar point in their evolutions. Maxim Raveneau noted as we were tasting together that “the wines are nicely expressive already of their terroir, which is quite rare for such young wines” and both he and Isabelle expect that they will ultimately be a bit more soil-driven in personality than their counterparts from 2015. The wines all range from thirteen to 13.5 percent octane this year, which is not particularly high and quite classic for the domaine in riper years such as 2018. They all possess excellent structural chassis and good acidity, to go along with ripe, but pure and classical expressions of fruit and lovely minerality, and though they will probably drink sooner than the 2017s, they are yet another excellent vintage chez Raveneau.

2018 Petit Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

The 2018 Petit Chablis from Domaine Raveneau is going to be a lovely bottle. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, straw, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a hint of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and shows off a lovely core of pure fruit, with sound framing acids and very nice length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2020-2025+. **88.**

2018 Chablis- Domaine Raveneau

The Raveneaus' 2018 Chablis *villages* is bright and juicy in personality, delivering a fine and nicely reserved aromatic constellation of apple, lemon, chalky minerality, white flowers and just a hint of the beeswax to come. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and shows off fine mid-palate depth, with good focus and grip, impressive backend mineral drive and a bright harness of acidity adding lift and clarity on the finish. A lovely example in the making. 2021-2040. **90+.**

2018 Chablis "Forêt"- Domaine Raveneau

The 2018 Forêt here is another really fine bottle in the making. It offers up a wide open and very expressive bouquet of apple, slightly candied lemon peel, paraffin, a fine base of limestone minerality and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, complex and full-bodied, with a beautiful synthesis of succulent fruit and precise minerality. The finish is long, beautifully balanced and vibrant, with excellent cut and grip. 2022-2050. **92.**

2018 Chablis "Montmains"- Domaine Raveneau

The 2018 Montmains *chez* Raveneau is another excellent wine in the making. The bouquet is very expressive out of the blocks (as Maxim Raveneau noted), wafting from the glass in a complex blend of lemon, apple, chalky minerality, a potpourri of white flowers and just a touch of anise in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with fine chalky undertow, bright, zesty acids, excellent focus and grip and great backend lift on the nascently complex finish. It is interesting that this wine is more reserved on the palate today than the nose suggests, which augurs even better for its evolution in bottle. 2022-2050+. **93.**

2018 Chablis "Vaillons"- Domaine Raveneau

The domaine's 2018 Vaillons was also showing beautifully at the time of my visit, with both the nose and palate equally reserved and promising. The nose delivers a fine combination of lemon, pear, chalky soil tones, beeswax and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with an excellent core of fruit, racy acids and lovely mineral drive and bounce on the very long, very classy and impeccably balanced finish. This is going to be a great drink in only a few years and age very nicely indeed. 2023-2055. **93.**

2018 Chablis "Chapelot"- Domaine Raveneau

There has not been a bottling of Chapelot in the Raveneaus' cellars since the 2011 vintage, as the crops have been so small since that time that it has had to be blended in with the Montée de Tonnerre. Happily, there is once again one here in 2018 and it is a beautiful wine in the making. The wine is expressive and simply gorgeous on the nose, offering up scents of pear, apple, a nice touch of orange zest, a fine base of limestone minerality, beeswax, a hint of flowers and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and really has great dimension in the mid-palate, with bright, racy acids, fine focus and grip and a very long, very refined and nascently complex finish. I love the gentle closing note of anise on the backend here! 2023-2055. **93+.**

2018 Chablis “Montée de Tonnerre”- Domaine Raveneau

It was interesting that Maxim chose to show the Montée de Tonnerre ahead of the Butteaux this year, which I took not to be a reflection of what he felt of the relative merits of the two wines in 2018, but rather, that as Butteaux has that parcel of really old, high quality vines in it as well, it should have the place of honor and be served last amongst the premier crus. The 2018 Montée de Tonnerre is a stunning wine in the making, soaring from the glass in a complex blend of lemon, pear, beeswax, chalky minerality, a touch of straw and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, beautifully-balanced and shows off great purity, with a rock solid core, snappy acids and laser-like focus and excellent grip on the very, very long and complex finish. 2024-2065+. **94+**.

2018 Chablis “Butteaux”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2018 Butteaux from Domaine Raveneau is another great premier cru in the making. The youthful and pure nose wafts from the glass in a mix of lemon, apple, pear, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and beeswax. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and fairly powerful in personality this year, with a rock solid core, excellent transparency and grip, an outstanding girdle of acidity and superb length and lift on the very long finish. First class juice in the making. 2024-2065+. **94**.



Maxim and Isabelle Raveneau in the family domaine's offices in Chablis.

2018 Chablis “Valmur”- Domaine Raveneau

The 2018 Valmur from Domaine Raveneau is outstanding in quality, and quite expressive out of the blocks, as are several other of the wines here in this vintage. The very complex bouquet wafts from the glass in a combination of apple, pear, a touch of tangerine, beeswax, white flowers, chalky undertow and just a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and precise, with a rock solid core of fruit, superb soil signature, a lovely girdle of acidity and outstanding length and grip on the snappy finish. This is an excellent wine in the making, and the only reason I rank it just a whisper behind the other two grand crus in the cellar this year is because it shows just a touch more ripeness in its panoply of fruit aromatics. But, there is absolutely nothing here not to be excited about! 2027-2075. **95+**.

2018 Chablis “Blanchot”- Domaine Raveneau

The old vines in Blanchot have really excelled in 2018. The wine offers up a brilliant bouquet of apple, pear, citrus blossoms, beeswax, a profound base of chalky minerality, just a touch of vanillin oak and a topnote of lemon zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very racy in personality, with a superb core, great mineral drive and a very, very long, very pure and vibrant finish. I cannot ever recall tasting a young vintage of Blanchot *chez* Raveneau that is as magical as the 2018! Great, great juice. 2027-2075. **96**.

2018 Chablis “Clos”- Domaine Raveneau

While the Blanchot are the oldest vines that the Raveneau family has planted in their vineyards, those in Les Clos are also quite venerable. There were three plantations here in their parcel: 1963, 1976 and 1989, so even the youngest are now thirty years of age and there are plenty of very old vines as well. The wine has turned out beautifully in 2018, mirroring the greater purity of the Blanchot, rather than the slightly riper fruit tones of the Valmur this year. The bouquet is a fine blend of pear, apple, flinty minerality, anise, citrus peel and just a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, rock solid at the core, with great focus and grip, snappy acids and laser-like focus on the very, very long and very pure finish. The Clos chez Raveneau can often be the most adolescently grumpy wine out of the blocks here, but the 2018 is already supremely elegant in personality. Great juice. 2028-2075+. **96**.

Gevrey-Chambertin:

Domaine Denis Bachelet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Denis Bachelet was out in his vines starting to gather grapes on the September 2nd in 2018 and completed all of his picking in five days, with the Bourgogne rouge grapes the last to be brought in on September 7th. The domaine has plenty of old vines, but Denis reported that nonetheless “yields were generous in 2018, but alcohol levels are normal” and that if one did not start picking early in 2018, one ended up with a completely different vintage than those who did not waste time getting rolling out in the vines. As I noted in the introductory background on the vintage, Monsieur Bachelet essentially feels that there are three different vintages in 2018, depending on whether or not one started picking the first week, second week or third week of harvest, with those who picked later ending up with raisined berries with very high potential alcohol levels and very little freshness in the resulting wines. To my palate, these are some of the very best wines produced in all of the Côte de Nuits in 2018, as they exemplify the purity, mineral drive and elegant structures that Burgundy is famous for and which can sometimes be damn hard to find elsewhere in the 2018 vintage!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2018 Bourgogne rouge from Monsieur Bachelet is a lovely example, offering up a black fruity bouquet of sweet plums, black cherries, a touch of raw cocoa, a lovely base of dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and has a good base of soil, with very modest tannins and good backend tension on the relatively long finish. This is a very good bottle of Bourgogne. 2022-2035. **88.**

2018 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2018 Côte de Nuits Villages from Domaine Bachelet is truly exceptional, coming in at 12.5 percent octane and offering up a very pure and precise bouquet of sweet dark berries, grilled meats, black cherries, bitter chocolate and a complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and already nicely suave on the attack, with a good core of fruit, a very elegant personality and just a touch of backend tannin perking up the long and classy finish. Flat out delicious wine in the making. 2022-2040+. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

Monsieur Bachelet’s 2018 Gevrey old vine bottling is also excellent, with a more reserved personality out of the blocks than the Côte de Nuits Villages. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a promising blend of black plums, black cherries, espresso, meaty tones, black minerality, woodsmoke and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and impeccably balanced, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, good soil signature and a long, nascently complex and promising finish. This will need at least a few years to blossom, but will be very good indeed. 2026-2055. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2018 les Evocelles *chez* Bachelet is also gorgeous on both the nose and palate and is a bit more expressive out of the blocks than the straight Vieilles Vignes this year. The nose delivers a fine constellation of cassis, sweet dark berries, espresso, a complex base of dark soil tones, grilled meats and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate concentration, with a beautiful combination of sappy fruit and superb mineral drive, suave tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. A gorgeous bottle of Gevrey in the making. 2026-2055+. **91+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Corbeaux” V.V.- Domaine Denis Bachelet

The 2018 les Corbeaux is flat out great from Domaine Bachelet. The wine is properly structured out of the blocks and will want a good dozen years to properly blossom, but once it reaches cruising altitude, it is going to be brilliant. The bouquet offers up a superb blend of sappy black plums and sweet dark berries, spit-roasted meats, black minerality, bitter chocolate, smoky new oak and a nice touch of spice elements in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of black fruit, fine-grained, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the very pure and very, very promising finish. Great juice. 2030-2075+. **94.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Denis Bachelet

Denis Bachelet’s 2018 Charmes-Chambertin is one of my wines of the vintage this year, and I only wish there were a lot more wines produced in this gorgeous style in this year. The stunning nose soars from the glass in a youthful mix of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, a very complex base of soil tones, bitter chocolate, a refined foundation of smoky oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very, very pure on the attack, with a sappy core, great mineral drive, suave, seamless tannins and outstanding length and grip on the stellar finish. 2032-2085. **97.**

Maison Pierre Bourée (Gevrey-Chambertin)

I normally visit Maison Pierre Bourée et Fils in the springtime, as the wines are usually in a better mood to be tasted at that time of the year, but this year, curiosity got the better of me and I scheduled an appointment in November to see how the 2018s were showing. As experience should have suggested to me, not everything in the cellar was happy about being tasted and I will go back in the spring to revisit here, as many of the wines that I tasted were in varying degrees of grumpiness and it was clearly not the best time to be evaluating some of these wines. The racking was just starting here at the time of my visit on November 6th and several of the wines were a bit reduced (as is normal at this time of year) and were certainly ready for some aeration, so I have just posted notes below on the wines that were on form at the time of my visit. As readers already know, I really like the old school style of the wines produced here by the Vallet family and find that the Maison Bourée wines can be some of the very finest values to be found in all of the Côte d'Or these days. This is a traditional, small scale négociant, and though the Vallet family does own some very choice vineyard parcels, most of the wines are purchased either as grapes or wine, so one finds a bit of variation on style and quality as one tastes through the cellars. But, despite the need to pick and choose just a bit here, there are always plenty of really well-made wines that are classic expressions of their underlying terroirs and this is certainly again the case with many of the 2018s at the maison. In general, the white wines that I sampled were in a better spot for tasting than the reds, with the couple of whites that showed a hint of reduction still easily coaxed into showing their wares with swirling, but some of the reds were quite recalcitrant and will need to be revisited in March. I have listed only the wines that I tasted during my visit here that were in a good enough mood for tasting, and will cover others in the cellar after the spring visit. As 2018 is a big crop in Burgundy, the Bourée cellars were, happily, far better stocked with casks of wine than has been the case in the last couple of years, due to the short crops in the region, so there are plenty of good options here from the 2018 vintage for intrepid Burgundy fans that favor classically-styled wines. I am already looking forward to my visit in the spring, to catch some of the grumpier wines in a better frame of mind for tasting, as there are clearly some very fine successes here in 2018!

Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Maison Pierre Bourée was showing quite nicely at the time of my visit, offering up a pretty nose of apple, peach, hazelnut, chalky soil tones and a gentle floral topnote. On the palate the wine is fresh, fullish and suave on the attack, with a good core, good acids and fine length and grip on the nicely balanced finish. A good example. 2020-2030. **88+**.

2018 Bourgogne Blanc “Beurot”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

This is quite the rare wine in the cellar, as I cannot ever recall tasting an example of Pinot Beurot from a Burgundy domaine, though at one time, this grape was pretty widely planted in the region. This is really quite lovely and if one spots it in the market, do not hesitate to order some! The bouquet is bright and complex, jumping from the glass in a mix of peach, apple, lovely nuttiness that hints at walnuts, plenty of smokiness and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more soil-driven in personality than the regular Bourgogne Blanc, with zesty acids and lovely focus and grip on the long and vibrant finish. This is impressively serious for its appellation and a real sleeper this year! 2020-2030. **90**.

2018 Auxey-Duresses Blanc- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The Auxey-Duresses Blanc in the Bourée cellars was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but still easy to handicap. The ripe bouquet offers up scents of peach, tangerine, chalky soil tones, a touch of honey, almond and a bit of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely plump on the mid-palate, with good balance and grip, sound framing acids and a closing note of orange peel on the long finish. Good juice for near-term drinking. 2020-2030. **88+**.

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Pernand Blanc *chez* Vallet is also a tasty wine and again, cut from the riper side of the vintage, but still nicely balanced. The nose delivers scents of pineapple, apple, a fine base of chalky soil, orange peel and musky floral topnotes. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and plenty plush at the core, with sound framing acids, good focus and grip and just a whisper of heat on the backend that indicates that this is a touch higher in alcohol than the Auxey Blanc this year. I would guess this is a full fourteen percent, but carries it quite well. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Puligny *villages* from the Vallet family is going to be a very good example. The wine was just a hint reductive at the time of my visit, but some swirling reveals a bright and zesty wine with an aromatic constellation of apple, pear, a touch of iodine, a fine base of limestone minerality, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite long on the backend, with a fine core, very good focus and grip and a long, bouncy finish. Good juice in the making. 2020-2045. **90+**.

2018 Saint-Aubin “Premier Cru”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Saint-Aubin “Premier Cru” from Maison Pierre Bourée is riper in personality than the Puligny AC, offering up a slightly tropical nose of pear, passion fruit, musky floral tones, a good base of chalky soil and a nutty topnote. On the palate the wine is plump, full-bodied and wide open in profile, with modest acids, but good length and complexity on the succulent finish. This is a touch on the soft side and will not make old bones, but for nearer-term drinking, it will be tasty. 2020-2025. **89.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “la Garenne”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 la Garenne from Maison Bourée is quite a step up from the above wine, as this has cut, grip and lovely precision on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of white peach, apple, a fine base of limestone minerality, citrus blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite classic in profile, with a lovely core, good soil signature, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the long and zesty finish. Good juice. 2022-2045. **92.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Chassagne “Morgeot” is another very strong example of the vintage in the cellars at the estate, delivering lovely precision in the nose of pear, apple, a touch of almond, excellent, chalky soil tones, a deft foundation of vanillin oak and a topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a good core, fine backend mineral drive, bright acids and a long, classy finish. Really a strong example of Morgeot! 2022-2045. **92.**

2018 Meursault- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

I will be back in the spring to taste the Meursault AC, as it was quite reduced at the time of my visit, but wanted to mention this wine here, as it is customarily one of the best village wines in the cellar and underneath the reduction seemed to be a really strong example in 2018.

2018 Meursault “Perrières”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

Similarly, the 2018 Meursault “Perrières” was pretty reduced at the time of my visit, but this opened up a bit on the nose with swirling, though it remained recalcitrant on the palate. There is not much of this in the cellars, so it may make sense to enquire now, even though I will score it in a range to be fair to the wine in its relative grumpiness. The bouquet eventually shows really lovely notes of passion fruit, apple, iodine, hazelnuts, complex, chalky minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and nicely mineral, albeit out of sorts from its reductive state. The wine is quite fresh and zesty for the vintage and is clearly a successful example. This will drink from 2023-2045+ and merit a score somewhere between **92** and **94**, but it may well all be spoken for by the time I get back in March to retaste it, so keep it in mind!

Vins Rouges

2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune from Maison Pierre Bourée is a plush and nicely black fruity example of the vintage, with perhaps not a ton of complexity, but plenty of depth and positive attributes. The nose delivers scents of red and black cherries, chocolate, woodsmoke and a good base of soil elements. On the palate the wine is deep and full, with a sappy core, moderate, buried tannins and sneaky length and grip on the very nicely balanced finish. There is a lot to like here for an easy-going village wine for immediate consumption. 2022-2045. **88**.

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Auxey Rouge is really a lovely example of the vintage, offering up a ripe and sappy nose of red and black cherries, bonfire, gamebird, chalky soil tones and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively solid at the core, with fine soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, complex and soil-driven finish. This will need some time to blossom, but it will be an excellent value! 2024-2050. **90+**.

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Rouge- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Pernand *villages* red is also a very strong wine in the cellars this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a ripe and pure blend of red and black cherries, venison, a lovely base of stony soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice topnote of Corton-like spices. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a fine core, good soil signature and a long, nascently complex and very nicely balanced finish. 2026-2050. **90**.

2018 Aloxe-Corton- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Aloxe-Corton from Maison Bourée is another strong village wine, offering up a bright bouquet of red and black cherries, roasted venison, a bit of bonfire and an excellent base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a fine core of fruit, impressive focus and grip and a long, nascently complex finish. Another very strong village wine. 2024-2050. **90**.

2018 Santenay “Gravières”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Santenay “Gravières” from the Vallet family is far more black fruity in personality this year than is customary with this wine, but it has impressive depth and complexity as well. The bouquet delivers scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, woodsmoke

and a fine base of chalky minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has good mineral undertow, with a plush core, moderate tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. 2026-2050+. **90+**.

2018 Pommard- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Pommard AC is one of the ripest wines that I tasted in the Bourée cellars this year, with just a bit of *sur maturité* informing both the nose and palate. The nose offers up a mix of baked black cherries and black plums, venison, a touch of soil, woodsmoke and a topnote of fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush at the core, with some soil tones, chewy tannins and a long, broad-shouldered finish. This is good, but hails from the more muscular side of the vintage ledger. 2028-2055. **89**.

2018 Beaune “Epenottes”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Beaune “Epenottes” is a very strong example of the vintage *chez* Vallet. The bouquet is ripe and pure, wafting from the glass in a mix of plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, hung game, bonfires and a complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a superb core of ripe fruit, with good soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. A first class Beaune. 2028-2060. **91**.

2018 Fixin- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Fixin- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils is another really strong *villages* in the cellars here this year. The bouquet is bright and very promising, offering up a black fruity blend of cassis, black cherries, grilled meats, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with a fine foundation of soil, suave tannins and lovely length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2023-2050. **90**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos de la Justice”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The flagship Clos de la Justice bottling *chez* Vallet is once again excellent in 2018, offering up a pure and already beautifully expressive bouquet of plums, black cherries, grilled meats, a touch of raw cocoa, fine soil signature and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with fine sappiness at the core, excellent mineral drive and a long, fine-grained and classy finish. 2027-2060. **91+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cazetiers”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

Maison Bourée’s 2018 Cazetiers is a first class bottle of Gevrey in the making. The nose offers up an aromatic constellation of black cherries, dark berries, espresso, smoked meats and a fine base of black minerality. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine-grained tannins, excellent backend mineral drive and a very long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2065. **92+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Maison Pierre Bourée Fils

The 2018 Champeaux is another superb example of the vintage. The bouquet is deep, pure and complex, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, grilled meats, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with very good transparency and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a long, soil-driven and complex finish. Choosing a favorite between the excellent Champeaux and equally fine Cazetiers is going to be very difficult for many decades to come! 2028-2065. **92+**.



Domaine Fourrier (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Jean-Marie Fourrier's 2018s are cut from the riper side of the stylistic cloth in this vintage, though the wines are not particularly high in octane, with the range of domaine bottlings running from 12.8 up to only around 13.5 percent alcohol (which is really quite reasonable for the 2018 vintage). But, there is a glossy, baked fruit and slightly jammy character to some the wines here that bespeaks of the backend heat of early September and which is found in many other red wines from the hot summer of 2018. The domaine started picking on September 7th in this vintage, but only picked in the mornings (from 6 AM to noon) each day, and then worked in the cellars during the heat of the afternoon and let the grapes that remained in the vineyards wait for the next day's cooler morning hours. All of the 2018s had been racked three weeks before my visit on November 12th, so perhaps the wines were not yet fully recovered and will show even better once they are further out from their racking. Not that all of the wines were in this riper and slightly jammy style in 2018, as some of the wines chez Fourrier are very precise and show more fresh fruit characteristics than others, but it is a vintage of slightly bigger and more powerful wines here than is customary, but this is, of course, to be expected in a vintage such as 2018. Some of the wines in the lineup are a bit more fruit-driven than what one normally finds (though often with no shortage of soil tones), but there is nothing overtly overripe about the wines, just a jammy aspect that is more vintage-specific, rather than the customary house style at Domaine Fourrier. Again, this impression could be the result of their fairly recent racking, but my gut feeling that this will be the signature of the vintage chez Fourrier in 2018

and the wines are likely to be more defined by their lovely, jammy fruit tones than their underlying terroir. In this vintage, they are very well-made wines in a style that just does not speak to me, but which may find legions of fans with different palates than mine. I have tried hard to understand the wines and score them accurately for their ultimate quality, as they really are quite good in their style, but for me, (and this is one of the most problematic aspects of the 2018 vintage), as there are wines such as some of these chez Fourrier that are really well-made, but which are simply not up my personal stylistic alley.

Domaine Wines

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Chambolle VV from Domaine Fourrier is a ripe and sappy example of the vintage, offering up a nose of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, chalky soil tones and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and shows a good undertow of soil tones, with a bit of backend tannin and good bounce and length on the finish. A tasty AC. 2023-2050+. **90.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Fourrier

The old vine bottling of Gevrey AC from Jean-Marie Fourrier is a bit more ripe and jammy than the Chambolle. The nose wafts from the glass in a mélange of red and black raspberries, woodsmoke, plenty of spices and just a dollop of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and juicy at the core, with suave, understated tannins and a long, fruit-driven finish that promises early accessibility. This is not bad at all, but in most vintages, there is more soil signature, and this may arrive in the 2018 with further bottle age. 2022-2050. **88.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Aux Echézeaux”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Aux Echézeaux” was showing more overt soil signature than the Vieilles Vignes at the time of my visit, but shares that same nexus of raspberry fruit tones as the above wine. The bouquet offers up a mix of red and black raspberries, dark chocolate, a gently floral topnote and reasonably good soil elements. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and quite long on the backend, with a good core and grip, suave tannins and good balance. I like this a bit better than the Gevrey Vieilles Vignes today. 2024-2050. **89+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Gruenchers”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Gruenchers from Jean-Marie Fourrier is again fairly fruit-driven in style, but also sappy and complex. The wine comes in at 13.4 percent octane, so this is hardly over the top in style. The nose offers up scents of red and black cherries, chocolate, *pigeon*, a nice touch of chalky soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with a good touch of soil, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and ripe finish. 2026-2065. **91+.**

2018 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Domaine Fourrier Petits Vougeots is nicely ripe and slightly jammy in personality at the present time, delivering an aromatic combination of raspberries, cherries, chocolate, gamebird, a nice dollop of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit broader-shouldered than the Gruenchers, with a plush core, suave tannins and very good length and grip on the presently, quite fruit-driven finish. I am so accustomed to Jean-Marie’s Petits Vougeots just screaming out its chalky base of minerality that to taste the 2018, resplendent in very ripe red fruit tones and chocolate, is a bit beyond the realm of my experience. But, that said, this is a well-made wine and maybe there is more chalkiness here lurking under the puppy fat of red fruit that will emerge with bottle age. 2023-2055. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cherbaudes”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Cherbaudes from Domaine Fourrier is nicely expressive out of the blocks, which is not always the case with this *terroir*. The wine offers up a deep and sappy nose of black cherries, a bit of black raspberry, dark soil tones, hung game, vanillin oak and plenty of spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with plenty of stuffing at the core, good soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, sappy finish. Good juice. 2028-2065. **92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Goulots”- Domaine Fourrier

Les Goulots is usually one of the most transparent and mineral expressions of premier cru in Gevrey-Chambertin, but the vintage’s character has exchanged some of this quality for more jammy fruit tones. The nose wafts from the glass in a ripe mélange of red and black cherries, gamebird, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and a dollop of chalky soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and plush on the attack, with a good core of red fruit, ripe, buried tannins and a long, primary and (at least today) fairly fruit-driven finish. This is still a very good bottle, but stylistically, it is a bit removed from what I usually most cherish about this wine *chez* Fourrier. 2026-2060. **91+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Fourrier

At least at the present time, there is more mineral drive here in the Champeaux than in the Goulots of 2018. The bouquet is deep and classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, grilled meats, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is sappy, full-bodied and more defined by its underlying soil than the Goulots, with a good core, fine-grained tannins and a long, plush and nicely complex finish. This is a good example of its *terroir*, as well as the vintage. 2028-2060. **92+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Combes aux Moines”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Combes aux Moines from Domaine Fourrier is a bit riper and more powerful in personality than the Champeaux. It delivers a sappy bouquet of red and black cherries, meaty tones, raw cocoa, dark soil tones and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is primary, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe tannins, good focus and balance and a long, still very adolescent finish. One can easily imagine that more soil signature will emerge here as the wine gets more distance out from its recent racking, but right now, this is quite a fruit-driven young example of Combes aux Moines. 2028-2060. **92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Clos St. Jacques *chez* Fourrier is one of the most mineraly-defined wines in the entire cellar this year. The bouquet is outstanding, wafting from the glass in a blaze of red and black cherries, just a touch of raspberry, meaty tones, chocolate, roses, vanillin oak and a lovely vein of minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy and full-bodied, with a good core, quite good freshness and bounce and impressive backend mineral drive on the long, ripe and seamlessly tannic finish. This is very good wine in the making. 2028-2065. **93+.**

2018 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Fourrier

The 2018 Griotte-Chambertin from Domaine Fourrier is another very strong wine in the making, as again, like the Clos St. Jacques, it has more mineral drive than others in the cellar. The ripe and sappy nose jumps from the glass in a mix of red and black raspberries, cherries, chocolate, chalky minerality, woodsmoke, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely pure on the attack, with a plush core of fruit, good complexity and grip, ripe tannins and a long, refined finish. A lovely wine. 2032-2075+. **94+.**

Négociant Wines

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Jean-Marie Fourrier

The 2018 les Amoureuses made from purchased grapes by Jean-Marie Fourrier is really a lovely example of the vintage, with a bit more overt backend tension than many of the domaine bottlings. The bouquet is deep, ripe and quite black fruity this year, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, a good base of soil and a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with good purity and soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and very classy finish. Fine, fine juice in the making here. 2028-2065+. **94.**

2018 Bonnes-Mares- Jean-Marie Fourrier

The 2018 Bonnes-Mares from Monsieur Fourrier is also an excellent example of the vintage. The nose jumps from the glass in a youthful and sappy blend plums, red and black cherries, *pigeon*, bonfire, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really defined by its underlying *terroir*, with a sappy core of fruit, a fine chassis of ripe tannin and excellent focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and promising finish. A fine example of Bonnes-Mares. 2033-2085. **94+.**

2018 Echézeaux- Jean-Marie Fourrier

The 2018 Fourrier Echézeaux is again, a strong and nicely soil-driven example of the vintage and seems a bit less jammy in personality than some of the domaine bottlings. The bouquet is black fruity, offering up a mix of sweet dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, gamebird, dark soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off good mid-palate depth, with fine focus and grip, ripe tannins and a long, soil-driven and youthfully complex finish. Good juice. 2031-2075. **94.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Jean-Marie Fourrier

Jean-Marie Fourrier's 2018 Charmes-Chambertin is the most overtly ripe and powerful wine in his lineup of *négociant* bottlings that I tasted from this vintage. The bouquet has plenty of personality in its mix of black raspberries, black cherries, chocolate, hung game, dark soil and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and broad-shouldered, with a jammy core, ripe, buried tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This seems quite 1990-like in style, albeit, probably more powerfully built. 2031-2065+. **91.**

2018 Latricières-Chambertin- Jean-Marie Fourrier

The 2018 Latricières from Monsieur Fourrier is not quite as ripe as the Charmes, but it is still a riper example of its appellation than are the Bonnes-Mares or Amoureuses. The bouquet offers up an extroverted blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, cigar smoke, *pigeon*, dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plenty sappy at the core, with a good undertow of soil tones, ripe, firm tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. A good, chewy and structured example. 2033.-2075. **93.**

2018 Chambertin- Jean-Marie Fourrier

The 2018 Chambertin from Jean-Marie Fourrier is an excellent wine in the making, as it offers up a deep and very promising bouquet of red and black cherries, a touch of raspberry, grilled meats, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil and a firm foundation of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe, chewy tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, promising and classy finish. This will take plenty of time for the tannins to soften, but it will be a very good, powerful example of Chambertin when it is ready to drink. 2035-2085. **94+.**

Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Philippe Harmand is on quite a roll in the last few vintages and he has made very successful 2018s. The wines are in the “riper, but extremely successful camp” to my palate in 2018, with alcohol levels all generally between 13.9 and 14.2 percent, but the wines also very pure, soil-driven and balanced, to go along with plenty of plush, precise black fruit. The Harmand family was out picking on September 5th in this vintage, There are a couple of outliers in terms of ripeness in 2018 chez Harmand, as the Bourgogne rouge came in at 13.5 percent and the straight Gevrey-Chambertin AC bottling, which was the last parcel picked, was the only wine to really get up a bit in octane, as it is around 14.5 percent in 2018. The cellar was in its customary point of transition at the time of my visit on the 8th of November this year, with some cuvées already racked into tank, but others still in barrel and awaiting their assemblage in the coming days after my visit. I arrived at Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy straight from my tasting with Denis Bachelet, which I feared might be rather unfair to the wines here, but they showed very well indeed and did not have to suffer from following hard on the heels of Denis’ stunning lineup of 2018s. As a matter of fact, Monsieur Bachelet had asked me as I was getting ready to leave where my next appointment was and I mentioned Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy, to which Denis replied “Philippe is really doing great work there in the last few years and I really like his wines”, which is about as high a compliment as a young vigneron in Gevrey can receive these days! The 2018s chez Harmand are quite similar in style to several other cellars of very successful, riper examples of the vintage, as a few of the lower appellation bottlings (which were the last to be picked) are a bit more fruit-driven and riper in personality, while the top premier crus and the Mazis, which were the first parcels gathered, are more precise, soil specific and potentially exciting for the long haul. There is nothing here in 2018 I would not be very happy to own and drink, but the most serious wines of 2018 were the first parcels picked. The top premier crus and the Mazis-Chambertin chez Harmand are deep, pure and nicely structured wines that will need a bit more than a decade in bottle to start to properly stir, but they will be long-lived and offer up some outstanding drinking once they are ready to go.

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Bourgogne rouge from Philippe Harmand had been racked on the morning of my afternoon visit, but was still showing very well indeed. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a sappy blend of black cherries, meaty tones, dark soil, a touch of bitter chocolate and a good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a good core of fruit, a bit of backend tannin and sneaky length and grip. Good juice. 2020-2035. **88.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Gevrey AC was not yet completely assembled at the time of my visit, so my note is only on an approximation of the final blend. As I mentioned, this is the ripest wine in the cellar this year, coming in at 14.5 percent octane, but carrying its alcohol pretty well. The bouquet is a very sappy blend of black raspberries, chocolate, hung game, dark soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, powerful and sappy at the core, with ripe, firm tannins and good length and grip on the fruit-driven finish. This is not bad at all in its idiom, but it is a bit of an outlier chez Harmand this year. 2024-2050+. **89.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “en Jouise”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 en Jouise is just a bit lower in octane than the Gevrey AC, but shares the same ripe and sappy fruit tones of the above in its aromatic constellation of black raspberries, sweet cassis, venison, a touch of coffee grounds, dark soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine

is deep, full-bodied and surprisingly (given the ripe aromatics), quite refined on the attack, with a sappy core of black fruit, a pretty good base of soil tones, moderate tannins and a long, focused and gently warm finish. This too is quite tasty in that riper side of the vintage, and is a hair more refined than the straight AC. 2023-2050+. **89+**.



Philippe and Gérard Harmand outside the entrance to the family domaine in the center of Gevrey-Chambertin.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Clos Prieur from Philippe Harmand is outstanding. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of black cherries, cassis, grilled meats, black minerality, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and a nice touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with chewy, well-integrated tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, powerful and beautifully balanced finish. Though this is officially only *villages* in appellation (being a combination of old vines in the AC portion of Clos Prieur and a bit younger vines in the premier cru section, blended together), this is year in and year out, Premier Cru quality to my palate and the 2018 is no exception. 2026-2060. **90+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Gevrey old vines cuvée is also very strong *chez* Harmand, with a similarly deep, broad-shouldered and very well-balanced personality to the Clos Prieur. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a classic, black fruity blend of sweet dark berries, roasted meats, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, bonfires and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied,

powerful and nicely structured, with a fine core of fruit, good soil signature, firm, buried tannins and superb length and grip on the focused and nascently complex finish. Good juice. 2028-2055. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Bousière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The domaine’s example of la Bousière from 2018 had only been racked a few days before my visit, but it too was still on form and there was no problem judging the wine. The bouquet offers up an excellent blend of black cherries, dark berries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, cigar smoke, espresso and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tightly-knit out of the blocks, with a fine core, firm, well-integrated tannins and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2028-2060+. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Perrière”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 la Perrière was also just racked the morning of my visit, and this was a tad more grumpy after being moved than the Bourgogne or the la Bousière. The nose is deep, ripe and potentially quite classy, delivering a mix of cassis, black raspberries, dark chocolate, venison, back minerality, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is ripe, pure and sappy at the core, with a full-bodied format, firm, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. This will certainly be very good, but I have scored it in a range, as it was the only wine that was really still a bit cranky from its very recent racking. 2030-2065+. **91-92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Champeaux”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Champeaux chez Harmand was still in cask at the time of my visit and had not yet been racked, so the wine was in fine form and absolutely singing. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a very refined blend of red and black cherries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, grilled meats, woodsmoke, a touch of mustard seed and a suave base of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, soil-driven and sappy at the core, with firm, ripe tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, balanced and nascently complex finish. First class juice! 2030-2065. **93.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Lavaux St. Jacques was also still in cask and showing beautifully. The wine offers up an aromatic constellation of sweet dark berries, cassis, espresso, dark soil tones, venison, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, youthfully complex and rock solid at the core, with buried tannins, excellent balance and a long, focused and very promising finish. Another excellent wine. 2032-2070. **93+.**

2018 Mazis-Chambertin- Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy

The 2018 Mazis-Chambertin from the Harmand family is also a superb example of the vintage. The wine was still in barrel and offers up a classic, ripe bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, cassis, black minerality, just a whisper of Mazis’ youthful botanical streak, dark chocolate, roasted meats and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy on the attack and at the core, with impressive backend mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and great length and grip on the focused and impeccably balanced finish. 2034-2080. **95.**

Domaine Rossignol-Trapet (Gevrey-Chambertin)

The Rossignol brothers have made excellent 2018s, with a sense of elegance and classical balance that was not easy to find in this hot second half of summer. They had their teams out picking in their parcels in Beaune on September 4th and in Gevrey starting on September 5th, and reported that their yields ended up the same in 2018 as in the previous

vintage! As Nicolas Rossignol observed, “we had more grapes in 2018 than in 2017, but the berries were smaller this year, so there was less juice” and this is how the yields ended up the same between the two vintages. The brothers decided to use fifty percent whole clusters in 2018 for all of their wines, as the stems were nicely ripe. Alcohol levels here are all roughly in the low thirties up to 13.7 percent for their beautiful Chapelle-Chambertin in 2018, so they are quite moderate by the standards of 2018, and the wines have a very classical size and shape that recalls quite a bit the 1999 vintage in terms of sappy fruit and classical expressions of underlying terroir. Many of the Rossignol brothers’ wines in 2018 are beautifully red fruity in personality, which was not an easy thing to pull off in the torrid conditions of late August and early September. I did not taste the micro cuvées of Cherbaudes, Combottes or Corbeaux chez Rossignol this year, but everything else in the cellar was absolutely singing and this was one of the best stops of my entire trip!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

This was destined for bottling in early December and was showing very well indeed. The nose wafts from the glass in a stylish blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a good base of soil for Bourgogne, a touch of raw cocoa and a gentle topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely tangy, with good soil signature and a dollop of backend tannin perking up the quite long finish. This is a lovely example. 2020-2035. **89.**

2018 Beaune “Theurons”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2018 Beaune “Theurons” from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is beautifully red fruity in personality this year, offering up a vibrant bouquet of strawberries, cherries, spice tones, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a bit of fresh nutmeg in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and beautifully balanced, with a good core, lovely grip, moderate tannins and a long, complex and elegant finish. 2026-2060. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2018 Gevrey V.V. from the domaine is excellent and again, shows plenty of red fruit tones in its aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil tones, gamebird, a touch of violet and a gentle foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a lovely core of pure fruit, good structure and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, refined and promising finish. Lovely AC. 2026-2050+. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The vineyard of Clos Prieur almost always produces very black fruity wines, but the 2018 from the Rossignol brothers is surprisingly red fruity and elegant this year. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a refined blend of cherries, strawberries, grilled meats, dark soil tones, mustard seed, a touch of almost Vosne-like spices and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved at the present time, with a beautiful core of fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a very long, classy finish. This will take a full decade to start to blossom, but it will be an outstanding premier cru in due course. 2028-2060+. **92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2018 Petite Chapelle from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is one of the ripest wines in the cellar this year, coming in at 13.5 percent octane, which just underscores how nicely classical the vintage has turned out here. The bouquet is ripe, pure and perfumed, offering up scents of red and black cherries, cocoa powder, fresh nutmeg, a superb base of soil and an elegant framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality for this

cru (and quite reminiscent of a young 1999), with a sappy core, excellent soil signature, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and very well-balanced finish. This will need time, but it will be excellent. 2030-2065. **92+**.

2018 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2018 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Rossignol-Trapet is a great wine in the making. The bouquet delivers a pure and again, strikingly red fruity constellation of red plums, cherries, spiced meats, a great base of soil tones, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off gorgeous mid-palate depth, with a superb signature of soil, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very complex finish. First class Latricières! 2032-2080. **94+**.

2018 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The warm microclimate of Chapelle-Chambertin has produced the highest octane wine in the Rossignol brothers' cellars this year, but at 13.7 percent, this is a relatively low octane wine by the standards of the vintage! The bouquet is deep, ripe and precise, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red plums, red and black cherries, a touch of nutskin, a complex base of soil, lovely spice tones redolent of fresh nutmeg and clove and a bit of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven in personality (particularly for a wine with such gorgeous fruit!), with a sappy core, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, poised and nascently complex finish. This is properly structured and will need plenty of the time in the cellar to reach its apogee, but it will be well worth the wait! 2035-2080. **94+**.

2018 Chambertin- Domaine Rossignol-Trapet

The 2018 Rossignol-Trapet Chambertin was one of the absolute highlights of my trip in November and this has to be one of the wines of the vintage this year. I imagine that it will close down a bit once it is bottled, but out of cask in early November, it was stunningly expressive and complex already, delivering a celestial blend of red plums, red and black cherries, fresh nutmeg, a very complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, spiced meats, just a whisper of mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with stunning transparency, firm, fine-gained tannins and a very, very long, tangy and complex finish. This is aristocratic young Chambertin! 2030-2100. **96+**.

Domaine Armand Rousseau (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Cyrielle Rousseau has crafted, alongside of her father Éric Rousseau, an excellent range of 2018s, though this should come as no surprise, as Domaine Rousseau has been on a hot streak for the last decade and was already a reference point estate for quality before this most recent run of brilliance seemed to take everything up another level! As Cyrielle noted, "we took the decision to start picking on September 1st this year, after looking at the vineyards, but my father was still on his holidays and could not get back to join us until the 2nd." As she continued, "we now do a green harvest every year in July, as it is the last thing we do before we get ready for our vacations, and I think this was very important for us in 2018 because it meant that we had ripe tannins before the sugars got too high in the grapes this year." The resulting wines are all between thirteen and thirteen and a half percent alcohol, which is fairly ripe by the standards at Domaine Rousseau, but low octane by the standards of some of their neighbors in Gevrey in this vintage! Cyrielle was asked if the warm growing season and the large crop of 2018 has resulted in wines similar to the domaine's outstanding 1999s (another very large and high quality crop in the Côte d'Or) and Mademoiselle Rousseau responded: "oh no, our vineyard work is far more meticulous today than what we were doing back in 1999, so we had better quality fruit to work

with this year than what my father and grandfather would have had back in 1999.” For those who have tasted the 1999 Rousseau wines, it gives some indication of just how stellar the 2018s will be here!



The vineyard of Clos St. Jacques resting comfortably under the late autumn sunshine.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Gevrey AC from the Rousseau family is really lovely and red fruity this year, with a sappy quality that remains very pure in its combination of strawberries, cherries, Gevrey spice tones, a fine base of soil and a touch of raw cocoa in the upper register. On the palate the wine is suave, fullish and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, modest tannins and lovely length and grip on the silky and very classy finish. The domaine's *villages* bottling of Gevrey is often quite delicate in style (in a very positive manner), but the 2018 version had added a core of sappiness that is quite lovely. Fine juice. 2024-2050. **90+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Lavaux St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

I am not sure I have ever tasted a better vintage of Lavaux St. Jacques from Domaine Rousseau than this stellar 2018 version. The wine is very precise on both the nose and palate, offering up a beautiful mineral signature to go along with a sappy blend of black cherries, red plums, grilled meats, lovely spice tones, just a whisper of vanillin oak and that signature black minerality of Gevrey. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a fine core,

excellent mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic and impeccably balanced finish. This is really superb this year! 2026-2055+. **92+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Cazetiers”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Cazetiers *chez* Rousseau is just a tad sappier and opulent in personality than the Lavaux St. Jacques this year (hardly a bad thing!), but I have a slight preference for the extraordinary mineral signature of the latter. That said, this too is beautiful wine in the making, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, woodsmoke, gamebird and just a touch of nutty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite sappy at the core, with suave, seamless tannins, a good undertow of soil tones and a long, complex and quite classy finish. This too is really good in 2018. 2028-2055+. **92**.

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

I have the impression that the Charmes-Chambertin has been gaining a bit of concentration to its personality in recent years here, while not losing any of its longtime elegance and perfume. The 2018 had impressive depth and concentration, coupled to that signature refinement, offering up quite a black fruity bouquet this year in its mix of black cherries, black raspberries, grilled meats, raw cocoa, lovely minerality, Gevrey spices and a nice foundation of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, quite tangy acids and a very long, seamlessly tannic and complex finish. This is a superb example of Charmes. 2028-2070. **93**.

2018 Mazy-Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Mazy-Chambertin from Domaine Rousseau is another outstanding wine in the making in this vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a superb blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, venison, a touch of Mazy's lovely botanical overtones and a fine touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off exceptional mid-palate depth, with ripe, fine-grained tannins, lovely focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and extremely promising finish. 2028-2070. **93+**.

2018 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Clos de la Roche *chez* Rousseau is a tad more structured and wilder in personality than the Charmes or Mazy this year, but shows the same outstanding potential. The bouquet delivers a complex and sappy blend of black cherries, red plums, some brambly overtones, bonfire, gamebird, a fine base of soil, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and sappy at the core, with very good focus and grip, ripe tannins and a long, polished, but still quite youthful finish. This will need at least a few more years in the cellar to blossom than the Mazy, but in due course, this too will be a superb example. 2030-2075+. **93+**.

2018 Ruchottes-Chambertin “Clos des Ruchottes”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

In so many recent vintages, the Clos des Ruchottes was a beautifully red fruity young wine, but the 2018 version is far more black fruity in personality than is customary for this cuvée, with the heat of the vintage turning those fruit tones towards the darker side, but not stealing any of the wine's customary elegance. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a ripe blend of black raspberries, black cherries, chocolate, venison, a fine base of soil tones and a sound framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and still very primary in personality, with almost a bottomless core of fruit, ripe tannins, fine balance and excellent length and grip on the focused and adolescent finish. This wine will need time to unwind and show its layers of complexity, but it will be a very good bottle in due course. That said, while other tasters in the cellar here were enthralled with the style of the 2018 Clos des Ruchottes, I was missing

that gorgeous red fruity personality a bit and was not quite as enamored of the style of the 2018 as I was of the 2017 version. 2030-2075. **93.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos St. Jacques”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

While the Clos des Ruchottes was hunkered down at the time of my visit, the 2018 Clos St. Jacques was absolutely singing. The bouquet soars from the glass in a flamboyant mix of black cherries, plums, black raspberries, dark soil tones, grilled meats, nutty new oak and a topnote of dark chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very sappy, with lovely supporting structure and grip, impeccable balance and a long, ripely tannic and energetic finish. Great juice. 2028-2075. **95+.**

2018 Chambertin- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Chambertin from Domaine Rousseau is so expressive and exotic out of the blocks, that I was sure that this was the Clos de Bèze! The bouquet is deep, sappy and spicy, offering up notes of black cherries, black raspberries, grilled meats, bitter chocolate, a brilliant base of soil tones, nutty, smoky new oak and a potpourri of exotic spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, sappy and flamboyant right out of the blocks, with a great core, superb soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and stunning length and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2033-2085+. **97+.**

2018 Chambertin “Clos de Bèze”- Domaine Armand Rousseau

The 2018 Clos de Bèze is more closed and powerful than the Chambertin this year (or at least at this stage of its development), but every bit as long and promising. The bouquet shows stunning depth in its youthful blend of black cherries, red and black plums, dark chocolate, grilled meats, a superb base of soil and a fine foundation of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely structured, with a sappy core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, perfectly integrated tannins and a long, adolescently complex and very promising finish. Fine juice in the making. 2035-2085+. **97+.**

Domaine Trapet Père et Fils (Gevrey-Chambertin)

Jean-Louis Trapet and his team were out in the vineyards starting to pick on September 5th in 2018, so they were one of the earlier harvesting domaines in Gevrey-Chambertin. The resulting wines have turned out beautifully, ripe, pure and very nicely balanced. Like many other producers in 2018, Jean-Louis started with his grand crus, then attacked the premier crus and finished up with the village level and Bourgogne parcels when harvesting this year, which has allowed the grand crus to come in around 13.5 percent octane, and only a couple of the villages or regional bottlings have crept up close to fourteen percent. The fruit textures in the wines this year is really marvelous, with purity and sappiness in equal measure and this is going to be a very, very strong vintage chez Trapet. Monsieur Trapet noted that “the malolactic fermentations this year were very discreet, because of the very modest level of malic acidity, so they were slow and gentle in nature, but kept going until the end of January or early February.” Jean-Louis used about a third whole clusters for most of his wines in 2018, as he noted that the stems were nicely ripe and it was a good way to absorb some of the potential alcohol in the wines and keep the octane levels reasonable. The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc, Marsannay Blanc and Bourgogne Rouge were already bottled, just ahead of the harvest of 2019, with everything else still in cask. The domaines has elegant, new white labels for both Bourgogne bottlings, with embossed type that is both quite modern in style, and still very traditional, with the family’s coat of arms still front and center on the label.



2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Trapet is ripe, fresh and very pretty this year. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, a touch of quince, lemon zest and salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent, with a good core, lovely soil signature and quite bright acids on the long and satisfying finish. A fine example. 2020-2027. **88.**

2018 Marsannay Blanc- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Marsannay Blanc from Jean-Louis Trapet has really turned out well in this vintage, as the wine is more refined and shows better inner mouth tension than the very good Bourgogne Blanc. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of lemon, a touch of grapefruit, lovely, chalky soil tones, citrus zest, spring flowers and a touch of *fleur de sel* in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, complex and vibrant, with a lovely core, good backend mineral drive and very good cut and grip on the long finish. This was half barrel-fermented this year in older, large casks. Fine juice and a great bargain this year! 2020-2030+. **90.**

2018 Bourgogne “à Minima” Rouge- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The vines Jean-Louis Trapet uses for his Minima bottling are right on the edge of the Gevrey *villages* boundary and were planted in 1965, so these are very well-situated vines for Bourgogne. Jean-Louis does not add any SO₂ during the ferment or *elevage* and just adds one or two grams at bottling. The 2018 Minima offers up a fine, red fruity nose of cherries, quince, woodsmoke, a good base of soil and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, tangy and juicy at the core, with just a touch of backend tannin and good length and grip

on the wide open finish. This is a tasty bottle that will drink well from the moment it is released. 2020-2030. **88.**

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The domaine's "regular" bottling is composed from four different parcels of vines, with three in the commune of Gevrey-Chambertin and the fourth, and largest, in the village of Gilly, not far from those of Ghislaine Barthod. This is also a fine example in 2018, but it is a bit more closed after its recent *mise* than the above. The nose delivers a nicely reserved combination of cherries, plums, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a touch of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows lovely structural tension on the backend, with a good core, fine soil signature and a bit of suave tannin perking up the finish. This is good Bourgogne in the making. 2021-2030+. **88.**

2018 Côte de Nuits Villages "Meix Fringuet"- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

As I mentioned last year, Jean-Louis Trapet has been producing this wine, from a cousin's parcel of vines, since the 2011 vintage, but only has had enough quantity to begin showing it during tastings beginning in 2017. The vines are in the village of Brochon, just down slope from les Evocelles. The 2018 version is very tasty, but this is one of the ripest wines in the cellar this year and is probably right around fourteen percent octane. The nose offers up scents of black raspberries, cherries, pretty spice tones, dark soil and a bit of upper register mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a very good core of fruit, a good foundation of fine-grained tannin and fine length and grip on the finish. This will need a bit of time to blossom, but will be quite tasty. 2023-2040+. **88+.**

2018 Marsannay- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I have not yet done extensive tastings in Marsannay, as my visits to Domaines Joseph Roty and Bart are scheduled for the spring, but tasting through the two examples from Jean-Louis Trapet makes me think that this village may have really excelled in 2018. The Marsannay Rouge *chez* Trapet is an excellent wine, offering up lovely purity in its bouquet of cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, a fine base of soil, gentle spice tones, a hint of new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good core, refined tannins and good backend bounce and grip on the long and classy finish. Good juice. 2022-2045. **89.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Gevrey *villages* from Domaine Trapet is really quite stylish and should start hitting on all cylinders in another four or five years. The red fruity bouquet is impressive pure and classy, delivering a blend of cherries, a touch of strawberry, dark soil tones, grilled meats, mustard seed and a delicate framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and classy, with lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. A very classy AC. 2024-2055. **90.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin "Ostrea"- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Ostrea is also a fine *villages* in the making. The wine is a touch more black fruity than the straight Gevrey, but still retains a nice mix of red fruit as well in its bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, meaty tones, an excellent base of soil tones, gentle spices, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite soil-driven in personality, with an excellent core of fruit, suave tannins and impressive length and grip on the nascently complex finish. 2025-2055+. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Petite Chapelle”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Petite Chapelle is nicely ripe and will be a very suave and flamboyant when it is ready to drink. The wine is nicely ripe, but also very pure and transparent, offering up a classic nose of plummy fruit, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, cigar wrapper, a complex base of dark soil tones and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and fairly powerful in personality, but with that classic sense of elegance of this great *terroir*, with excellent focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very promising finish. Fine, fine juice, cut from the riper side of the vintage, but well under fourteen percent and still very classical in sensibilities. 2028-2060. **92+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Clos Prieur”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Clos Prieur from Jean-Louis Trapet is another fine premier cru in the making. The wine is not quite as suave structurally as the Petite Chapelle, but part of that is just the differences of the two *terroirs*, and the Clos Prieur shows excellent promise for the future. The bouquet delivers a lot of red fruit this year (Clos Prieur is usually very black fruit in profile), offering up notes of raspberries, cherries, plums, venison, dark soil tones, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is complex, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with a nice core of plush fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, gently chewy tannins and a long, nascently complex and promising finish. This will be another excellent wine in due course. 2029-2060. **92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Capita”- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

I was wondering if Jean-Louis would produce his blended Premier Cru bottling of Capita in 2018, as he purchased some very small fermentation tanks last year to allow for individual fermentations of his small parcels in the les Combottes and les Ergots (which are generally blended into the Capita, along with a bit of the production from his Petite Chapelle and Clos Prieur as well), so he now has the means to bottle all of his premier crus on their own if he so chooses. However, there is still a Capita bottling in 2018 and it is a beauty! The aromatic constellation offers up a very elegant blend of cherries, red plums, cocoa powder, a very complex base of soil tones, gentle spices, vanillin oak and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is very pure, full-bodied and already suave on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, impressive transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex and classy finish. A lovely bottle. 2028-2060. **93.**

2018 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

Chapelle-Chambertin is quite a warm *terroir*, so I wondered how it would turn out in the torrid summer of 2018, but Jean-Louis picked this very early and the alcohol comes in at a quite classic 13.5 percent this year. The wine is ripe and powerful in personality, albeit, still with that characteristic Chapelle elegance, as it wafts from the glass in a gorgeous blend of plums, black cherries, grilled meats, cigar wrapper, chocolate, an excellent base of soil, vanillin oak and a distinct topnote of fresh nutmeg. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with firm, ripe and seamless tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and classic finish. This is outstanding. 2030-2080. **95.**

2018 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Trapet is another brilliant example of the vintage. As the microclimate here is cooler than in Chapelle, the wine is a tad less powerful in personality out of the blocks and is an absolute classic in the making. The nose is deep, pure and very precise, offering up scents of sweet dark berries, black cherries, meaty tones, a great base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke, espresso and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, soil-driven and shows off stunning mid-palate depth, with lovely focus and nascent

complexity, suave, buried tannins and outstanding length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. A gorgeous vintage of the Trapet family's Latricières. 2030-2080. **95+**.

2018 Chambertin- Domaine Trapet Père et Fils

The 2018 Chambertin from Jean-Louis Trapet is stellar on both the nose and palate. The perfectly ripe bouquet delivers a complex blend of red and black cherries, plums, grilled meats, a gorgeous base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a hint of mustard seed, vanillin oak and a dollop of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with firm, ripe tannins, a proper sense of reserve out of the blocks, great focus and grip and a very, very long, soil-driven and classic finish. Great juice. 2032-2085+. **96+**.

Morey St. Denis

Domaine Dujac (Morey St. Denis)

Jeremy Seysses is very happy with how the domaine's 2018s have turned out, though one gets the sense that their effortless beauty in the glass belies an awful lot of work that had to go on behind the scenes to make such beautifully classic wines in the torrid summer of 2018. The team at Domaine Dujac was out picking chardonnay for their white wines on August 26th of 2018 and did not waste any time moving onto pinot noir on the 30th of the month, once the white grapes had been brought in. The last pinot noir grapes were brought in on September 8th, from the premier cru vineyard of Malconsorts in Vosne-Romanée. As is typical in mid-November, the red wines here were in varying stages of evolution at the time of my visit, with the Dujac Fils et Père AC level bottlings already having been assembled in tank and a few of the other wines still down in the cellars in barrel also having just been racked, or were due for a racking in the near future. So, while many of the wines here were absolutely singing, others were still fairly easy to ready, but perhaps not quite at their optimum for tasting and a couple were a bit cantankerous and ready to be racked. The Fils et Père villages wines had been racked about four weeks prior to my visit on November 11th, while the few domaine wines that had already been racked had been decanted only a couple of weeks prior, so they were a bit more unsettled than the earlier racked village wines. But, in general, it was very easy to see that 2018 is a brilliant vintage for Domaine Dujac and the wines are going to be among the reference point successes of this roller coaster of a vintage.

The reds from the Seysses family in 2018 are packed with beautifully ripe fruit tones, coupled with exemplary expressions of their underlying terroirs, suave, seamless tannins and great promise for the future. A few of the wines (probably the latter picked) are a bit more powerfully fruit-driven and will probably evolve along the lines of the 1990s here (which are very successful in the context of that slightly roasted vintage), while others are a significant step up in terms of purity and transparency and seem more likely to age along the lines of the 1999s here (which I vastly prefer to the 1990s). It is too early to say with any certainty, but it does seem likely that the best 2018s in the cellar at Domaine Dujac (and there are many of these), will end up even superior to the 1999s, so this is clearly one of the most successful range of wines to be found in the Côte d'Or in this vintage.

Vins Rouges

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Dujac Fils et Père

The négociant bottling of 2018 Chambolle-Musigny from Dujac Fils et Père is a ripe and black fruity example of the vintage this year, offering up a nascently complex nose of plums,

dark berries, a good base of soil tones, dark chocolate and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, tangy and nicely sappy at the core, with a nice touch of backend tannin and a long, tasty finish. This will be quite a good AC. 2024-2045. **88-89.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2018 Fils et Père Gevrey was a bit reduced and not particularly expressive aromatically, but surprisingly, was far easier to appreciate on the palate. The nose offers up a mélange of sweet black fruit, dark chocolate, a good base of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is ripe, full-bodied and nicely succulent at the core, with good soil signature, modest tannins and a long, promising finish. This should prove to be quite good, though it is close to fourteen percent octane and seems likely to be quite plush in personality when it is ready to drink. 2024-2045. **88-89+.**

2018 Morey St. Denis- Dujac Fils et Père

Of the three Dujac Fils et Père villages bottlings, the 2018 Morey was the prettiest of the three at the time of my visit. The nose is pure and precise, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird and a fine base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is long, pure and classy, with a full-bodied and very nicely balanced format, a good core and a long, moderately tannic and focused finish. Good juice. 2023-2045+. **89-90.**



Diana and Jeremy Seysses in the courtyard at Domaine Dujac on a sunny November morning.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Damodes”- Dujac Fils et Père

2018 will be the last vintage for the Damodes from Dujac Fils et Père, as (if memory serves me correctly) the vines have been replanted. This was still in cask at the time of my visit and showing nicely, offering up a blend of black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, venison, woodsmoke and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with ripe tannins, good focus and grip and a long, well-balanced and promising finish. Good juice. 2028-2050. **90.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Dujac Fils et Père

Happily, there will be no interruption in the production of the Nuits “aux Cras” from the domaine, and the 2018 version has turned out beautifully. The bouquet offers up a very refined nose of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a fine base of minerality, pigeon and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and focused, with a very suave attack (particularly for young Nuits), as lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and very classy finish. This wine was raised in one-third new oak and this percentage really works beautifully with this terroir. 2028-2055+. **92.**

2018 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

This has already been racked a couple of weeks ahead of my visit, but seemed to be on good form and was not hard to handicap. The nose wafts from the glass in a very refined mix of plums, black cherries, dark chocolate, a fine base of soil, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and nicely transparent, with a good core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, poised and vibrant finish. This is going to be a very good AC. 2026-2045+. **90+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Dujac

I did not write down whether or not the domaine’s version of Chambolle *villages* had been racked prior to my visit or was just in need of one, but it was a bit cranky and much harder to get a read on than the lovely Morey AC. The wine is ripe and black fruity, with scents of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, soil, bonfire and *pigeon* wafting from the glass. On the palate the wine is deep, fullish and quite nicely plump at the core, with a good base of soil, ripe tannins and a long, adolescent finish. I am sure this will be quite good in due course, but I did not catch it on the best of days. 2026-2045. **88-90.**

2018 Morey St. Denis “Premier Cru”- Domaine Dujac

The Domaine Dujac Morey “Premier Cru” is a really lovely example of the 2018 vintage. The bouquet delivers a fine combination of sweet dark berries, black plums, raw cocoa, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of vanillin oak and a fine topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with fine transparency and grip, refined tannins and a long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. Just a lovely wine in the making. 2027-2065. **92+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “aux Combottes”- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Combottes *chez* Seysses is also outstanding and beautifully red fruity this year. The bouquet is pure and very expressive already, offering up scents of cherries, strawberries, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, a great base of soil tones, gamebird, a touch of new oak and lovely, delicate spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is long, pure and very classy in personality, with a sappy core of red fruit, excellent soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, precise finish of impressive backend tension. Fine, fine juice. 2031-2070+. **93+.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Dujac

This year, we stayed within communes as we worked our way through the cellars, so the 2018 Charmes-Chambertin followed up the excellent Combottes. This is more reserved aromatically than the Combottes, but every bit as good, as it eventually offers up (with a bit of coaxing) a fine blend of red plums, cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a very classy base of soil tones, cedar and a topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and great focus and grip on the long, nascently complex and vibrant finish. A marvelous Charmes. 2031-2070+. **94+**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Dujac

In a torrid vintage like 2018, I would expect the Beaumonts here to be quite black fruity in personality, but the wine is all red fruit this year and really superb. It delivers a fine aromatic constellation of red plums, cherries, Vosne spices, a bit of gamebird, a superb base of quite stony soil tones, bonfire and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and marvelously transparent out of the blocks, with a lovely core of fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2028-2060. **93**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Malconsorts *chez* Seysses is more exotic and musky in personality than the Beaumonts this year, but at least based on the showing at the time of my visit, there is not quite the customary distance between the two wines. The bouquet is very flashy out of the blocks, offering up scents of sappy black raspberries, sweet blackberries, raw cocoa, plenty of musky floral tones, new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and more reserved in personality than the flamboyant nose suggests, with a sappy core of black fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, tangy and focused finish. I like this wine very much, but it is a tad riper in personality than the Beaumonts (which is of course, a cooler microclimate than Malconsorts), and tough the wines are comparable in quality, my personal preference this year may run to the Beaumonts. 2030-2065+. **93**.

2018 Echézeaux- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Echézeaux from Domaine Dujac is a brilliant wine in the making, and this is one of the best young examples of this cru that I can recall tasting at the estate. The celestial bouquet soars from the glass in a sappy blend of raspberries, cherries, red plums, duck, a very complex base of soil tones, Vosne spices, cocoa powder and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with all of the complexity that the nose promises, a great core, suave, fine-grained tannins and outstanding backend mineral drive on the focused and utterly complete finish. Great, great Echézeaux! 2032-2075+. **95**.

2018 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Domaine Dujac Clos de la Roche is another gorgeous example of the vintage. The nose is pure, complex and already beautifully refined, offering up a mix of plums, red and black cherries, a refined base of soil tones, gamebird, cocoa powder, mustard seed and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a sappy core of fruit, great backend mineral drive, suave, seamless, but firm tannins and a very, very long, vibrant and promising finish. A great vintage of this iconic cuvée. 2032-2085. **95**.

2018 Clos St. Denis- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Clos St. Denis here is every bit as magical as the Clos de la Roche. The spicy and red fruity bouquet is already very expressive, offering up a deep, pure and sappy constellation of red plums, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, a complex base of soil, cocoa powder, fresh nutmeg and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is elegant, full-bodied and very

transparent, with a sappy core, great focus and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a very, very long, soil-driven and tangy finish. This is brilliant and maybe my favorite wine in the Dujac cellars this year (though I did not taste the RSV). 2030-2085. **96+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Gruenchers”- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Gruenchers is a very good wine, but its ripeness and more plush personality had a hard time following up the magical troika of Echézeaux, Clos de la Roche and Clos St. Denis in our tasting lineup. The sappy nose wafts from the glass in a ripe blend of red plums, black cherries, woodsmoke, chocolate, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and pleasingly plump at the core, with a long, ripely tannic and already pretty generous finish. I suspect this wine will age along the lines of a 1990 Burgundy and show more of its vintage character as the decades roll away. 2028-2065. **91**.

2018 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Dujac

After the slight dip of premier cru, we ramped right back up to the magic of Domaine Dujac grand crus with this stellar example of Bonnes-Mares. The bouquet is deep and flat out stunning out of the blocks, soaring from the glass in an already very complex combination of red and black cherries, plums, gamebird, a great base of chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, raw cocoa, vanillin oak and a topnote of rose petals. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a great core, superb soil signature, ripe, firm, but buried tannins and a very long, tangy and promising finish. This is extremely refined already for young Bonnes-Mares and is another stellar example of the vintage from the Seysses family. 2035-2085+. **96+**.

Vins Blancs

2018 Morey St. Denis Blanc- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 Morey AC Blanc from Domaine Dujac is a very pretty example of the vintage. The nose wafts from the glass in a bright blend of white peach, apple, chalk, white flowers, fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely succulent on the attack, with a good core, fine backend tension and a long, vibrant finish. Good juice that will drink with generosity right from the start. 2020-2035+. **90**.

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “les Folatières”- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2018 Folatières from Fils et Père is a lovely and succulent example of the vintage. The ripe and generous nose offers up scents of apple, peach, a good base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak, citrus zest and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with very good focus, cut and grip and a long, already quite complex finish. This is a lovely example of the vintage that could use a few years in the cellar to blossom fully, but which will be hard to resist out of the blocks. 2023-2045. **91+**.

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “les Combettes”- Dujac Fils et Père

The 2018 Combettes from Dujac Fils et Père has a bit more backend tension and grip than the Folatières, which is already wearing its heart on its sleeve, but it too will drink really well with not a whole lot of bottle age. I really like the nose here, which wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, bee pollen, a hint of almond, a beautiful base of limestone, vanillin oak and a whisper of the beeswax to come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and very long on the backend, with a good core, fine transparency and grip and a long, zesty and quite complex finish. 2023-2050. **92+**.

2018 Morey St. Denis “les Monts Luisants” Blanc- Domaine Dujac

The 2018 les Monts Luisants Blanc from Domaine Dujac is another lovely example of the vintage in the making. It does not quite have the same mid-palate volume of the Combettes,

but offers up lovely aromatic complexity in its blend of apple, lime, white flowers, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and beautifully detailed, with a fine sense of balance, very good backend mineral drive and lovely grip on the long, complex and classy finish. This too is really charming this year. 2022-2045. 92.

Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils (Morey St. Denis)

Laurent Lignier has fashioned a generally fine set of 2018s, though there is quite some variation in the ripeness level of a few of the wines in the cellar this year, as a couple of cuvées (for varying reasons) are up over fourteen percent alcohol in 2018. However, most are in the thirteens and the lowest octane wine in the cellar is only 13.1 percent. So, there are some differences amongst the different bottlings chez Lignier this year, and though I do not love the few higher octane wines here, the vast majority of the wines are really outstanding examples of the vintage. Monsieur Lignier started picking this year on September 4th and reported that most of the malolactic fermentations were pretty brisk, with the majority of wines finishing up in late November or during the month of December of 2018 and only a few percolating on into February of 2019. As Laurent Lignier has a few wines made from parcels in the southern half of Nuits St. Georges (including one of his Bourgogne rouge cuvées), he was a bit affected by the July hailstorms in that area and one of his higher octane wines in 2018 is a direct result of the hail damage and the subsequent need for the vines to regrow vegetation, rather than ripening up bunches in the wake of the storms. For this reason, he finished his picking on September 12th with the parcels that had been hit by hail, as he was waiting for the tannins to ripen up a bit more. Another high alcohol outlier in the lineup is the Morey St. Denis premier cru of La Riotte, which came in at a full 14.5 percent alcohol in 2018 and I cannot recall why this parcel needed to be picked a bit later. It is a pretty good wine in its style, but it is really not cut from the same cloth as most of the other cuvées in the Lignier cellars this year. Monsieur Lignier generally used about thirty percent whole clusters for most of his 2018s (and might have used a bit more for some wines, but the fermenters were full!), but the wines that are higher in alcohol happened to also be completely de-stemmed in 2018 (probably because Laurent was not happy with the ripeness of the stems of these later-picked parcels).

There is also a new wine in the cellars this year, which is a special bottling of Clos de la Roche made from the oldest vines in the Lignier family's holdings and named in homage to Laurent's grandfather, Henri Lignier, who founded the family domaine and originally purchased his first parcel of Clos de la Roche in 1955. The wine is called "Cuvée MCMLV" for that date and hails from the estate's parcel of vines in the lieu à dit of Monts Luisants. Henri Lignier first planted this parcel in 1955, from selection massale cuttings which produce tiny berries, year in and year out, and Laurent Lignier feels that these represent the best genetic material planted in the family vineyards. These old vines are not particularly prolific, with their yields ranging from fifteen to twenty-five hectoliters per hectare every year. The first vintage produced of this special cuvée of Clos de la Roche was the 2017 (though Monsieur Lignier did not mention it at all last year!), when there were two barrels made of the wine. In 2018, with the slightly more generous yields, there were three pièces of the cuvée produced and it is a stunning wine and will be well worth a special search to find in the market.

2018 Bourgogne “Plain Gilbert”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Plain Gilbert, with vines in Chambolle, is the lower octane of these two Bourgognes in the cellar this year, but as these were also some of the last bunches collected, the wine still comes in at 13.7 percent octane. The wine is actually quite fresh and pretty on the nose, as the red fruity bouquet delivers scents of strawberries, cherries, woodsmoke, a nice touch of soil and gamebird. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and has a bit of confiture elements to its fruit expression on the palate, with little tannin and good length and grip on the tangy finish. This is one of the riper-styled wines in the cellar, but this is not necessarily a bad thing with Bourgogne rouge. 2020-2030. **87.**

2018 Bourgogne “Grand Chailiot”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The vines for the Grand Chailiot bottling of Bourgogne are in Nuits St. Georges and were hailed on in July. This was the last parcel picked in 2018, as Laurent wanted the tannins to ripen up a bit more, and it was completely destemmed and the alcohol is the heftiest in the Lignier cellars this year, tipping the scales at 14.7 percent. The wine handles its ripeness okay, but this is one of my least favorite wines in the cellar this year, though that is more a reflection of what Mother Nature handed out here with the hail damage to the vines than with anything that Monsieur Lignier could have done. 2020-2025. **86.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The vines here are in the fifty to sixty year range and this helped them in 2018, so the grapes ripened up nicely without the sugars getting out of hand (even this too was one of the later parcels picked) and the wine comes in this year at a proper 13.5 percent octane. It is a very pretty and red fruity example of Chambolle, with the nose wafting from the glass in a mix of red plums, cherries, musky floral tones, gamebird and a nice base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe and succulent at the core, with sound acids, just a wisp of tannin and sneaky length and grip on the complex finish. Good juice that will only need a few years in the cellar to really start to drink well. 2023-2050. **89.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “la Bussière”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 la Bussière is also a very strong village wine this year. This vineyard is right on the Morey border (and is adjacent to Christophe Roumier’s Clos de la Bussière in the next village) and so, the wine has a bit more black fruit in its aromatic constellation of plums, red and black cherries, dark chocolate, a touch of mustard seed, lovely soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and nicely soil-driven on the backend, with a good core of sappy fruit, fine-grained tannins and lovely length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This has a bit more structure than the Vieilles Vignes bottling, and will need a few more years in the cellar to blossom as a result, but it is also even a bit better overall. 2026-2050+. **90.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “la Justice”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 la Justice is the lowest octane wine in the Lignier cellars this year, coming in at a very svelte 13.1 percent, and the wine is lovely, precise and red fruity in personality. The nose delivers a mix of cherries, red plums, a nice touch of beetroot, a fine base of soil, gamebird and a gentle topnote of cocoa powder. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and beautifully transparent in personality, with lovely tension and grip on the long and fine-grained finish. Really good juice. 2024-2050. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “le Reniard”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 le Reniard is another very good bottle of Gevrey-Chambertin, with it is a riper wine (13.9 percent) and more fruit-driven as a result. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a musky blend of strawberries and cherries, chocolate, a good base of soil and a smoky topnote.

On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush on the attack, with plenty of fruit at the core, moderate tannins and good length and grip on the finish. This does not have the precision and soil pull of the la Justice, but it is a good, solid wine that shows just a whisper of backend heat. 2023-2050. **88+**.

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Seuvrées”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The Gevrey-Chambertin “les Seuvrées” is again from older vines (sixty to sixty-five years of age) and they seem to have navigated the heat of the summer of 2018 better than those in le Reniard. The wine offers up a very refined nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, a fine base of soil, gamebird, woodsmoke and a gentle topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully structured, with suave, seamless tannins, a lovely core of fruit fine soil signature and a long, fine-grained and bouncy finish. This is good juice. 2025-2055. **91**.

2018 Morey St. Denis “Trés Girard”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Trés Girard is another nicely ripe, but not overripe wine in the Lignier cellars this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a generous blend of plums, black cherries, mustard seed, a good base of soil, gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, robust and nicely structured out of the blocks, with a fine core, ripe, firm tannins and good length and grip on the slightly muscle-bound finish. This will need time, but turn into a good drink. 2027-2055. **89+**.

2018 Morey St. Denis “Trilogie”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Trilogie villages is the more refined example of the two AC bottlings from Morey St. Denis this year. The bouquet is nicely black fruity, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, woodsmoke, just a touch of beetroot, a fine base of soil and pigeon. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a good core of fruit, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very well-balanced finish. This is a lovely AC. 2026-2055. **91**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Poisets”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier counted himself quite lucky with this wine, as les Poisets was just on the edge of the hail damage and only twenty percent of the crop was hit, so things turned out far better than they could have in this parcel. The wine has turned out beautifully and shows none of the signs of disequilibrium that is found in more hail-affected wines in 2018. The bouquet is pure, precise and black fruity, offering up scents of dark berries, cassis, dark soil tones, gamebird, espresso and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and very well-balanced, with fine-grained tannins, impressive length and grip and a very promising finish. Good juice. 2025-2055. **91**.

2018 Pommard “En Brescul”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Pommard “En Brescul” from Domaine Lignier was a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but a bit of coaxing got it to offer up a bouquet of red and black cherries, venison, stony soil tones, a bit of bonfire and a topnote of fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a good core of fruit, ripe, chewy tannins and fine length and grip on the well-balanced and youthful finish. This will need some time to blossom, but will be very good in due course. 2028-2055. **90**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Chabiots”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 vintage is the first where Laurent Lignier included any stems in his bottling of Chabiots, as the wine includes one-third whole clusters this year. It has turned out very well indeed and offers up a pretty and red fruity nose of musky strawberries and cherries, beetroot,

vinesmoke, chalky soil tones and gamebird. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven, with fine depth in the mid-palate, silky tannins and very good focus and grip on the long and well-balanced finish. A lovely bottle of Chambolle. 2027-2065. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 les Baudes chez Lignier is really lovely this year, offering up a lovely mélange of both red and black fruit tones and plenty of Chambolle perfume in its aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, a touch of beetroot, mustard seed, complex soil tones, pigeon and a topnote of bonfire. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and really nicely defined, with a good core of ripe, pure fruit, suave, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the nascently complex and very classy finish. First class Chambolle premier cru! 2028-2065+. **92+.**



Laurent Lignier, showing off the new label on a double mag of the 2017 Clos de la Roche “Cuvée MCMLV”.

2018 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

As I mentioned in the introduction, the Morey “la Riotte” is a bit of an outlier stylistically than the other premier crus in the Lignier lineup this year, as this wine comes in at a full 14.5 percent octane and is plenty ripe in personality. The wine is one of those 2018s that carries its alcohol quite well, but it is more a flamboyant *mélange* of *confiture* fruit, rather than the very pure fruit tones found in so many of these other premier crus. The nose is quite elegant for its ripeness level, offering up sappy scents of black cherries, espresso, a nice dollop of dark soil tones, smoky overtones, venison and cedar. On the palate the wine is big, full-bodied and

flamboyantly fruity, with a plush core, fine-grained tannins, but good length and grip and really little sign of backend heat on the well-balanced finish. At 14.5 percent octane, this is a bit of a high wire act in terms of balance, but it carries it off very well and is really quite a good wine in the more flamboyant style of many 2018s. It is not typical of Laurent Lignier's wines in general in this vintage, but it has turned out quite well in its more singular style. 2025-2050+. **90.**

2018 Morey St. Denis "les Chaffots"- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 les Chaffots is quite different from the la Riotte, as this is quite typical of Monsieur Lignier's 2018s, coming in at 13.4 percent alcohol and is really a lovely bottle in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a touch of Morey mustard seed, a lovely base of soil and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and already nicely complex, with a fine core, excellent soil signature, suave, buried tannins and very good focus and grip on the long and classy finish. This is a really good example of Chaffots in the making. 2027-2060. **92+.**

2018 Morey St. Denis "Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes"- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The old vine Premier Cru bottling is always my favorite premier cru from the domaine, and the 2018 version is again looking very promising. This is ripe, but not particularly fruit-driven and quite classical in its styling, delivering a fine bouquet of red and black cherries, beetroot, woodsmoke, venison, good soil signature, mustard seed and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very elegant profile, impressive complexity, fine-grained tannins and a long, balanced and vibrant finish. I always think of this wine as having a lot of Clos de la Roche character, and this is particularly striking in the 2018 version. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2065. **93.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin "aux Combottes"- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Because of the *combe* behind this vineyard, cooler air often filters down from the hills each evening and this was obviously a benefit in the torrid late summer days of 2018. The result is another absolutely superb 2018, with a complex and refined bouquet of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, gamebird, very pretty soil tones and a nice touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and tangy, with exquisite balance, a nice core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, complex and utterly refined finish. This is every bit as fine as the old vine Morey Premier Cru. 2028-2065. **93.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges "les Didiers"- Hospices de Nuits (Dom. Hubert Lignier Père et Fils)

The 2018 Hospices de Nuits bottling that Laurent Lignier likes to buy each year is also very good, but this is a riper-styled wine than most of the domaine wines in the cellar and is again, stylistically out of the norm here this year, despite it also being quite good. The ripe bouquet is quite complex, offering up a quite red fruity blend of cherries, red plums, a touch of Châteauneuf-like fruitcake, a good base of soil and a foundation of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely complex, with a ripe core of fruit, firm, but buried tannins and quite good focus and grip on the well-balanced finish. In many vintages, this is quite a black fruity wine, but it is red fruity in 2018. Good juice. 2028-2065. **91.**

2018 Griotte-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Griotte-Chambertin from Domaine Lignier is really a beautiful example of the vintage this year, and one can see how precise the wine has come about from it being picked at the outset of the vintage. The celestial bouquet wafts from the glass in blaze of red fruit, with notes of cherries, blood orange, grilled meats, chalky soil tones, very pretty spice tones, coffee and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and tangy, with a

lovely core of fruit, excellent complexity and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and very promising finish. Just a lovely example of Griotte. 2032-2085. **94.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Charmes-Chambertin *chez* Lignier is again an superb wine in the making. This is a properly youthful and structured grand cru, offering up a fine aromatic constellation of plums, red and black cherries, venison, mustard seed, a complex base of soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is full, focused and seamlessly balanced, with a rock solid core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex and chewy finish. This is really fine. 2030-2085. **94.**

2018 Clos de la Roche- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

The 2018 Clos de la Roche from Laurent Lignier is simply stellar example of the vintage, offering up ripe and very pure fruit, great soil signature and a firm, refined chassis of tannin to carry it far into the future. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a complex blend of plums, red and black cherries, a touch of beetroot, gamebird, bonfire, mustard seed, marvelous soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off beautiful mid-palate depth, with ripe, chewy and well-integrated tannins, great balance and grip and a very long, tangy and nascently complex finish. A terrific wine. 2032-2085+. **95+.**

2018 Clos de la Roche “Cuvée MCMLV”- Domaine Hubert Lignier Père et Fils

Laurent Lignier’s 2018 Clos de la Roche “Cuvée MCMLV” bottling is a bit more black fruity in personality than the “regular” Clos de la Roche here this year. The wine is made with thirty percent whole clusters, aged twenty-one months in cask (one of the three barrels of this wine was new in 2018) and bottled unfinned and unfiltered. The bouquet is precise and bottomless, offering up scents of black plums, black cherries, venison, espresso, woodsmoke, a very complex base of soil, mustard seed and a deft touch of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and a bit more mineral in personality out of the blocks than the regular Clos de la Roche, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and stunning length and grip on the very, very promising finish. Qualitatively, there is not a whole lot of distance between these two beautiful bottles of young Clos de la Roche, but it will be interesting to follow both of them over the coming years and see how each unfolds. One can almost sense the small berries on the bunches of the Cuvée MCMLV in the way the black fruit is presented in the wine and how the minerality really shines on the palate- even in its youth! Great juice. 2034-2090. **96.**

Domaine Ponsot (Morey St. Denis)

Not surprisingly, given the traditional house style at Domaine Ponsot, the 2018s here were some of the biggest and ripest (successful) wines I tasted during my two and a half weeks in Burgundy in November. However, that said, they are not as massive as one might imagine, given that the domaine started picking relatively early for them on September 6th in 2018. The resulting wines are ripe and buxom, with most of them coming in between the high thirteens and 14.5 percent octane this year, but they are really well-balanced at their higher alcohol levels and did not show any signs of heat on the backend. How Cellar Master Alexandre Abel was able to do this is a mystery to me, but his were not the only 2018s that are higher in alcohol than is customary in the region and yet have retained very good balances; this is one of the enigmas of the 2018 vintage in Burgundy. This was my very first stop in the Côte d’Or on my trip this year, as I had started out this year in Chablis for the first couple of days and arrived at Domaine Ponsot directly from Chablis in the early afternoon and really had no inkling yet what the style of the 2018s would be in this part of the region, so the size and power of these wines came as a

bit of a surprise right out of the blocks. The domaine followed the same pattern as many of the other estates in the region during harvest time, attacking the grand crus first and then moving onto the premier crus and villages level wines. Consequently, the village wine which I tasted (the Morey AC- I did not try the Chambolle and Gevrey versions) is very ripe in style, with perhaps a whisper of sur maturité to its personality, but the precision ramps up noticeably here as one moves up the appellation hierarchy into the premier and grand cru reds. My favorite red wines in the cellar chez Ponsot this year are those that retain the most freshness- where the black fruity tones are plum, cassis and black cherry, rather than the more flamboyant tones of boysenberry or black raspberry. Many of the top cuvées here have good soil signatures in 2018, but they are buried deep under the puppy fat of flamboyant fruit tones in the young wines and it will take some extended bottle age for the fruit to stand down a bit and the soil signatures to ramp up in the profiles of the wines. But, the soil is here and these are going to be very interesting wines to follow over the next several decades, as I have never tasted young wines like this from any Burgundy estate before (including from Domaine Ponsot in the riper vintages of the past like 1990) and I have no real sense of what these wines are going to look like when they are fully mature. But, out of the blocks, they are impressive for their having retained a remarkable sense of balance at high octanes and bountiful levels of sappy fruit. Long-time fans of Domaine Ponsot are going to really like the 2018s here.

Vins Blancs

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Ponsot is an excellent example of the vintage. The bouquet is deep, ripe and complex, wafting from the glass in a gently tropical blend of apple, pear, guava, honeycomb, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and plush on the attack, with a superb core of fruit, crisp acids and excellent backend mineral drive on the long and complex finish. This has a good chassis of acidity and will age nicely over the medium-term (for Corton-Charlemagne), but will drink very, very well right from release. 2020-2035+. **93.**

2018 Morey St. Denis “Clos des Mont Luisants” Blanc- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Clos des Mont Luisants Blanc is excellent and the much cooler microclimate of this *monopole*, coupled with the old vine Aligoté here have conspired to produce an outstanding young wine in this torrid vintage. The bouquet is bright, focused and flat out superb, offering up scents of pear, tangerine, citrus peel, gentle smokiness, a great base of minerality and a topnote of dried flowers. This is a bit less tropical in personality than the very good Corton-Charlemagne this year. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite racy in personality for a 2018, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent flavor precision and a long, zesty and beautifully balanced finish. This is outstanding! 2020-2045+. **93+.**

Vins Rouges

2018 Morey St. Denis “Cuvée des Grives”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Cuvée des Grives Morey *villages* bottling is very ripe and very sappy this year, offering up a vibrant mix of black raspberries, black cherries, venison, smoke, bitter chocolate and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, very full and still quite primary, with a plush core of ripe fruit, just a bit of backend tannin and a long, fruit-driven and vibrant finish. This is well done in its powerful style. 2025-2055. **88.**

2018 Morey St. Denis “1er Cru” Cuvée des Alouettes- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Cuvée des Alouettes Premier Cru from Domaine Ponsot is a very good wine in the making, albeit, again, in the bigger, riper style of the vintage. The bouquet is a flamboyant blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, violets, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, plush on the attack, broad-shouldered and very well-balanced for its ripeness, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the focused finish. This carries its octane very well indeed. 2027-2065. **90+**.

2018 Corton “Cuvée de Bourdon”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Corton “Cuvée de Bourdon” shows a bit more of the super ripeness of the vintage than the Morey “Premier Cru” bottling, with a return of a bit of black raspberry to the aromatic constellation that also includes notes of black cherries, woodsmoke, roasted venison, a good dollop of soil and a topnote of black pepper. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, sappy at the core, with impressive mineral undertow beneath the plush fruit, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, nascently complex and promising finish. This has to be well over fourteen percent octane, but has a fine vein of minerality still carrying the flamboyant fruit component and the wine shows very good potential for down the road. 2030-2070. **92**.

2018 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Corton “Bressandes” from Domaine Ponsot is excellent, with a bit more soil signature shining through the ripe and buxom fruit tones than in the Cuvée de Bourdon at the present time. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine mix of black cherries, plums, grilled meats, cocoa, a complex base of soil tones and a hint of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with excellent focus and grip, a deep core of fruit, good backend mineral drive, suave tannins and impressive length on the well-balanced and sappy finish. Again, this is certainly well over fourteen percent octane, but its sense of balance is really very good! 2030-2075. **93+**.

2018 Charmes-Chambertin “Cuvée des Merles”- Domaine Ponsot

The domaine’s 2018 Charmes-Chambertin is another very successful, powerful and super ripe (but not overripe) example of the vintage. The bouquet shows plenty of ripe fruit, but with impressive purity to its blend of cassis, black cherries, vinesmoke, grilled meats, espresso and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, plush and powerful, with a great core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins, surprisingly good soil elements and a fine grip on the long and primary finish. This too is going to be a very good, muscular example of Charmes when it is ready to drink. 2028-2070. **93**.

2018 Clos de Vougeot “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Ponsot

I have liked the Domaine Ponsot Clos Vougeot very much since it was added to the lineup several vintages ago, and the 2018 is a good wine in the making, in a deep, flamboyant and powerful style. The nose is still quite adolescent today, offering up scents of sappy black raspberries, black cherries, chocolate, meaty tones, a touch of balsamic overtones, soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, sappy, powerful and surprisingly precise for its size and shape, with a bottomless core, good soil signature and a long, ripely tannic and well-balanced finish. This is another high octane, high wire balancing act that works! 2032-2075. **92**.

2018 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Ponsot

The 2018 Chapelle-Chambertin from Alexandre Abel is a deep, ripe, sappy and powerful example of the vintage that carries its ripeness very well and shows impeccable balance for the scale of the wine. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a blaze of cassis, black cherries, dark chocolate, grilled meats and dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe and broad-

shouldered, but also quite elegant for its size and shape, with a sappy core, buried tannins and good backend minerality adding to the complexity on the long finish. 2028-2075. **93+**.

2018 Clos de la Roche “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Ponsot

The Clos de la Roche “Vieilles Vignes” is always the most powerful grand cru *chez* Ponsot and in 2018 this is again the case, as this is a massive, powerful and very well-balanced example of the vintage. The sappy and flamboyant nose offers up scents of black raspberries, black cherries, roasted venison, dark chocolate, a good base of soil and a touch of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, massive and potentially voluptuous, with a bottomless core, ripe, well-integrated tannins and great length and grip on the powerful and promising finish. This is a super-sized vintage of Ponsot Clos de la Roche, but at least out of the blocks, all the pieces are in place and the wine works very well and shows fine potential for future evolution. The style will not be to everyone’s tastes, but that is true of this iconic wine in every vintage and the powerful 2018 version is still cut from the same stylistic cloth as all the great Clos de la Roche bottlings here from the past, the vintage has just added a bit more muscle to a wine that is always one of the most powerful reds to be found in the Côte. 2032-2080. **94.**

Domaine Taupenot-Merme (Morey St. Denis)

Romain Taupenot’s 2018s were some of the riper wines I tasted on my trip, but often quite successful in their idiom and hardly exceptional stylistically for this vintage. He and his team got started picking on September 4th in 2018, on the hill of Corton in the family’s parcel in Rognet, and ended up with most of the range of wines between thirteen and 13.9 percent octane this year. The couple of outliers that were higher in alcohol were Romain’s two bottlings in Auxey-Duresses, which I would gather were picked at the tail end of the harvest, and both of these wines top fourteen percent. The Taupenot-Merme cellars are quite typical of many other producers in 2018 in that the villages level wines tend to be a bit ripe, jammier and show a hint of sur maturité to their personalities, as they were picked a bit late (with the harvesting team out in the grand crus and top premier crus first), so that there is greater purity and precision in the upper appellation bottlings here this year. These upper level wines are really very good, with fine undertow of terroir, deep and sappy fruit tones and plenty of structure and muscle to carry them many decades out into the future. As I shared my tasting appointment at the domaine this year with Allen Meadows, we worked through a fine selection of 2017s after tasting the range of 2018s here, and as was the case at a couple of other domaines where I was presented some 2017s after the 2018s, the Taupenot-Merme 2017s put in sharp contrast the style of the two vintages and further underscored in my mind how much more I generally prefer the style of the previous vintage. But, this is not a knock on Romain Taupenot’s top 2018s- which are very good indeed- just a reminder that if you can still find his exceptional 2017s, then do not hesitate to add some to the cellar!

2018 Saint Romain Rouge- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

Saint Romain is a cooler village and this has helped immensely in 2018, as I have to imagine that this parcel was not picked particularly early this year. The wine comes in at 13.6 percent octane and offers up a ripe, but fresh bouquet of dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, a touch of coffee grounds, fresh herbs and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and quite black fruity for young Saint Romain, with a good core, moderate tannins and good focus and grip on the long finish. This is chewy and will need a bit of bottle age, but it is a good, solid effort in 2018. 2023-2045. **88.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Auxey-Duresses AC had been racked two weeks prior to my visit in anticipation of bottling early in the new year. Romain Taupenot reported that it was just over fourteen percent octane and the wine offers up a ripe and black fruity nose of dark berries, espresso, mustard seed, gamebird and a good base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful in personality for this appellation, with a good core of fruit, chewy tannins and good grip and bounce on the quite youthful backend. This will need time to soften, but will be a good example in a slightly muscular style. 2025-2045+. **88.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses “Premier Cru”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The Auxey Premier Cru bottling *chez* Taupenot is usually one of the sleeper wines in the lineup here, but the 2018 is a bit more ripe and powerful in style than I usually like in my wines from the commune. The bouquet offers up a fine, ripe and black fruity nose of cassis, venison, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a touch of anise and balsam bough in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, quite broad-shouldered for young Auxey, with a deep core of black fruit, chewy tannins and good length and grip on the adolescent finish. This is a good bottle of pinot noir that will age nicely, but it is more about vintage than village in terms of personality at the present time. 2027-2050+. **89.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Chambolle AC from Romain Taupenot reminded me quite a bit of a young 1990 in its aromatic and flavor profile, though I am sure it is a bit higher in alcohol than the 1990s here would have been. The bouquet offers up a complex and brambly bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, venison, bonfire, mustard seed, soil tones and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and well-balanced, with good acids and a long, chewy and nicely focused finish. This will need time, but will be quite a good example. 2026-2060. **90.**

2018 Morey St. Denis- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Morey *villages* from Domaine Taupenot-Merme is a bit riper in personality than the Chambolle, as it wafts from the glass in a mix of cassis, black raspberries, some balsamic overtones, hints of the forest floor to come, hug game and coffee grounds. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely tangy, but also a bit warm on the backend, with a plush core of fruit, chewy tannins and a long, energetic finish. This has a hint of overripeness to its personality that I find a bit less attractive than the Chambolle, but others may like it even better for its plush and extroverted personality. 2027-2055. **88.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Gevrey AC here is more red fruity than the Morey, and though not marked by notes of *sur maturité*, there is a *confiture* aspect to its fruit expression that shows it got plenty ripe. The nose delivers scents of baked strawberries and cherries, mustard seed, a good base of soil, woodsmoke and just a bit of cedar in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, surprisingly transparent in personality and quite easy-going structurally, with a good core, moderate (slightly dry-edged) tannins and good length and grip on the jammy finish. This is a good, solid effort, but one can tell it was picked towards the end of the harvest. 2026-2055. **88+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “la Combe d’Orveau”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Combe d’Orveau is a big step up from the *villages* level bottlings *chez* Taupenot. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a ripe, but pure and precise blend of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, fresh thyme, a lovely and complex base of soil and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and very nicely balanced, with a sappy

core, good soil signature and a long, ripely tannic finish. This just needs some time in the cellar to blossom. 2028-2065. **92.**

2018 Morey St. Denis “la Riotte”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 la Riotte is another pretty ripe wine, coming in at 13.7 percent, but it is quite a tasty example of the riper side of the vintage. The bouquet is quite wide open and complex, offering up scents of red and black cherries, coffee grounds, gamebird, dark soil tones, mustard seed, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy, with a good core of fruit, ripe tannins and a bit of backend heat belying its vintage origins on the long finish. This is not likely to make particularly old bones by the premier cru standards of the domaine, but will provide a good, ripe bottle during its heyday. 2027-2055+. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Bel Air”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Bel Air from Romain Taupenot seems just a bit less ripe in personality than the la Riotte this year, and delivers a touch more precision and classical expression of its underlying *terroir* as a result. The nose is complex and quite classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, fresh thyme, gentle meatiness, black minerality, espresso, cedar and fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows its vintage character a touch more than the nose suggests, with a bit of *confiture* aspect to the fruit tones, but coupled to good mineral drive, chewy tannins and a tangy, vibrant finish. I really like the freshness of the nose here, but the palate is a tad riper than I would ideally like (this is 2018 after all) and I wonder if extended bottle age will find the nose will eventually getting more of the baked fruit quality that is evident on the palate? This is a good example of the vintage, but from the riper side again, and, consequently, its balance may be most appealing over the first half of its life in bottle. 2028-2065. **91.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

Like the la Riotte and Bel Air, the 2018 Pruliers *chez* Taupenot is a ripe and vibrant wine that carries its alcohol quite well, but still shows a whisper of backend heat on the palate. The bouquet is quite complex, delivering a blend of black raspberries, black cherries, balsam bough, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, hung game and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a very good soil signature, chewy, firm tannins and just a bit of alcohol poking out on the long, powerful finish. This will need extended cellaring to allow its tannins to start to soften, but there is plenty of depth and complexity here. Like many of the riper 2018 reds, the question is what will the balance of the wine look like fifteen or twenty years down the road, as the style of the vintage is really quite unprecedented for wines cut from this stylistic cloth? 2030-2070. **91+.**

2018 Corton “Rognet”- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The *lieu à dit* of Rognet is quite a warm microclimate, as it sits further down the slope on the hill of Corton, and despite Romain Taupenot getting out here with his team first at the start of picking, the wine has ended up quite ripe in personality. However, this is displayed today as an inverse to the premier crus, which are more obviously marked by their vintage on the palate than on the nose, but with the Rognet, the touch of *sur maturité* of 2018 is more evident today on the nose, which offers up scents of jammy black raspberries and black cherries, spit-roasted game, dark soil tones, bonfire, spicy oak and just a whisper of Corton coriander seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is plush, full-bodied and seemingly less overtly ripe than on the nose, with impressive depth of fruit in the mid-palate, ripe, buried tannins and fine length and grip on the chewy and gently warm finish. This carries its 13.9 percent octane pretty well and is a

big, flashy and complex wine that will delight some tasters, but may be a touch over the top stylistically for others. It is very much a creature of its vintage. 2032-2075. **91.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

In contrast to the flashy Rognet, the 2018 Charmes-Chambertin from the domaine seems to straddle the great ripeness divide of the vintage and land up more in the classical side of the ledger, with more precision, less power and a touch more promise for the long haul as a result. The bouquet is very nicely red fruity this year, jumping from the glass in a complex mix of strawberries, red and black cherries, mustard seed, incipient notes of forest floor, coffee and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite suave on the attack, with a plush core, sound soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and nicely balanced finish. This is ripe, but does not get into the realm of *sur maturité* in any manner at the present time and has a very good future ahead of it. 2030-2075+. **93.**

2018 Mazoyères-Chambertin- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Mazoyères from Romaine Taupenot is even a step up from the very, very good Charmes this year. The bouquet is deep, pure and precise, offering up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, roasted meats, espresso, dark soil tones, a nice touch of the vineyard's botanicals and a discreet framing of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and exquisitely balanced, with a fine core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and impressive length and grip on the complex and refined finish. Fine juice. 2030-2075. **94.**

2018 Clos des Lambrays- Domaine Taupenot-Merme

The 2018 Clos des Lambrays is also outstanding in 2018 and I have to imagine that this was one of the first wines picked *chez* Taupenot in this vintage. The very complex nose delivers an aromatic constellation of dark berries, cassis, French roast, beautifully complex, savory elements, a gorgeous base of dark soil tones, a touch of mustard seed and a suave foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant for a 2018, with a fine core of fruit, superb length and grip and a lovely chassis of fine-grained tannins perking up the very complex finish. This is a first class example of the vintage. 2028-2075+. **95.**

Domaine Cécile Tremblay (Morey St. Denis)

Cécile Tremblay has made a beautiful range of 2018s. Her range is one of those riper, flashier sets of 2018s that have retained perfect balance, lovely soil signatures and seem destined to age long and gracefully and always deliver layer upon layer of stunning, sappy fruit tones. In fact, these 2018s remind me stylistically very much of young Henri Mayer wines in many regards, though they are riper than any that Monsieur Mayer released in his long and illustrious career. Cécile and her team started harvesting on September 4th in 2018 and notes that her wines all fall in the 13.5 percent to 14.5 percent range for octane levels, but none of them shows even a hint of “sur maturité” or heat on the palate. Instead, they are flashy, sappy wines with their fruit components firmly grounded in great expressions of terroir, with fine-grained, but firm foundations of tannin and the potential to age very long and gracefully. There are other collections of 2018 that share this flamboyant, ripe, but pure and soil-driven styles that are so apparent here chez Tremblay, and these are some of the very best wines of the vintage. Cécile varied her use of whole clusters in 2018, depending on the relative warmth of her parcels, so that a vineyard like Feusselottes in Chambolle-Musigny included a higher percentage of whole clusters than a cooler one such as her Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”, as the stems were riper in the former. I would guess that the wines that are slightly higher in octane here are the ones that included a bit less whole clusters in their fermentations in 2018, but I did not note this in my

tasting book and now cannot recall specifically if this was indeed the case. We did not taste either Madame Tremblay's Chambolle AC bottling nor the premier cru Vosne-Romanée "les Rouges Dessus" from 2018 on this visit, but the rest of the lineup was in stunning form.



Cécile Tremblay outside of her cellars in the village of Morey St. Denis.

2018 Bourgogne Côte d'Or "la Croix Blanche" Rouge- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2018 Bourgogne Côte d'Or from Madame Tremblay is a lovely example, with plenty of ripe fruit and admirable complexity for its level. The nose delivers scents of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, venison, a hint of vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with just a touch of backend tannin, fine grip and a long, balanced and quite serious finish. Good juice. 2021-2031. **88.**

2018 Morey St. Denis "Trés Girard"- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The domaine's 2018 Morey St. Denis "Trés Girard" is an excellent village wine. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a very expressive blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, roasted venison, chalky soil tones, bitter chocolate, bonfire and toasty oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and nicely ripe, with an excellent core of sappy fruit, lovely mineral undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and very refined finish. Lovely juice in the making. 2024-2055. **91.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée “Vieilles Vignes” from Cécile Tremblay is, aromatically, a dead-ringer for Henri Mayer’s Vosne *villages* bottling back in the day! The bouquet is deep, complex and very seductive, offering up scents of black cherries, black plums, gamebird, woodsmoke, a lovely base of dark soil tones and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, elegant and nicely soil-driven for a wine with such beautiful fruit tones deep down in the core. The finish is long, suavely tannic and very well-balanced, and this is going to be a beautiful bottle with sufficient bottle age, but it will take some time to blossom, as it is a bit more structured out of the blocks than the Morey “Trés Girard”. 2026-2055. **91.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Feusselottes”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2018 Feusselottes is one of the wines with a higher percentage of whole clusters in it in this vintage and the wine has really turned out beautifully. The superb nose soars from the glass in a youthful blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird, dark chocolate and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off marvelous depth at the core, with excellent focus and grip, suave tannins and a very long, bright and nascently complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2065. **93.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The vineyard of les Beaumonts is higher in elevation and hence, a bit cooler, so there were only ten percent whole clusters used for this cuvée by Cécile Tremblay in 2018, as the ripeness of the stems was not as uniform as in some of her other vineyards. The wine is flat out brilliant on both the nose and palate (and again, very much reminds me of a young Mayer wine), with the bouquet offering up a stellar combination of black plums, black raspberries, duck, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, smoky new oak and a topnote of Echézeaux-like bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with great soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and superb backend energy and grip on the very long and nascently complex finish. This is one of the best young examples of Beaumonts I have ever tasted! 2029-2065. **94.**

2018 Echézeaux- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

The 2018 Echézeaux from Domaine Cécile Tremblay is a gorgeous wine in the making. The bouquet is simply brilliant, wafting from the glass in a refined blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, a complex base of dark soil tones, roasted gamebird, a touch of fresh nutmeg, woodsmoke and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great focus and mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and stunning length and grip on the poised, well-balanced and immensely complex finish. Great juice. 2032-2085+. **96.**

2018 Chapelle-Chambertin- Domaine Cécile Tremblay

Cécile Tremblay’s bottling of Chapelle-Chambertin is all from the sector of the vineyard known as les Gémeaux, and this has more clay in the soil and produces more powerful examples of Chapelle than from the rest of the vineyard. The clay soil is also a bit cooler and retains its moisture well, so it may well have been favored a bit in the heat of 2018. In any case, the wine is truly spectacular, offering up a pure and sappy nose of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, a beautiful base of dark soil tones, nutty new oak and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and gorgeously deep at the core, with great sappy fruit woven into the great base of soil tones. The finish is ripe, very, very pure and precise, with fine-grained tannins, great focus and grip and stunning length on the perfectly balanced finish. This is a magical wine in the making, but it will need plenty of time to reach full maturity. 2035-2085+. **97.**

Chambolle-Musigny

Domaine Ghislaine Barthod (Chambolle-Musigny)

Like her husband, Louis Boillot, Ghislaine Barthod also decided to start picking early, so as to protect the potential elegance in the wines of 2018. As I tasted the Domaine Barthod wines after those of Louis Boillot, I did not ask quite as many specific questions about the start date for harvest and the like, as Ghislaine and her son Clément had just returned from a late night showing of their wines in Switzerland the day before and it was already nearly 6:30 in the evening when we started on her collection of 2018s and everyone was tired. So, I hustled through the wines and let the family get back upstairs and rest over dinner, rather than trotting out the customary range of questions out about the vintage chez Barthod. It is my distinct impression that Clément Barthod-Boillot is now fully involved with all aspects of the viticulture and crafting of the wines from both his parents domaines (Domaine Barthod and Domaine Louis Boillot), and this is very much a multi-generational, family domaine these days, and it was Clément who led us through the tasting of the superb 2018s from his mother's estate this year. The 2018s chez Barthod are gorgeous examples of the vintage, with each bottling really showing its underlying terroir, in addition to delivering beautiful depth of pure and sappy fruit tones. Some of the wines are very black fruity in personality this year, others just awash in red fruit tones (such as the Chambolle "Charmes"), and all speak very clearly of their foundation of terroir. The wines are not particularly high in alcohol (one would expect between thirteen and 13.5 percent max- but again, I did not ask for specifics in this regard) and are very classical in personality, with ripe and perfectly-integrated tannins destined to carry the wines nicely far into the future. None of these wines are likely to drink on the early side, as they are properly structured, but they have all the lovely fruit tones of a solar vintage that was handled perfectly from start to finish.

2018 Bourgogne Côte d'Or "Bons Batons"- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2018 Bons Batons is an excellent example of the vintage, delivering a bright and juicy bouquet of red and black cherries, chocolate, a bit of gamebird, soil tones and a lovely floral topnote redolent of both violets and lavender. On the palate the wine is full, pure and sappy at the core, with a fine, soil-driven backend and just a touch of tannin on the long finish. Good juice. 2021-2035. **88.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The Domaine Barthod Chambolle AC is also a fine bottle in 2018, sharing the same purity and sappy core as many of the top premier crus here. The nose wafts from the glass in a fine blend of red and black cherries, a nice touch of plumminess, chalky soil, *pigeon*, mustard seed and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very precise, with a good core of fruit, lovely soil signature, with ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. 2028-2060. **90+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny "les Châtelots"- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

There is a change in the bottling of Châtelots in 2018, as the domaine decided that only the production from the oldest vines in their parcel (ages fifty to sixty years) would go into the premier cru bottling, with the younger vines in this plot being blended into the Chambolle AC this year. The result is more depth and sappiness at the core from the old vines, with the nose delivering a fine blend of red and black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, limestone soil, gamebird, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with fine transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, promising and potentially velvety finish. This will be excellent in due course. 2026-2065. **92+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Combottes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2018 Combottes from Domaine Barthod is another lovely premier cru in the making. The bouquet is pure, precise and classically Chambolle in its mix of black cherries, chalky soil tones, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, just a touch of vanillin oak, woodsmoke and a topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is refined, full-bodied and beautifully deep at the core, with impressive focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. This will be a delight to drink in another eight years or so and age very gracefully. 2026-2065. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

In contrast to the more black fruity Combottes, the 2018 Charmes *chez* Barthod is all perfume and red fruit. The nose wafts from the glass in a very elegant blend of cherries, blood orange, red plums, chalky soil tones, gamebird, vanillin oak and a gently smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully detailed, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the poised and promising finish. 2028-2065. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Beaux Bruns”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2018 Beaux Bruns from the Barthod family is excellent, with a more black fruity personality than the Charmes, but sharing the same lovely sense of purity and sappy fruit down at the core. The bouquet delivers a fine aromatic constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, floral tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in overall personality, despite a very sappy core of fruit, lovely mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic, tangy and utterly seamless finish. This is really a beautiful wine in the making. 2030-2065. **93.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Noirots”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The 2018 les Noirots bottlings from Ghislaine Barthod is an excellent wine in this, its second vintage being bottled on its own at the estate. Readers may recall that these vines are sixty-six years of age, so they fared very well in this vintage, offering up a fine bouquet of sappy red and black cherries, raw cocoa, chalky soil tones, roses, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and quite mineral in personality (particularly for a wine with such lovely sappiness at the core!), with fine-grained tannins and a long, soil-driven finish. Though there is lovely depth of fruit here in the mid-palate, the wine does not come across as quite so sappy at the core as the Beaux Bruns, but rather as a wine more defined today by its underlying minerality. It is a fine bottle. 2027-2060. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Sentiers”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

The premier cru of les Sentiers, located right on the Morey-Chambolle border, also made its debut here in 2017, and these vines are even older than those in Noirots, as they were eighty-six years of age in 2018. Sentiers, to my palate, has always been as much defined by its proximity to Morey as its being placed in Chambolle, and this is really a hybrid *terroir* that shares classic aspects of both communes. The 2018 version from the Barthods is excellent, offering up a lovely bouquet of cherries, strawberries, mustard seed, a fine base of soil, gamebird and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and nicely soil-driven, with a good core, suave tannins and a nice sense of reserve on the backend that augurs very well for its future evolution in bottle. 2028-2060+. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Baudes”- Domaine Ghislaine Barthod

If you love the style of Bonnes-Mares, but would like to pay premier cru prices, the 2018 les Baudes from Domaine Barthod would be a good option to try to find. The bouquet is pure and beautifully expressive out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a mix of sappy red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, a complex base of chalky soil tones, violets and vanillin

oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with marvelous purity and transparency, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and very, very promising finish. This is stellar. 2032-2065+. **93+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Gruenchers” - Domaine Gislaine Barthod

The 2018 Gruenchers *chez* Barthod is another absolutely superb wine. The bouquet is deep, pure and sappy, offering up notes of plum, red and black cherries, a touch of cocoa powder, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil, mustard seed, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full and classy, with great delineation and intensity of flavor, plenty of backend mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic and beautifully balanced finish. This is gorgeous Gruenchers in the making, but it will need a full decade to start to really blossom! 2028-2065. **93+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées” - Domaine Gislaine Barthod

In a cellar full of very equal and all beautiful premier crus, the 2018 les Fuées may well be my favorite this year (or the first among equals). The bouquet is so beautifully expressive out of the blocks, despite the wine still being quite youthful, as it offers up scents of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, a beautifully refined base of minerality, gamebird, violets, new oak and just a whisper of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, fine-grained, ripe tannins and great length and grip on the tangy and perfectly balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2070. **94**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Veroilles” - Domaine Gislaine Barthod

The 2018 les Veroilles from Domaine Barthod is also very strong in this vintage, with a more black fruity personality than the past few wines. The bouquet delivers scents of black cherries, plums, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, plenty of soil elements, smoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, youthful finish. This seems a tad riper in personality than any of these other premier crus, and I am not sure if this was just the stage that the wine was in at the time of my mid-November visit, or if this is truly the case with the Veroilles this year. In the context of the vintage, it is certainly not a particularly ripe wine, but it was sowing a bit more fruit-driven in style than any of the other premier crus *chez* Barthod. 2030-2065. **92**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras” - Domaine Gislaine Barthod

The 2018 les Cras from Gislaine Barthod is absolutely classic in personality this year and fully underscores just how great this *terroir* can be. The beautiful bouquet delivers a combination of sappy black cherries and plums, raw cocoa, gamebird, a very complex base of limestone minerality, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and exquisitely balanced, with a superb core of fruit, excellent transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins an impressive backend mineral drive on the refined and vibrant finish. This will take plenty of time to fully blossom, but it is destined to be an absolutely brilliant rendition of les Cras when it is ready to drink. 2032-2075. **94**.

Domaine Louis Boillot (Chambolle-Musigny)

Louis Boillot was one of the vignerons in the Côte d’Or who decided that it would be foolhardy to wait to start picking in the blazing heat of September of 2018, so he and his team were out in his parcel of vines in the premier crus of les Angles and Caillerets in Volnay very early in the morning of August 25th to get started picking in this vintage. As he has a wide variety of different parcels in both the Côte de Beaune and the Côte de Nuits, he benefitted from his plots of vines in the northern half of the region ripening a bit later than those in the south, so

that he was able to bring in his last grapes from the Côte de Nuits on the 6th of September, which was before many of his neighbors had even gotten started picking! So, like Denis Bachelet, he was one of the earliest pickers in 2018 and when I visited him in mid-November, he was extremely happy that he and his wife, Ghislaine Barthod, had both started harvesting early in this year. Consequently, Monsieur Boillot's 2018s are amongst the most beautifully elegant, transparent and classically-proportioned wines that one will find anywhere in the Côte d'Or in this vintage, with a good underpinning of tannins, lovely soil signatures and impressive bounce and transparency for the vintage. Louis related that late every afternoon, after the grapes had been brought in, crushed and started their fermentations, he would head out in his car and make the rounds of his parcels that were not yet picked and take samples of grapes and make his decision on which vineyard would be harvested the next morning, as the sugars were moving fast enough by early September that a vineyard that was not ready for picking on Monday might be prime to be harvested by Wednesday.

Monsieur Boillot also mentioned that it was a very different harvest at the end of August than it was in September, as the blazing heat did not arrive until the latter month and mornings in late August were still cool enough that one needed to wear a jacket when first getting out in the vines to start collecting grapes. This was most emphatically not the case by the end of the first week of September! As a result of picking early and keeping a sharp eye on sugar levels, the 2018s chez Boillot are not particularly higher in alcohol than were his 2017s, and though some can be a bit chewy with well-integrated tannins, they are all shapely, transparent and destined to age beautifully in the cellar. Of course, Louis Boillot had a bit of an advantage in 2018 in that he has tons and tons of very old vines, which naturally regulate their yields, so that he was not faced with the dilemma of having to let sugars soar, so that tannins could ripen up more completely, which was often the case with those with younger vines and much larger crop loads. The results are some of the prettiest, most complex and transparent red wines to be found anywhere in the Côte d'Or in 2018, with beautifully pure and sappy fruit components, coupled to very soil-driven and ripely tannic palates. The wines will not drink right out of the blocks, as despite their beautiful and evocative sappiness, these are not fruit-forward wines and they have plenty of tannin to age long and gracefully. My guess is that they may well shut down a bit after bottling, as they are not fat wines (just beautifully sappy), but that gorgeous fruit is buried down at the core of these wines and when they are ready to drink, they are going to be absolutely stunning wines!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Louis Boillot

Though the Bourgogne vines were some of the last collected by Monsieur Boillot, the wine has the good chewy foundation that is found in all of his bottlings in 2018. The nose is ripe, pure and quite promising for its level, offering up scents of black cherries, dark chocolate, gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, with a bit of backend tannin, a good core and pretty good length and grip. A fine example- just give it a few years to blossom. 2022-2032. **88.**

2018 Côte de Nuits Villages- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Côte de Nuits Villages from Louis Boillot is really lovely in this vintage, with fine nascent complexity evident on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, dark soil tones (this is all from the village of Brochon, where Denis Bachelet also has vines), dark chocolate, a bit of grilled meats, just a touch of oak and a

smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and impressively transparent, with modest backend tannin, good focus and grip and a long, tangy finish. This is really a lovely bottle and hard to peg as a 2018! 2023-2040+. **90.**



Louis Boillot, in his second cellar in Chambolle, where he does the élevage for his various Beaujolais Crus.

2018 Fixin “les Herbues”- Domaine Louis Boillot

I believe that 2018 will be the first vintage where the name of the *lieu à dit* will appear on the label of Monsieur Boillot’s bottling of Fixin. This is very refined for a young example from Fixin, offering up a complex nose of black raspberries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, venison, black minerality and just a touch of oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy, with fine mid-palate depth, fine-grained tannins and nice backend mineral drive on the long and surprisingly classy finish. Good juice. 2026-2050. **90+.**

2018 Beaune “Epenottes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Beaune “Epenottes” from the domaine is a fine example of how well older vines did in this vintage, as these vines are seventy-two years old and they have produced a very pure and classically ripe wine. The bouquet is quite lovely, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a lovely touch of savory elements, a good base of soil and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and impressively soil-driven, with lovely focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and very good length on the complex and tangy finish. This is a really good *villages*! 2026-2050+. **90+.**

2018 Pommard- Domaine Louis Boillot

One often thinks of young Pommard as a bit rustic out of the blocks, but this is emphatically not the case with any of the Pommards in the cellar *chez* Boillot in 2018. The Pommard AC shows great purity on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering a sappy mix of plums, red and black cherries, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and impressive length and grip on the balanced and promising finish. This has the structure of Pommard out of the blocks, but in a very sophisticated manner that is quite a far cry from the rusticity many associate with this commune. In due course, this will be an excellent bottle. 2030-2065. **91.**

2018 Volnay “les Grands Poisots”- Domaine Louis Boillot

Like so many of the 2018s *chez* Boillot, the Volnay AC is already beautifully expressive aromatically, though still a young wine and has a lovely veneer of structure that will ask for a bit of patience for the palate to catch up with the nose. The bouquet is very pure and classy, offering up scents of blackberries, cassis, woodsmoke, espresso, gamebird and a fine base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with fine mineral undertow, suave, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. This is really, really good *villages* in the making! 2028-2055. **91.**

2018 Volnay “les Angles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

One of the reasons that Louis Boillot started his picking in les Angles in 2018 is that he has “young vines” here, which in his case are forty-two years of age! By picking on August 25th, he has crafted a bottling here that comes in at an even thirteen percent octane and is utterly classic in profile, with the nose delivering a fine blend of red and black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of new oak and a lovely topnote of juniper berry. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shapely, with a sappy core of black fruit, excellent soil signature, seamless tannins and a long, vibrant and nascently complex finish. A lovely bottle of Volnay. 2030-2070. **92.**

2018 Volnay “les Brouillards”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Domaine Boillot les Brouillards is also a terrific wine in the making. These are seventy year-old vines and they have produced a stellar bottle, with the nose offering up scents of dark berries, cassis, bitter chocolate, a marvelous base of soil tones, *pigeon*, a touch of balsam bough and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, lovely balance, ripe tannins and a long, complex and really classy finish. 2033-2070+. **92+.**

2018 Volnay “les Caillerets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Caillerets from Louis Boillot comes in at 13.2 percent octane and offers up a simply beautiful bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, currant leaf, chalky minerality, a lovely array of spice tones, *pigeon* and a dollop of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with great nascent complexity, fine-grained tannins and a proper sense of reserve on the backend that augurs very, very well for long-term cellaring. 2033-2075+. **93+.**

2018 Pommard “les Fremiers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

Louis Boillot makes very elegant examples of Pommard and this is very evident in the 2018 vintage, where the potential to craft coarse and over the top wines was so pervasive. His 2018 les Fremiers is an excellent premier cru in the making, delivering a lovely young nose of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, a lovely dollop of fresh sage, a complex base of soil tones,

discreet new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure on the attack and sappy at the core, with a full-bodied format that is impeccably balanced, ripely tannic, long and perfectly balanced. This will need time in the cellar to blossom properly, but it will be an outstanding wine in due course. 2033-2075+. **93.**

2018 Pommard “les Croix Noires”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 les Croix Noires from Monsieur Boillot is likely one of the finest red wines made in the Côte de Beaune in this vintage- certainly one of the best two or three that I tasted! The wine is stunningly complex aromatically out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a gorgeous blend of red and black cherries, plums, gorgeous spice tones, raspberries, a very refined base of minerality and just a hint of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth of sappy fruit, with refined, buried tannins and a very long, stunning finish. This is a flat out brilliant wine! 2032-2075+. **95.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Chambolle *villages* is very fine example, offering up a sappy nose of red plums, red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, chalky soil tones and a nice smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is very pure, elegant and fullish, with a lovely core of fruit, good soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, classy finish. A lovely Chambolle AC. 2028-2055. **90+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin- Domaine Louis Boillot

As fine as the 2018 Chambolle *villages* may be *chez* Boillot, the Gevrey AC may be just a shade finer! The refined nose delivers scents of red and black cherries, grilled meats, mustard seed, black minerality, woodsmoke and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, tangy and very well-balanced finish. Fine juice. 2028-2055. **91.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Evocelles”- Domaine Louis Boillot

As readers already know, I love the *terroir* of les Evocelles, and the 2018 example from Louis Boillot is a marvelous rendition of this lovely vineyard. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of black raspberries, dark chocolate, black cherries, *pigeon*, a hint of current leaf, a gentle touch of new oak and a complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and marvelously transparent this year, with a fine core, superb focus and grip, suave tannins and a long, elegant and potentially silky finish. 2028-2060. **92+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Champonnets”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Champonnets from Monsieur Boillot is beautifully red fruity in personality this year (which is pretty rare in this vintage!), delivering a fine aromatic constellation of cherries, strawberries, a touch of blood orange, mustard seed, a complex base of soil, roses and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and precise, with a good core, lovely backend mineral drive, ripe tannins and impressive length and grip on the promising finish. A lovely Gevrey premier cru in the making. 2031-2075+. **92+.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cherbaudes”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “les Cherbaudes” from Louis Boillot is terrific and notably elegant out of the blocks, which is seldom the case with this particular premier cru, which in many vintages can start out life a bit grumpy. Not so in 2018, as the wine offers up a very classy bouquet of red and black cherries, dark chocolate, grilled meats, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a bit of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very pure finish. 2031-2080. **93.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Louis Boillot

The 2018 Pruliers *chez* Boillot is also superb, but about ten percent of the domaine’s parcel was touched by the hail in July and so the wine is a bit chewier out of the blocks than any of the other premier crus in the cellars here. The potential here is still excellent, as the wine delivers a nose of red and black cherries, venison, complex soil tones, mustard seed, a touch of currant leaf and a discreet framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with fine nascent complexity, good soil signature, firm, buried tannins and a long, youthful and very well-balanced finish. This will be a long-distance runner, but it will need fully fifteen years of bottle age to really let the tannins start to fall away. 2033-2080. **93.**



The entrance to Domaine Mugnier, resplendent in autumn colors in fall of 2018; this year it was pouring rain.

Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier has produced a lovely set of 2018s, but it is really a tale of two vintages here at the domaine, for as I mentioned in the introduction, Monsieur Mugnier’s fine premier cru monopole of the Clos de la Maréchale was the epicenter for the two brutal blasts of hail and torrential rainstorms in July of 2018, so this vineyard faced far more challenges than the estate’s parcels in Chambolle-Musigny. When I asked Monsieur Mugnier about the ferocity of the storm and the flash flood-like waters pouring over the wall at the bottom of the Clos de la Maréchale in the wake of the second hail storm, he commented “that cannot be right, as we have outlets for the water in the wall there, but I really do not know, as I was not

here in Burgundy when the storm hit.” The account of the deluge in the Clos de la Maréchale came from another vigneron in Nuits St. Georges and I do not doubt its accuracy, so this just underscores how hard the summer of 2018 was on the vineyards in Prémieux and surrounding villages because of the hail damage. For Monsieur Mugnier, he started picking his Chambolle vineyards on August 28th in Bonnes-Mares, brought in all of the fruit in Chambolle, before moving on to the Clos de la Maréchale, as the shredded vegetation and regrowth here had put the vineyard seriously behind the Chambolles for maturity. Eventually, the Clos de la Maréchale was picked on September 8th in 2018. Consequently, the Chambolle wines here are all around 13.5 percent octane in 2018, while the Clos de la Maréchale rouge comes in at 14.5 percent. With the release of the 2018s this year, the 2013 Musigny will also come out of hibernation and be included in the allocations for the domaine’s clients. As Monsieur Mugnier noted, “it is five years now, I have done my part, and though the wine is still way too young to really be drinking, at least it has had some bottle age and if it ends up on a restaurant wine list in a few more months, one will be able to find at least a bit of its true character.” We were graciously treated to a taste of the 2013 Musigny to finish up our tasting and remind us just how good the wine is going to be, and for those with some in their allocations, it would still be a shrewd move to let it continue to age for many more years to come!

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2018 Chambolle AC from Domaine Mugnier had been racked a couple of weeks prior to my visit, but was showing very nicely in mid-November. The wine offers up a pretty, ripe and sappy nose of red and black cherries, chocolate, gamebird, chalky soil tones. just a hint of new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with just a bit of backend tannin and a long, tangy and nicely plush and complex finish. Good juice. 2026-2050+. **90.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Fuées”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

I really like the domaine’s les Fuées in 2018, which is plush, precise and nicely soil-driven at the same time. The bouquet is quite classy, delivering a blend of black cherries, plums, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, beautiful spice tones, chalky soil and a bit of cedar. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, vibrant and quite pure, with a good core of fruit, lovely structural tension and grip, suave, ripe tannins and a very long, complex and classy finish. This is a lovely wine, but it is properly structured in the style of the vintage and is going to want at least a decade in the cellar to start to soften and really drink with generosity. 2030-2065. **92.**

2018 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2018 Domaine Mugnier Bonnes-Mares is a beautiful wine in the making. This is deep, ripe and precise on both the nose and palate, with the aromatic constellation consisting of black cherries, sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, a complex base of *terres blanches* soil tones, woodsmoke and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and gorgeously transparent out of the blocks, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine-grained, buried tannins and outstanding focus and balance on the long, nascently complex and really refined finish. This is going to be marvelous bottle of Bonnes-Mares in the fullness of time. 2033-2080. **94.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The bouquet of the 2018 les Amoureuses *chez* Mugnier is composed of a beautiful, musky perfume of red and black cherries, plums, violets, chalky soil tones, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a lovely, sappy core of fruit, lovely soil

signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, tangy and perfectly balanced finish. This is a beautiful, beautiful wine in the making. 2033-2075. **94+**.

2018 Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2018 Musigny from Domaine Mugnier is a gorgeous example of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, a great base of complex soil tones, woodsmoke, cedar and a pungent topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and sappy, with lovely backend mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and a lovely sense of grace on the long, intensely flavored and vibrant finish. This is a puppy and will not be released for many years to come, but it seems destined to be one of the finest red wines of the 2018 vintage. 20235-2090. **97**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale”- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Not only was the 2018 Clos de la Maréchale picked more than a week later than most of the other wines in the stable in this vintage, but it is taking its sweet time evolving in the cellars as well and is quite a bit behind the other wines here. Though this wine is fully 14.5 percent octane in 2018, it does not show it on either the nose or palate, as there are no signs of backend heat or notes of *sur maturité* here, but just plenty of muscle, depth of fruit and broad shoulders. The primary nose offers up scents of sappy black cherries and plums, venison, mustard seed, a fine base of soil, woodsmoke and just a whisper of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, powerful and tannic, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine nascent complexity and a very long, chewy and adolescent finish. The wine seems quite well-balanced for its dimensions and should be a good drink when it is mature, but it is a big-boned wine and it will take plenty of bottle age to start to soften. At this point, I really do not have a strong sense of just how good it will be, as it is just too adolescent at the present time to get a good read on its future size and shape. But, given what Mother Nature hurled at the Clos de la Maréchale in 2018, this is an unequivocal success! 2033-2065+. **88-91**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Clos de la Maréchale” Blanc- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

The 2018 Clos de la Maréchale Blanc is a very nice bottle, and though it is nicely balanced, it is a ripe wine that seems likely to drink at its best right from release and will probably not make particularly old bones. The bouquet wafts from the glass in an inviting blend of peach, tangerine, almond, chalky soil tones and a hint of honey. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and well-balanced, with good acids and grip, a fine core and a long, powerful and very nicely balanced finish. 2020-2030. **90**.

2013 Musigny- Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Guess who is stepping out of the cellars next year! After the ripe and plush 2018s, it was quite refreshing to return to a vintage of classically-proportioned wines with this 2013 Musigny. The bouquet is still youthful in its inclination, but it is beautiful and starting to show a bit of its inherent underlying complexity in its mix of black cherries, sappy red plums, fresh herb tones, a very complex base of chalky soil elements, woodsmoke and the first signs of the black truffles to come with more bottle age. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with tangy acids, outstanding focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. The domaine has held onto this wine for five years' worth of bottle age, and it will be approachable when released, but it is still a long, long way from real maturity and deserves to still be tucked away in the cellar for at least another dozen years before it is drunk! 2030-2085. **95**.

Domaine Georges Roumier (Chambolle-Musigny)

Christophe Roumier has made a lovely set of 2018s, cut in the riper style of some of the most successful wines of the vintage, such as those at Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg for instance, Christophe and his picking team started bringing in fruit on September 5th in 2018, and the resulting wines range from 13.1 percent alcohol up to 14.2 percent, so on the lower end of the scale in this solar vintage. None of the 2018s had been racked yet at the time of my visit in mid-November and Christophe was of the opinion that he would probably not do any rackings for the 2018s until he made the final assemblage of the wines in the spring. As the stems were often nicely ripe in this vintage, he used around a third of whole clusters for most of his 2018s, and this has worked very nicely with the wines and they show lovely potential for long-term cellaring. This is a pretty tannic vintage chez Roumier this year, as is the case with many of the most successful domaines in the region, and though the wines are often plush with deep and sappy fruit tones, there is also a good chassis of tannin in all of the bottlings here that augurs well for long lives in bottle. The 2018s here have broader shoulders and more overt muscle than is the case with the beautifully transparent 2017s, but there is also plenty of soil signature in the '18s and the wines are beautifully balanced and will drink very well once they have had a chance to blossom properly. If memory serves me correctly (I am writing up my notes here nearly a month after I was in the cellars), Christophe felt that the wines of 2018 are a bit more powerful in personality than his 1999s (which another taster in the cellar possibly compared the '18s to in style), and more likely to be cut from the stylistic cloth of the 1990s here- which certainly have a lot of fans!

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2018 Chambolle AC from Domaine Roumier comes in around 13.4 percent octane and included thirty-five percent whole clusters in this vintage. The resulting wine is deep and promising, offering up a sappy nose of black cherries, plums, chocolate, gamebird, a good base of soil and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full, complex and quite long, with a good signature of soil, a rock solid core, fine-grained tannins and a long, primary and nicely balanced finish. This is riper in personality, but is fresh and pure at the same time. 2027-2055. **90+**.

2018 Morey St. Denis “Clos de la Bussière”- Domaine Georges Roumier

I quite liked the 2018 Clos de la Bussière, as the wine has excellent focus and purity to go along with a firm foundation of tannin. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful blend of sappy dark berries, black cherries, raw cocoa, venison, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, really solid at the core, with ripe, buried tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced and promising finish. This will need more than a decade in the bottle to start to shed its tannins, but it is going to be long-lived and a very, very good vintage of Clos de la Bussière when it is really ready to drink. 2031-2060. **92**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Combottes”- Domaine Georges Roumier

Christophe Roumier's 2018 Combottes has turned out very nicely indeed in this vintage, as the sappy quality of the fruit this year really works well with the lovely soil signature in the wine. The aromatic constellation here is very classy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, chalky soil tones, a hint of orange peel, cocoa, gamebird and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely tangy in personality, with plenty of sap in the center of the wine,

ripe, seamless tannins and fine length and grip on the nascently complex and very well balanced finish. This is lovely in 2018. 2029-2060. **92.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Cras”- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2018 les Cras is the highest octane wine in the Roumier cellars this year, as the wine comes in around 14.2 percent alcohol, and it is a very powerful and ripe rendition of this great *terroir*. The bouquet is sappy and extroverted, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, chocolate, just a touch of soil and a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and broad-shouldered, with a plush core of fruit, ripe, firm tannins and very good grip on the long and primary finish. This is the most powerful young vintage of les Cras that I have tasted *chez* Roumier, and the wine was the most difficult to really get a read on at the time of my visit, as it was still adolescent and really not showing its customary early complexity that one usually finds in November. Consequently, I have scored the wine in a range, as it was a bit on the grumpy side. 2030-2060. **89-91?**

2018 Echézeaux- Christophe Roumier

Though this is the third official vintage for Christophe’s new Echézeaux bottling, this is really only the first one that he has been able to see from start to finish, as the 2016 was severely frost-damaged and the 2017 still showed some of the effects of the frost, at least to my palate. So, this lovely 2018 is really the first window into the true potential of this bottling and it is very, very good indeed. These are fairly old vines, having been planted in 1956, and there are two barrels of the Echézeaux in the cellars this year, with one of the casks new. The bouquet offers up a lovely, ripe and black fruity blend of plums, sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark, chocolate, a touch of lavender, fresh thyme, dark soil tones and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and focused, with a sappy core, lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a nice sense of reserve on the long and nascently complex finish. This is fine juice in the making. 2032-2075. **93.**

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

While, qualitatively, the 2018 and 2017 versions of Charmes-Chambertin from Christophe Roumier are quite similar, they are quite different stylistically. The 2018 is deeper and more powerful in profile, with a far more black fruity personality than the red fruity and beautifully transparent 2017 example. The bouquet here is deep and sappy, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, vinessmoke and a nice touch of cedary wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with really fine soil signature, chewy tannins and fine focus and grip on the long and youthful finish. This will need extended bottle age to start to blossom, but it will be a good drink when it is ready to go. 2032-2075. **93.**

2018 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Christophe Roumier

The 2018 Ruchottes-Chambertin *chez* Roumier is also showing excellent potential for down the road, with perhaps a bit more refinement to its tannin texture, but the same good combination of pure, sappy fruit and lovely *typicité*. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a fine blend of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, woodsmoke, grilled meats, woodsmoke, fresh herb tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth of sappy fruit, with good mineral drive, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, poised and potentially velvety finish. This will be an excellent wine in due course, but like the Charmes, it will need time in the cellar to soften up. 2032-2080. **93+.**

2018 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2018 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine Roumier is going to be a very, very long-lived wine and it is going to be superb when it reaches maturity. The bouquet is precise, deep and sappy, offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, gamebird, a complex base of limestone soil tones, woodsmoke, a refined base of vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of lavender. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a firm, backwards chassis of ripe tannin, excellent focus and grip and a very, very long, pure and immensely promising finish. This is great young Bonnes-Mares, but be patient. 2035-2100. **95+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Georges Roumier

Christophe Roumier’s 2018 les Amoureuses is also a beautiful wine in the making. It is more perfumed out of the blocks than the Bonnes-Mares, but still has plenty of underlying structure and will also be a serious long-distance runner. The excellent bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of sappy red and black cherries, a touch of red plum, roses, *pigeon*, complex minerality, violets and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and nicely reserved in personality, with a good core, lovely transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a very long, nascently complex and impeccably balanced finish. 2032-2075+. **95+**.

2018 Musigny- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2018 Musigny *chez* Roumier is another great wine. The stunning young nose is pure, refined and nicely expressive out of the blocks, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, a hint of raspberry, gamebird, a beautiful base of chalky minerality, raw cocoa, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, buried, fine-grained tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, complex and stellar finish. 2035-2100. **96**.

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Georges Roumier

The 2018 Corton-Charlemagne from Domaine Roumier was bottled right before the harvest of 2019 and was showing quite nicely at the time of my mid-November visit. The nose is ripe and very expressive already, offering up a complex constellation of pear, white peach, dusty limestone minerality, a touch of vanillin oak and a topnote of white lilies. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, ripe and vibrant, with a good core of fresh fruit, good, solid acidity and lovely length and grip on the wide open and complex finish. Good juice. 2020-2045. **93**.

Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé (Chambolle-Musigny)

The Domaine de Comte de Vogüé started picking quite early in 2018, as François Millet and his team were out in the vineyards on August 30th to start bringing in grapes in this hot summer. They started by bringing in the younger vine fruit in Musigny (which goes on to become the Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru” bottling) and then moved along briskly through the older vines in the grand crus and les Amoureuses before settling in to finish by picking the Chambolle AC vines. The wines were in the midst of their racking at the time of my visit on November 18th, which made them a bit harder to taste, so I have scored any that had just been racked within a range this year to be fair to them. The Bonnes-Mares and Musigny Vieilles Vignes were sampled from barrels that had not yet been racked and were spot on, so they have not been scored within a range and point towards the wines that had been racked already probably scoring at the top of their own respective ranges when they have fully settled back in from the “soutirage”. Alcohol levels at the domaine all fall between 13.5 and fourteen percent this year, according to Monsieur Millet, and interestingly, the yields in 2018 at the domaine are actually a bit lower than in 2017 (which is hardly the norm in the Côte de Nuits in 2018!), with

the crop averaging only thirty-nine hectoliters per hectare here this year. Malolactic fermentations were not particularly brisk to finish for the 2018s, as the cellars are kept cool and Monsieur Millet noted that the malos here did not finish up until July and August of 2019.



2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2018 Chambolle *villages* had been racked two weeks ahead of my visit and was not in a particularly good mood after the fact, but there are some very good constituent components here and this seems likely to be very tasty in due course. There is plenty of pure and sappy fruit on display on both the nose and palate here, with the bouquet quite black fruity this year in its mix of black cherries, blueberries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, smoke and a deft base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and tangy structurally, with a sappy core of fruit, suave tannins and a long, promising finish. I have to believe this will be a lovey village wine when it is ready to drink, but it has a good chassis of tannin and will probably need at least a decade to blossom. 2028-2055. **89-90.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Domaine de Georges de Comte de Vogüé

The 2018 young vine Musigny bottling from Comte de Vogüé had also just been racked a short time before my visit, so it was not at its best for tasting, but it is easy to see that this too has good potential. Despite this being the first parcel picked, it is clear that this is also the ripest wine in the cellars here this year, as the bouquet offers up a sappy and ripe blend of black raspberries, black cherries, dark chocolate, hung game, a good base of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the

wine is deep, full-bodied, adolescent and sappy at the core, with ripe, buried tannins and a long, plush finish. This is even a bit less on form than the *villages* after its racking (it was racked a few days later), but it should turn out quite nicely. 2030-2060. **89-91+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Amoureuses”- Domaine Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2018 les Amoureuses was also in its post-racking recovery phase, so was out of sorts at the time of my visit. The wine is quite black fruity at the present time, offering up a bouquet of blackberries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a good base of soil, gamebird and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very primary in personality, with a good core, more fine-grained and seamless tannins than in the Premier Cru bottling, very good length and grip and impressive lift on the finish. It is still rather chunky and unfocused from its recent racking (naturally), but there are some very good elements here and I am sure that once everything snaps back into place after the racking, it will be a very, very good bottle. 2033-2075. **91-93.**

2018 Bonnes-Mares- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2018 Bonnes-Mares from Domaine de Comte de Vogüé had not yet been racked, so it was the first wine in the cellar where one could really see the size and shape of the vintage here in a proper perspective. This is going to be a lovely wine, as it delivers a fine aromatic constellation of black plums, black cherries, blueberries, dark soil tones, venison, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely sappiness and mineral undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, youthful and vibrant finish. This reminds me a bit of the 1993 Bonnes-Mares here, though I am not sure why, as 1993 was a cooler year and 2018 is a solar vintage, but there are some structural similarities and the same sappy, black fruity personality that I find attractive in both vintages. The 2018 Bonnes-Mares will take plenty of time to blossom, but it is superb potential. 2035-2085. **94.**

2018 Musigny “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine de Comte de Georges de Vogüé

The 2018 Musigny Vieilles Vignes was also in fine form at the time of my visit, as the racking for this cuvée was just starting and there were plenty of untouched casks to choose from for sampling. The wine is very deep and still very primary on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a sappy blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke, soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth of sappy fruit, with good mineral drive, ripe, seamless and buried tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, focused and classy finish. All this needs is time in the cellar! 2038-2085+. **95.**

Vougeot and Gilly-lès-Citeaux

Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat (Vougeot)

Charles van Canneyt has fashioned a very strong set of 2018s. He and his team started picking on September 5th in this year in the vineyard of Murgers on the northern side of Nuits St. Georges (and untouched by the hail damage in the vineyards south of the center of town) and then moved on briskly to all of the grand crus. The wines all tend to be between 13.5 and fourteen percent octane here in 2018, with, for example, the Murgers at 13.8 percent and the Clos Vougeot at 13.9 percent alcohol on the higher side and most wines around 13.5 or 13.6 percent. The malolactic fermentations here were some of the slowest in all of Burgundy in this vintage, as Monsieur van Canneyt does not like rapid malos and tends to keep his cellars cooler to allow the malos to take place over a more prolonged period of time, so that most wines did not completely finish their malolactic fermentations until July of 2019. Though the ripeness levels amongst the wines are fairly uniform in 2018, their styles vary a bit, with a few quite like young,

1990 red Burgundies, with plenty of depth of fruit and soil signatures, but with slightly more “roasted” personalities than in most vintages here, while others are fresh, vibrant and sappy at the core, but not quite as marked by those torrid end of summer growing conditions. Other wines here are structured, muscular and quite pure, but in need of long cellaring to really start to blossom and were quite hunkered down at the time of my visit. However, despite the slight stylistic variations here, the wines all share high quality, and while I liked the style of some bottlings more than others this year, they were all quite similar in qualitative terms and are certainly successes for this vintage. And that cannot be said of every cellar in 2018!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

This has already been bottled, as is customary, a few months prior to my visit, but was showing nicely in early November. The wine comes in at 13.2 percent octane and offers up a ripe and wide open bouquet of baked red and black cherries, chocolate, a nice touch of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a very good core for Bourgogne, with good focus and balance and just a whisper of backend tannin on the reasonably long finish. This is a good example that will drink well from release. 2020-2030. **87.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Chambolle AC was one of the last wines to finish its malo in the cellars this year and this wine was perhaps still a bit grumpy as a result. The aromatics here show just a touch of the heat of summer in its slightly roasted (like a 1990 red Burg) sheen to the notes of black cherries, black raspberries, a bit of plum, bitter chocolate, hung game, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a good core of fruit, with fine focus and grip, moderate backend tannins and a long, well-balanced finish. This is only 13.5 percent octane, so it is not an overripe wine by any stretch of the imagination, but it seems likely to always have a bit of that 1990-like personality. 2026-2050+. **89.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée *villages* from Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat was more on form and seemed a bit fresher in profile than the Chambolle, but it finished up its malo sooner and may just have been a bit more on form. The bouquet is ripe, pure and classy, offering up scents of black raspberries, dark soil tones, espresso, Vosne spices, woodsmoke and a touch of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows a lovely synthesis of ripe black fruit and minerality. The finish is long, poised and suavely tannic, with impressive focus and grip. Good juice. 2026-2050+. **90+.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Au Bas de Combe”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The *lieu à dit* of Au Bas de Combe lies on the northern side of Nuits St. Georges and was happily unaffected by the hail in July. The 2018 version from Monsieur van Canneyt is an excellent village wine, delivering a complex and very precise nose of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil, gamebird and smoky overtones. On the palate the wine is pure, full and vibrant, with a lovely core, fine-grained tannins and nicely transparent on the long, complex and very classy finish. The proximity to Vosne is quite evident in this wine this year. 2028-2055. **90+.**

2018 Vougeot “Petits Vougeots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Petits Vougeots is also very good *chez* Hudelot, but this wine was far more primary and was not showing the same precision on either the nose and palate as the lovely Au Bas de Combe at the time of my visit on November 6th. The aromatic constellation offers up notes of red and black cherries, plums, chalky soil tones, *pigeon*, chocolate and mustard seed. On

the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely balanced, but a bit fruit-driven at the present time. The finish is long, ripely tannic and promising, but today, this is still a bit adolescent and is not all that happy to be tasted. I am accustomed in most vintages to have this wine's great chalky base of soil front and center in the wine, but that is not yet the case with the 2018. 2028-2060. **89-90+?**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Murgers”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Though the 2018 Murgers here is 13.8 percent octane, it is a very pure and plummy wine and is not particularly ripe in profile on either the nose or palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a primary, but very promising blend of plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, a lovely base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved out of the blocks, with a fine core of fruit, excellent balance and grip, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and focused finish. This is going to be an excellent wine in due course. 2030-2070+. **91+**.

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “les Charmes”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Chambolle “Charmes” is ripe and pretty in this vintage, offering up a red fruity and gently musky nose of cherries, red plums, chocolate, gamebird, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with ripe, well-integrated tannins, lovely focus and grip and a long, potentially sumptuous finish. In personality, this seems likely to have a bit of 1990 red Burgundy about it as well, but it is a very well-made wine and not particularly ripe at 13.6 percent in 2018. Qualitatively, it is not dissimilar from the Murgers, but I have a stylistic preference for the slightly greater purity of fruit expression in the Murgers this year. 2028-2060+. **91**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Beaumonts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

As Beaumonts is a cooler vineyard than many of the other premier crus in Vosne, it seems to have excelled *vis à vis* its neighbors in the hot backend of the 2018 growing season. The Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat version is lovely this year, offering up a ripe and pure bouquet of black raspberries, black cherries, dark chocolate, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, cedar and a lovely touch of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and impressively transparent, with a fine core of black fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. This is very, very good this year. 2028-2060. **92**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Suchots”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Suchots is quite a way further down the slope than Beaumonts and is always a riper wine as a result, which in 2018 gives it a bit more of a roasted character here (again, very reminiscent of a 1990 Vosne), but still with plenty of complexity and breed. The nose wafts from the glass in a mix of roasted cassis, blackberries, roasted meats, dark soil tones, a bit of coffee grounds, bonfire and a topnote of Vosne spices. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with far more mineral drive on the backend than the nose suggests, good focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic finish. This is a very good bottle in the making and I am sure that some might prefer its more flamboyant style than that of the Beaumonts, but I have a slight preference for the latter. 2028-2060. **91**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Malconsorts”- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Malconsorts is one of the riper wines in the lineup *chez* Hudelot this year, coming in at 13.8 percent, but everything works here together beautifully and the result is a very sappy and sexy wine. The bouquet delivers a flamboyant constellation of red and black raspberries, cocoa powder, musky floral tones, a beautiful base of minerality, cloves, nutmeg and a touch of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and velvety on the attack,

with a sappy core, great focus and grip, suave tannins and a long, complex and beautifully balanced finish. This is a gorgeous wine. 2026-2065. **93+**.

2018 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Though the 2018 Clos Vougeot from Charles van Canneyt is just about as ripe as the Malconsorts, it is completely different stylistically, and while the gorgeous Malconsorts wears its heart on its sleeve already, this Clos Vougeot is deep, muscular and reserved in personality and is going to need plenty of bottle age to blossom. The bouquet has plenty of fine elements in its mix of plums, red and black cherries, woodsmoke, chocolate, a good base of soil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is broad-shouldered and rock solid at the core, with plenty of muscle and depth, firm, well-integrated tannins and a very long, ripe and potentially complex finish. This will be very good, but it is a puppy today and needs to be left alone in the cellar for a good fifteen years before it will start to stir. 2033-2075+. **92.**



2018 Romanée-St.-Vivant- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

The 2018 Romanée-St.-Vivant was one of the very last wines in the Hudelot cellars to finish its malo, and so this wine may have even more in store down the road than met the eye at the time of my visit the first week in November. The bouquet is ripe and black fruity in personality today, offering up scents of black raspberries, cassis, espresso, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, spicy oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite mineral in profile, with rock solid core of fruit, fine-grained tannins, tangy acids and a long, primary and well-balanced finish. This wine is lagging behind many of the others in the cellar today and it may well end up even better than I forecast. 2033-2075+. **94+**.

2018 Richebourg- Domaine Hudelot-Noëllat

Charles van Canneyt's 2018 Richebourg is also a fine bottle in the making, but it is a powerful and nicely structured wine and this too is going to take plenty of bottle age to really start to drink with generosity. The nose offers up a primary combination of red and black plums, cherries, dark chocolate, a good base of soil, gamebird, woodsmoke and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and muscular, with excellent depth at the core, firm, buried tannins and a long, primary, and surprisingly soil-driven (particularly for a young Richebourg!) finish. This is going to be very good as well, but it may take even longer than the RSV to reach cruising altitude. 2025-2085. **94.**

Vosne-Romanée

Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair (Vosne-Romanée)

Louis-Michel Liger-Belair has again made a really lovely set of wines in the 2018 vintage. He began picking on September 2nd in this vintage, not wanting to let the sugars climb too high, and the wines have ended up suave, velvety and beautifully expressive on both the nose and palate. There is a new wine in the cellars this year, a premier cru Pommard "Clos de la Cromin", which is owned by an American investor who asked Louis-Michel Liger-Belair to head up the vineyard project and make the wine. The first vintage is the 2018, which Louis-Michel decided to completely de-stem, primarily as he was unfamiliar with the style of the wine that would be made here and thought it would make sense to start out with no inclusion of stems in the wine for the inaugural vintage, so as to have a baseline for future vintages. It was raised in sixty percent new oak and has really turned out beautifully in 2018. The cellar was in a transition stage at the time of my visit on the 12th of November, with the first five wines we tasted already racked and assembled, with the remainder of the wines not yet racked and due for their soutirage in the coming weeks before the end of the year. In general, the 2018s here are beautifully svelte, pure and flattering wines that will not demand a long time in the cellar before they really start to drink with great appeal, with many of the premier crus likely to really start reaching a great point of drinkability with seven or eight years' worth of bottle age, but they are also so beautifully balanced that they will have no trouble lasting many decades. At this level, the wines are not particularly big or powerful (particularly by the standards of 2018!) and are really remarkable for their purity, ripe, but never overripe aromatics and flavors, and very refined structures on the palate that promise plenty of longevity, but will not demand extended patience.

2018 Nuits St. Georges "Clos des Grandes Vignes" Blanc- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Nuits St. Georges Blanc from Domaine Liger-Belair is an excellent wine, coupling very pretty and ripe fruit with lovely soil undertow and sound framing acids to keep the wine bright and light on its feet. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a very attractive blend of pear, peach, almond, white soil tones, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and bouncy, with a good core of fruit, fine complexity and focus and a long, zesty and wide open finish. This will drink well from the moment it is released. 2020-2035. **92.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

With all of the glittering array of premier and grand crus in the Liger-Belair stable, it is easy to overlook just how good the three Vosne *villages* bottlings are here. The 2018 straight Vosne AC is very pretty this year, offering up a perfumed nose of black plums, black raspberries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a good touch of soil and a generous serving of toasty new oak. On

the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and already suave on the attack, with a good core, just a bit of backend tannin and a long, complex finish. This is nicely new oaky in personality and will drink well with just a few years of bottle age. 2023-2050. **90.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Each year there is one or two wines in Louis-Michel’s cellar that channel the style of Henri Mayer remarkably, and this year it is the lovely 2018 la Colombière. The wine has a sappy flamboyance of a young Mayer wine, wafting from the glass in a blaze of black raspberries, black cherries, smoked duck, a lovely base of soil, fresh nutmeg and other Vosne spices and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and nicely light on its feet, with a good, solid core and fine length and grip on the suavely tannic finish. Good juice- particularly for a *villages*! 2025-2055. **90+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Clos du Château”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Clos du Château has as bit more of its whole clusters still in evidence on the nose, which offers up a very promising blend of red and black raspberries, cherries, a good base of soil tones, gamebird, black tea, new oak and a nice topnote of sweet stems. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very nicely balanced, with a good core, fine soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex finish. Another really good AC. 2024-2050. **90+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “les Suchots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The Suchots was the only 2018 premier cru that had already been racked and assembled prior to my visit, which is why it was shown a bit earlier in the tasting, as it made sense to group all of the wines that had already been racked together, rather than jumping back and forth between racked and un-racked examples. The wine is really lovely and already gorgeously expressive on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of black raspberries, black plums, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and sappy at the core, with a fine signature of soil, ripe, suave tannins and very good length and grip on the complex and classy finish. Fine juice. 2026-2060. **93.**

2018 Pommard “Clos de la Cramin”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The new Clos de la Cramin is a fine addition to the Liger-Belair lineup. The bouquet is very refined, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, raw cocoa, a fine base of soil tones, gamebird and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely sappy at the core, with fine transparency and grip, ripe, buried tannins and a very long, very pure and promising finish. This has the depth and potential muscle of Pommard, but with a polished veneer of Vosne sensibilities at the same time that is quite exciting! 2032-2065. **92+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brûlées”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brûlées” from Domaine Liger-Belair is another beautifully expressive and exotic wine in the cellars this year. The aromatic constellation offers up scents of black raspberries, black plums, smoked duck, Vosne spices, dark chocolate, a touch of sweet stems and plenty of smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, elegant and sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, suave tannins and a long, complex and sexy finish. 2026-2060. **93+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis-Michel’s 2018 Petits Monts is another absolutely stellar example of the vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a flamboyant blend of sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, fresh nutmeg, duck, nutty new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and beautifully balanced, with lovely focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and classy finish. Fine, fine juice as well. 2025-2060. **93+.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Nuits St. Georges “aux Cras” from Domaine Liger-Belair is another stellar success in this vintage. The wine was still in the midst of absorbing its new wood at the time of my visit, and so appeared a tad more oaky than it ultimately should prove to be, but there is plenty of fruit to carry the wood in due course. The bouquet is very promising, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, black plums, *pigeon*, a superb base of soil tones, plenty of new oak and a distinct topnote of black tea. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with good soil signature, ripe, chewy tannins and fine length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. A lovely bottle in the making. 2030-2065+. **93.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Grandes Vignes”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The Clos des Grandes Vignes vineyard is located in Prémieux, but it is on the eastern side of the Route Nationale and may not have been hit by the hail that struck many of its premier cru neighbors on the other side of the road in July. Certainly, there is no signs of this in the wine and Louis-Michel did not mention anything in this regard, so I have to assume that the vineyard was spared. The bouquet of the 2018 is certainly very pure and expressive, offering up scents of red and black cherries, plums, smoked duck, a gorgeous base of soil tones and a generous serving of nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully soil-driven, with a fine core, ripe, buried tannins and a very long, very pure finish. This will be excellent in ten to twelve years. 2030-2065. **92+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “aux Reignots”- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Reignots from Louis-Michel Liger-Belair is a breathtakingly beautiful young wine. The flamboyant bouquet soars from the glass in a blaze of black raspberries, black cherries, smoked duck, a stunning base of complex minerality, black tea, smoky new oak and a lovely topnote of spicy whole clusters. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and vibrant, with a great core of sappy fruit, superb mineral drive, great length and grip and a very pure, very complex and suavely tannic finish. This is flat out brilliant in 2018! 2026-2065. **95.**

2018 Clos Vougeot- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Clos Vougeot from the domaine is about as sexy a young example of this vineyard as I have ever tasted. The bouquet is deep, ripe and flashy, offering up scents of plums, black cherries, spit roasted venison, cinnamon, a beautiful base of soil tones, whole cluster spices and plenty of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and quite elegant in profile, with a sappy core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a very long, complex finish. This is first class Clos Vougeot. 2032-2070. **93.**

2018 Echézeaux- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

The 2018 Echézeaux from Domaine Liger-Belair is another flat out beautiful young wine in the cellars this year. The bouquet is deep, new oaky and gorgeously complex right out of the blocks, delivering a constellation of black plums, black cherries, dark soil tones, venison, chocolate and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and plenty sappy at the core, with superb soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long, energetic finish. This has plenty of new oak to it, but carries it effortlessly and is a stunning young bottle of Echézeaux. 2028-2080. **95.**

2018 La Romanée- Domaine du Comte Liger-Belair

Louis-Michel’s 2018 La Romanée was one of the most beautiful wines I tasted during my two and a half weeks of immersion in the new vintage. This is brilliantly complex out of the blocks on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering a magical blend of black plums, black raspberries, Vosne spices, dark chocolate, smoked duck, fresh nutmeg, a very complex

base of minerality, sweet stems and spicy oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and vibrantly tangy, with a sappy core of black fruit, great backend mineral drive, suave, buried tannins and brilliant length and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. Celestial juice. 2033-2085+. 97.

Domaine Méo-Camuzet (Vosne-Romanée)

I did not have the opportunity to taste quite as broad a range of wines chez Méo this year as is customary, due to some logistical issues with the samples. There was a wider spread of wines prepared than what I ultimately had a chance to write up, but the samples seemed slightly “dulled” to me as if they were not quite representative (they were being served via Coravin from bottles drawn from the casks and corked up earlier that day or the previous day), but as one of the domaine’s importers was also sharing our tasting and he was very enthusiastic about what he was tasting, I did not wish to be impolite beyond asking Jean-Nicolas Méo if he thought a certain wine “was showing well and seemed representative of what was in the cask?” Jean-Nicolas felt the wine in question might have been a touch unrepresentative, but as the importer and Monsieur Méo both had tight schedules, we worked through the rest of the prepared samples and then Jean-Nicolas graciously offered to let me work through any samples I was uncertain of with Peer Reis, his Cellar Master, out of barrel. Peer and I rolled up our sleeves and launched back into another look at many of the domaine’s wines and I am very happy that we did so, as the wines seemed so much more representative to my palate of what I anticipated here in 2018 than what we had tried before.

The wines out of cask had greater purity and depth of fruit, more vibrancy and bounce and as we worked through the second serving of 2018s out of barrel, it became readily apparent that this is an outstanding vintage chez Méo! The domaine had its harvesting team out in the vines on August 29th of 2018, starting with the white wines and their two red Cortons. Jean-Nicolas reported that one or two wines in the cellar in 2018 came in around fourteen percent octane, but everything else is below that threshold and most reds were around 13.5 percent- a very civilized level for 2018! All the barrels in the cellar had seen their sulfur levels adjusted a week or ten days before my visit, but (almost) everything out of cask was spot on and showing very well. As I am sure that a great many November visitors who visited the estate ahead of me at Domaine Méo-Camuzet (I was here on November 7th) also tasted samples prepared as I described and served via Coravin, I wonder if there will be a bit of divergence in opinion as to the ultimate level of success here in 2018. All of the notes below were taken from wines tasted directly from cask, and I have not printed my notes on the wines tasted from the Coravined samples, as they collectively were a step or two behind the wines out of barrel. But, I would certainly assume that the wines I usually taste here each year, such as the Chambolle “Feusselottes” and the like, are every bit as successful in 2018 as the wines whose notes appear below.

Vins Rouges

2018 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée from Domaine Méo-Camuzet was showing lovely potential out of barrel, offering up a ripe and expressive bouquet of black cherries, black raspberries, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, a hint of chocolate, Vosne spices and a dollop of cedar. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off fine mid-palate depth, with nice backend

mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Lovely AC. 2026-2050. **90+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “aux Murgers”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Murgers *chez* Méo is a stellar example of the vintage, delivering a deep and very pure bouquet of red and black cherries, plums, venison, a fine, complex base of dark soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and soil-driven, with a full-bodied and sappy format, ripe, suave tannins and excellent length and grip on the perfectly balanced finish. First class Nuits! 2028-2065. **93+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “aux Boudots”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Choosing a favorite between the 2018 Boudots and Murgers is going to be one of the really fun challenges of the coming three or four decades, as this wine too is stellar! Jean-Nicolas used about ten percent whole clusters for this wine in 2018. It is more black fruity in profile out of the blocks than the Murgers, offering up a refined blend of black plums, black cherries, gamebird, bonfire, dark soil tones and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and fairly powerful out of the blocks for Boudots *chez* Méo, with a rock solid core, ripe, firm tannins and great focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. This may need a year or two longer in the cellar to blossom, but it is going to be every bit as superb as the Murgers- just differently styled. 2030-2065. **93+**.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “les Chaumes”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Chaumes from Jean-Nicolas Méo is another strong premier cru, with, again, quite a black fruity personality this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, Vosne spices and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, soil-driven and tangy finish. This is lovely and should come forward nicely and start drinking with real generosity at eight to ten years of age. 2026-2060. **92**.

2018 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Coravined sample of this was very discreet and the wine out of cask could not be any different, as this is one of the finest young vintages of Clos Vougeot I have tasted from the domaine in many, many years! The bouquet is youthful, but already beautifully delineated, delivering scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, a complex base of soil, venison, woodsmoke, gentle spice tones redolent of fresh nutmeg and a beautiful foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very refined in profile, with a sappy core, lovely soil inflection, ripe, buried tannins and impeccable balance on the long, vibrant and very promising finish. 2030-2080. **94**.

2018 Corton “Clos Rognet”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The Clos Rognet is a warmer microclimate and Jean-Nicolas judiciously decided to start picking here first in 2018 and the wine has turned out brilliantly as a result! This is ripe, but oh, so precise and pure at the same time, with the nose soaring from the glass in a blaze of black cherries, black raspberries, roasted meats, a nice touch of Corton spice, beautiful minerality, French roast, coriander seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and powerful in personality, with stunning purity on the attack, a sappy core, great backend mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic and beautifully balanced finish. This is a great example of the vintage! 2032-2080. **95**.

2018 Corton “Perrière”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

This was perhaps the only wine out of cask that was still showing some signs of grumpiness after having its SO2 adjusted a week or so before my visit. Consequently, there was

a sense of reserve here that was not evident in the other wines out of barrel and so I have scored the wine in a range, to be fair to its being still a bit unsettled. The bouquet has some lovely nuances in its *mélange* of red and black cherries, coriander seed, bonfire, stony soil tones and spit-roasted game. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plenty sturdy at the core, with firm tannins, good soil signature and a long, nascently complex finish. The sulfur adjustments here seem to be most evident on the backend, where the wine does not have the same lift as these other wines, but I am sure it is simply a reflection of the wine having not yet bounced back completely. I would fully expect it to eventually place at the top of the range. 2032-2080. **92-94?**

2018 Echézeaux- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Echézeaux from Domaine Méo-Camuzet is another outstanding wine waiting in the wings from release this year. The bouquet is deep, ripe and flamboyant, delivering scents of black raspberries, black plums, roasted meaty tones, woodsmoke, a complex base of soil, Vosne spices and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very sappy at the core, with beautiful complexity and grip, suave tannins and outstanding length and grip on the vibrant finish. This is a big wine, but impeccably balanced and full of wonder and delight. 2030-2080. **94.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “aux Brûlées”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

Jean-Nicolas’ 2018 Brûlées is also a stunning young wine in the making. This comes in at 13.5 percent octane and soars from the glass in a complex blend of black plums, black cherries, duck, black minerality, Vosne spices, dark chocolate and nutty new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very elegant in profile, with a sappy core of black fruit, beautiful soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and great balance and grip on the very, very long, very promising finish. 2028-2070. **94+.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Cros Parantoux”- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Cros Parantoux is a touch riper than the Brûlées this year (13.7 percent versus 13.5), and it is a touch more exotic on both the nose and palate as a result. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a ripe and flashy blend of black raspberries, black cherries, a potpourri of spice tones, a lovely base of soil, roasted venison and spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and potentially flamboyant, with a great core of fruit, firm, well-integrated tannins and stunning length and grip on the youthful, but potentially very flamboyant finish. Man, I do not drink enough Cros Parantoux these days! 2028-2060. **96.**

2018 Richebourg- Domaine Méo-Camuzet

The 2018 Richebourg is just a hair riper than the two stunning premier crus that preceded it in the lineup, as this is fully fourteen percent in 2018 (which is hardly “over the top” in this vintage). The bouquet is deep and more reserved out of the blocks than the Cros Parantoux, offering up scents of ripe plums and black cherries, cocoa powder, hung game, a good base of soil, cedary new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full and already very suave on the attack, with a rock solid core, firm, ripe tannins and very good, length and grip on the still quite primary finish. Given that the barrels were recently adjusted for SO₂, maybe this wine is also not quite back on form yet (like the Corton “Perrière”) and I am underrating it a bit as a result. So, please keep in mind that there could be a couple more points lurking here that were not readily apparent at the time of my visit! 2030-2085. **95 (+?).**



Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg (Vosne-Romanée)

The 2018 harvest was the thirtieth vintage celebrated by the Mugneret sisters, Marie-Christine and Marie-Andrée, as they took over for their ailing father in 1989. We had a chance to share our appreciation for the amazing success that the Mugneret family has realized since the sisters' first vintage, as three generations of the family invited a couple hundred of their close friends from the region and around the globe to a get together at the winery in mid-November this year to mark the occasion. It has been an amazing journey for Marie-Christine and Marie-Andrée and their family, and now with three of their daughters now joining the domaine full-time, the future chez Mugneret has never looked brighter! Congratulations on thirty years of magical wines! Happily, their thirtieth harvest was very successful at the domaine, as the family and their team were out in the vines on September 5th to get started picking and tackled Ruchottes-Chambertin first in 2018, before quickly moving on to all of their parcels and bringing everything in as quickly as possible in the heat of early September. Marie-Andrée reported that the malos were fairly quick in 2018, but lasted a bit longer than at some domaines, with everything finished up by the end of the winter. The resulting wines are ripe, but pure, precise and some of the best wines to be found in the Côte de Nuits in 2018, with alcohol levels generally between 13.5 and fourteen percent for all of the wines (with the villages level bottlings at the upper end of the scale, as they were picked last) and these are going to be very, very popular wines in this vintage! I left my tasting here thinking if everyone had made wines as superb as the Mugneret family this year, it truly would have been a great vintage. There is one

new bottling in the cellars here, as the lieu à dit of la Colombière in Vosne has been bottled separately in 2018 for the first time since the late 1950s (I drank a bottle of the 1957 at a Paulée about a decade ago, which would have been the last time the wine was bottled separately). The Mugneret sisters are not sure of the precise date of plantation of their vines in la Colombière, but believe it was around 1960, so these are getting to be old vines now. It is a terrific new addition to the lineup here. The 2018s generally included from a third to fifty percent whole clusters chez Mugneret (depending on how much room the fermenters had for stems), but the stems that were included were obviously perfectly ripe, as it is hard to find their influence amongst the sappy and beautiful fruit tones of the young wines. I did not write up a note on the 2018 Chambolle “Feusselottes” this year, as the wine had only been racked a couple of days before my visit and it was still very much out of sorts from its recent assemblage and not happy at all to be tasted! Of all the 2018s that I tasted that I would put in the “ripe, but extremely successful camp” in this vintage, the Mugneret sisters’ wines were my favorites of this style of wines and they will age absolutely magnificently and a generation down the road, people will comment that they were certainly of properly high quality to commemorate the thirtieth harvest for Marie-Christine and Marie-Andrée!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Bourgogne Rouge from the Mugneret family is a lovely wine, offering deep and sappy fruit and good soil signature. The wine is around 13.5 percent octane this year and delivers a fine nose of sappy black cherries and plums, chocolate, dark soil tones and a hint of violets in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a good bit of ripe tannin, with a lovely core of fruit and fine balance and length on the focused finish. Good juice. 2023-2040. **88.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Vosne AC from Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg seems very much the same in personality and quality as it did last year, when it contained the la Colombière in the cuvée. The wine offers up a ripe and again, very pure bouquet of plums, black raspberries, chocolate, a lovely base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a very pungent topnote of violets (which makes the reference to violets in the Bourgogne seem far-fetched!). On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and velvety on the attack, with a sappy core of black fruit, ripe tannins and lovely focus and balance on the long, tangy and complex finish. A gorgeous *villages*. 2023-2055+. **91.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “la Colombière”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The new bottling of la Colombière *chez* Mugneret is a slightly more structured wine than the straight Vosne, but shares the same beautiful black fruit tones and inherent complexity. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of black plums, black raspberries, some meaty tones, dark soil, woodsmoke, again, violets and a deft touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and displays excellent mid-palate depth, with ripe, buried tannins, excellent focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and promising finish. This seems just a hair riper than the straight Vosne this year, but it shares the same purity and vibrancy. 2025-2060. **92.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “au Bas de Combes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Bas de Combes is one of the riper wines in the cellars this year, hovering just under fourteen percent and offering up a beautifully sappy nose and a very precise and promising palate. The aromatic constellation here is a fine blend of sweet dark berries, chocolate, gamebird, dark soil tones, vanillin oak and a bit of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very elegant for a young Nuits, with a sappy core, good soil signature, ripe,

suave tannins and a long, nascently complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice in the making. 2028-2060. **91.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Vignes Rondes”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Vignes Rondes *chez* Mugneret is also a ripe wine, but a touch less so than the *villages* this year and the wine is consequently more soil-driven in personality. The bouquet is excellent, wafting from the glass in a youthful mix of black cherries, dark berries, chocolate, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, plenty of soil and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, reserved in personality and rock solid at the core, with firm, ripe tannins, excellent balance and a long, primary and promising finish. Fine juice in the making. 2030-2075+. **92.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The Mugneret family’s 2018 Chaignots is another fairly powerful interpretation of this vineyard, but the wine’s fine sense of balance augurs very well for its future evolution, it is just a chewy and structured wine and will need a bit more than a decade in the cellar to start to blossom. The bouquet offers up a fine combination of ripe fruit and good soil signature, as it delivers scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, chocolate, some 1990-like roasted venison tones, a fine base of soil, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite powerful for this cuvée, with a very deep core of fruit, firm, chewy tannins and a long, balanced and very youthful finish. Chaignots and Vignes Rondes are both on the northern side of Nuits and the July hailstorms did not affect them at all, but the structured nature of the 2018 vintage is very much evident in both of these wines, which will be serious long-distance runners! 2033-2075. **91+.**

2018 Echézeaux- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Echézeaux from Domaine Mugneret-Gibourg included fully fifty percent whole clusters in this vintage, but they are hard to spot amongst all of the other aromatic fireworks going off in the glass! The bouquet is ripe, vibrant and sexy, offering up scents of black raspberries, black cherries, roasted *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil tones, chocolate, violets, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and great length and grip on the still quite primary, but, oh, so promising finish. This will be stunning wine when it is ready to drink! 2033-2085. **94+.**

2018 Ruchottes-Chambertin- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

Like the Echézeaux, the 2018 Ruchottes-Chambertin *chez* Mugneret is plenty ripe, but also very pure, very precise and very much informed by its underlying soil tones. The nose jumps from the glass in a vibrant display of black plums, black cherries, gamebird, dark chocolate, a simply stellar base of soil tones, just a whisper of floral aromatics and a discreet foundation of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and seamless, with a sappy core, great soil inflection, ripe, seamless tannins and superb focus and grip on the very, very long, nascently complex finish. A great wine in the making. 2032-2085. **95.**

2018 Clos Vougeot- Domaine Georges Mugneret-Gibourg

The 2018 Clos Vougeot from the Mugnerets is also a superb wine in the making, but at the present time, its tannins are a bit firmer and not quite as integrated as those in the Ruchottes. The bouquet is pure and first class, offering up scents of black cherries, plums, roasted squab, woodsmoke, a very complex base of soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and loaded with sappy fruit in the mid-palate, with fine soil signature, firm tannins and excellent length and grip on the powerful and still quite primary finish. This has excellent

potential as well, but today, it is the Ruchottes that seems to be the most complete grand cru in the cellars here this year. 2025-2085+. 94+.

Nuits St. Georges

Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils (Nuits St. Georges)

Bertrand Chevillon has crafted excellent 2018s, but given the impact of the hail storms on the southern end of Nuits St. Georges, where many of the finest premier crus in the commune are located, he has had to navigate the significant challenges presented by the vintage. Consequently, though these are outstanding wines in the making, they are some of the most powerfully-built young wines from Domaine Chevillon that I have ever tasted, with big, broad shoulders, deep, sappy cores of fruit, big, firm tannins and the need for long-term cellaring before they will start to soften and blossom. Once they are ready to drink, they will be excellent wines and there is no shortage of fruit to stand up to the robust tannins, but these are going to be long-term projects for the cellar! Monsieur Chevillon started picking on September 5th of 2018, opting to not let the sugars get too out of control with later picking. Consequently, his 2018s range from 13.5 percent up to a maximum of 14.2 percent octane this year, which is quite civilized by the parameters of southern Nuits St. Georges vineyards in this vintage! Bertrand Chevillon is very content with how his 2018s have turned out, but as we were discussing their structural style, he chuckled and said “these are certainly going to be wines for long cellaring!” The personalities of each premier cru here are very much true to form from other years, but everything is muscled up a bit because of the style of the vintage in Nuits St. Georges, so shoulders are a bit broader across the board, the cores of fruit are all rock solid and beautifully sappy, and the chassis of underlying tannin in each and every wine here are formidable. The tannins are ripe and chewy and very well-integrated into the wines, but they are destined to be serious long-distance runners and they are going to demand some extended cellaring time before they start to stir. For people who might have children or grandchildren born in 2018, one could not ask for a better vintage chez Chevillon to present them for marking milestones in the decades to come, as many of these wines seem likely to last seventy-five or eighty years without any difficulties!

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The inherent power of the 2018 vintage chez Chevillon is readily apparent from the first wine in the lineup this year, as this is a big, deep and pure example of old vine Nuits AC. The bouquet is ripe and sappy, jumping from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, venison, chocolate, dark soil tones, woodsmoke and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a rock solid core of fruit, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and chewy finish. This will be the first wine to come forward in the stables this year, but I would not touch a bottle until it has seen ten years flow swiftly by. 2028-2055+.

89.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

One gets accustomed to the Chaignots in the Chevillon cellars being so charming and potentially drinkable fairly early on in its evolution, that it was a bit of a surprise to see how powerfully structured the wine is this year. Chaignots is of course on the northern side of Nuits St. Georges, so this wine was not affected by the July hail, but it still has plenty of depth and muscle. The nose offers up a mix of pure, sappy black cherries, black raspberries, gamebird, chocolate, a fine base of soil tones and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine

is deep, full-bodied and broad-shouldered for this cuvée, with great depth of fruit at the core, fine balance and grip and a long, ripely tannic and promising finish. 2030-2075. **91+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Bousselots”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The vineyard of Bousselots is also on the northern side of the center of Nuits, so again, this is a vineyard that was completely unaffected by the hail in the southern half of the commune. The 2018 version from Monsieur Chevillon is an excellent wine, offering up a quite black fruity bouquet of black plums, black cherries, spit-roasted *pigeon*, coffee bean, woodsmoke, dark soil tones and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and tangy, with a fine core of fruit, really exceptional backend mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and a very long, sappy and promising finish. 2030-2075. **92**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Roncières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The vineyard of Roncières is south of the center of town, but tucked in between les Porrets to its south and Pruliers to its north and, to the best of my recollection, it was not hit by any of the hail in July (or only very marginally affected). The 2018 Roncières has turned out beautifully, combining great pure and sappy fruit with a good undertow of minerality, all harnessed to the powerful and broad shoulders of the vintage. The bouquet jumps from the glass in an excellent combination of black cherries and plums, bitter chocolate, a superb base of soil, woodsmoke, grilled meats and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and almost bottomless in the mid-palate, with plenty of sappiness, fine mineral drive and a very long, ripely tannic and powerful finish. This is impeccably balanced and will be an outstanding wine in the fullness of time, but like all of the 2018s *chez* Chevillon, this will need some extended cellaring before it starts to stir. 2031-2075. **92+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Les Perrières is situated just above les Porrets on the slope, south of Roncières, so it is closer to the epicenter of the hail in July and may have been a bit more affected as a result, but I am not certain of this. The bouquet is deep, powerfully sappy and shows enormous potential in its mix of red and black cherries, plummy fruit, bonfire, *pigeon*, a great base of stony minerality and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, very pure and rock solid at the core, with a full-bodied format, plenty of sappiness, firm, chewy tannins and outstanding length and grip on the very youthful, but very promising finish. This will be a great wine in due course, but it will need a minimum of fifteen years to start to stir and will probably not really peak until it is thirty years of age! 2033-2075+. **93+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Pruliers”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The 2018 Pruliers *chez* Chevillon is a stunning wine in the making. It has a simply gorgeous bouquet, coupled to a broad-shouldered, well-balanced and very powerful palate. The nose soars from the glass in a blaze of red and black cherries, black plums, dark chocolate, venison, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, new oak and a nice touch of violet in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very powerful in personality, with a bottomless core of pure fruit, excellent soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and a very, very long, nascently complex finish. This is a superb vintage of Pruliers in the making. 2035-2080. **93+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Cailles”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Usually the “Big Three” at Domaine Chevillon are the best wines in the cellars, but this distinction is not quite so clear cut in 2018, as all three of these vineyards, to some degree, were peripherally affected by the hail in July. It is not that the les Cailles is less pure than the wines that preceded it, but perhaps it is a bit more chewy and tannic. The black fruity bouquet is deep, very pure and sappy but also quite powerful, offering up scents of black cherries, black

raspberries, plums, venison, a good base of soil, woodsmoke, chocolate and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is ripe, powerful and broad-shouldered, with a rock solid core of fruit, firm, chewy tannins, good acids and a very, very long, youthful and promising finish. 2035-2075+. **93.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

Monsieur Chevillon reported that his parcel in Les St. Georges was down about thirty percent in 2018. The wine shows of great purity and depth on the nose, delivering scents of sappy dark berries and black cherries, espresso, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones and a nice touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is very deep, very powerful and impressively transparent in personality at the same time, with bottomless depth of fruit at the core, firm, ripe and chewy tannins and a very, very long, very well-balanced finish. This will need plenty of time and will always be a powerful vintage of Chevillon Les St. Georges, but this will also be an excellent wine for a long, long time, once it is finally ready to drink. 2035-2080. **94.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Robert Chevillon et Fils

The vineyard of Vaucrains produces powerful wines in virtually every vintage- at least when the wine is young- and this is amplified in the vintage of 2018. This will be a fine bottle in due course, but patience will be very much required, as this will need a good twenty years to start to stir. The bouquet offers up superb purity and nascent complexity, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, bonfire, gamebird, a touch of nutskin, a very good base of soil tones, bitter chocolate and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, powerful and broad-shouldered, with a rock solid core, excellent soil signature and a very powerful, massively tannic and very, very long finish. I have never tasted a young vintage of Vaucrains that was this tannic, but the tannins are buried into the body of the wine and I really feel there is enough depth of fruit here to age alongside of the tannins and eventually produce a fine bottle. 2038-2085. **93+.**

Domaine Henri Gouges (Nuits St. Georges)

Grégory Gouges took a slightly different course than Bertrand Chevillon in determining when to start picking in 2018, as he opted to give the bunches just a few more days out on the vines to further ripen up the tannins, and deal with very slightly higher octane levels as a result. So, he and his picking team started out in the vines on September 8th and then they moved with alacrity and had brought in everything by the 13th of the month. Despite the fast pace of picking, the Domaine Gouges team only picked grapes from the break of day until lunchtime, with the afternoons devoted to very strict sorting of the bunches that had been collected in the morning, to remove any imperfect grapes “berry by berry” according to Grégory, so that the purity could be retained in the wines. Consequently the entire cellar ranges in alcohol levels this year from 13.5 percent up to 14.5 percent (which is just a hair higher than Domaine Chevillon), but the tannins are a bit less massive as a result of letting them ripen a few days longer and also the very strict selections done each afternoon. Keep in mind that, other than the Nuits AC parcels, which are scattered around the commune, all of the premier crus owned by the Gouges family, with the exception of their Chaignots, are situated on the southern side of Nuits St. Georges, so there was a bit more need to navigate around the hail damage in the domaine’s premier crus than was the case at Domaine Chevillon, where they have four premier crus that would have been north of the hail in July, so the parameters of the vintage were different at these two iconic estates in Nuits. Grégory Gouges noted that “we ended up fifty percent down from a normal crop in Vaucrains, Les St. Georges and Chaines Carteaux in 2018, because of the hail and our very strict selection in these parcels, but we still managed twenty hectoliters per hectare in these three vineyards.”

All of the malolactics here were finished by Christmas of 2018, so the wines were nicely settled and showing very well in cask at the time of my visit on the 12th of November. The Gouges family has done an admirable job with the 2018 vintage and these are an outstanding set of wines, with great depth of pure fruit, superb transparency, and surprisingly well-mannered (albeit firm) tannins that seem to have benefited from a just a few days longer hang time in vineyards such as Vaucrains and Les St. Georges.



2018 Bourgogne- Domaine Henri Gouges

Like many domaines, the lower level wines were picked after the premier crus by the Gouges family in 2018, so the Bourgogne rouge is one of the higher octane wines in the cellar this year, with an alcohol level of 14.2 percent. This had been bottled in September of 2019 and had bounced back nicely. The bouquet is deep and vibrant, offering up scents of black cherries, dark berries, woodsmoke, a good touch of soil, espresso and just a dollop of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and moderately tannic, with a good core and a long, pure finish. Though this is over fourteen percent, it is simply ripe and shows absolutely no signs of *sur maturité*. Good juice. 2023-2040. **88.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Nuits AC from 2018 *chez* Gouges is a bit lower in octane than the Bourgogne, coming in at a very reasonable (by 2018 standards in Nuits St. Georges) of 13.8 percent and offering up excellent focus and soil signature to go along with beautiful fruit tones. The nose

wafts from the glass in a mix of sweet dark berries, espresso, black plums, a touch of new leather, a fine base of soil, gamebird and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite energetic and powerful on the backend, with a fine core of fruit, ripe, well-integrated tannins and excellent length and grip on the soil-driven finish. This will need a good decade to start to blossom, but it is a fine example. 2028-2060+. **90+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Chaignots”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 Chaignots from Grégory Gouges is also a very fine bottle in the making, with a similarly powerful style to the same cru at Domaine Chevillon. The wine is 14.2 percent this year and delivers a deep and sappy nose of cassis, dark berries, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of balsam bough and a very gentle foundation of new wood. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with chewy, buried tannins, fine focus and grip and lovely balance on the long and nascently complex finish. This is very, very good, but again, it will demand some patience. 2030-2070. **92**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Chaines Carteaux”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The vineyard of Chaines Carteaux was right in the path of the hailstorms in July, so yields were way down here, but the wine has turned out quite well. The bouquet delivers a blend of black cherries, dark berries, juniper berry, bitter chocolate, hung game, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and has a lovely core of sappy black fruit, with fine mineral drive, good focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic and nascently complex finish. This has turned out very well indeed! 2032-2070. **91+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Clos des Porrets”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The Clos des Porrets is further north and was out of the path of the hail in July, so the wine was not affected and it has turned out superbly in 2018. The bouquet is deep and already beautifully expressive, jumping from the glass in a mix of black cherries, cassis, bitter chocolate, a hint of cola, gamebird, a complex base of dark soil tones and a topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, powerful in personality, but just impeccably balanced at the same time, with a great core of fruit, firm, buried tannins, tangy acids and outstanding length and grip on the poised and very promising finish. Fine, fine juice in the making. 2033-2080. **93**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Pruliers”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 les Pruliers from Grégory Gouges is also outstanding and was unaffected by the July storms. The bouquet is very pure and already shows lovely complexity, delivering a combination of black plums, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, a touch of anise, complex soil tones, bitter chocolate, *pigeon* and a topnote of sweet herbs. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off marvelous mid-palate depth, with superb balance and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a very, very long, very classy finish. All this needs is time to blossom. 2033-2080. **93+**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Vaucrains”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 Vaucrains *chez* Gouges is an excellent wine in the making- powerful and loaded with pure fruit and firm tannins, but not as massive as the version crafted at Domaine Chevillon this year. The wine delivers a superb aromatic constellation of dark berries, black cherries, venison, espresso, a great base of minerality, woodsmoke and a lovely topnote of cola. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe, firm, but surprisingly suave tannins, excellent nascent complexity and a very, very long, youthful and promising finish. This will be excellent in due course. 2035-2085+. **94**.

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Les St. Georges”- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 Les St. Georges from Domaine Gouges is also superb, with the depth, power and structure of the very best wines of the commune in 2018, coupled to great purity and early complexity. The bouquet delivers a refined blend of black plums, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, gamebird, a touch of balsam bough, bitter chocolate and a very complex base of minerality. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a stunning core, with firm, ripe tannins, stunning backend mineral drive and a very, very long and complex finish. This will take a long time in the cellar to blossom, but in time, it will be pure magic! 20235-2085+. **95.**

Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Henri Gouges is excellent this year. The wine offers up a bright and succulent nose of sweet quince, apple, chalky soil tones, beeswax and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and juicy on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, very good acids and a long, surprisingly complex and wide open finish. This is of course, the pinot blanc mutation that originated in the family’s parcel of vines in Perrières and is a unique and compelling example of Bourgogne blanc. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” Blanc- Domaine Henri Gouges

The 2018 Nuits St. Georges “Perrières” Blanc from the Gouges family is also lovely in this vintage. The wine is a bit more reserved in personality than the already delicious Bourgogne, offering up a complex and very pure blend of white peach, fresh almond, salty soil tones, spring flowers and just a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and complex, with a good core of fruit, fine focus and grip, sound framing acids and good backend mineral drive on the long finish. This will want a couple of years in the cellar to allow its secondary layers to emerge, but it will not need too long before it really starts to drink beautifully. 2022-2040. **91.**

Savigny-lès-Beaune

Domaine Simon Bize et Fils (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Chisa Bize has made a truly lovely range of 2018s, with several of the wines amongst the lowest in alcohol that one is likely to find in this vintage. She and her team began picking on August 29th, but due to the range of different appellations and varying terroirs, the harvest took nearly three weeks to complete and she notes that “there are different styles certainly between the wines made from the earliest picking and those picked at the end.” During the baking heat of harvest, the strategy here was to pick as early in the morning as possible and stop just after midday, before the really brutal temperatures arrived in the afternoons. Madame Bize also chose to start with the premier crus first thing in the morning, so as to guard as much freshness as possible in the resulting wines. This she has done admirably, particularly with the red wines here, which are generally lower in alcohol than their corresponding white wine, with reds ranging from 12.5 percent octane for the premier cru bottling of Fournaux to 13.8 percent for the les Vergelesses this year, with all the wines beautifully reflective of their underlying soil characters. The white wines tend to be a bit higher in alcohol here in 2018, with most of the wines between 13.5 and fourteen percent, and though the white wines chez Bize are still very pure and transparent down to their soils, they will also be wines to drink fairly early on, as they are generous right out of the blocks. The red wines here are more structured, as always, but again, this seems likely to be a vintage that drinks earlier than in most years here. Chisa Bize notes that there were a couple of cuvées this year where she did not use one hundred percent

whole clusters- not because the stems were not ripe- but, rather, because she had so many bunches that she simply did not have enough room in the fermenters to include all the stems this year for the Talmettes and les Vergelesses! Consequently, both of these wines were about thirty percent de-stemmed this year, just to get all the grapes into the fermenting tanks.



Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Blanc “Champlains”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Champlains had been bottled in August of 2019. It is a touch less ripe than the Perrières Blanc this year (13.5 versus 14 percent) and is a lovely wine, offering up scents of apple, quince, chalky soil tones and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a good core and nice backend tension on the long and wide open finish. This will drink nicely from the outset, but seems likely to last a bit longer than the Perrières this year. 2020-2030+. **89.**

2018 Bourgogne Blanc “Perrières”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The Bourgogne Blanc “Perrières” *chez Bize* is usually one of my absolute favorite bottlings at this level, but the 2018 is a tad on the soft side and will probably not age as long as most vintages of this wine. It is still very pure and bright, as it is only fourteen percent octane, but structurally, it is pretty laid back this year and will drink with generosity right from the outset. The nose is very pretty, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a bit of almond and white flowers. On the palate the wine is full, open and succulent on the attack,

with a good core, soft acids, but good length and focus on the very tasty finish. Good juice, but the 2018 Perrières is not going to last as it usually does in bottle. 2020-2028. **88.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc from Domaine Simon Bize is also quite forward this year. The wine offers up lovely aromatic complexity in its blend of lemon, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of citrus peel and a topnote of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite suave already on the attack, with good focus and balance, a nice foundation of soil and good, but not great depth at the core. The finish is long, open and the acids are fairly gentle here, so this again, will be a wine that is best drunk in its relative youth. 2020-2030+. **89+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Vergelesses” Blanc- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

Not surprisingly, the 2018 les Vergelesses Blanc is a step up in terms of depth and complexity, but this too shares the same relatively gentle structural chassis and will be a charmer right out of the blocks. This was the very first vineyard picked on August 29th this year and offers up a very stylish bouquet of lemon, pear, chalky minerality, orange zest and a nice touch of iodine. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and soil-driven, with an excellent core of fruit, fine focus and grip, sound framing acids and a long, classy finish. 2020-2040. **91.**

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

I am not sure when the 2018 Corton-Charlemagne *chez* Bize had been assembled, but it was in tank at the time of my visit and my guess is that this was done relatively recently. The vineyard here was picked on September 6th (as they are over on the far side of the hill in Pernand), and the wine comes in at 13.5 percent octane this year, so I suspect this will be a very classical Corton Charlie from the estate. However, it was showing a bit soft in personality at the time of my visit, and I strongly expect that this was just the reflection of its recent *assemblage*. The bouquet is certainly quite lovely, offering up lovely depth and precision in its aromatic constellation of apple, pear, fresh almond, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, a touch of iodine and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very nicely focused, with fine purity and grip, but seemingly fairly gentle acidity on the long finish. I would anticipate that there is more acidity here than it was showing in November and that the wine will bounce back into better structural form with some more time in tank. It was certainly plenty long and complex. If I am correct in my guess and there is more cut and bounce here than it was showing out of tank, then it will merit a score at the top of the range. 2024-2040+. **92-94?**

Vins Rouges

2018 Bourgogne Rouge “Perrières”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Bourgogne Rouge “Perrières” was still in tank at the time of my visit and showing quite well. This is a ripe vintage for this bottling, but certainly not overripe, as it offers up a black fruity bouquet of black plums, cassis, venison, woodsmoke and a good base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite broad-shouldered for this cuvée, with a good, sappy core of fruit, moderate tannins and fine length and grip on the ripe and fairly powerful finish. This was one of the last vineyards picked and is probably one of the highest alcohol wines in the cellar this year, but still probably under fourteen percent. 2020-2035. **87.**

2018 Aloxe-Corton- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Aloxe-Corton from Chisa Bize is also fairly ripe in personality, but it is a bit more vibrant and sappier than the Perrières above, and hence, shows more of its underlying *terroir*. The bouquet is bright and expressive, offering up scents of black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, venison, stony soil tones and a touch of chocolate. On the palate the wine is

deep, full-bodied and quite shapely, with a good core, impressive soil signature, fine focus and grip and a long, suavely tannic finish. Good juice. 2023-2045. **89+**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Savigny AC rouge was one of the few wines still in cask at the time of my visit and it was showing beautiful detail and complexity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in an elegant mix of black cherries, woodsmoke, bitter chocolate, a fien base of soil, *pigeon* and a gentle topnote of spice. On the palate the wine is fullish, suave and classy, with fine focus and grip, a good core and a long, modestly tannic and very satisfying finish. This wine is only 12.85 percent octane this year. Unless this closes up dramatically after bottling, it is going to drink well from a young age and make lots of friends, as it is a very, very satisfying *villages* bottling this year. 2024-2050. **90+**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Grands Liards”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Grands Liards was also still in cask on November 11th and it too was showing lovely potential, though this is just a tad riper (13.3 percent) than the above and a sappier wine as a result. The bouquet is superb this year, wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, black raspberries, venison, bonfire, Savigny fruitcake, stony soil elements and a spicy topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and quite elegant in profile (particularly for a young Grands Liards!), with a sappy core, good mineral undertow, fine-grained tannins and a long, complex and promising finish. 2026-2055+. **91**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Fournaux”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Fournaux is the lowest octane wine in the cellar this year at 12.5 percent, and it is excellent. The bouquet offers up a deeply black fruity mix of black plums, dark berries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, a hint of Savigny fruitcake tones and a fine base of dark soil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and chewy, with a sappy core, fine mineral drive and a long, focused and very nicely balanced finish. This is fine juice in the making. 2025-2055. **92**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Marconnets”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Marconnets is also a fine example of the vintage, with perhaps a slightly sappier personality than the Fournaux, but still a wine of purity and soil signature. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a very stylish blend of black cherries, cassis, espresso, dark soil tones, roasted *pigeon* and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and very well-balanced, with a sappy core of fruit, fine undertow of soil, ripe, seamless tannins and impressive length and grip on the promising finish. This will take a year or two longer to blossom than the Fournaux, but it is going to be excellent. 2026-2060. **92+**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Serpentières”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

I did not get the alcohol level for the Serpentières this year from Madame Bize, but it is my impression that this wine is a bit riper than the previous two premier crus, and there is just a whisper of *sur maturité* tones on both the nose and palate this year. The bouquet is certainly deep and complex, offering up scents of sappy black cherries, meaty tones, a hint of fresh apricot, complex soil tones, Savigny fruitcake and plenty of very attractive spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite plush on the attack, with a fine core, solid soil signature, suave tannins, very good grip and a long, complex and succulent finish. This is quite good, but the mark of the vintage is more evident here than in the last few premier crus. 2024-2050. **90**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Talmettes”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

As I mentioned above, the Talmettes here in 2018 is one of only two wines that did not include one hundred percent whole clusters, as there was simply not enough room in the

fermenters for all of the stems! The thirty percent or so that was de-stemmed seems to have given the wine an early sheen that is pretty rare for a Domaine Bize wine, but which works very nicely with the style of the vintage, as it delivers a fine bouquet of black cherries, sappy dark berries, French roast, bonfire, gamebird and a complex base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and fine backend minerality perking up the long and very classy finish. Just a lovely bottle in the making. 2027-2060. **93.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Vergelesses”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 les Vergelesses is probably the ripest red wine *chez* Bize this year, coming in at 13.8 percent, but in the context of the vintage, this is still pretty low octane juice! The bouquet is deep, pure and very classy, wafting from the glass in a mix of dark berries, black cherries, gamebird, woodsmoke, gentle spice tones, just a whisper of fruitcake and a very complex base of soil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a sappy core, fine mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and outstanding length and grip on the complex and very refined finish. This is the most elegant premier cru *terroir* in the domaine’s lineup, but often that elegance takes a full decade or more to start to really make its presence felt; this year it is there right from the outset! 2028-2060+. **93+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes”- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The inherent elegance of all of Chisa Bize’s 2018s is very much in evidence with this lovely example of Guettes as well this year. The bouquet is deep, pure, sappy and quite complex, delivering a fine constellation of sweet cassis, just a hint of black raspberry, espresso, *pigeon*, lovely minerality, woodsmoke and a topnote of bitter chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with a nice touch of sappiness at the core, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and very promising finish. This is going to be outstanding. 2028-2060+. **93+.**

2018 Latricières-Chambertin- Domaine Simon Bize et Fils

The 2018 Latricières-Chambertin from Domaine Simon Bize as picked on September 5th and is one of the lowest octane wines in the cellar this year, coming in at a svelte 12.65 percent. The wine is absolutely stellar, offering tons of early complexity in its very refined bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, a very complex base of dark soil tones, a touch of fresh thyme, just a touch of new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very transparent in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, great focus and grip, fine-grained tannins and a perfectly balanced, long and very impressive finish. This is not a powerful example of Latricières, but it is one of those wines that puts on weight with extended bottle age and ends up being one of the most impressive wines of the vintage a couple of decades down the road! 2030-2085. **95.**

Domaine Camus-Bruchon (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Guillaume Camus was very happy with his 2018s, as he moved decisively at harvest time to prevent the grapes from getting overripe. Consequently, his team was out picking pinot noir on August the 30th, starting in the Beaune premier cru vineyard of Clos du Roi and quickly following up in the premier crus in Savigny and Pommard in which the domaine holds parcels. The resulting wines are excellent, coming in generally between 13.1 and 13.2 percent octane and possessing firm, but ripe and very nicely-integrated chasses of tannin. The malolactic fermentations were not particularly brisk chez Camus in 2018, with Guillaume reporting that most were completed in March of 2019- so really pretty normal in terms of duration this year.

About thirty percent whole clusters were included in most of the cuvées here in 2018, as Monsieur Camus observed that “the stems were beautifully ripe this year and it made no sense not to use them.” These are beautiful examples of the 2018 vintage!

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2018 Bourgogne Rouge is very nice from Domaine Camus-Bruchon this year, offering up a bright and black fruity blend of black cherries, Savigny spice tones, gamebird, a nice touch of soil and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and has a good core of fruit, with fine focus and grip and just a bit of backend tannin perking up the finish. This will need a couple of years to blossom, but will be a good example. 2021-2040. **88.**

2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune “le Grand Soussy”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune *chez* Camus is very attractive this year on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, spices meats, dark soil tones and a bit of clove and cumin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and potentially plush on the attack, with a good core and nascent complexity, but not quite the same backend structural tension as the Bourgogne, so the overall impression is of a wine that will drink well from early on, but will be just a touch easy-going in style. This will actually drink better than the Bourgogne out of the blocks! 2020-2040. **88.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Cuvée Reine Joly”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The domaine’s Cuvée Reine Joly is one of my favorite *villages* level bottlings in the commune and the 2018 version is really very successful this year. The bouquet delivers a fine constellation of red and black cherries, a touch of fruitcake, gamebird, coffee, dark soil tones and a classic topnote of young Savigny spice tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely structured, with impressive mid-palate depth, a bit of buried tannin on the backend and very good focus and grip on the nascently complex finish. Another first class AC. 2024-2050+. **90.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Pimentiers” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The old vine bottling of Pimentiers (eighty-nine years of age in 2018) is deeper and more structured than the Cuvée Reine Joly, but this is not atypical by any means, as this is always built like a fine premier cru. The bouquet is more reserved today, but shows impressive complexity to come, offering up a mix of dark berries, black cherries, *pigeon*, bitter chocolate, stony soil tones, Savigny spice tones, a touch of cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a fine signature of stony soil tones, ripe, well-integrated tannins and fine length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This will take a good decade to really start to hit on all cylinders, but it is going to be outstanding once it has blossomed. 2028-2060. **91+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Grands Liards” V. V.- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2018 Grand Liards is also outstanding, as these old vines also moderate crop levels year in and year out, so there was no issue with getting the tannins properly ripe before the sugars climbed out of control. The result is a superb young wine, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, gamebird, a touch of red currant, woodsmoke, chalky soil tones and that signature topnote of spice. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic in profile, with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature and a long, focused and gently chewy finish. Like the Pimentiers, this is clearly premier cru quality in 2018. 2028-2060. **92.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Gravains”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2018 Camus-Bruchon Gravains is also a lovely wine in the making, with its nose quite expressive at the time of my visit, but the palate still a bit reserved and hunkered down. The bouquet delivers plenty of refinement in its blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, gamebird, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a nice touch of balsam bough, cedar and the village’s signature spice elements in the upper register. On the palate there is plenty of fruit down at the core and lovely soil signature, but this full-bodied wine is structured out of the blocks and will need a good decade to blossom. The tannins here are ripe and beautifully integrated, the wine shows lovely focus and balance and plenty of grip on the very long finish. This will be excellent in the fullness of time. 2028-2065. **93.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The 2018 les Lavières from Guillaume Camus is a gorgeous wine in the making. The bouquet is pure, elegant and potentially sappy, offering up a nascently complex blend of red and black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, violets, gamebird, a superb base of soil tones and a deft framing of cedary oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and really deep in the mid-palate, with a suave sense of balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and very, very refined finish. This is a great Savigny in the making! 2028-2065. **94.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Narbantons” Vieilles Vignes- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Narbantons, with its northeasterly exposition, was probably one of the more favored vineyards in the village in 2018, and the Camus-Bruchon version is stellar. The great nose wafts from the glass in a classic blend of cherries, a touch of fruitcake, red plums, gorgeous spice tones, gamebird, bonfire, dark soil tones and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, excellent balance and grip and a very long, soil-driven and promising finish. Fine juice. 2030-2065. **94.**

2018 Beaune “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

The Clos du Roi vineyard is a bit warmer microclimate than most of the Savigny premier crus, so I wondered if this would be the one wine in the Camus-Bruchon lineup that showed a bit more of the super ripeness of the 2018 vintage, but the answer was an emphatic “no”. The wine has turned out beautifully pure, precise and sappy, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a beautiful blend of blackberries, cassis, bitter chocolate, gamebird, a touch of mustard seed, a superb base of soil, just a whisper of cedar and a topnote of woodsmoke. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and potentially sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a very long, perfectly balanced finish. This is a first class bottle of Beaune premier cru in the making. 2026-2060. **93.**

2018 Pommard “Clos des Arvelets”- Domaine Camus-Bruchon

Year in and year out, I love the Camus family’s example of Clos des Arvelets, and the 2018 version is absolutely stellar. The bouquet again is very pure and sappy in personality, delivering a fine constellation of cherries, red plums, a hint of quince, cocoa powder, fresh nutmeg, *pigeon*, complex soil tones and a bit of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and loaded with pure fruit at the core, with superb balance and grip, lovely transparency, fine-grained and seamless tannins and a very long, nascently complex and vibrant finish. Great juice. 2033-2075. **94.**

Domaine Chandon de Briailles (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Claude et François de Nicolay were very early in picking at Chandon de Briailles in 2018, as they were out gathering chardonnay as early as the 22nd of August this year for their

Corton Blanc bottling, and the red wine harvest began for the domaine's parcels on the 30th of the month. However, Claude de Nicolay noted that "the harvest was pretty drawn out for us in 2018, as we took fully two weeks to finish bringing in the pinot noir this year, as we only picked in the mornings and stopped before it got too hot in the afternoons- so that we could protect the freshness in the wines." The resulting reds and whites have both turned out beautifully, with the white wines suave and pure, though generally quite open in personality, and the red wines pure, classic and extremely successful in 2018. There is a new bottling of Savigny Blanc in the cellars this year that is lovely and a fine new addition to the domaine's lineup. None of the red wines from 2018 had been racked yet at the time of my visit on the 15th of November and everything was showing beautifully. The red wines were raised in between twenty and twenty-five percent new oak in this vintage, and plenty of whole clusters were used, as the stems were beautifully ripe in 2018. The malolactics were pretty quick here in 2018, with the vast majority of the cellar finished up in the months of November and December, but there were a couple of wines (the les Fourneaux and les Vergelesses) that took until March of 2019 to complete their secondary fermentations. I do not know if the de Nicolays produced a separate, non-sulfur bottling of les Lavières again this year, as I only tasted the one that was raised with a judicious touch of SO₂, but there may be one in the cellars again in 2018, as the yields here were good for the first time in a long time and it was nice to see the cellar full of barrels of 2018s, after the very meager crops here in the last couple of years. However, as Claude de Nicolay noted, "our yields were generous in 2018, but not overly so, as for example, we only produced thirty-eight hectoliters per hectare with our Aloxe-Corton bottling, so it was not an enormous crop by any means." The red wines here in 2018 are superb from top to bottom, with a depth of fruit, transparency and suave structural chassis that are very exciting for down the road. Claude de Nicolay commented that "I am really, really happy with the quality of our Cortons in particular this year, which have really turned out beautifully."

Vins Blancs

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune "Saucours" Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

This is the new wine in the Chandon de Briailles cellars this year, made from a half hectare parcel of vines that were planted five years ago, but because of frost damage, this is the first vintage being produced. The soils here are sandy and the exposition is northeasterly, so it should prove to be a perfect vineyard for white Savigny in the years to come. The first vintage is quite impressive on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of apple, peach, a touch of fresh almond, citrus zest and soil. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and juicy at the core, with good framing acids, lovely focus and length and a complex and zesty finish. Good juice. 2020-2035+. **90.**

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses "Îles de Vergelesses" Blanc - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Both the Îles de Vergelesses Blanc and the Corton Blanc are now having part of their cuvée raised in one thousand liter, Stockinger *foudres*, which Claude de Nicolay likes very much for both of these wines. The wine has turned out beautifully in 2018, offering up a very pure and precise bouquet of pear, lemon zest, a hint of beeswax, a superb base of soil and a topnote of citrus blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a succulent core, fine soil signature and grip, quite nice acids and a long, wide open and totally captivating finish. This has the balance to age quite nicely, but it is going to be tough work not drinking it in the first blush of youth this year! 2020-2040. **92+.**

2018 Corton Blanc- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

Like the 2018 Îles de Vergelesses Blanc, the Corton Blanc from Chandon de Briailles has the potential to age quite well, but it is going to be so delicious out of the blocks, that I suspect a significant percentage of the wine will be drunk up with great pleasure before it reaches the age of five! The wine wafts from the glass in a blend of pear, apple, a touch of *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms and a suave foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, sound framing acids and a long, complex and zesty finish. In terms of structure, this reminds me very strongly of a young 1992 white Burgundy. 2020-2045+. **93.**

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Corton-Charlemagne from the domaine was picked on September 1st this year and comes in at an even and quite classic thirteen percent octane. This is an outstanding example in the making, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of pear, apple, fresh almond, complex, limestone minerality, spring flowers and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very long, with a great core of fruit, beautiful mineral drive, good framing acids and a very long, nascently complex and impeccably well-balanced finish. First class Corton Charlie! 2023-2050. **94.**

Vins Rouges

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Fourneaux”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Fourneaux from the domaine this year is not going to be a premier cru bottling, but rather a *villages*, as the Claude and François de Nicolay decided to blend the production from their holdings in both the premier cru and AC sectors of the vineyard together this year to make a single cuvée. The result is a superb wine that really is of premier cru quality, but will carry a *villages* level price tag and should be sought out with alacrity. The wine includes fifty percent whole clusters in 2018 and comes in at a very civilized 13.2 percent octane. It delivers a lovely nose of red and black cherries, Savigny spice tones, gamebird, a lovely base of soil and a nice dollop of fruitcake in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, soil-driven and pure at the core, with ripe, fine-grained tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. This is first class AC! 2028-2055. **91.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Lavières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 les Lavières from Chandon de Briailles comes in just under thirteen percent octane in 2018, tipping the scales at a very classic 12.9 percent and having included eighty percent whole clusters in this vintage. The wine is beautifully red fruity out of the blocks, wafting from the glass in a fine blend of red plums, cherries, violets, gamebird, chalky soil tones and a hint of smokiness in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and very classy in personality, with a fine core of fruit, suave, moderate tannins and a long, complex and shapely finish. Just a classic example of les Lavières in the making. 2027-2060. **92+.**

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses “les Vergelesses” - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 les Vergelesses is a tad riper than the Lavières this year and that is all to the good, as this wine can sometimes have a slight veneer of rusticity to it out of the blocks, but this is emphatically not the case in this vintage! The pure and sappy nose offers up a fine blend of red and black cherries, plums, a touch of chocolate, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, just a hint of new oak and a lovey topnote of discreet spices. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and sappy

at the core, with ripe, seamless tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and very promising finish. This is really, really good. 2028-2060. **91+**.

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses “Îles de Vergelesses” - Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Îles de Vergelesses is outstanding from the domaine, with the great soil signature of this vineyard tied to pure, sappy and perfectly ripe fruit in this vintage. The bouquet is deep and pure, offering up scents of red and black cherries, red currants, gamebird, a complex base of stony soil tones, a touch of iron and a lovely potpourri of spices in the upper register (this is much spicier out of the blocks than the les Vergelesses). On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with plenty of sappy red fruit waiting in the core, excellent transparency and grip, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a very long, focused and complex finish. This is going to be a brilliant example of this underrated *terroir*. 2030-2075. **94**.

2018 Aloxe-Corton “les Valozières”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Aloxe-Corton “les Valozières” from Domaine Chandon de Briailles is another lovely bottle in the making. This is probably the ripest wine in the cellars this year, coming in at 13.6 percent octane and offering up a deep and expressive bouquet of plums, cherries, woodsmoke, venison, a whiff of iron and a deep base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and soil-driven in personality, with a sappy core of red fruit, suave tannins and a long, plush and nascently complex finish. This too is really, really strong in 2018! 2028-2060. **91+**.

2018 Corton “Maréchaudes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Maréchaudes is really strong from Claude and François this year, coming in at 13.5 percent octane and having been made with one hundred percent whole clusters, due to the perfect ripeness of the bunches here in this vintage. The wine offers up a very deep and very pure bouquet of red and black cherries, just a touch of plum, a lovely base of soil, venison, woodsmoke and a topnote of Corton spices. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully structured, with ripe tannins, a sappy core of fruit, fine transparency and a long, poised and promising finish. This was picked on the morning of September 3rd and will be first rate Corton in the fullness of time. 2030-2075+. **93+**.

2018 Corton “Bressandes”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The domaine’s 2018 Corton “Bressandes” is even a step up from the very, very good Maréchaudes this year, and this seems likely to be one of the finest Bressandes crafted here in the last quarter century! The wine was raised in twenty percent new cask this year and offers up a simply beautiful bouquet of plums, red and black cherries, smoked meats, a touch of cocoa powder, a complex base of soil tones, lovely floral elements and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off superb depth of sappy fruit at the core, with beautiful soil signature, ripe, fine-grained tannins and lovely balance and grip on the long and complex finish. This is great Bressandes in the making! 2032-2085. **95**.

2018 Corton “Clos du Roi”- Domaine Chandon de Briailles

The 2018 Corton “Clos du Roi” from Chandon de Briailles is every bit as brilliant out of the blocks at the Bressandes. The wine is very red fruity in personality this year, delivering a superb aromatic constellation of cherries, strawberries, coriander seed, a touch of orange zest, complex minerality, woodsmoke, gamebird, still a touch of whole cluster tones (that will turn to cinnamon with bottle age) and a judicious framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, full-bodied, focused and sappy with red fruit at the core, with ripe tannins, lovely balance and grip and a very, very long, nascently complex and soil-driven finish. Outstanding juice. 2033-2085. **95**.



Hugues Pavelot in the family domaine's tasting room.

Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot (Savigny-lès-Beaune)

Hugues Pavelot has made a really lovely and succulent examples of the 2018 vintage, with his picking team out in the vines on August 28th to start bringing in chardonnay grapes and on the 31st of the month to start gathering pinot noir. As is the case at several of the most successful vigneron I tasted with on this trip, there is a bit of a range of alcohol levels between the lower level wines here and the top premier crus, as Monsieur Pavelot took the logical decision to start picking his best parcels first and brought in the Bourgogne rouge and some of the village wines at the end of the picking. So, for example, his Bourgogne rouge reaches fourteen percent octane, whereas most of the premier crus are in the 13.5 percent range. There is also a bit of variation here this year between the wines made from purchased fruit, such as the Chorey-lès-Beaune, and those made from estate-grown fruit, as again, priority for picking was given to the best premier cru parcels owned by the domaine. Nothing had yet been bottled amongst the red wines of 2018 chez Pavelot, with the Bourgogne and the Chorey having been racked in July and the rest of the vins rouges having been racked in September. There is a new experimental wine in the cellars this year, which is a Savigny AC bottling that was made without any added SO₂ (after a very small addition post-malo). Monsieur Pavelot made four barrels of this low sulfur bottling “just out of curiosity with how it would turn out”, and given the good yields of 2018, this seemed like the perfect vintage to see how a bottling in this style might compare with the regular Savigny villages cuvée. He noted that he may not make it again in the

future, but at least the 2018 version has turned out quite nicely and is food for thought for the future. It is certainly a bit more forward in personality than the “regular” Savigny villages bottling, made with its customary SO2 additions and will not last as long, but it was at the same quality level at the time that we tasted the two and will have the added advantage (for those wanting to drink the wine younger) of blossoming at least a couple of years sooner than the more conventionally-crafted version. While all the wines here are good to excellent in 2018, the fireworks really start at the premier cru level for the reds (with an honorable mention for the excellent Aloxe-Corton AC bottling), and there are several absolute classics to be found here amongst the 2018s. The white wines are very pretty, often quite wide open and accessible out of the blocks, and all will drink well from the outset or with a minimal amount of bottle age. They are not particularly high in acidity, but have sufficient to keep them bright and fresh for near-term drinking. The one real exception to this generalization is the superb 2018 Corton Blanc, which has cut, mineral drive and grip and is truly a superb bottle in the making and will need some time in the cellar to really reach cruising altitude. Another fine vintage for Hugues Pavelot in 2018!

Vins Rouges

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Bourgogne rouge is nicely ripe, coming in at fourteen percent, but at this level, it works very nicely, as a bit more plump, ripe fruit is welcome and will lead to earlier drinking. The nose is pretty and sappy, offering up a nice red fruity mix of cherries, plums, a bit of *pigeon*, good spices tones and a nice dollop of soil. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, long and already quite open and juicy, with good focus and grip and just a whisper of buried tannin on the backend. Good juice. 2020-2030. **87+**.

2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune “les Beaumonts” from Domaine Pavelot is a good wine in the making as well- a bit more chewier than the Bourgogne rouge, but sharing the same plush fruit tones and good balance and grip. The bouquet is a mix of red and black cherries, dark soil tones, a touch of chocolate, woodsmoke and a bit of upper register spice elements. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe, with a good core, some backend tannin and good length and grip on the focused finish. This will want at least a few years in the cellar to soften up a bit on the backend, but it will not take too long. 2023-2040. **88**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Sans Soufre”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

As there are one hundred cases of this wine in the cellars, I have to imagine that clients will have to ask about it to receive any. The wine is quite precise on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet offering up scents of red and black cherries, bonfire, woodsmoke, gamebird, a fine base of soil and classic Savigny spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, and long, with a good core of fruit, just a touch of tannin and a long, complex finish. This seems likely to drink even a year or two sooner than the Chorey. 2022-2040+. **90**.

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The “regular” bottling of Savigny *villages* is equally fine in 2018 from Hugues Pavelot, and will be a bit longer-lived as well. The bouquet is deep, pure and sappy, offering up scents of black cherries, black raspberries, *pigeon*, stony soil tones and a hint of young Savigny fruitcake as a topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and broad shouldered, with a good core of black fruit, ripe tannins and good focus and mineral undertow on the long finish. Good juice. 2025-2050+. **90**.

2018 Volnay- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Volnay from the Pavelots is also a lovely *villages* in the making and quite red fruity in personality this year, which is pretty rare in 2018. The nose offers up a complex blend of cherries, red plums, a touch of raspberry, pretty spice tones, a good base of soil, gamebird and a trace of cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with a good base of soil tones, ripe tannins and a long, balanced and tangy finish. 2026-2055. **90.**

2018 Aloxe-Corton- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

I always like the domaine's Aloxe AC bottling, which ages beautifully, and the 2018 version is really a superb *villages* in the making. The bouquet is very pure and offers up a sappy blend of black cherries, plums, a hint of chocolate, a lovely base of soil, gentle spice tones (this is fifteen percent whole clusters this year), gamebird and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off really fine mid-palate depth, with lovely soil signature, fine-grained tannins and excellent length and grip on the very well balanced finish. This will be really good in five or six years. 2025-2055. **91.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune "les Peuillets"- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

With the Pavelot family's lineup in 2018, when one starts to get to the vineyards that were picked earlier, the precision starts to jump up, and this is certainly the case with the excellent les Peuillets bottling. The wine delivers an aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, raspberries, a touch of red currant, *pigeon*, stony soil tones and a potpourri of Savigny spices in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full and nicely soil-driven, with a very deep core of fruit, ripe tannins and a long, tangy and nicely balanced finish. This is a very fine premier cru in the making. 2028-2065. **92+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune "les Serpentières" - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Hugues Pavelot's 2018 Serpentières is a classic in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a nascently complex blend of red and black cherries, venison, coffee, bonfire, Savigny spices, an excellent base of soil and just a touch of fresh herb tones out of the blocks from the bit of whole clusters. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely mineral in personality, with a sappy core of fruit, ripe tannins and fine length and grip on the young, but vibrant and classy finish. This is a classic example of Serpentières and it will be a great drink a decade down the road. 2028-2065+. **92+.**

2018 Beaune "Bressandes"- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

I am a big fan of top flight Beaune wines, but it is always hard to taste them in the midst of a lineup of Savigny premier crus, as they come across as less minerally in comparison at this early age. So, keep in mind that my score here may just be a tad conservative, as this is a really, really good bottle of Beaune in the making! The nose wafts from the glass in a fine, sappy blend of black cherries, chocolate, *pigeon*, bonfire, a touch of balsam bough, a fine base of dark soil tones and just a bit of new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with good soil elements, sappy fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and very well-balanced finish. 2026-2060. **91+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune "les Lavières" - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 les Lavières from Domaine Pavelot is a fine bottle in the making and very impressively red fruity this year. The bouquet delivers a refined blend of red plums, cherries, currants, gamebird, gentle spice tones, a beautiful base of soil and a deft framing of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with impressive mid-palate depth, ripe, seamless tannins and excellent focus and grip on the long, complex and very classy finish. A fine, fine example of one of my favorite premier crus in the commune. 2027-2060. **92.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Guettes” - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Hugues Pavelot's 2018 version of aux Guettes is also a stellar bottle in the making, with a far more black fruity personality than the lovely les Lavières. The bouquet delivers a fine mix of black cherries, sweet cassis, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, gamebird, woodsmoke, vanillin oak and just a whisper of youthful Savigny spice. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full, with a fine core of fruit, excellent balance and grip and a long, fine-grained and soil-driven finish. This will need a decade to reach real maturity, but it will be delicious when it is ready to drink and should be quite long-lived. 2028-2065+. **93.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “aux Gravains”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Gravains from Domaine Pavelot was really singing at the time of my visit and this wine is destined for great things down the road. The bouquet is deep, black fruity and beautifully precise out of the blocks, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, roasted game, excellent soil signature, woodsmoke, a dollop of new oak and a lovely interplay of Savigny spices and savory elements in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full and sappy at the core, with lovely mineral drive, ripe, fine-grained tannins and impeccable balance on the long, nascently complex and focused finish. Fine juice. 2030-2065+. **93.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “la Dominode”- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

Often, the Dominode *chez* Pavelot is my favorite premier cru in the cellar, but the 2018 was a bit grumpy at the time of my visit this year. The vineyard was picked on September 1st and comes in at 13.7 percent octane this year, offering up a ripe and sappy nose of black cherries, black raspberries, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, dark soil tones and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, broad-shouldered and plenty sappy at the core, with ripe, buried tannins, good balance and a long, fairly powerful finish. It is not that this wine is disappointing in any respect, it was just not showing the same precision and purity at this point in its evolution as was the case with the last few of these Savigny premier crus in the cellar this year. I suspect that this is just the phase the wine was in at the time of my visit. 2028-2065. **91-93?**

Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Pavelot is a very nice example of its genre and the vintage, with a bouncy, full-bodied format and a wide open personality that will make friends right out of the blocks. The ripe bouquet offers up scents of apple, peach, chalky soil tones and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, juicy and nicely plump at the core, with good framing acids and sneaky length on the finish. Good juice. 2020-2028. **88.**

2018 Choresy-lès-Beaune “Clos Margot” Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Clos Margot blanc from Hugues Pavelot is a more mineral and zesty wine than the Bourgogne, offering up a very pretty nose of pear, crab apple, a nice touch of salinity to the limestone soil elements and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, crisp and nicely focused, with vibrant acids and good focus and grip on the soil-driven finish. This is a tad more serious than the Bourgogne Blanc, but also will drink well right from the start. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Saint Romain “la Perrière” Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Saint Romain “la Perrière” Blanc from Domaine Pavelot is another good example of the vintage, with about the same overall quality level as the Clos Margot, but with a different personality. This is a tad riper and more generous than the above, but does not possess

quite the same backend cut and lift. The wide open nose offers up a pretty blend of apple, pear, a touch of almond, chalky soil elements and fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with sound framing acids and good length and grip, but a slightly deeper-pitched personality than the Clos Margot. I think each of these wines will fine their own partisans. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc- Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Savigny Blanc from the Pavelot family is really already beautifully expressive on the nose, wafting from the glass in a classy mix of pear, green apple, fresh almond, chalky soil tones, a bit of citrus peel, vanillin oak and dried flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and nicely soil-driven in personality, with sound framing acids and good focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This does not have the cut of my favorite vintages of this excellent bottling, so it will not make old bones (as many vintages do here!), but for drinking over the next decade, there is plenty to like! 2020-2030. **90.**

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc - Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot

The 2018 Pernand Blanc from Domaine Pavelot is a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the Savigny Blanc, with a bit more cut and grip and superior mineral drive on the backend, coupled to the same utterly charming fruit tones of the above. The bouquet is very classy, delivering scents of apple, pear, almond, chalky minerality, a touch of *crème patissière* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, focused and full-bodied, with plenty in reserve, a good core, zesty acids and fine mineral drive on the long and complex finish. This is very good. 2022-2035+. **91.**

2018 Corton Blanc “les Charmes”- Jean-Marc et Hugues Domaine Pavelot

There is only a single *pièce* of this fine Corton Blanc in the Pavelot cellars, so it will be a hard wine to find, but it is very, very good this year and will be worth a special search to latch onto a few bottles. The nose jumps from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, acacia blossoms, hazelnut, a fine base of chalky soil tones, gentle notes of pastry cream and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and absolutely rock solid at the core, with fine focus and grip, bright acids and lovely promise on the long and zesty finish. This is an excellent wine in the making! 2025-2050. **93+.**

Beaune

Maison Joseph Drouhin (Beaune)

For the last few years, Maison Joseph Drouhin has been organizing a press tasting in Beaune each November to show their top wines for the new vintage. They also do the same in London for top merchants and journalists there, which is a great way to preview the young wines without having to deplete the number of bottles of the most sought after premier and grand crus in the market by gobbling up potential bottles down the road with endless tastings in the cellars. The program has worked beautifully since its inception, but we hit a hiccup this year during the press tasting, as a few of the samples prepared ahead of time had gotten a touch oxidative and, to my palate, were probably not representative of the underlying wines- at least based on the sappy beauty of the perfect samples. So, my report this year is a bit truncated on the 2018s from Maison Joseph Drouhin, as I have not printed notes on the samples that seemed unrepresentative to me (as this would be a disservice to both the wines and readers). As the maison is very generous with presenting such a wide array of their wines for this event (fully forty-six wines were shown this year!), a few off samples would not be such a big deal, but they did sting a bit, as they often were the very top grand cru bottlings produced by Joseph Drouhin! Such is the luck

of the draw, and I would certainly not infer anything from a particular sample not being spot on at this tasting and I am sure it is not indicative of the wines themselves. So, in the report that follows, some of my very favorite wines in all of Burgundy are missing from the roster of 2018 tasting notes, but as the vast majority of the samples were in prime shape and absolutely singing, it is easy to say that this is a lovely vintage for Maison Drouhin.

Véronique Drouhin Boss was our host for this tasting, as has been the case for several years, and she commented that “the challenge of 2018 was to decide when to pick, as we had to balance the sugars with phenolic maturity of the tannins this year”, and in the end, “we decided to pick based on the phenolic maturity.” The picking teams at Maison Drouhin were out in the vines first on August 29th, starting in Corton-Charlemagne this year, and the Côte de Beaune reds and whites followed apace. The teams started in the Côte de Nuits on September 5th in 2018, beginning with the maison’s grand cru parcels and then moving on to the premiers and village vineyards. The reds included a goodly proportion of whole clusters in 2018, as is often the case at Maison Drouhin, but Véronique emphasized that “we opted for very gentle extraction during fermentations of the reds, so as to preserve the elegance in the wines.” Malolactic fermentations were not particularly brisk in finishing up here in 2018, with many lasting until the summer of 2019, but with much malic acidity already burned up by the plants in the blazing heat of August, the resulting wines are plush in personality. Acidity levels here are on the lower side for Maison Drouhin, but certainly quite adequate and the wines do not have any sensation of being soft. In fact, it is fairly chewy vintage here this year, with the plush and sappy fruit supported by a firm chassis of tannins in most cases and these wines should age very nicely. A few of the lower level white wines in the lineup (which were no doubt picked later) had their malos partially blocked this year to protect freshness and bounce. It is a very good vintage at Maison Joseph Drouhin, and I only wish we had better luck with a few more of those “crown jewel” red wine samples!

Vins Blancs de Maison Drouhin

2018 Saint-Véran- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Saint-Véran from Maison Joseph Drouhin is a very pretty wine this year, offering up a bright and wide open bouquet of peach, apple, Mâconnais toastiness, chalky and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and zesty, with a good core and soil signature, lovely balance and good framing acids perking up the tasty finish. Good juice. 2020-2025. **88.**

2018 Mâcon-Bussières “les Clos”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

This is one of the cooler sites in the Mâconnais and it has done very nicely in the warmer summer of 2018. The bouquet is bright and classy, delivering a blend of apple, peach, gentle toastiness, chalk, just a whisper of vanillin oak and a topnote of orange peel. On the palate the wine is bright, crisp and full-bodied, with a good core, fine soil signature, sound acids and good bounce and grip on the wide open and succulent finish. A fine example. 2020-2030. **90.**

2018 Pouilly-Vinzelles- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Pouilly-Vinzelles shows its ripeness a bit on both the nose and palate this year, giving it a slightly tropical veneer to go along with lovely limestone mineral drive. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of apple, a hint of tangerine and pineapple, chalky soil tones, dried flowers and a topnote of lemon peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost plush at the core, with good minerality, sound framing acids and a long, succulent and wide open finish. This is very tasty, but I like the extra bit of cut in the Bussières this year. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Rully Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Rully was more closed aromatically at the time of our tasting than the Saint-Véran, but it was showing well on the palate and this wine is clearly going to be quite lovely. The shy nose eventually is coaxed into offering up scents of apple, lemon, stony soil tones, a touch of citrus peel and a gentle base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and bouncy, with a lovely core, good soil signature, sound acids and very good length and grip on the classy finish. Good juice. 2020-2030. **89.**

2018 Côte de Beaune Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Côte de Beaune Blanc is always one of the best values in the Maison Joseph Drouhin portfolio and the 2018 is a lovely example of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in an expressive blend of pear, lemon blossoms, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of *crème patissière* and a discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, ripe and full-bodied, with lovely complexity and grip, good supporting acids and a long, classy and very tasty finish. 2020-2030+. **89+.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

It is my impression that the Chassagne *villages* bottling from Joseph Drouhin is taking on more and more the style of the beautiful Laguiche Morgeot bottling, and it turns out that one of the chief components in this blend of three different *lieux à dits* lies just to the north of Morgeot and in the same band of the slope. The 2018 version is excellent, offering up a deep and classy bouquet of apple, pear, pastry cream, lovely soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a lovely core, sound framing acids and fine focus and bounce on the long and poised finish. A lovely *villages*! 2020-2040. **90.**

2018 Meursault- Maison Joseph Drouhin

It is always interesting at this November tasting to compare the three *villages* offerings from Maison Drouhin from the big three villages in the Côte de Beaune, as one gets to taste them side by side. This year, my slight favorite is this excellent Meursault AC, which delivers a very pure and classy bouquet of apple, pear, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, white flowers, citrus zest and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and quite classic in personality, with a good core, lovely acids and grip, impeccable balance and a long, focused and nascently complex finish. First class Meursault *villages*! 2020-2040+. **91.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Puligny AC from Maison Drouhin is a lovely example of the vintage: ripe, pure and stylish. The bouquet delivers a lovely combination of apple, pear, acacia blossoms, chalky soil tones and a judicious coating of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with good soil undertow, sound acids and fine focus and balance on the wide open and very tasty finish. Good juice. 2020-2040. **89+.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Embazées”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 les Embazées from the Drouhin family is very strong this year. The vineyard lies high up on the slope, at the same altitude as La Romanée and Grands Ruchottes, but further south and right on the Santenay border. The nose is pure, refined and already nicely complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, lemon, a lovely base of chalky soil tones, *crème patissière*, orange blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, deep and full-bodied, with impressive soil signature, zesty acids and a long, youthful and vibrant finish. This is really lovely. 2023-2050. **92.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot” Marquis de Laguiche- Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Marquis de Laguiche Morgeot is simply outstanding. The bouquet is deep, pure and very refined (as always!), delivering a beautiful blend of pear, golden delicious apple, pastry cream, chalky soil tones, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and already silky on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, bright acids and fine purity and precision on the long and complex finish. 2022-2050. **93.**

2018 Meursault “Genevrières”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

I love the 2018 Genevrières from Maison Drouhin, which may well be the strongest example of this premier cru that I have yet tasted from the domaine! The first class nose jumps from the glass in a complex blend of apple, pear, passion fruit, almonds, salty soil white tones, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with impressive transparency and grip, racy acids and a long, zesty, elegant and utterly complete finish. Just a beautiful bottle in the making. 2020-2050. **93+.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Folatières is a lovely and forward example of this fine premier cru. The nose delivers a very attractive aromatic constellation of apple, peach, a touch of almond, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a musky floral topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a great core of fruit, with good soil signature, sound acids and a long, ripe and still fairly adolescent finish. This is tasty, but still youthful and deserves at least a couple of years in the cellar to fully settle in and start to blossom. 2022-2040+. **90.**

2018 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Blanc- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Clos des Mouches Blanc is an outstanding wine in the making. Due to the varied ripening of parcels in the vineyard this year, the team at Maison Drouhin made several passes through the vineyard to bring in chardonnay in optimal condition, so that the picking here occurred between August 30th and September 8th, which was quite a wide window in this vintage. The results speak for themselves, with the beautiful nose offering up scents of lemon, apple, beeswax, chalky soil tones, citrus peel, a deft framing of vanillin oak and a lovely floral topnote redolent of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sports lovely mid-palate depth, with lovely cut and grip, impeccable balance and a long, complex and focused finish. 2025-2055+. **94.**

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Joseph Drouhin (Estate)

The 2018 Corton-Charlemagne from Maison Drouhin shows lovely potential, and it was only upon reflection after the tasting that I wondered if there might not be even more here than the sample showed, as it seemed just a bit soft in structure for this bottling. Perhaps we had a less than perfect sample? In any case, the aromatics were spot on, offering up a mix of apple, pear, chalky minerality, *crème patissière*, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, ripe and classy, with a plush core, lovely mineral drive and grip and a long, (seemingly) fairly low acid finish. As the question of samples did not really occur at the tasting until we got to some of the customary top red wines at the *maison*, it did not occur to me at the time that this sample may not have been pristine, but it does seem a possibility in retrospect. If that is the case, I would suspect the wine merits two points more in proper form! 2025-2050+? **92+.**

2018 Montrachet “Marquis de Laguiche”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Happily, the 2018 Marquis de Laguiche Montrachet was spot on at our tasting and the wine is absolutely beautiful on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in marvelous constellation of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, fresh almond, a beautiful base of chalky

soil tones, acacia blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and classy, with a superb core of fruit, lovely soil signature, bright acids and a long, ripe and very pure and classy finish. A lovely Laguiche Montrachet that strongly reminds me of the 1992 version when it was released. 2025-2060+. **96.**



Vins Rouges de Maison Drouhin

2018 Rully Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Rully Rouge from Maison Drouhin is a lovely wine and a fine value. The bouquet is bright and nicely red fruity, offering up scents of cherries, sweet cranberry, dark soil tones, gamebird, a touch of fresh sage and a nice note of bonfire in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly soil-driven, with a good core, moderate tannins and a long, well-balanced finish. This will need a few years to blossom, but will be quite tasty when ready to drink. 2023-2040. **89.**

2018 Côte de Beaune Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

This is often one of the best values in the Drouhins' portfolio, as it is almost entirely a blend of younger vine fruit from their premier cru holdings in Beaune. The 2018 Côte de Beaune is another lovely wine, offering up a juicy nose of red and black cherries, smoke, dark chocolate, a nice base of soil and a topnote of vinesmoke. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, sappy and gently tannic this year, with a bit of its youthful whole clusters still showing at the present time, but with good length and grip for fine drinking a short time down the road. 2023-2040+. **88.**

2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Chorey-lès-Beaune from the Drouhins reminds me very much of the 1999 version, which is a wine that I bought a case of and drank with great pleasure. The 2018 version shares that same black fruity personality as the '99, offering up scents of black cherries and plums, chocolate, a touch of rose petal, dark soil tones and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with a nice touch of backend tannin perking up the long and promising finish. Good juice. 2022-2040. **89.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Clos des Godeaux”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Clos des Godeaux offers up truly beautiful aromatics this year, coupled with a deep and muscular palate impression that promises long life in bottle. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a fine blend of sappy black cherries, dark berries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, a touch of vanillin oak and a lovely base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with a firm foundation of chewy tannin, tangy acids and fine focus and grip on the long, fairly powerful finish. Give this time in the cellar to allow its customary elegance to emerge and marry with the broad shoulders of the vintage. 2027-2045+. **89+.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “Fourneaux”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Fourneaux from Maison Drouhin is a fine bottle in the making, with its superior premier cru situation on the slope allowing for a bit more refinement to the texture of the tannins than the Clos des Godeaux. The bouquet is ripe, pure and black fruity in personality, offering up scents of dark berries, black cherries, espresso, dark soil tones, roasted gamebird, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully concentrated at the core, with good soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, well-balanced and nascently complex finish. This should prove to be a sappy and very elegant example of Fourneaux when it is ready to drink. 2028-2055. **91+.**

2018 Beaune “Grèves”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

Maison Drouhin's 2018 Beaune “Grèves” was really showing beautifully in November, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a sappy and very refined blend of plums, black cherries, bitter chocolate, a hint of fresh nutmeg, a fine base of soil, gamebird, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush at the core, with lovely purity and grip, fine-grained, buried tannins and a long, complex and very classy finish. 2028-2060. **92+.**

2018 Beaune “Cras”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The vineyard of Cras sits up towards the top of the slope in the pure heart of the premier crus in Beaune and is a beautifully-situated parcel. The 2018 from Maison Drouhin is fully worthy of its excellent location, offering up a pure and nascently complex bouquet of red and black cherries, plum, woodsmoke, gamebird, a fine base of soil tones, just a touch of oak and a lovely topnote of fresh herbs. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely transparent in personality, with a good core of fruit, fine focus and grip, ripe, seamless tannins and a long, classy finish. In a vintage with lots of over the top fruit bombs, the 2018 Drouhin Beaune “Cras” is destined to be a refreshingly light on its feet example. 2027-2050. **91.**

2018 Beaune “Clos des Mouches” Rouge- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Clos des Mouches rouge contains twenty-five percent whole clusters this year. The wine is deep, ripe and classy on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet delivering a constellation of black cherries, cassis, vinesmoke, roasted *pigeon*, a complex base of soil and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with a long, powerful, primary and moderately tannic finish. This is still a baby and will need a

good decade to blossom, but will turn out to be a ripe and very satisfying example of the vintage. 2030-2065+. **92.**

2018 Nuits St. Georges “les Procès”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 les Procès was also showing beautiful potential at the time of our tasting. The bouquet is deep, sweetly black fruity and promising, wafting from the glass in a blend of sweet dark berries, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, a touch of Nuits nutskin in the upper register and a very refined foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with ripe, seamless tannins, excellent focus and grip and a long, nascently complex and classy finish. 2030-2065+. **92.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée *villages* from Maison Drouhin is pretty structured out of the blocks this year, underscoring that this is a vintage with plenty of aging potential. The bouquet is already quite lovely, offering up scents of dark berries, black raspberries, gamebird, dark chocolate, woodsmoke, a good base of soil and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely sappy at the core, with a good chassis of chewy tannin, fine focus and grip and a long, promising finish. There is plenty of fruit here to absorb the tannins in due course, but this wine will need some bottle age before it starts to drink with generosity. 2026-2050. **89+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Chambolle AC from Joseph Drouhin is a touch riper on both the nose and palate than the Vosne AC this year, so its personality is a bit different. The sappy nose offers up scents of plums, black cherries, chocolate, chalky soil tones, gamebird and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite fruit-driven in personality out of the blocks, with a plush core, ripe and well-integrated tannins and a long, sappy finish. This too is going to be a good bottle in due course and it will be interesting to chart its evolution in comparison to the sterner, but less fruit-driven Vosne *villages* and see which side of the 2018 vintage proves better over the long haul. 2025-2055. **89+.**

2018 Chambolle-Musigny “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Chambolle “Premier Cru” from the Drouhins was showing beautifully in November, with the bouquet offering up a sappy and nicely perfumed combination of plums, black cherries, gamebird, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, dark chocolate and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a plump core, good soil signature, ripe, firm tannins and a long, primary and promising finish. This will take some time to blossom. 2028-2060+. **92.**

2018 Gevrey-Chambertin “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Premier Cru bottling from Gevrey from Maison Drouhin is composed of fruit from four different parcels in 2018: Champonnet and Craipillot (just below the Combe de Lavaux) and la Bossière and les Veroilles at the very top of the Combe de Lavaux. The wine is excellent in 2018, with the nose wafting from the glass in a mix of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, a hint of mustard seed, dark soil tones, grilled meats and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, plush at the core and chewy, with fine focus and grip, good soil signature and a long, focused and fine-grained finish. Good juice. 2028-2065. **92.**

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Premier Cru”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The relatively new Premier Cru bottling from Vosne *chez* Drouhin is excellent in 2018. This is a blend of purchased fruit from Petits Monts, Malconsorts and Chaumes, so its pedigree is indisputable and the wine is fully worthy of its roots, offering up a superb bouquet of black plums, black raspberries, raw cocoa, duck, a touch of sweet hazelnut, dark soil tones and vanillin

oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with fine backend mineral drive, ripe, buried tannins and lovely length and grip on the nascently complex finish. First class juice. 2027-2075. **92+**.



The winter sun starting to sink low over the Clos des Mouches.

2018 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts”- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The 2018 Vosne-Romanée “Petits Monts” from Maison Drouhin is a very pretty bottle in the making. This cuvée includes about half whole clusters this year and offers up a still very youthful bouquet of black cherries, sweet dark berries, lovely minerality, woodsmoke, still a bit of sweet stem elements and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with plenty of black fruit at the core, fine-grained tannins and a long, soil-driven and ripe finish. I like the early touch of stems here on both the nose and palate, as these elements turn into lovely spice tones with extended bottle age and should make this wine really enjoyable a decade down the road. There is just a hint of very ripe fruit on the backend today that suggests this may age along the lines of the 1990 Petits Monts. 2030-2075+. **92+**.

2018 Charmes-Chambertin- Maison Joseph Drouhin

The Drouhins changed sources for their Charmes-Chambertin bottling several years ago and the new plot of vines is right in the heart of the upper section of aux Charmes, just across the Route Nationale from Chambertin. Their 2018 version is stellar, wafting from the glass in a refined and sappy nose of black cherries, sweet dark berries, grilled meats, espresso, dark soil

tones, woodsmoke, mustard seed and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite powerful for this bottling, with a rock solid core, fine focus and grip, ripe tannins and a long, nascently complex finish. I would guess that this is fully fourteen percent in octane this year, but carries it very well and will be an impressive bottle in due course. 2030-2075+. **93.**

Volnay

Domaine Michel Lafarge (Volnay)

Frédéric Lafarge has crafted such classically-styled wines in 2018 that they look to be from a completely different vintage than almost all of his contemporaries in the Côte d'Or, but this is the very essence of the heterogeneous nature of the vintage! Monsieur Lafarge and his team started picking on September 1st in 2018, in the Volnay vineyards of Clos des Châteaux des Ducs and Caillerets, and then moved onto their other premier cru parcels starting on the 4th of the month. The domaine did not have large yields in this vintage, with Frédéric noting that "they were correct, but not overly generous in 2018, and this because we have many old vines." As I mentioned in the vintage introductory remarks, Monsieur Lafarge is also of the opinion that farming biodynamically is also an advantage in very hot summers like 2018, as he feels farming in this manner allows the vines to more readily adapt to extreme temperatures and still ripen the grapes in a more measured manner that allows sugar accumulation and physiological ripeness to mount together, rather than the sugars soaring in the heat. Whatever the reason, the 2018s chez Lafarge are amongst the most svelte and terroir-defined wines that I tasted during my entire trip, with alcohol levels universally between 12.8 and 13.2 percent and the wines elegant, transparent and structurally refined. Frédéric's father, Michel Lafarge thinks they bear a strong resemblance to his young 1959s, so the family's optimism for the 2018 vintage is quite clear! The entire cellar had been racked in August of 2019, so all of the wines were in a very good state for tasting in the first week of November this year. Much of the cellar is very red fruity in personality this year, which was no small feat in the torrid backend vintage conditions of 2018, when it was so easy to let ripeness get the upper hand. But, there are a great many red fruity and very transparent young wines in the Lafarge lineup this year, which speaks highly to just how perfect the timing was by Frédéric Lafarge in terms of when to start picking.

Vins Blancs de Domaine Lafarge

2018 Bourgogne Aligoté "Raisin d'Orée"- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Raisin d'Orée is a lovely wine from the Lafarge family this year, offering up a bright and youthfully complex nose of apple, tangerine, lovely soil tones, citrus peel and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and vibrant, with a good core and impressive focus, cut and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is first class Aligoté. 2020-2035. **89.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Meursault AC from Domaine Lafarge is also outstanding. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, hazelnuts, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and a nice, youthful touch of orange peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely reserved in personality out of the blocks, with a good core of fruit, fine mineral undertow, bright acids and lovely length and grip on the promising finish. Good juice. 2023-2045+. **90.**

2018 Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Meursault “Vendanges Selectionées” is a small step up in both depth and complexity from the straight *villages*. The nose delivers a fine combination of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky minerality, an incipient hint of honeycomb and a discreet framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and quite racy in personality, with a fine core, lovely minerality and impressive precision and grip on the beautifully balanced finish. This will probably start to drink very well around the same time as the straight Meursault, with only a few years’ worth of bottle age, but will deliver just a bit more complexity and core. 2023-2050+.

92.

2018 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots” Blanc- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Clos des Aigrots Blanc is another terrific young white wine from the Lafarge family. The bouquet reveals an aromatic constellation of apple, tangerine, a complex base of chalky minerality, white lilies, gentle notes of new oak and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and quite youthful in personality, with lovely mid-palate depth, fine focus and grip and a very long, vibrant and racy finish. This is going to be a stellar example of the vintage, but it will need a bit of bottle age to really start hitting on all cylinders. 2025-2055.

93.



A few other vinous treasures in the Lafarge family’s cellars this past November.

Vins Rouges de Domaine Lafarge

2018 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Exception”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Cuvée Exception is a lovely, red fruity example of the vintage. The complex bouquet offers up scents of cherries, cranberries, a lovely base of soil, bonfire, a nice touch of fresh thyme and a bit of pepper in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-bodied, bright and bouncy, with lovely intensity of flavor, fine soil signature, tangy acids and lovely length and grip on the admirably complex finish. Good juice that will drink well right from the start. 2020-2035. **88+**.

2018 Bourgogne Passetoutgrains “Cuvée Anthologie”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Lafarge family’s Cuvée Anthologie (a fifty-fifty blend of pinot noir and gamay made from a parcel of ninety year-old vines and bottled only in magnums and jeroboams) is another fine and very transparent example of the 2018 vintage. The wine is a bit deeper at the core than the Cuvée Exception, but just as beautifully red fruity and transparent, offering up scents of strawberries, cherries, a touch of cocoa powder, gamebird and a complex base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is medium-full, tangy and very much soil-driven in personality, with a very pretty core of fruit, zesty acids and lovely length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. 2020-2040. **89+**.

2018 Bourgogne Côte d’Or Rouge- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Michel Lafarge is a classic example of this bottling (which is one of the finest in the Côte d’Or in my experience). The wine offers up a lovely blend of red and black cherries, gamebird, dark soil tones, coffee and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is medium-full, tangy and transparent, with a fine core of pure fruit, lovely soil signature and a long, gently tannic and light on its feet, bouncy finish. This will age very nicely, but will come forward and start to drink a couple of years quicker than is customary with this bottling *chez* Lafarge. 2021-2040. **90**.

2018 Côte de Beaune-Villages- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Côte de Beaune-Villages bottling from the Lafarge family hails from a parcel of vines in the *lieu â dit* of En Gargouillot in Meursault that lie just below the *Dessous* section of Volnay “Santenots” on the slope. The 2018 version is very pretty and quite red fruity this year, wafting from the glass in a blend of strawberries, cherries, raw cocoa, a lovely base of soil, woodsmoke and a dollop of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a good core, beautiful transparency and just a touch of tannin perking up the long and complex finish. This is a classic middleweight that is destined to put on weight with bottle age and will be utterly charming when it is ready to drink. 2023-2040+. **90**.

2018 Volnay- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Volnay *villages* from Domaine Michel Lafarge is another lovely middleweight in the making. The vibrant bouquet is pure and already nicely complex, offering up scents of raspberries, cherries, gamebird, woodsmoke, lovely soil tones and a topnote of raw cocoa. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and bouncy, with a good core, excellent soil signature and grip, quite subtle tannins and a very long, very pure and promising finish. Lovely AC in the making. 2025-2055. **91**.

2018 Volnay “Vendanges Sélectionées”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Volnay “Vendanges Sélectionées” from Frédéric Lafarge is also excellent, with more depth and sappiness at the core than the straight AC this year, coupled with a bit more structure as well on the backend. The aromatic constellation is a refined mix of red plums,

cherries, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, a touch of nutskin and a lovely, smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very svelte in profile, with a good core, lovely transparency, impeccable balance and a long, complex suavely tannic finish. I love the backend energy and bounce here. 2027-2060. **92.**

2018 Beaune “Clos des Aigrots”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Clos des Aigrots *rouge* is utterly superb this year. The bouquet is pure, sappy and nicely defined by its soil elements at the same time, offering up notes of cherries, quince, a touch of blood orange, woodsmoke, gamebird, a complex base of soil and just a whisper of oak. On the palate the wine is very pure, long and full-bodied, with excellent depth at the core, ripe, buried tannins and a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks that augurs beautifully for its future evolution in bottle. First class juice. 2028-2060+. **92+.**

2018 Beaune “Grèves”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The Lafarge parcel of vines in Grèves celebrated their ninetieth birthday in 2018 and the wine has turned out brilliantly. This is more black fruity in personality than the Clos des Aigrots this year, delivering a refined aromatic constellation of black cherries, plums, *pigeon*, woodsmoke, a lovely base of dark soil tones and a whisper of fresh thyme in the upper register. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and soil-driven in profile, with a nice sense of creaminess at the core, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and complex finish. Fine, fine wine in the making. 2028-2060+. **93.**

2018 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Pézerolles from Domaine Lafarge is a very elegant and transparent young Pommard in the making. The nose wafts from the glass in a very pure blend of red plums, cherries, quince, gamebird, a gorgeous base of soil tones, a touch of oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and ripely tannic, with a superb core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and impeccable balance and grip on the long, focused and nascently complex finish. This will take some time to come around (it is a Pommard premier cru after all!), but it will be a stellar wine once it has blossomed. 2032-2070. **93.**

2018 Volnay “Pitures”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

With all of the beautifully red fruity wines *chez* Lafarge in 2018, I was surprised to see just how black fruity both the Pitures and the Mitans have turned out, but this is the signature fruit tones of both of these *terroirs*. The 2018 Pitures in a lovely wine in the making, delivering a fine nose of dark berries, black cherries, venison, espresso, dark soil tones and a bit of bonfire. On the palate the wine is deep, black fruity and complex, with excellent soil signature, plenty of sappy fruit at the core, fine-grained tannins and a long, poised and promising finish. 2032-2065+. **93+.**

2018 Volnay “Mitans”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Mitans is another excellent wine in the making from Domaine Lafarge in this vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful blend of black cherries, black plums, French roast, *pigeon*, a very complex base of soil tones, woodsmoke and a nice touch of bitter chocolate in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite transparent in profile, with a lovely core of sappy black fruit, excellent focus and grip and fine-grained tannins perking up the long, complex and vibrant finish. Another absolutely superb bottle in the making. 2030-2065+. **93+.**

2018 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Volnay “Caillerets” from Frédéric Lafarge is another outstanding wine, and given how many of these cuvées this year are really red fruity in personality, I was surprised to

see a fine mix here of both red and black fruit tones. The bouquet is quite plummy, delivering a constellation of red and black plums, black cherries, great, complex minerality, gamebird, raw cocoa, woodsmoke and just a whisper of oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with lovely focus and balance, fine-grained tannins and a very long, very complex and utterly classic finish. A great bottle of young Caillerets. 2033-2075. **94+**.

2018 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Clos des Chênes *chez* Lafarge is again, quite red fruity in personality out of the blocks, with great breed and complexity already evident in its aromatic combination of red plums, cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, woodsmoke, gentle notes of violet, dark soil tones and a hint of hazelnuts in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved in personality, with a rock solid core, great soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins and great backend energy and grip on the very, very long, very pure finish. Great juice. 2033-2075+. **95**.

2018 Volnay “Clos du Château des Ducs”- Domaine Michel Lafarge

The 2018 Clos du Château des Ducs from Domaine Michel Lafarge is also flat out brilliant this year. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthfully complex blend of cherries, red plums, plenty of smokiness, raw cocoa, *pigeon*, a hint of nutskin, gorgeous soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very soil-driven in personality, with marvelous depth in the mid-palate, suave tannins and a long, tangy and very elegant finish. Equally stunning! 2032-2075. **95**.

Domaine Joseph Voillot (Volnay)

Domaine Joseph Voillot in Volnay is making beautiful wines and their 2018s are again, fine examples of the vintage. Proprietor, Jean-Pierre Charlot and his nephew, Etienne Chaix, are doing great work and have succeeded very well in this challenging vintage. The family team moved decisively to start picking early in 2018, getting out in the vines on the 30th of August, and began harvesting their premier cru parcels in Volnay first, followed by their premier crus in Pommard, before moving on to the remainder of their vines. Consequently, the octane levels here are amongst the lowest to be found in the Côte d'Or in 2018, with the reds coming in between 12.8 and 13.2 percent this year! Much of the cellar of 2018s had been racked a few weeks before my visit on November 9th, with the whites destined to be bottled in December. Only the Bourgogne rouge was already in bottle. As the recently-racked wines were still a bit unsettled after their assemblage, I have scored them within a range to be fair to them, but would expect the wines finally to merit scores at the top of each point range when all is said and done. The white wines here in 2018 are admirably precise and zesty, with very classic aromatics and flavors and they will be excellent examples of their respective appellations. The red wines of 2018 from Domaine Voillot are excellent, with lovely depth of sappy fruit, fine soil signatures and refined structures for aging. The wines have a good foundation of tannin at the premier cru level and many will need eight to twelve years in the cellar to really start to blossom, but they will be fine examples of their respective terroirs when they are fully mature. With tons of old vines in the domaine's parcels, many planted back in the 1930s, there does not seem to have been any issue with having to wait for tannins to ripen up while the sugars got too high, so the red wines have turned out quite classically across the board here and will be some of the absolute steals of the 2018 vintage!

Vins Blancs

2018 Meursault “les Chevalières”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Meursault “les Chevalières” from Domaine Voillot was showing fine potential at the time of my visit, despite its recent *assemblage*. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, a hint of fresh almond, lemon, chalky soil tones and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and very nicely balanced, with a good core of fruit, lovely acids and very good length and grip on the promising finish. Good juice in the making. 2020-2040. **90-91+**.

2018 Meursault “les Cras”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Meursault “les Cras” was a bit more reserved on the nose from its recent racking than the Chevalières, but with some coaxing offered up scents of apple, passion fruit, spring flowers, salty, chalky minerality and a gentle foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved, with a lovely core, good mineral drive and fine cut and grip on the long and very well-balanced finish. Though this is a touch more grumpy post-racking than the Chevalières, this is clearly going to be a lovely bottle. 2022-2045. **92-93**.

Vins Rouges

2018 Bourgogne “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Bourgogne from Domaine Voillot had been bottled just ahead of the harvest of 2019 and was showing still a bit closed at the time of my visit. The red fruity nose eventually offers up a stylish mix of cherries, strawberries, woodsmoke, soil tones and a floral topnote. On the palate the wine is full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a good core of fruit, a touch of backend tannin and sneaky length and grip on the well-balanced finish. 2022-2035. **87-88**.

2018 Volnay “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Volnay old vine AC really was showing fine depth for a *villages* bottling, delivering a refined bouquet of black cherries, plums, dark chocolate, gamebird and a good base of dark soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely reserved in style, with a lovely core of fruit, fine focus and grip, moderately chewy tannins and impressive length on the backend. This is still youthful and a bit grumpy about being tasted so soon after its racking, but the constituent components here are very strong and this will be a lovely example. 2026-2050+. **89-90+**.

2018 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Pommard “Vieilles Vignes” from Domaine Joseph Voillot had settled in a bit more from its racking than the Volnay *villages*, offering up a precise and promising bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, venison, woodsmoke, a good base of soil, just a touch of oak and a nice dollop of mustard seed in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely transparent, with a great core of pure fruit, ripe, buried tannins and excellent length and grip on the very well-balanced finish. This is a proper young Pommard and will need a good decade to blossom, but it has fine potential. 2028-2055+. **90-91**.

2018 Beaune “aux Coucherais”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Beaune “aux Coucherais” from Domaine Joseph Voillot is a fine bottle in the making, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a sappy blend of red plums and black cherries, raw cocoa, a touch of *pigeon*, dark soil tones, vanillin oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plush at the core, with good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and a long, tangy and very well-balanced finish. Good juice. 2028-2060. **91-92**.

2018 Volnay “Fremiets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Fremiets is more black fruity than the Coucherais, but equally well balanced and seamlessly balanced. The nose delivers a refined aromatic constellation of dark berries, black plums, gamebird, bitter chocolate, dark soil tones, a touch of fresh thyme and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with ripe, buried tannins and fine shape and grip on the long, focused and promising finish. 2028-2060. **91-92+.**

2018 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Champans from Domaine Voillot is pure, sappy and soil-driven. The first class bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of plums, sweet dark berries, a complex base of soil, venison, dark chocolate, a discreet foundation of new oak and a nice touch of upper register spiciness. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a superb core of fruit, ripe, buried tannins and a long, tangy and beautifully focused finish. This is top flight Champans in the making. 2030-2065. **92-93.**

2018 Volnay “Caillerets”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The 2018 Caillerets from Messieurs Charlot and Chaix is also nicely black fruity in this vintage, offering up a fine nose of black cherries, sweet dark berries, espresso, violets, gamebird, stony soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, suave tannins and impressive length and grip on the classy finish. Fine, fine juice. 2030-2065. **92-93.**

2018 Pommard “Clos Micault”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

The family’s parcel in Clos Micault is their smallest in any of their premier crus, with their fourteen *ares* producing three barrels in 2018. So, this is their premier cru with the highest percentage of new oak, as one out of the three barrels made in this vintage was a new cask. The wine is very good in this vintage, offering up a sappy and pure bouquet of red and black cherries, chocolate, a fine base of soil, gamebird, a touch of mustard seed and a fairly generous framing of spicy new oak. On the palate the wine is precise, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with good soil signature, fine-grained tannins and very good length and grip on the primary and promising finish. This was probably the grumpiest wine I tasted during my visit, so I have scored it in a slightly wider range, but the raw materials here are promising and I have little doubt it will turn out to be a fine bottle in due course. 2028-2055. **89-91+.**

2018 Pommard “Epenots”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

In contrast to the still slightly shaken Clos Micault, the 2018 Epenots from Domaine Voillot was showing beautifully. The bouquet in particular is already very expressive, offering up scents of red plums, black cherries, gamebird, a touch of mustard seed, complex soil tones and a suave foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, beautifully sappy at the core, with lovely soil signature, ripe, seamless tannins, good acids and fine focus and grip on the long and nascently complex finish. Lovely juice. 2030-2065. **92-93+.**

2018 Pommard “Pézerolles”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

I love the synthesis of red and black fruit in the nose of the 2018 Pommard “Pézerolles” from Domaine Voillot. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of black plums, red and black cherries, cocoa powder, *pigeon*, a complex base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of violets. On the palate the wine is pure, ripe and full-bodied, with excellent focus and grip, a superb core of fruit, lovely backend mineral drive and a long, ripely tannic finish. This will need time, but it will be excellent. 2030-2065+. **92-94.**

2018 Pommard “Rugiens”- Domaine Joseph Voillot

Messieurs Charlot and Chaix have crafted an outstanding young bottle of Rugiens in 2018. This is more red fruity in personality than either the Pézerolles or Epenots, wafting from the glass in a blend of cherries, a touch of quince, red plums, mustard seed, gamebird, stony soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off gorgeous mid-palate depth, with fine transparency, ripe, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and tangy finish. Great juice. 2032-2070. **93-94.**



On the road back from Auxey-Duresses, the view of the village of Monthélie sitting pretty up on the hill.

Auxey-Duresses

Domaine Gilles Lafouge (Auxey-Duresses)

Gilles Lafouge and his son, Maxim, have crafted lovely examples of the 2018 vintage. The father and son team began picking on September 2nd in 2018 and Gilles reported that all of their wines, both reds and whites this year, came in between thirteen and 13.5 percent octane, so this is quite a classically styled vintage chez Lafouge. As was the case with many other of the most successful vigneron in this vintage, Gilles Lafouge noted that “wed did very little punch-downs this year, as the goal was to extract very gently, so pumping over was far more important for us during the fermentations, to retain the elegance in the wines.” This he has done in beautifully, as this is as strong a range of 2018s- both red and white- that one will find anywhere in the Côte d’Or. The white wines chez Lafouge in 2018 are beautiful examples of just how 1992-

like this vintage is at the most successful domaines, as the wines share just gorgeous depth of pure, fresh fruit tones, lovely expressions of terroir, zesty acids and impeccably balanced personalities that promise early and very high quality drinking, but have the balance to age quite gracefully as well. The red wines here are absolute classics in the making, and one could never taste them blind and think of them as coming from a torrid vintage! Stylistically, the red wines chez Lafouge remind me very strongly of the 1999 vintage for red wines, which was the finest in the Côte de Beaune that I have ever witnessed! The wines are deep, sappy and rock solid with pure fruit tones, coupled to classic expressions of their underlying soils, fine-grained, ripe tannins and superb structures for long-term cellaring. A few, such as the Auxey-Duresses AC rouge will drink well early on, but most will want eight to ten years cellaring to start to properly blossom. They will be long-lived wines and absolute cellar treasures down the road, and for those intrepid Burgundy shoppers who are willing to range a bit further afield than Volnay in the Côte de Beaune for their red wines, these will be marvelous additions to the cellar.

2018 Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Bourgogne Aligoté from Domaine Lafouge is a lovely example this year, offering up a bright and classy nose of apple, lime blossoms, salty minerality and a touch of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and nicely mineral in personality, with a good core, fine acids and grip and a beautifully balanced finish. This is raised half in stainless steel tank and half in older barrels, which gives the wine a lovely textural sophistication for Aligoté. 2020-2030. **88.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Hautés”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The Lafouge family’s 2018 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Hautés” is really a beautiful wine this year, with the generosity of pure fruit of 2018 coupled to an excellent harness of acidity and minerality that gives the wine excellent lift. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, a touch of beeswax and a lovely topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with excellent focus and cut, zesty acids and a long, complex and very well-balanced finish. 2020-2040. **90.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Blanc “les Boutonniers”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 les Boutonniers is another excellent example of the vintage, with a touch more reserve than the already delicious les Hautés, but the same combination of good structural tension, mineral drive and pure fruit. The nose offers up a refined combination of pear, fresh lime, chalky soil tones, a hint of fresh almond, spring flowers and a nice touch of salinity. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, complex and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a very good core, a lovely girdle of acidity and fine cut and grip on the long finish. This will want just a couple of years’ worth of bottle age to blossom. 2022-2040+. **91.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Meursault AC *chez* Lafouge is also really a beautiful bottle. The bouquet is bright and classic in profile, offering up a pure blend of pear, lime, a touch of passion fruit, chalky minerality, a discreet framing of vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of geranium. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and again, beautifully transparent, with a fine core of fruit, zesty acids and a long, complex and very well balanced finish. This does not quite have the same depth of fruit at the core as the Boutonniers, but it is beautifully detailed and will drink very well from release. 2020-2045. **91.**

2018 Meursault “Meix Chavaux”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The Lafouges have very old vines in Meix Chavaux, as they celebrated their ninety-first birthday in 2018. These old vines have really crafted a beautiful bottle in this vintage, offering up a superb aromatic constellation of pear, apple, hazelnut, chalky minerality, white lilies and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure and bright, with fine depth in the mid-palate, bright acids and lovely lift and grip on the long and complex finish. First class Meursault. 2020-2045. **92.**

2018 Meursault “Casse Têtes”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The Domaine Lafouge 2018 Casse Têtes is also beautiful this year. The bouquet is vibrant and loaded with citrus zest, to go along with notes of apple, pear, hazelnuts, a superb base of chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of lime blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, and really deep at the core, with excellent cut and grip, impressive nascent complexity and a very long, very classy finish. While the Meix Chavaux will charm from the outset, I would opt to give the 2018 Casse Têtes at least a few years in the cellar and let the secondary layering of complexity come to the fore. Great juice. 2023-2050. **93.**

2018 Vins Rouges

2018 Bourgogne “Coteaux Bourguignons” Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Coteaux Bourguignons from Domaine Lafouge is a blend of sixty percent gamay and forty percent pinot noir. This has turned out quite nicely this year, offering up a bright and red fruity nose of cherries, a touch of cranberries, bonfire, dark soil tones and just a touch of gamebird. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, tangy and nicely transparent, with a good core and a long, complex and bouncy finish. A good example. 2019-2025+. **87.**

2018 Bourgogne “Côte d’Or” Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Gilles Lafouge observed that his vines for his Bourgogne “Côte d’Or” are located in Pommard and he really likes the location of these vines and how they responded to the challenging conditions of 2018. The wine is very, very good for its level, offering up a vibrant nose of cherries, quince, a complex base of soil, gamebird and a hint of roses in the upper register. On the palate the wine is medium-full, long and soil-driven in personality, with good length and grip and just a touch of tannin perking up the long finish. 2020-2035. **88+.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Auxey-Duresses *villages* is very pretty and quite classic in personality this year, delivering a fine bouquet of red and black cherries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, a hint of chocolate and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and sappy at the core, with fine soil signature, modest tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and classy finish. This will drink well from a young age, but has the balance to age nicely as well. 2022-2045. **90.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “les Ecusseaux”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The les Ecusseaux bottling of Auxey *rouge* was new to me in the cellars last year, though this small cuvée had been added to the family’s lineup several years before. The wine is quite black fruity in personality in 2018, delivering a fine blend of sweet dark berries, black plums, raw cocoa, a touch of fresh herbs, gamebird, just a touch of oak and a superb foundation of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and synthesizes soil tones and sappy fruit beautifully at the core, with ripe, buried tannins and a long, focused and tangy finish. Fine juice. 2026-2060. **91+.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “Climat du Valle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Climat du Valle was just a touch reduced at the time of my visit, but a bit of swirling coaxed the nose nicely out of the glass to reveal a red fruity blend of cherries, red plums, bonfire, chalky minerality, *pigeon*, mustard seed and a touch of spicy oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely defined by its underlying minerality, with ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, youthfully complex and tightly-knit finish. This is first class juice in the making. 2026-2060. **92.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “la Chapelle”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 la Chapelle is one of the ripest wines in the Lafouge cellars this year, coming in at all of 13.4 percent octane. The wine is just stellar on both the nose and palate, with the bouquet wafting from the glass in a classic mix of red and black cherries, raw cocoa, gamebird, plums, a complex base of soil tones and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with fine focus and grip, impeccable balance, fine-grained tannins and outstanding backend mineral drive on the long and complex finish. This is stellar Auxey in the making! 2028-2065. **93+.**

2018 Auxey-Duresses Rouge “les Duresses”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 les Duresses from Gilles Lafouge is also outstanding, and makes a lovely stylistic juxtaposition with the red fruity la Chapelle, as this is all pure and sappy black fruit in its aromatic constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, bitter chocolate, lovely minerality, bonfire, gamebird and cedar. On the palate the wine is deep, full and very precise, with a great core of fruit, a lovely sense of salinity to the soil signature, ripe, buried tannins and a long, nascently complex and impeccably balanced finish. Fine, fine juice. 2028-2065. **94.**

2018 Pommard “les Noizons”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

The 2018 Pommard “les Noizons” from Domaine Lafouge is a lovely bottle in the making. The bouquet is quite elegant for young Pommard, offering up scents of cherries, quince, woodsmoke, *pigeon*, stony soil tones, a bit of clove-like spices and a topnote of mustard seed. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and refined (again, for young Pommard!), with a fine core of fruit, a good base of soil, fine-grained tannins and a long, transparent and vibrant finish. This will actually come forward a bit sooner than the top two premier crus from Auxey in the cellar this year, but should age very nicely as well. Good juice, but just not quite in the same league of complexity as the la Chapelle or les Duresses this year. 2027-2050+. **90+.**

2018 Pommard “les Chanlins”- Domaine Gilles Lafouge

Gilles Lafouge may be best known for his outstanding red and white Auxey-Duresses cuvées and his Domaine Roulot-like Meursaults, but the Chanlins, year in and year out, is amongst the very best wines in his cellar. The 2018 is no exception, as this is a stellar young Pommard, offering up a superb aromatic constellation of red and black cherries, plums, a lovely base of minerality, gamebird, mustard seed, cedar and a very pretty topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and soil-driven, with a great core of sappy fruit, exquisite balance and a long, focused, complex and seamlessly tannic finish. Great juice. 2030-2075. **93+.**

Meursault**Domaine Coche-Dury (Meursault)**

I love that Raphaël Coche has decided to show his wines after they are bottled now, so that tasting here is always one vintage behind most of his colleagues showing the wines out of cask. Domaine Joseph Roty has the same policy, so it is always a pleasure to dip back one vintage during the course of the November trip and sample a range of wines chez Coche that are

complete and finished in every respect. So, amidst the roller coaster ride that is the 2018 vintage in Burgundy, it was a great pleasure to settle in to the tasting at Domaine Coche-Dury with Monsieur Coche and work through the family's range of 2017s- which have turned out breathtakingly beautiful in both red and white! Raphaël Coche began harvesting his chardonnay on August 29th in 2017 and has crafted some of the finest examples of the vintage that I have yet tasted, which of course is no surprise whatsoever, but the 2017 red wines here are clearly the product of a great vintage of vins rouges chez Coche and will deserve their own search of the marketplace to locate and add to the cellar. I did not taste the Monthélie rouge this year during my visit, which is unfortunate, as the domaine makes a stellar example. But, there is a new wine in the red wine lineup at Domaine Coche-Dury this year, as Raphaël Coche is quite impressed with the work being done by the new winemaker for the Hospices de Beaune, Ludvine Griveau, and he purchased a lot of the Volnay "Santenots" Cuvée Gauvain" to offer to clients and it is a marvelous wine. Amongst the 2017 white wines, we did not taste the Puligny "Enseignères" and I cannot recall now the reason why it was not available, but everything else was absolutely singing and 2017 is clearly one of the great recent vintages at Domaine Coche-Dury. During the course of the tasting, some of the domaine's very friendly private clients from Belgium arrived to taste with us (just a bit on the tardy side), which allowed me to sneak out to the restroom while introductions were made and more glasses were secured, and this gave me the chance to also chat a bit with Jean-François Coche, who was just coming in from the vineyards. He commented on how much he liked the 2017s here, which he felt showed very impressive minerality and nervosité for "yet another solar vintage" and it was clear that he was every bit as impressed with Raphaël's wines in 2017 as I was! Jean-François also shook his head and commented what a "huge problem climate change is now for vignerons in Burgundy", as he was reflecting on the warm summer of 2017, followed by the even hotter summers in both 2018 and 2019. What was left unsaid for the moment, but clearly on the mind of Jean-François Coche, is that if the globe keeps heating up at its current rate, it may well be impossible to make great wines in Burgundy for all that much longer...With that in mind, it might make it well worth every Coche-Dury fan's while to make an extended search for these brilliant 2017s, which are about as classical as one is likely to find from this great domaine and will prove to be cellar treasures for decades to come!

Vins Blancs

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2017 Bourgogne Blanc bottling from Raphaël Coche is excellent and up to the customary standards of the domaine as one of the very finest examples at this level that one can find in all of Burgundy. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined blend of pear, apple, chalky soil tones, almond, a touch of orange zest and a very discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and shows good mineral undertow, with bright acids and lovely cut and grip on the long finish. First class Bourgogne! 2020-2040. **90.**

2017 Meursault- Domaine Coche-Dury

This is the Narvaux bottling of Meursault AC, which I assume is the one that Kermit Lynch buys for the US market. It is an outstanding wine in 2017, with the depth and inner core of a top premier cru. The aromatic constellation is absolutely superb, delivering scents of apple, passion fruit, a touch of iodine, chalky minerality, hazelnuts, gentle floral tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and shows off a great core of fruit, with superb focus

and grip, lovely mineral drive and a long, pure, complex and zesty finish of outstanding energy and lift. Stunning villages! 2023-2050+. **93.**

2017 Meursault “les Chevalières”- Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2017 Meursault “les Chevalières” from Domaine Coche-Dury is a beautiful wine in the making, with a very floral personality this year and unrepentant elegance right out of the blocks. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined mix of pear, apple, spring flowers, chalky soil tones, almond, a touch of iodine and a lovely framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and a bit more reserved than the Narvaux, with a lovely core of fruit, excellent soil signature, zesty acids and the same lift and cut as the Narvaux on the very long and very classy finish. Lovely Chevalières. 2025-2055+. **93+.**

2017 Meursault “les Rougeots”- Domaine Coche-Dury

Raphaël Coche has crafted an equally stellar example of Rougeots in 2017. The wine is pure and very classic on the nose, delivering a blend of apple, passion fruit, a hint of tangerine, iodine, chalky soil tones, hazelnut and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, nicely ripe and racy, with a rock solid core of fruit, excellent focus and balance and a very long, snappy and complex finish. This is at exactly the same stellar level as the Chevalières, but more masculine in personality. 2026-2055+. **93+.**



Jean-François and Raphaël Coche share a photo op after a vertical tasting of Corton-Charlemagne last year.

2017 Meursault “les Caillerets”- Domaine Coche-Dury

I like the 2017 Caillerets very much from Domaine Coche-Dury, but it is just a whisper behind the last two wines in terms of backend dimension on the palate. The bouquet is pure and

very refined, delivering a mix of apple, pear, a fine base of soil tones, almond, a touch of citrus zest, gentle floral tones and new oak. On the palate the wine is deep and full-bodied, with a good core and fine soil signature, bright acids and fine focus and grip on the long and complex finish. This is a complete wine in every respect and just serves to underscore the exceptional quality of the 2017 Chevalières and Rougeots *chez* Coche this year. 2024-2050+. **93.**

2017 Meursault “les Genevrières” - Domaine Coche-Dury

The vineyard of Genevrières was one of the luckiest in the Côte de Beaune in 2016, as it was barely touched by the severe frost damage of that year, so there was nothing to recover from in 2017 and the result is a very, very beautiful young example of Genevrières from Raphaël Coche. The bouquet is flat out stunning, soaring from the glass in an elegant combination of apple, passion fruit, salty, chalky minerality, white flowers, hazelnut and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very elegant in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, great soil signature, bright, zesty acids and laser-like focus on the very long and very pure finish. One tastes a young example of Genevrières such as this and it is very easy to quickly come to the conclusion that one has not drunk enough Genevrières over the years! 21024-2055+. **95.**

2017 Meursault “les Perrières” - Domaine Coche-Dury

The 2017 Meursault “Perrières” from Domaine Coche-Dury is also an absolutely brilliant young wine. The nose delivers an aromatic constellation of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, iodine, a very complex base of minerality, lovely floral tones and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, very complex and quite expressive today (particularly for a young Perrières!), with a rock solid core of fruit, beautiful transparency and grip and a long, vibrant and racy finish. This is a great, great young vintage of Coche Perrières, and I have to assume that it will shut down at some point for a bit of hibernation, but today it is quite flattering and will be in serious danger of infanticide when it is released in a couple more months! 2026-2060. **97.**

2017 Corton-Charlemagne - Domaine Coche-Dury

In contrast to the open and very flattering Meursault “Perrières”, the 2017 Corton-Charlemagne *chez* Coche is much more reserved and bound up in its youthful structure at the present time. The wine’s ultimate quality is unmistakable, but this is a puppy and is going to need some cellaring time before it starts to stir. The bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, a great base of chalky minerality, citrus peel, iodine, hints of the spring flowers to come and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, a snappy girdle of acidity and gorgeous mineral drive on the adolescently complex and extremely long finish. 2030-2075. **97.**

Vins Rouges

2017 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

As I mentioned in the introduction, the 2017 red wines from the domaine are stellar this year, and this starts right out with this lovely Bourgogne Rouge. The bouquet is really lovely, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, woodsmoke, a touch of gamebird, dark soil tones and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off a lovely core, with good soil signature, just a touch of tannin and a long, vibrant finish. This will drink well with only a year or two in the cellar, but will also age very well indeed. 2021-2040. **90.**

2017 Meursault “Côte de Beaune” Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

I have never had more than a bottle or two of the Meursault *rouge* bottling from Domaine Coche-Dury in my cellar (despite being an avid collector of the other red wine cuvées), as I never have seemed to come across bottles of the wine for sale. But, a bottle of the 1989 drunk several years ago underscored just how beautiful this wine can age and it should most emphatically be purchased if one is lucky enough to spot a bottle! The 2017 is excellent, offering up a deep and black fruity nose of sweet dark berries, black plums, dark chocolate, a lovely base of soil, woodsmoke and a delicate coating of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very suave on the attack, with a sappy core, lovely transparency, fine-grained tannins and a long, focused and complex finish. Fine juice. 2024-2050. **91+**.

2017 Auxey-Duresses Rouge- Domaine Coche-Dury

In contrast, I have bought more Auxey-Duresses *rouge* from the Coche family than any other wine from them and have always been delighted with how beautifully this wine ages in my cellar. The 2017 is another stellar bottle in the making, offering up a complex bouquet of black cherries, plums, chocolate, chalky soil tones, woodsmoke, gamebird and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already starting to get a bit velvety on the attack, with a lovely core of fruit, suave tannins and lovely focus and grip on the complex and perfectly balanced finish. Most young vintages of Coche Auxey are quite red fruity in personality, but the 2017 is more black fruity than customary, though no less refined and potentially elegant! Fine, fine juice. 2022-2055+. **91+**.

2017 Volnay “Premier Cru”- Domaine Coche-Dury

As fans of the domaine no doubt are aware, the Premier Cru bottling of Volnay here is a fifty-fifty blend of fruit from Champans and Clos des Chênes. The 2017 version is an outstanding wine in the making, offering up a complex and very classic bouquet of black cherries, dark berries, gamebird, a complex base of dark soil tones, woodsmoke and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, deep and full-bodied, with a fine core, a velvety attack, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and very classy finish. First class Volnay. 2027-2065. **93+**.

2017 Volnay “Santenots” Cuvée Gauvain- Domaine Coche-Dury (Hospices de Beaune)

I am not sure if Raphaël Coche is likely to buy this cuvée on a regular basis in the future, but I am very happy he purchased a lot of the 2017, as this is going to be an excellent wine. It is a bit more new oak, and the wood is a bit more toasted than is the case with the domaine’s own red wines, but it has excellent depth and complexity on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a blend of sweet blackberries, black cherries, bitter chocolate, *pigeon*, dark soil tones and smoky new oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and shows fine purity to its soil signature, with a lovely core, fine focus and grip and a long, ripely tannic and very nicely balanced finish. Fine juice. 2027-2065. **93**.

Domaine Arnaud Ente (Meursault)

Arnaud Ente was once again one of the earliest vignerons out in the vines to start bringing in fruit in 2018, as he observed that one had to do so in this vintage to retain freshness in the finished wines. Consequently, he and his team of pickers were out starting on August 20th in 2018 and were able to bring in grapes with good acidity levels and moderate sugars, so that the lineup of white wines here range from twelve to 12.7 percent octane in this vintage! Needless to say, I did not taste anywhere else where the 2018s had such low alcohol levels. Interestingly, and quite contrary to my expectations, the domaine started picking their pinot noir first on

October 20th and did not tackle the chardonnays until the Bourgogne rouge vines and the Volnay “Santenots” had already been picked. Monsieur Ente compared the style of the vintage of 2018 to that of 1999, “with a combination of good quantity and high quality” and he is very happy with the overall balance of his wines in 2018. The entire cellar had been racked right after the harvest of 2019 and the wines had bounced back nicely and were really showing beautifully at the time of my visit. 2018 will be the last vintage for the great old vine parcel of Aligoté that Monsieur Ente has farmed since I first started visiting his domaine in the mid-1990s, and this ultimate vintage of Aligoté seems likely to be a fitting close, as it is one of the finest examples of this varietal I have ever had the pleasure to taste here. There is a new wine in the cellars this year as well, which is a Puligny-Montrachet AC bottling, which is produced from a section of the domaine’s parcel of vines in Referts, which had to be replanted in 2010. The white wines here are every bit as brilliant as one has come to expect chez Ente, with great aromatic and flavor complexity, stellar minerality and superb structural integrity and zesty acids that promise fine and leisurely development in bottle. However, it will be one of the recent vintages where one will not have to defer gratification all that long- even for the very top cuvées- as they seem likely to drink very nicely with only moderate bottle age, but retain the potential to age long and gracefully, due to their impeccable balances. 2018 is a great vintage for Arnaud Ente, but I have been saying that now for many years running and this should come as no surprise!

2018 Bourgogne Aligoté- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Bourgogne Aligoté is really strong from Domaine Ente this year. It offers up a ripe and nicely mineral bouquet of apple, lemon, stony minerality, dried flowers and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and zesty, with lovely focus and grip, a good core and a very long, very classy finish. First class Aligoté and a very fitting vintage to say goodbye to these old vines, which were grubbed up after the harvest. 2020-2040. **90.**

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Ente is also a lovely wine, with a beautifully expressive and pure bouquet and a precise and nicely racy palate. The nose wafts from the glass in a classy blend of apple, pear, bee pollen, chalky soil tones, orange zest and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and really stylish on the attack, with a good core, bright, zesty acids and fine focus and grip on the long and impressively complex finish. Bourgogne Blanc as it should be! 2020-2040. **90+.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Meursault AC from Monsieur Ente is beautifully refined and complex out of the blocks, offering up a very zesty aromatic constellation of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones and a floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and beautifully balanced, with a pretty core of pure fruit, really excellent backend mineral drive and fine cut and backend tension on the complex finish. This is not a broad-shouldered example of Meursault *villages*, but rather a wine of great precision and intensity of flavor. Just gorgeous. 2020-2045+. **91+.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The young vine bottling from the eight year-old vines in Referts is very charming as well and really makes a fine *villages*, but, as Monsieur Ente insinuated, the younger vines do not quite deliver the mid-palate stuffing or backend mineral drive one would expect from premier crus here. The bouquet is very pretty, offering up scents of white peach, apple, chalky soil tones, citrus peel and a musky floral topnote. On the palate the wine is crisp, full, long and very tasty

right out of the blocks, with a succulent core and very good length and grip on the bouncy finish. The younger vines here have produced a slightly more fruit-driven interpretation of the vintage, but with the domaine keeping yields reined in here to thirty-six hectoliters per hectare, the wine does not lack dimension, just a slightly diminished mineral undertow. 2022-2045. **91.**

2018 Meursault “Clos des Ambres”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Clos des Ambres is beautifully emblematic of the Ente house style in 2018, as this wine is full-bodied and quite suave, but also only 12.6 percent octane and utterly classical in structural sensibilities. The nose jumps from the glass in a complex blend of passion fruit, almond, pear, a lovely base of soil, a touch of iodine, orange zest and a discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and seductive on the attack, with a good core of fruit, a nice sense of reserve on the finish and intense backend energy on the focused, complex and very precise finish. Stellar juice. 2023-2050. **92.**

2018 Meursault “la Goutte d’Or”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Goutte d’Or *chez* Ente is stunning on both the nose and palate, though still a young wine and will deserve to be tucked away in a cool corner of the cellar for at least five or six years and really let the secondary layers emerge in all their splendor. The bouquet delivers a magical blend of apple, pear, hazelnuts, delicate floral tones, orange zest, a very complex base of salty soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, great structural tension and grip, vibrant acids and a very, very long, complex and utterly refined finish. Brilliant wine. 2025-2060. **94+.**

2018 Meursault “Petits Charrons”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Petits Charrons from Domaine Ente is far more expressive out of the blocks than the brilliant, but still slightly reserved Goutte d’Or. The nose wafts from the glass in stunning mix of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, citrus oils, a hint of vanillin oak and a topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full, refined and elegant in personality, with a good core of fruit, lovely transparency and grip, bright acids and a long, complex and utterly captivating finish. Great juice. 2023-2055. **93.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Champ Gains”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Champ Gains is also an excellent wine in the making. The wine delivers a fine aromatic profile of lemon, apple, chalky soil tones, orange peel, gentle floral tones and a touch of new wood. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and shows off excellent mid-palate depth, with superb cut and grip and a long, focused and complex finish. This is still a puppy and deserves some time in the cellar to unfold, but it will be first class Puligny premier cru in due course. 2025-2065. **93.**

2018 Meursault “la Sève du Clos”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

Monsieur Ente’s 2018 la Sève du Clos is a gorgeous wine in the making as well, but it is the most introspective wine in the cellar at the present time and all of its magic is in pure potential. The nose offers up a youthful blend of pear, apple, passion fruit, orange zest, a gorgeous base of minerality, a nice touch of nutskin and a bit of citrus peel in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and laser-like in its focus, with a great core of fruit, superb mineral drive, bright, zesty acids and a very long, precise and nascently complex finish. Electric juice, but give it some time to really start hitting on all cylinders! 2026-2060. **95.**

2018 Bourgogne Rouge- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Ente is the ripest wine in the cellar here by quite some margin, for though these were the very first vines picked on August 20th, the wine has come in at 13.5 percent octane! The wine has turned out quite nicely, offering up a ripe and pure

bouquet of cherries, strawberries, woodsmoke and a lovely base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, fullish and quite soil-driven in personality, with a touch of tannins and fine length and grip on the very nicely balanced finish. A fine example. 2022-2035. **89.**

2018 Volnay “Santenots”- Domaine Arnaud Ente

The 2018 Volnay “Santenots” from Monsieur Ente is also a very fine result in this vintage, combining beautifully ripe, black fruit and excellent transparency and backend lift. The nose delivers scents of black cherries, dark berries, *pigeon*, dark soil tones, woodsmoke, a touch of cedar and a nice array of spice tones in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite complex, with a good core of black fruit, fine soil signature, ripe, well-integrated tannins and a long, poised and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2028-2065. **92.**

Domaine François et Antoine Jobard (Meursault)

Antoine Jobard has made very nice 2018s, but he started picking a bit later in this vintage than some of his neighbors and the wines are a bit more broad-shouldered and forward as a result. Monsieur Jobard and his team were out in the vines starting on August 31st in 2018, and though the wines are certainly not high in alcohol, they are a bit more plush in personality that was the case with the 2017s here. Alcohol levels chez Jobard are still very reasonable in 2018, with Antoine reporting that most of the wines range from thirteen to 13.3 percent, but they do not have quite the same cut and grip as the wines here from the previous vintage. The flip side is that they will drink very well from an early age and make good insurance to let the 2017s sleep in the cellar a bit, as they do not lack for anything and are fine examples of ripe, pure fruit and fine underlying signatures of terroir. The top Meursault premier crus here have the structure to easily last twenty-five to thirty years, but they will already be flat out delicious four or five years from now and they are going to be present quite a challenge to not drink fairly early on. There is no longer a Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Gains” in the cellars, as the ownership of the vineyard changed and Antoine Jobard no longer is being sold the fruit. However, there is a new Saint Aubin premier cru to help offset the loss a bit, as Antoine’s parcel in the fine vineyard of Derrieres Chez Edouard are now four years old and he has made a first bottling from these vines.

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Antoine Jobard is a very pretty and wide open wine this year, offering up a nose of apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and quite nicely plump at the core, with zesty acids and good length and grip on the zesty finish. Good juice. 2020-2030. **88+.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The Jobard family’s Meursault AC bottling is made from three *lieux à dits*, including the currently quite fashionable Chaumes de Perrières. Antoine Jobard vinifies the fruit from all three together to make a seamless cuvée and the 2018 version is quite pretty, offering up a lovely nose of apple, a touch of orange zest, almond, a fine base of soil, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and already nicely expressive, with a good core, sound acids and good bounce and length on the open and well balanced finish. 2020-2040. **89+.**

2018 Meursault “En la Barre”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 En la Barre from Antoine Jobard is very, very pretty wine this year. The bouquet is bright and precise, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, hazelnut, a touch of iodine, chalky minerality and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, ripe, full-bodied and

nicely soil-driven, with good acids, fairly broad shoulders for this bottling, but lovely lift and focus on the zesty and long finish. Good juice. 2020-2040+. **90+**.

2018 Meursault “Tillets”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 les Tillets *chez* Jobard is also excellent this year, with a similar larger structural chassis than the 2017, but impressive purity and mineral drive. The bouquet is already very expressive, delivering a fine combination of apple, passion fruit, lime zest, chalky soil, almond, vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of white lilies. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and very classy in profile, with a fine core, crisp, sound acids and good length and grip on the well-balanced and vibrant finish. 2020-2040+. **91**.

2018 Meursault “Blagny”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Meursault “Blagny” is also very good, and there is a nice touch of reserve here on both the nose and palate that augurs very well for its future evolution. The bouquet is very precise, offering up a beautiful blend of pear, tangerine, hazelnuts, citrus zest, vanillin oak and a fine base of soil. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, ripe and very long, with a rock solid core, fine cut and grip and a nascently complex, promising finish. This has lovely acidity for the vintage. 2023-2050. **92**.

2018 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Poruzots from Antoine Jobard is outstanding on both the nose and palate, with every detail already presented as it will show at full maturity. The stunning nose offers up a classic combination of apple, a touch of tangerine, hazelnut, iodine, a potpourri of citrus blossoms, chalky soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and classic, with a great core of fruit, excellent cut and grip and a very long, very vibrant and complex finish. Fine, fine juice. 2023-2050+. **93**.

2018 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

It is interesting that the Poruzots 2018 is already showing all of its multi-faceted personality, but the Genevrières *chez* Jobard is much more reserved out of the blocks. All of the building blocks are here for excellent development, but it is a bit more shy than the Poruzots today, with a bit of coaxing necessary to have the bouquet eventually offer up scents of passion fruit, tangerine, a touch of nuttiness, lemon zest, beautiful, salty soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely adolescent today, with lovely depth at the core, bright acids and fine length and grip on the still quite primary finish. This will be very good in due course, but it will be less tempting to drink during its ascent than the Poruzots! 2024-2050+. **93**.

2018 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Charmes from Domaine Jobard is also a lovely wine in the making, with a similar personality to that of the Poruzots this year. The bouquet is detailed and utterly captivating, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, passion fruit, orange zest, spring flowers, chalky soil tones, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and precise, with a lovely core of fruit, fine soil signature, zesty acids and a long, still fairly reserved, but very promising finish. 2024-2050+. **93**.

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Trézin”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Trézin” from the Jobard family is also quite lovely, but this is again, far more forward in personality than these last several Meursault bottlings. The wide open bouquet delivers scents of apple, white peach, almond, chalky soil tones, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is long, complex and full-bodied, with quite an

ample core for this cuvée, bouncy acids and good focus and grip on the long finish. This will drink well from the moment it is released and will be a real crowd pleaser. 2020-2040. **91.**

2018 St. Aubin “Derrières Chez Edouard”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

As these are only four year-old vines, they have produced a very pleasant wine in 2018, but the more generous yields of the vintage are a bit apparent here. The bouquet is wide open and very pretty, offering up scents of pear, apple blossoms, chalky soil tones, a hint of nuttiness and a very discreet foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, juicy and charming, with a solid core, good acids and fine length and grip. This is not overly complex, but that is just the age of the vines, and in due course, it will catch up to the other premier crus from this village in the Jobard cellars. 2020-2040. **89.**

2018 St. Aubin “Sur le Sentier du Clou”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

Monsieur Jobard’s vines in Sur le Sentier du Clou are in two different parcels, aged twenty-two and thirty-two, so they are now getting into their primes and this really shows in 2018, as the wine has a nice sense of reserve. The bouquet is lovely and very promising, delivering a mix of apple, pear, a touch of hazelnut, spring flowers, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and the first vestiges of the spring flowers to come with further bottle age. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with lovely mid-palate concentration, bright, zesty acids and great length and grip on the vibrant finish. 2022-2045+. **92.**

2018 St. Aubin “les Perrières”- Domaine François et Antoine Jobard

The 2018 Perrières from Antoine Jobard is another excellent Saint Aubin in the making, with a tad less mid-palate stuffing than the Sur le Sentier du Clou, but perhaps even more elegance and inherent complexity. The bouquet is really lovely and expressive today, offering up an aromatic constellation of pear, a touch of orange zest, fresh almond, pastry cream, complex, chalky minerality, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very refined, with a good, respectable core, excellent transparency and cut, zesty acids and a long, complex and energetic finish. This is a stellar Saint Aubin. 2022-2045+. **92+.**

Domaine des Comtes Lafon (Meursault)

I had the pleasure to hosted for this year’s tasting of the 2018s at Domaine des Comtes Lafon by Léa Lafon, Dominique’s daughter, who has just returned full-time to the domaine after a decade of working abroad in a wide range of countries (Brazil, the UK and the US stand out from what I remember of our conversation, but I think the peripatetic Mademoiselle Lafon has travelled more widely than that during her career prior to returning to the family domaine in Meursault). Her father, Dominique Lafon, had been away in Paris the evening before my appointment at the domaine and arrived back in Meursault later in the morning, to join us at the end of our tasting, and it was quite clear that both father and daughter are very content with the style and quality of their lovely 2018s resting comfortably in the cellars here this year. As Dominique commented, once he had joined us in the cellar, “2018 is the very first vintage where I was out in the vines picking earlier than Jean-Marc Roulot!”, as he and the picking team began harvesting this year on August 24th and the decision to pick early has resulted in wines of beautiful purity, mineral drive, cut and lift, and this is clearly a stellar vintage chez Lafon. It is generally a larger, more generous crop here in 2018, with the sole exception of the Volnay “Champans”, as Monsieur Lafon had hired a new pruning team here this year and they started out a bit too enthusiastically in the domaine’s parcel in Champans and pruned back so severely that it ended up being a tiny crop in this vineyard in 2018! The resulting wine is pretty concentrated and structured, but also very pure and precise, and though it is a bit of an outlier

stylistically to the other, utterly classical red wines here this year, it will eventually be a lovely Champans. The other Lafon red wines are simply stellar, with no signs of the torrid nature of the vintage evident on either the nose or palate of any wine- just great pure, sappy fruit, outstanding soil signatures and suave structures that will allow them to drink well relatively young, but age long and gracefully as well.



The Comtes Lafon white wines are also outstanding in 2018, and again, with Dominique Lafon's decision to pick early, the wines are zesty, mineral and very pure, with lovely and perfectly ripe fruit tones coupled to beautiful structures for long-term aging. I did not have a chance to taste the full range of Mâconnais wines here this year, as I was tight on time on this morning and had to content myself with the domaine's range from the Côte de Beaune, but will look forward to tasting these wines early in the new year and report on them in the upcoming piece on the wines from the Mâconnais. A couple of the Meursault bottlings here in 2018 had already been assembled prior to my visit- the Desirée and the Bouchères, with everything else still in cask (though the cellar team was in the midst of racking some of these wines at the time of my visit). The white wines chez Lafon are again (as was my impression at other of the most successful white wine producers in 2018) quite similar in style and shape to the 1992 white Burgundies, though in Dominique Lafon's case, his winemaking style has evolved quite dramatically since those 1992s. Back in those days, he was using (like many of his colleagues) quite a bit of battonage during the élevage of his white wines, which gave them a bit more

upfront early appeal, but perhaps took just a touch of long-term elegance away. This is not the case with the 2018s, as these wines are going to be about as elegant, complex and succulently beautiful as any white wines to be found in the vintage, They have plenty of ripe and very pure fruit tones, but they are also light on their feet, mineral and zesty and have the requisite balance to age long and gracefully in the cellar- at least for those with the proper self-control not to drink them on the early side!

Côte de Beaune Rouges

2018 Monthélie “les Duresses” Rouge- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Monthélie “les Duresses” from Domaine des Comtes Lafon is a really lovely bottle in the making this year. The bouquet is ripe, pure and vibrant, wafting from the glass in a mix of red and black cherries, dark soil tones, bitter chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke and a deft touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and nicely transparent down to its soil elements, with a good core of fruit, moderate backend tannins and a long, complex and very shapely finish. Fine juice that will start to drink beautifully with only a bit of bottle age, but also has the balance to age quite gracefully. 2025-2055+. **90.**

2018 Volnay- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

I was very happy to see the Volnay *villages* again in the domaine’s lineup in 2018, as this is the young vine fruit from their three premier crus and is often a terrific value. The 2018 is a really lovely wine in the making, offering up a black fruity bouquet of sweet dark berries, black cherries, dark soil tones, *pigeon*, woodsmoke and a dollop of chocolate. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully sappy at the core, with a good base of soil tones, velvety tannins and lovely focus and grip on the long and stylish finish. A lovely *villages*. 2025-2050+. **89+.**

2018 Volnay “Clos des Chênes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Clos des Chênes *chez* Lafon is a superb and utterly classic example of this great *terroir*. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a sophisticated blend of blackberries, plums, dark chocolate, gamebird, woodsmoke and fine base of soil tones and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a lovely core of fruit, fine backend mineral drive, seamless tannins and a very long, complex and vibrant finish. 2028-2060+. **92+.**

2018 Volnay “Champans”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

Due to the quite severe pruning of the new team during the late winter months, the 2018 Champans from the Lafon family is quite a bit more concentrated and powerful in personality than any of the other red wines in the cellar this year, though still with impeccable balance and plenty of personality. The nose delivers scents of sweet dark berries, black plums, woodsmoke, dark soil tones, *pigeon* and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with excellent focus and grip, impressive backend mineral drive and a long, chewy and youthful finish. This will take a few more years to blossom than the Clos des Chênes this year, but it too will be an excellent wine when it is fully mature. 2030-2065. **92+.**

2018 Volnay “Santenots du Milieu”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

2018 is unequivocally a great, great year for the Lafon family’s Santenots du Milieu, and I would not be surprised to see this gorgeous young Volnay eventually age along the lines of the stellar 1978 version (which remains the single finest mature red wine from Comtes Lafon that I have been fortunate enough to drink). The bouquet is pure and stunning, soaring from the glass in a blend of black cherries, sweet dark berries, woodsmoke, bitter chocolate, a complex base of

dark soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off outstanding mid-palate depth, with superb focus and grip, a fine sense of sappiness, great backend mineral drive, fine-grained tannins and a very, very long and complex finish. This will be a great bottle of Volnay in due course. 2028-2065+. **94.**

Côte de Beaune Blancs

2018 Meursault “Désirée”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

As the 2018 Désirée had already been racked and assembled for its winter in tank prior to bottling, we started out our tasting of the white wines here with this bottling. The wine is really quite lovely and elegant in 2018, offering up a classy nose of apple, a touch of tangerine and pink grapefruit, chalky soil tones, hazelnut, spring flowers and a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and quite shapely, with a good core, a nice signature of soil, bright acids and very good length and grip on the long finish that closes with a note of salinity. Good juice. 2020-2040+. **91.**

2018 Meursault- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Meursault *villages* bottling is also a very pretty example of the vintage. This is never a particularly powerful AC, but rather one of complexity, intensity of flavor and lovely transparency and this is certainly the case in 2018. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a refined mix of apple, fresh coconut, chalky soil tones, almond, fruit blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, fullish and succulent on the attack, with a good core of fruit, fine backend mineral drive, zesty acids and a long, complex and already quite delicious finish. 2020-2040+. **91.**

2018 Meursault “Clos de la Barre”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Clos de la Barre is simply gorgeous already on the nose, which delivers a fine constellation of apple, pear, salty soil tones, a touch of coconut, hazelnut, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and vibrant, with a fine core of fruit, great soil signature, bright acids and a long, focused and complex finish of great breed and lift. Good luck trying to keep your hands off of this wine in its youth! 2023-2050+. **92+.**

2018 Meursault “Bouchères”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Bouchères was already racked into tank, and perhaps it had not yet really recovered from its racking, so my impression may be slightly unjust to this wine. I had the feeling that this was really the only wine in the entire Lafon cellars this year that showed the torrid side of the vintage a bit in its personality, as the nose offers up a very ripe blend of apple, passion fruit, hazelnut, a good base of soil tones and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely plump at the core, with bright acids and good length and grip on the well-balanced finish. Today, this seems just a touch heavier in its footsteps than the other Meursault bottlings of 2018, and this may be a reflection of the slightly warmer microclimate of Bouchères, or just a result of it having been racked not too far ahead of my visit. I have scored the wine in a range, as I tasted this with Léa Lafon prior to her father returning (and of course, I forgot to ask when he joined us, as I was then in the afterglow of the stellar Charmes!), and she could not recall exactly when it had been assembled. 2023-2050. **91-92?**

2018 Meursault “Goutte d’Or”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Goutte d’Or was still in cask and absolutely singing at the time of my visit. The bouquet is very floral this year, delivering scents of pear, passion fruit, hazelnut, chalky soil tones, a gorgeous array of white flowers and a touch of buttery oak. On the palate the wine is

pure, full-bodied and has lovely cut and bounce, with excellent mid-palate depth, fine focus and grip and a long, complex and very, very classy finish. This is one of the best examples of Goutte d'Or I have tasted since the old vines were replanted in 1989. 2023-2055. **93.**

2018 Meursault “Poruzots”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Poruzots *chez* Lafon is also outstanding, but not quite as expressive yet on the nose and palate as the stellar Goutte d'Or. With a bit of coaxing, the wine eventually reveals a superb bouquet of apple, passion fruit, complex, chalky soil tones, almond, a touch of iodine, vanillin oak and a touch of dried flowers in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure on the attack, with an excellent core of fruit, lovely soil signature and great length and grip on the complex and beautifully balanced finish. This will take a couple more years in the bottle to properly blossom, but it will be outstanding. 2025-2060. **94.**

2018 Meursault “Genevrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Meursault “Genevrières” from Domaine des Comtes Lafon is another absolutely beautiful bottle in the making. The wine offers up a classic aromatic constellation of apple, pear, passion fruit, salty limestone minerality, fresh almond, a hint of coconut and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is precise, pure and full, with a lovely core of fruit, lovely backend mineral drive and a very long, very elegant and zesty finish. Tasting this wine, I realize I simply have not drunk enough of the Lafon family's Genevrières over the course of my life! 2024-2060. **94+.**

2018 Meursault “Charmes”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Charmes *chez* Lafon is just a touch riper than the Genevrières, but still very pure and classical in size and shape. The nose is utterly seductive already, wafting from the glass in a mix of pear, coconut, a hint of blood orange, chalky soil tones, citrus peel, hazelnuts and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and almost silky on the attack, with a superb core of fruit, excellent soil signature, bright acids and a very long, complex finish that closes with a lovely sense of salinity. 2023-2060. **94.**

2018 Meursault “Perrières”- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The Lafon family's 2018 Perrières is a great, great wine in the making. The bouquet offers up a youthfully complex constellation of apple, pear, hazelnut, iodine, a gorgeous base of stony minerality, gentle floral tones and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, young and full-bodied, with great focus and grip, a lovely core of fruit, superb backend minerality and a long, zesty and perfectly balanced finish. Great juice. 2028-2065+. **95+.**

2018 Montrachet- Domaine des Comtes Lafon

The 2018 Montrachet was one of the last wines picked at the domaine, as the grapes here were not brought in until September 4th in this year. The wine has turned out beautifully, delivering stunning purity and depth in its bouquet of pear, passion fruit, coconut, a very complex base of chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nascently complex, with outstanding mid-palate depth, a fine girdle of acidity and a long, soil-driven and beautifully energetic finish. Like all the top vintages of Lafon Montrachet that I have been fortunate enough to taste, this is not a powerful example of the vineyard, but rather a wine of dimension, precision and haunting beauty. 2028-2070. **97.**



The rain clouds just starting to break up over the town of Meursault.

Domaine Guy Roulot (Meursault)

Jean-Marc Roulot did not wish to have me visit this year to taste the 2018s, as I had erroneously reported last year that his 2017 Bourgogne Blanc still included some fruit from the Mâconnais along with his vines scattered around Meursault in regional level parcels. He had asked me to correct the note on January 7th of last year, after seeing my note on the wine, and I had intended to do so in the following issue of the newsletter, but simply forgot to include the correction by the time the end of February came along and the next issue was completed and ready to send out. So, here is the corrected note on the 2017 Bourgogne Blanc that should have been sent out in Issue 79, but which I forgot to include at the end of February of last year.

2017 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Guy Roulot

This cuvée has returned to be entirely produced from domaine-owned vineyards in 2017, after the sole year of 2016, where it included some Mâconnais fruit due to the exigencies brought about by the severe frost damage to the Bourgogne level parcels owned by the Roulot family in that year. I had misunderstood the information given about the wine when tasting the 2017 last year, and so mistakenly noted this wine as still a *négociant* bottling. It is, in fact, all domaine-grown fruit again and was sold under the domaine's label. The 2017 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Roulot is a pretty wine, offering up a wide open nose of pear, apple, white soil tones

and spring flowers. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, forward and tasty, with a good core, solid framing acids and a long, juicy finish that closes with a touch of grapefruit. 2018-2028. **87.**

Puligny-Montrachet

Domaine Jacques Carillon (Puligny-Montrachet)

Jacques Carillon is quite content with the style and shape of his 2018s, which he describes as “quite a bit in the style of the 2015 vintage”. He and his team were out picking by August 25th in this year and the wines have retained good structural tension and freshness as a result, with virtually everything in the cellar coming in right around 13.5 percent octane in 2018. He used his customary percentages of new wood for the wines this year, which is fifteen percent for the ACs, twenty percent for the premier crus and fifty percent for the marvelous Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet. Monsieur Carillon always observes that the wines show more fat and fruit personality in November, and then after their second winter in the cellars, they start to tighten up and the minerality emerges as the more dominant feature in the wines in their early years after bottling, and he fully expects this to be the pattern for his lovely 2018s. The 2018 village wines chez Carillon are really quite good this year, the premier crus their customary step up in terms of structure, complexity and potential longevity, and the Bienvenues once again stellar. Monsieur Carillon thinks that the 2018s will be better to drink ahead of his 2017s, which he feels will need a bit more bottle age to really hit their peaks, but he does not find that one vintage is particularly superior in overall quality to the other- they are just differently styled. All in all, the 2018s from Jacques Carillon are exceptional examples of the vintage and ringing successes, but that, of course, is nothing new!

2018 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2018 Puligny *villages* from Monsieur Carillon is a ripe, but fresh and zesty example of the vintage. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a pretty blend of peach, lemon, chalky soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, ripe and succulent at the core, with good soil signature, bright acids and lovely focus and grip on the very attractive finish. Good juice. 2020-2040+. **90.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2018 Chassagne AC is another very tasty wine *chez* Carillon, but these are younger vines (only planted in 2013) and consequently, there is not quite the same backend grip and lift as is found in the Puligny *villages* this year. The bouquet is very stylish, offering up scents of apple, pear, acacia blossoms, a hint of the *crème patissière* to come, chalk and a touch of new oak. On the plate the wine is ripe, generous on the attack and full, with a good, solid core, sound framing acids and a long, complex and wide open finish. This will probably firm up a bit with its second winter in the cellars, but it will wear its heart on its sleeve from an early age and not be quite as long-lived as the Puligny AC. 2020-2035. **89.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Champs Canet”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2018 Champs Canet is a lovely wine on both the nose and palate. The bouquet is quite classic in profile, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, slightly “candied” lemon, chalky minerality, citrus blossoms and a deft foundation of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely generous on the attack (at least today), with a fine core of fruit, good undertow of minerality, bright, zesty acids and lovely cut and grip on the long, complex and very classy finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045+. **92.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Perrières” - Domaine Jacques Carillon

I drank a lot of the 1992 Perrières from Domaine Carillon back in the day, and I immediately thought of that lovely wine when tasting the 2018 version. This is a pure, ripe and very classical expression of this beautiful *terroir*, offering up a vibrant aromatic constellation of apple, pear, orange zest, a beautiful base of limestone minerality, vanillin oak and a topnote of acacia blossoms. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and shows off both beautiful depth of fruit at the core and superb mineral drive on the backend. The finish is long, snappy and beautifully focused, with great potential for the cellar, but the likelihood that it will drink well with only a few years’ worth of bottle age. 2022-2050+. **93.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Referts”- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2018 Referts from Jacques Carillon is also an outstanding young wine. The bouquet delivers a fine range of lemon, apple, just a hint of tangerine, chalky soil tones, citrus blossoms, vanillin oak and a lovely topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and a bit more reserved out of the blocks than the beautiful Perrières, with a lovely core of fruit, good minerality and excellent cut and grip on the long, youthful and energetic finish. The backend closes with an overt note of citrus peel that I take as sign of the wine’s youthful promise for fairly long aging, in the context of 2018. 2024-2050+. **93+.**

2018 Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jacques Carillon

The 2018 Bienvenues from Domaine Carillon is a brilliant wine in the making. This is properly young and reserved in personality today, but it is easy to see its constituent components are first rate and the wine will be stunning in due course. The youthful bouquet offers up scents of apple, pear, lemon, a great base of chalky soil nuances, citrus peel, white flowers, vanillin oak and again, a topnote of orange zest. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, refined and rock solid at the core, with great backend mineral drive, snappy acids and excellent length and grip on the very, very promising finish. 2026-2065. **95+.**

Domaine Jean Chartron (Puligny-Montrachet)

Jean-Michel Chartron has made another very strong set of wines in 2018. He was not one of the very earliest harvesters in the Côte de Beaune in this year, as Dominique Lafon and several other vigneronns were out in the vines around the 25th of August, but Jean-Michel and his team were not far behind them, as harvest got rolling here with alacrity in August 30th in 2018. The resulting wines have turned out beautifully- and again, the early similarities to the 1992 vintage of white Burgundy was quite striking as I worked through the line at Domaine Chartron this year! The wines are generally all between thirteen and 13.5 percent alcohol this year, with the superb Corton-Charlemagne perhaps the highest in the cellars at 13.7 percent in 2018. They are deep, soil-driven wines with great depth of pure fruit and good acid structures, which will drink very well in a fairly short period of time for most cuvées, but have the balance to age long and gracefully as well. As is customary chez Chartron in November, the first few wines had already been bottled just before the harvest of 2019, everything else up to the level of premier cru had been assembled in tank at the same time and most had been fined in mid-September, while the grand crus would spend a second winter in cask prior to racking and preparation for bottling.

2018 Bourgogne Côte d’Or Blanc “Clos de la Combe”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Bourgogne blanc from Jean-Michel Chartron had bounced back nicely from its bottling at the end of August and was showing quite nicely in November. All of the vines for this

wine are in Puligny-Montrachet. The bouquet offers up a lovely blend of pear, lemon, chalky soil tones, a touch of beeswax and a very discreet base of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, long and bouncy, with good grip and length on the still nicely reserved finish. A good example. 2020-2030+. **88.**

2018 Haute Côtes de Beaune Blanc “En Bois Guilleman”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Haute Côtes de Beaune Blanc from Domaine Chartron is also a lovely wine this year. The nose delivers scents of apple, pear, chalky soil, a whisper of vanillin oak and a floral topnote redolent of fruit blossoms. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and nicely defined by its underlying soil tones, with zesty acids and good length and grip on the juicy and nicely focused finish. Another fine example of its appellation. 2020-2032+. **89+.**

2018 Rully Blanc- Domaine Jean Chartron

I have always been impressed with the consistent quality of Jean-Michel’s Rully Blanc and the 2018 is another very successful bottle. The bouquet is bright and very classy, wafting from the glass in a blend of apple, pear, stony limestone, spring flowers and a touch of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and focused, with a fine core of fruit, zesty acids and lovely backend lift on the long and complex finish. This is a really good bottle of Rully that will drink well right from the outset, but have no trouble keeping in the cellar. Great value! 2020-2035. **90.**

2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Pimentiers” Blanc- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Savigny-lès-Beaune “les Pimentiers” Blanc from Domaine Chartron was still in tank, as were the rest of the wines in the lineup up to the grand crus. It comes in this year at a quite classic octane level of thirteen percent and offers up a fine nose of pear, lime blossoms, chalky soil tones, a touch of vanillin oak and a topnote of beeswax. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and nicely deep at the core, with good framing acids and soil signature and a long, complex and wide open finish. Good juice. 2020-2035. **90+.**

2018 Santenay “Champs Perrier”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Santenay blanc was the one wine in the cellar this year *chez* Chartron that seemed to show the torrid side of the vintage a bit, as the fruit tones were a bit riper in personality and the new oak showed a bit more also (which is usually a side effect of slightly higher octane). The wine is still quite tasty, but less classical in profile than any other wine in the cellar in 2018, as it offers up a mélange of peach, pear, a hint of pastry cream, chalk and a bit of fruit skin in the upper register. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and broad-shouldered, with a good core, sound framing acids and a long, succulent finish. This is a good solid wine, but a bit easy-going structurally in comparison to many of these other gems this year. 2020-2030. **88.**

2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc “les Belles Filles”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron’s 2018 Pernand-Vergelesses Blanc is a return to the house style this year, with more cut, mineral drive and a very good structural chassis. The bouquet jumps from the glass in a mix of green apple, pear, chalky minerality, white flowers, a touch of vanillin oak and incipient notes of *crème patissière*. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and quite minerally in personality, with a good core of pure fruit, bright acids and lovely length and grip on the zesty finish. A lovely example. 2022-2040. **90+.**

2018 St. Aubin “Murgers des Dents de Chien”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel did not have the exact analysis yet on the Dents de Chien in 2018, but guesses it will be somewhere between 13.2 and 13.4 percent. The wine is very pure and promising, offering up a fine combination of apple, pear, pastry cream, a beautiful base of limestone soil, a touch of fresh almond and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and

full-bodied, with a lovely core of ripe fruit, racy acids and fine cut and grip on the focused and quite classic finish. 2022-2040. **91.**

2018 Meursault “les Pierres”- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron’s 2018 Meursault AC is a very pretty and wide open example of the vintage. This is composed of seventy-five percent Tillets and twenty-five percent Narvaux, so this is fruit from top flight *lieux à dits*. The bouquet of the 2018 is precise and stylish, wafting from the glass in a blend of passions fruit, pear, chalky minerality, citrus zest and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and beautifully balanced, with a good core, fine cut and grip and a vibrant, focused and energetic finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045. **91.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “les Benoites”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Chassagne *villages* is also very good from Domaine Chartron, delivering a complex bouquet of pear, apple, a good base of soil tones, orange blossoms, vanillin oak and just a hint of the *crème patissière* to come. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied, long and complex, with a good core, bright acids and very good length and grip on the backend. This is also a very good *villages*, but it is just a hair more four-square in personality than the Meursault *villages* this year. 2020-2040+. **90+.**



The Clos de la Garenne vineyard in Puligny-Montrachet at the start of November.

2018 Puligny-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Puligny AC from Jean-Michel Chartron is an excellent example in the making. The nose delivers a fine and youthful combination of white peach, apple, limestone soil tones, spring flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is young, deep and nicely structured, with a good core, full-bodied format and excellent soil signature on the long, zesty and focused finish. This could use a year or two to blossom, but it will also be quite tasty right out of the blocks. 2021-2045. **91.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Folatières”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Folatières from Domaine Chartron is very promising and was showing a nice sense of reserve out of the blocks that augurs very well for its future development. The bouquet is a classic and very precise blend of delicious apples, pears, pastry cream, complex, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of apple blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and complex, with a good core of fruit, bright acids, fine focus and grip and a long, poised and vibrant finish. This is very 1992-like in profile and depth of fruit. It will be accessible right out of the blocks, but I would opt to give it at least a few years in the cellar to let those secondary layers emerge. It is a very svelte example of Folatières. 2023-2060. **92+.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos de la Pucelle”- Dom. Jean Chartron

The Clos de la Pucelle is located on the northern end of the vineyard, next door to the large parcel owned by Domaine Leflaive, and the 2018 version is outstanding. The bouquet is pure and classic, delivering a fine aromatic constellation of apple, pear, chalky soil tones, *crème patissière*, lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and shows off lovely mid-palate depth, with good acidity and mineral drive, fine focus and grip and a very long, nascently complex and energetic finish. This is first class juice. 2024-2060+. **93+.**

2018 Puligny-Montrachet “Clos des Caillerets”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Domaine Chartron Clos des Caillerets is another stellar example of the vintage. The wine is youthful on both the nose and palate, with a nice sense of aromatic reserve and lovely depth and structure. The nose delivers scents of apple, white peach, a great base of limestone minerality, lemon zest, incipient notes of pastry cream, vanillin oak, spring flowers and a bit of bee pollen in the upper register. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very pure, with a rock solid core, a fine girdle of acidity, excellent focus and grip and a long, snappy and still fairly primary finish. This will want some time to blossom, but it is going to be stellar. 2026-2060+. **93+.**

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Jean Chartron

Jean-Michel Chartron’s fruit for his Corton-Charlemagne hails from the *lieu à dit* of En Charlemagne in the heart of the vineyard. His 2018 version is outstanding, offering up a superb bouquet of apple, pear, orange zest, a great base of chalky minerality, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and again, rock solid at the core, with great cut and grip, and superb focus and length on the ripe and racy finish. Very, very impressive! 2025-2065. **94+.**

2018 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Bâtard-Montrachet from Domaine Jean Chartron is also outstanding on both the nose and palate. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, *crème patissière*, chalky minerality, apple blossoms and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and shows off outstanding mid-palate depth, with lovely structure and lift,

bright acids and excellent length and nascent complexity on the very refined finish. This is great Bâtard in the making! 2027-2065+. **95+**.

2018 Chevalier-Montrachet “Clos des Chevaliers”- Domaine Jean Chartron

The 2018 Clos des Chevaliers is probably once again the finest wine in the Chartron cellars this year, but the race is neck and neck between it and the outstanding Bâtard! The bouquet is young and shows great potential in its combination of pear, apple, pastry cream, gorgeous, chalky soil tones, a touch of fresh almond, vanillin oak and a beautiful floral topnote redolent of acacia blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nicely ripe on the attack, with great purity and mineral drive, a superb core, bright acids and a long, zesty and laser-like finish. 2027-2065+. **95+**.

Chassagne-Montrachet

Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils (Chassagne-Montrachet)

Alex Moreau started picking fairly early in 2018, with the first grapes brought in on August 30th of this year. At the time of my visit in mid-November, only the Bourgogne Blanc and the St. Aubin “en Remilly” were already bottled, with the Chassagne AC having already been assembled into tank and ready for bottling early in the New Year, and most of the various premier crus assembled in tank, but not yet fined or filtered. Most of these premier crus had been assembled right before the harvest of 2019, and were destined to be fined and filtered before the holidays and would be bottled in the spring. The grand cru whites were still in cask at the time of my visit. There is a new wine in the Moreau cellars in 2018, as there are two barrels (neither one new) of Corton-Charlemagne this year, which will be worth a special search to try and find! Alex noted that “I am quite happy with how the 2018s have ended up this year, as we really tried to keep the elegance and minerality in the wines, which is our house style, and not let the wines get too heavy from the hot conditions.” This he has managed to do beautifully and once again, the Domaine Moreau white wines are amongst the most beautiful and successful to be found in the entire 2018 vintage in Burgundy. Several of the premier crus from Alex Moreau this year reminded me very, very strongly of the 1992 vintage of white Burgundy when it was young, with a similar sense of succulent fruit, great typicité and zesty girdles of acidity that keep the wines bright and light on their feet, but without impeding early accessibility. They are going to prove to be a very, very popular set of wines when they are released a bit later in 2020!

Vins Blancs

2018 Bourgogne Blanc- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Bourgogne Blanc from Domaine Moreau was showing very well at the time of my visit, particularly for only having been in bottle for a short time. The bouquet is bright and precise, offering up scents of apple, white peach, chalky soil tones, white flowers and just a whisper of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, crisp and classy, with good acids, a fine core and lovely cut and grip on the vibrant finish. A fine example of Bourgogne. 2020-2035. **89**.

2018 Saint Aubin “en Remilly”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 en Remilly was also bottled already and it too was showing lovely potential. This wine will drink beautifully from the outset (much like the 2000 vintage of this wine, which was my formal introduction to Alex’s wines all those years ago), but has the balance and structure to also age quite gracefully. The bouquet wafts from the glass in a mix of pear, apple, *crème patissière*, chalky soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the

wine is crisp, full-bodied, focused and juicy at the core, with lovely mineral drive, fine focus and grip, excellent acids and a long, complex and classy finish. A first class example of St. Aubin. 2020-2045. **91.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Chassagne *villages* here was all ready for bottling and was just settling in for another month or so prior to its *mise*. The wine had been assembled at the end of July and fined the last week of October, so it was showing very well in mid-November. The nose is pure and very floral this year, offering up a fine blend of pear, apple, a lovely base of soil, lemon blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and succulent at the core, with a zesty girdle of acidity, lovely focus and grip and impressive backend mineral drive on the complex and beautifully balanced finish. Fine juice. 2020-2045+. **91.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Clos St. Jean”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Clos St. Jean from Domaine Moreau is very elegant this year, exemplifying the goal of the Moreau brothers to really keep this element front and center in their 2018s. The nose jumps from the glass in a youthful blend of white peach, pear, a complex base of soil, bee pollen, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and very refined in personality, with a good core, fine transparency and grip, bright, zesty acids and a long, classy and very nicely balanced finish. 2023-2050. **91+.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vergers”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The Vergers vines here are now twenty years of age in 2018 and Alex noted that “they are really starting to arrive” and this is one of the best bottlings of Vergers I have yet tasted from the domaine. The bouquet is an absolutely classic example of this *terroir*, offering up scents of apple, pear, chalky minerality, vanillin oak, a touch of bee pollen and a beautiful, floral topnote redolent of orange blossoms. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and nicely mineral on the backend, with a beautiful core of fruit, great balance and a long, properly reserved and very promising finish. 2022-2050. **92+.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Chenevottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Like the Moreau family’s 2018 version of Vergers, the Chenevottes here this year is just a classic example of its respective *terroir*. The beautiful nose wafts from the glass in a fine mix of lemon, pear, lemon blossoms, chalky soil tones, a nice touch of *crème patissière* and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, crisp and complex, with excellent mid-palate depth, bright, zesty acids and impressive soil signature married to the great fruit of the vintage on the long and vibrant finish. These vines are between fifty and sixty-five years of age and the extra depth of these old vines is very much apparent here. A first class example of Chenevottes! 2021-2050. **93.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Maltroie”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Maltroie from Domaine Moreau is also excellent, but it is a bit less flattering out of the blocks than either the Vergers or the Chenevottes and will want a bit of bottle age before it really starts to blossom. The bouquet is pure and promising, delivering a mix of apple, a touch of tangerine, lovely soil tones, orange peel, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of citrus flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven in personality, with a lovely core of fruit, good acids and grip, fine focus and a long, nascently complex and vibrant finish. All this lovely Maltroie will need is a bit of bottle age. 2024-2050. **92.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Champgains”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

There are only two barrels of Champgains in the Moreau cellars this year, with one being a “one wine” barrel and the other a “two wine” cask, so no new oak was used for this wine in

2018. The wine is beautiful aromatically, but also reserved like the Maltroie and will want a bit of bottle age to start to stir, but it offers up scents of pear, apple, lemon zest, a complex base of soil tones, vanillin oak and a topnote of citrus oils. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with an excellent core of fruit, fine mineral drive and grip, bright acids and a long, nascently complex and pure finish. Good juice, just add some cellaring for full effect! 2025-2055. **92.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Morgeot”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

For many years now, my absolute favorite example of Morgeot has been fashioned by Alex Moreau, and his 2018 may well be one of the very finest he has yet crafted at the family domaine! The bouquet is flat out stunning, soaring from the glass in a blaze of lemon, pear, superb minerality, citrus zest, a hint of the pastry cream to come, apple blossoms and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, refined and nicely reserved in personality, with a great core of fruit, beautiful mineral drive, a very elegant structural chassis and superb cut and grip on the very, very long and vibrant finish. Great, great juice in the making! 2025-2055. **94.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Caillerets”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Caillerets *chez* Moreau is another great bottle of wine. The bouquet is pure and classic young Caillerets, offering up an aromatic constellation of apple, lemon, complex, limestone minerality, a hint of beeswax, lemon blossoms and new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full and utterly complete in every facet, with a great core, lovely minerality and cut, bright, racy acids and stunning backend length and grip on the perfectly balanced and electric finish. A classic. 2025-2055+. **95.**

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Grandes Ruchottes”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Grandes Ruchottes from the Moreau brothers is another masterpiece in the making. The nose is pure, refined and nascently complex, wafting from the glass in a mix of apple, pear, incipient notes of *crème patissière*, refined minerality, citrus peel and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, reserved and rock solid at the core, with great mineral drive and focus, perfect balance and a long, zesty and complex finish. 2028-2060. **95.**

2018 Bâtard-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

This is a beautiful Bâtard-Montrachet in the making. The nose is pure, refined and bottomless, offering up scents of apple, lemon, chalky soil tones, citrus zest, spring flowers and a deft framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with great focus and cut, impressive nascent complexity and soil signature, bright acids and outstanding length and grip on the poised and perfectly balanced finish. Though this is a very, very deep wine, it is not particularly broad-shouldered and is an utterly classical example of great young Bâtard. 2028-2060+. **95+.**

2018 Chevalier-Montrachet- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau’s 2018 Chevalier-Montrachet is one of the very best white wines that I tasted on this long trip. The bouquet is deep, pure and utterly precise, wafting from the glass in a blend of pear, apple, pastry cream, a gorgeous base of limestone minerality, white flowers and vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, pure and full-bodied, with a seamless, effortless sense of balance, a great core of fruit, stunning undertow of *terroir* and a long, vibrant and laser-like finish. Sheer brilliance. 2030-2075. **97.**

2018 Corton-Charlemagne- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

Alex Moreau commented that it was hard for him to figure out where in the tasting lineup to insert the new Corton-Charlemagne, and in the end, he figured it should just go at the end, as it is a different *terroir*, even though it is not particularly fair to let it follow the Bâtard and

Chevalier! The fruit for this bottling hails from Aloxe-Corton and the wine had not yet been racked at the time of my visit. It offers up a very promising nose of apple, pear, chalky minerality, a touch of iodine, vanillin oak and a gentle topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, long and rock solid at the core, with lovely focus and grip, excellent balance and a long, snappy and soil-infused finish. This is first class Corton Charlie and I suspect that it probably will merit a slightly higher score, but given the vinous fireworks it had to follow in our tasting, I may not have been entirely fair to the wine! 2028-2065+. **94+**.

Vins Rouges

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “Vieilles Vignes” Rouge- Dom. Bernard Moreau et Fils

As I have mentioned several times in recent years, the red wines of Chassagne-Montrachet are one of the few in Burgundy that seem to be benefiting (at least so far) from global warming, and this is quickly becoming one of the best values for red wines to be found in the region. Alex Moreau has been one of the leaders in crafting more elegant examples of Chassagne *rouge* in recent years and I am going to be writing a feature on the under-respected red wines of this commune in a coming issue. Alex’s 2018 old vine Chassagne *rouge* is outstanding, having included thirty percent whole clusters this year, seeing only ten percent new oak and tipping the scales at a very civilized 13.1 percent octane. The bouquet offers up a youthful bouquet of red and black cherries, bitter chocolate, gamebird, dark soil tones, a hint of orange peel and a gentle framing of vanillin oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and nascently complex, with a good core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, vibrant and very promising finish. This will be an excellent wine! 2025-2055+. **91**.

2018 Chassagne-Montrachet “la Cardeuse” Rouge- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

La Cardeuse is a great *terroir* for pinot noir and the 2018 from Domaine Moreau is a superb wine in the making. The youthful bouquet wafts from the glass in a black fruity blend of sweet dark berries, espresso, *pigeon*, a nice touch of whole clusters, a complex base of soil tones, just a touch of new oak and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and beautifully defined by its underlying soil, with a lovely core of black fruit, fine focus and grip, ripe tannins and a long, youthful and classy finish. 2028-2060. **93+**.

2018 Volnay “Santenots”- Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils

The 2018 Santenots *chez* Moreau is also an outstanding wine. The bouquet is pure and very elegant in profile, offering up scents of red and black cherries, blackberries, dark soil tones, gamebird, a nice touch of juniper berry, woodsmoke, an excellent base of soil and just a touch of new oak. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and very nicely transparent in personality, with nascent complexity, fine-grained tannins and a long, poised and perfectly balanced finish. This is a very refined example of young Santenots. 2028-2060. **93**.